

