



# Tails

**A newsletter promoting  
compassionate and  
responsible relationships  
between humans  
and animals**

## Mending a Broken Heart - Alexander's Story

Alexander is a homeless six-year-old blind Bulldog who came to North Country Animal League in July as the victim of severe neglect. Completely blind in both eyes due to a deteriorating condition and untreated infections, Alexander has gone through quite the journey to a second chance and has had to blindly trust all of the people who were involved along the way. Alexander's lifesaving journey took him from a high-kill shelter in the South to the safe haven of North Country Animal League in Vermont thanks to our rescue partner, St. Hubert's Animal Welfare.

Upon Alexander's arrival to NCAL, it was evident that he needed immediate medical attention. Beyond discovering that he was blind, Alexander's skin and ears were severely infected and he had advanced-stage dental disease. Most of Alexander's teeth were infected causing gingival hyperplasia, bone erosion, and gum recession. Due to abscessing and pain, it was determined that all of Alexander's teeth needed to be extracted as soon as possible.

Despite the confusion and pain that Alexander was in, his gentle nature won the hearts of our staff members who cared for him. As he tried to make sense of his new environment, he quickly warmed to his caregivers and loved getting the attention that he has been deprived of for so many years. In return, we committed to proving to

Mending a Broken Heart - Alexander's Story him that humans can be caring, in spite of the neglect that he has endured in his life.

Alexander was scheduled for his dental surgery in mid-July with his veterinarian, Dr. Emily Bond of Sequist Animal Hospital. Upon further diagnostics, it was discovered that the severity of Alexander's untreated dental disease has created much more significant health problems for him.

An x-ray taken of Alexander's heart prior to anesthetizing him for dental surgery revealed significant heart disease, the degree of which would need to be determined through a

full evaluation by a specialist. The surgery that Alexander desperately needed was cancelled due to the significant risk of his heart failing under anesthesia.

What first seemed like a straightforward treatment plan has now become a fight for his life. The difference is that this time he is not alone. Alexander is scheduled for a full cardiology evaluation at Peak Animal Hospital in Williston on August 20th, which will hopefully reveal an anesthesia plan that will minimize risk and allow for him to receive his life-saving surgery. This all needs to happen as soon as possible

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**Mailing Address**

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(802) 888-5065 phone (802) 888-4408 fax  
ncal.com

**Pet Adoption Shelter Hours**

Tuesday – Thursday: 1:00pm – 5:00pm  
Friday: 1:00pm – 6:00pm  
Saturday: 11:00am – 5:00pm  
Closed Sunday & Monday

To schedule an after-hours appointment, please contact our Pet Adoption Center at (802) 888-5065 x 101.

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Letter From Executive Director  
**Dear Friends,**

As we embark on the long-range planning effort to envision the future of North Country Animal League (NCAL), I've given a lot of thought as to what NCAL stands for and how we can best meet the needs of homeless animals and our community and keep coming back to one simple idea: People helping animals and animals helping people.

As we look toward the future in our long-range planning efforts, we keep in mind that NCAL is so much more than an animal shelter. It's a place where empathy and compassion toward all sentient beings is learned and fostered. We see evidence of this daily at our Pet Adoption Center, where we literally are bursting at the seams with visitors from our community who come to connect with our animals. It is through these visits that the stray and abandoned animals in our care become the catalyst for personal change and growth as they provide therapy, instill empathy and altruism, and promote kindness and compassion for all living things. We know that animals - especially those here who have faced adversity - can often be the best teachers. In return, we believe that with more understanding, empathy and compassion, we can protect many more animals in need.

Success is so often based on facts and figures - numbers of animals and people we serve, budgets, percentages of growth. If data is the pulse of a nonprofit, the stories behind the data are the soul. In this newsletter, you will read about the stories that we count as the true markers of our success and ones we are so proud to share with you.

These are difficult times and the need is greater than ever for us to do our part in helping to create a more compassionate, empathetic world - one in which we help one another. Our work to connect humans and animals is just as much about the people as it is the animals. It is only together that we can build a willingness for sharing the earth with each other and our animal friends.

Thank you for your continued support, and we hope you come visit us soon, and connect with our mission! We know that with your support of our mission, the future is a bit brighter.

*Best Wishes,*

Tracy Goldfine  
*Executive Director*



**Adventure Awaits for NCAL Dogs**

This summer, NCAL shelter dogs hit the trail as a part of our new program, Mountain Hounds. Since kicking the program off in May, twenty of our homeless dogs have gone on hiking or walking adventures with their trained volunteer companions. Mountain Hounds started with the goal of enriching the lives of our dogs at the shelter, while awaiting their forever homes. It has since exposed them to new audiences and potential adopters as well as they sport bright colored, lightweight Adopt Me! vests on hikes.

Surrounded by mountains with an abundance of hiking trails and scenic recreational paths, NCAL's location lends itself to adventures for both our dogs and volunteers. Volunteers have the opportunity to explore trails of all levels while spending one-on-one time with the dogs, providing them with a much-needed break from their daily kennel routine. Mountain Hounds is also perfect for volunteers who may not have a dog of their own to explore trails with a four-legged companion in need.

Volunteers sign up and participate in an orientation where they learn proper trail etiquette, dog behavior and handling, and how to manage a variety of situations that they may encounter out on the trail. Our goal is to make sure our volunteers felt confident and prepared before their first hike.

Volunteers sign dogs out for morning adventures from 9:00am to 11:30am during available days. This allows dogs to get out in the morning for exercise and back in time to meet with potential adopters during our open hours. We match volunteers daily with an appropriate dog for their level of comfort and experience, as well as their choice of hike.

Mountain Hounds Hiking Program has greatly benefited our canine residents. The exercise and mental stimulation the dogs receive before they meet with potential adopters allows them to show their true personalities and increases their chances of finding a forever home faster. A few of our lucky hiking dogs have even met their adopters while out hiking on the trail. Mountain Hounds is a year-round program, with the next orientation to take place in September - just in time for fall! **If you are interested in volunteering for Mountain Hounds, please visit [ncal.com](http://ncal.com) to sign up for an upcoming orientation or call (802) 888-5065 x 117 to learn more.**



**My Mountain Hounds Experience**

"I don't know who enjoys the outings more, me or the dogs. We lost our dog last winter and aren't in a position to adopt another right now, so it is a treat for me to spend time with dogs. I need the exercise and am happy to have such fine company along. The dogs are so excited to go for a ride and explore a new place. We walk several miles and they sniff everything. They usually take a little nap on the way back to NCAL, and I love that they are then just thrilled to return to their temporary home, like "I remember this place! I remember this person! I remember this bush!" I'm so happy that I can give a dog a morning out in a new environment. If I lived closer I would be doing this all the time!"

*Anne Exler, Mountain Hounds Hiking Volunteer*

STORY CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

**Mending a Broken Heart - Alexander's Story**

as the degree of his dental disease is causing further heart failure.

NCAL's Medical Fund allows us to respond to homeless animals like Alexander who come to us in crisis with needs that far surpass our usual budget for veterinary care and get them the help that they so desperately deserve. Support of NCAL's Medical Fund will help Alexander receive the treatment he needs in order to finally realize a life free of pain and neglect.

Learn more about Alexander and follow his progress on our Facebook page, or visit his site: [www.gofundme.com/alexandermedicalfund](http://www.gofundme.com/alexandermedicalfund). [www.gofundme.com/alexandermedicalfund](http://www.gofundme.com/alexandermedicalfund).







### A Letter from the Owner of Two Loving FIV+ Cats Dear Reader,

As the owner of two perfect FIV cats, I would love to urge anyone considering adopting one to not let those stigmatized letters ever stop them from doing

SO. People are often scared by FIV, but we've learned from caring for ours that it's manageable and really not that bad. I have had Fergus for two years and Francie (formerly Althea) arrived just weeks ago from NCAL.

Francie was a barn cat scooped up in a TNR (trap-neuter-release) operation by Felines and Friends Foundation, but she was not released and was brought to NCAL instead when it was discovered she has FIV. Francie was a barn cat, but we wonder if maybe she was a pet at some point because she was just so relaxed and confident here immediately. She is a very happy, VERY

people-oriented cat! Our only "deal breaker" was if she couldn't get along with our cat Fergus. Exceeding our best expectations, they were instant buddies and are now spotted snuggled together on a daily basis. Francie looks awfully dignified in photos but that is all a lie because she is actually a rambunctious crazy NUT. She is indoor only but we had to put a bell on her just to keep tabs on her fearless, ceaseless exploration of the apartment. She lays around on her back asking for belly rubs and will peep and peep at us until we pick her up for hugs and attention! She's the absolute sweetest.

So Francie is officially part of our family and we are so happy. She is a hilarious love bomb and we couldn't love her more!

Sincerely,  
Molly Hodgdon -  
*Lucky Mom of Two FIV+ Cats*



### FIV Demystified

Formerly known as Althea, Francie is a strikingly beautiful and heart-meltingly affectionate girl who recently found her happily-ever-after. She is also the fourth FIV cat who arrived at NCAL this year, all of whom have been successfully rehomed and welcomed into their loving families. Stories like hers help break the stigma of the FIV disease and advocate for other cats like her to get their second chance at finding deserving lives.

## FACTS About FIV

1. The Feline Immuno-deficiency Virus is a slow virus that affects a cat's immune system over a period of years. FIV belongs to the same group as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and is often inaccurately described as 'Feline Aids' but it tends to be much more benign and may never cause disease.

2. FIV is a cat-only disease and cannot be spread to humans or other non-felines.

3. Moreover, FIV is not easily passed between cats. It cannot be spread casually - like in litter boxes, water and food bowls, or when snuggling and playing. It is rarely spread from a mother to her kittens.

4. The virus can be spread through blood transfusions and deep bite wounds. Bite wounds of this kind are extremely rare, except in free-roaming, unneutered tomcats.

5. If introduced properly, a spayed/neutered cat in a home, is extremely unlikely to infect other cats.

6. There is a lack of information and a lot of misinformation about FIV since the virus was only discovered in 1986.

7. Despite what many people think, cats with this condition can live perfectly long, happy, healthy lives with no symptoms at all.

8. FIV should NOT be confused with FeLV (Feline Leukaemia), which is a very different kind of virus and a serious risk to a cat's health and longevity, whereas FIV is not.

## Every Spay and Neuter Counts!

Every year 6.5 million companion animals enter shelters across the United States. Only half of these animals are adopted, while the other half meet a far different fate. Only by reducing the number of unintended births among our dog and cat populations through spay/neuter efforts can we hope to prevent overcrowded shelters and needless euthanasia for adoptable companion animals.

Of the 6.5 million animals that enter shelters each year, North Country Animal League took responsibility and advocated for 605 of these lives in 2018. The fact that this is a fraction of a percentage of the overwhelming need does not discourage us. Instead, we remember that these animals are not only a number, but a life that needs to be advocated for - and every one of these lives matter. We know we have a lot more work to do and we need your help!

The Bunny Libby Spay/Neuter Fund was established to support spay/neuter efforts for our homeless companion animals in need. Thanks to this support, we were able to spay and neuter 295 cats, dogs, kittens and puppies in 2018 alone, and we see these numbers increase year after year. While the problem at time seems endless, we know that every spay and neuter counts towards ending unnecessary euthanasia of adoptable companion animals.

Support of the Bunny Libby Spay/Neuter Fund helps ensure that every stray cat and dog that comes to us in need is spayed or neutered and placed in a loving home and is critical to helping us end they cycle of homelessness for companion animals. In short, your support helps save lives.



## NCAL's Annual Meeting

Thank you to all who came out to celebrate another successful year of adoptions and programming on June 22nd at NCAL's Annual Meeting. The theme of the meeting this year was "Spay/Neuter Saves Lives", and we were honored to welcome guest speaker Pamela Krausz from Vermont Companion Animal Neutering (VT-CAN). Pamela spoke of the importance of partnership and low-cost spay neuter efforts in ending unwanted population growth for companion animals.

The Bunny Libby Spay/Neuter Fund was dedicated in memory of long-time supporter and dear friend to the animals, Bunny Libby, with the goal of continuing these life saving efforts for years to come. The Staff award this year was presented to our Education and Outreach Manager, Lusana Masrur, for expanding the reach of our Humane Education and Community Outreach programs over the past year. Our Volunteer award was presented to our dedicated foster parent, Erin Beares, who cares for many of our mothers and kittens as well as animals receiving medical attention. Our business award was presented to Dr. Emily Bond and Sequist Animal Hospital, for caring for our homeless pets in medical need and crisis as well as for participating in our Humane Education efforts.

Thank you to all who came out to celebrate and support NCAL. Here's to another successful year of saving lives together!



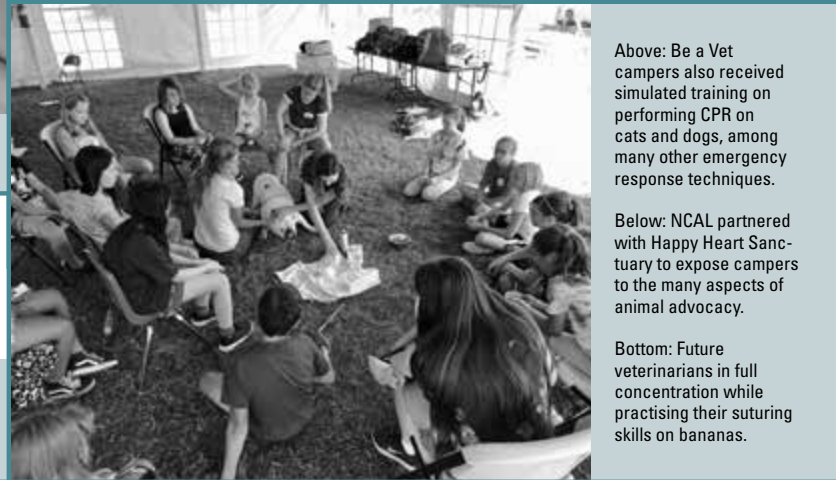
# Teaching Compassion Through Education

As a core part of our mission, NCAL strives to nurture the empathy inherent in every child to appreciate, respect and care for all sentient beings and the earth through our humane education programs. This summer, we welcomed over 60 campers in our Humane Heroes and Be a Vet Camps for age 8-15. Here are some highlights from summer:



Above: Vermont Therapy Dogs paid a visit to teach our campers about the therapeutic benefits of animals, and the many different jobs working animals can have.

Below: Awestruck campers on an expedition with the Oriante Society to learn about Vermont's amazing local wildlife in their natural habitats. The opportunity to interact with creatures from all over the world through Northeastern Reptile Welfare League gave Humane Heroes an appreciation for the diverse animal kingdom and the role future generations have in protecting them



Above: Be a Vet campers also received simulated training on performing CPR on cats and dogs, among many other emergency response techniques.

Below: NCAL partnered with Happy Heart Sanctuary to expose campers to the many aspects of animal advocacy.

Bottom: Future veterinarians in full concentration while practising their suturing skills on bananas.



Future veterinarians learn about animal husbandry, safe handling procedures and performing physical evaluations from Jamie Dutil, our Animal Health Manager and Carlee Brion, our Operations Director.  
Above Left: Dr. Emily Bond from Sequist Animal Hospital instructs a camper on safety protocols whilst 'drawing blood' from an orange.

Above Middle: Young campers practice bandaging and splinting on their life-like 'patients'.

Far Left: Our future veterinarians also went on a guided tour at Sequist Animal Hospital to learn about important differences between shelter medicine and private practice.



## Registration for Afterschool Programs NOW OPEN!

**Tuition: \$180/session (each session runs for 6 weeks)**

**Session 1: September 16 to October 21, 2019**

**Session 2: November 4 to December 9, 2019**

**Serving: Ages 7-10 on Tuesday; and 10-14 on Thursdays**

**To learn more or register, visit our website [www.ncal.com](http://www.ncal.com) or email [info@ncal.com](mailto:info@ncal.com)**

## Upward Bound Students Build Dog Play Yard

What is better than when community members use their creativity and skill in an effort to help to improve the daily lives of the animals we shelter? This summer, Upward Bound, a youth program offered through Northern University, partnered with NCAL for their summer service learning program. Twelve high-school students volunteered their time to assess NCAL's needs and determined how they can best help the animals. Upward Bound students developed and designed two projects, the first one included building a dog park in our fenced in area complete with tunnels, tables, benches, shade and storage. The second project included creating a selfie station in our lobby for adopters to remember their adoption. NCAL is so grateful to have had this opportunity to work with such dedicated and generous young adults. We feel so lucky to be supported in our community and look forward to future partnerships with this talented group.



## Create a Legacy

By making a gift to North Country Animal League through your will, trust or other financial plan, you can help protect homeless animals for years to come. Estate gifts come in many forms such as appreciated securities or stock, cash, real estate, personal property, and artwork. As you think about your charitable wishes, please consider including NCAL as part of your legacy giving. We would love to talk to you about the many opportunities for charitable giving that can save the lives of pets.

Please contact us by phone at 802-888-5065 x 106 or by email at [donations@ncal.com](mailto:donations@ncal.com) to learn more.





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## Upcoming Events

### Fall After-school program (for Ages 7-14)

Session 1: September 16 to October 21, 2019  
Session 2: November 4 to December 9, 2019  
Register online at [nca.com](http://nca.com)

### Volunteer Orientation

Scheduled Quarterly (November Orientation TBD)  
Register online at [nca.com](http://nca.com)

### Mountain Hounds Hiking Orientation

Saturday, September 14th, 11am  
Register online at [nca.com](http://nca.com)

### Community Microchip Clinic

Saturday, October 19th, 10am-2pm  
Drop in!

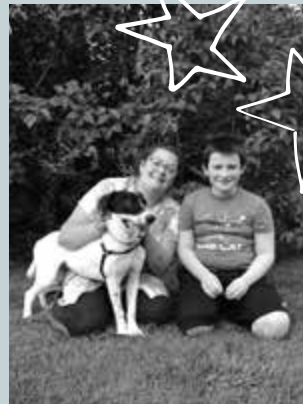
### Reading Buddies Orientation

Thursday, September 12, 12pm  
Saturday, September 21, 12pm  
Register online at [nca.com](http://nca.com)

### Halloween Open House

Saturday, October 26th  
Drop in!

**Save the Date for Menagerie 2020!**  
**Saturday, February 8th, 2020**



## Volunteer Superheroes:

Our incredible team of volunteers consists of a diverse pool of talents representing people of all ages and backgrounds. They roll up their sleeves everyday to help with animal care, housekeeping, fundraising, customer service, events and more.

If interested in joining our amazing volunteer team, please visit our website or email [info@nca.com](mailto:info@nca.com)

Featured here are Danielle Salant and Marius Rudy, both of whom started volunteering after attending orientation last year. They met again at the Be a Vet Camp where Danielle provided support as a camp counselor and Marius attended as a camper.

"I volunteer because I love cats. I visit the shelter every Wednesday and Friday all year round, except for holidays and hope other people want to help too," says Marius. "Cats make me happy, and so I want to make them feel happy too and help them find good homes. Cats can sometimes be a little rough, but they also teach me about respect and personal space and how to help others," he adds.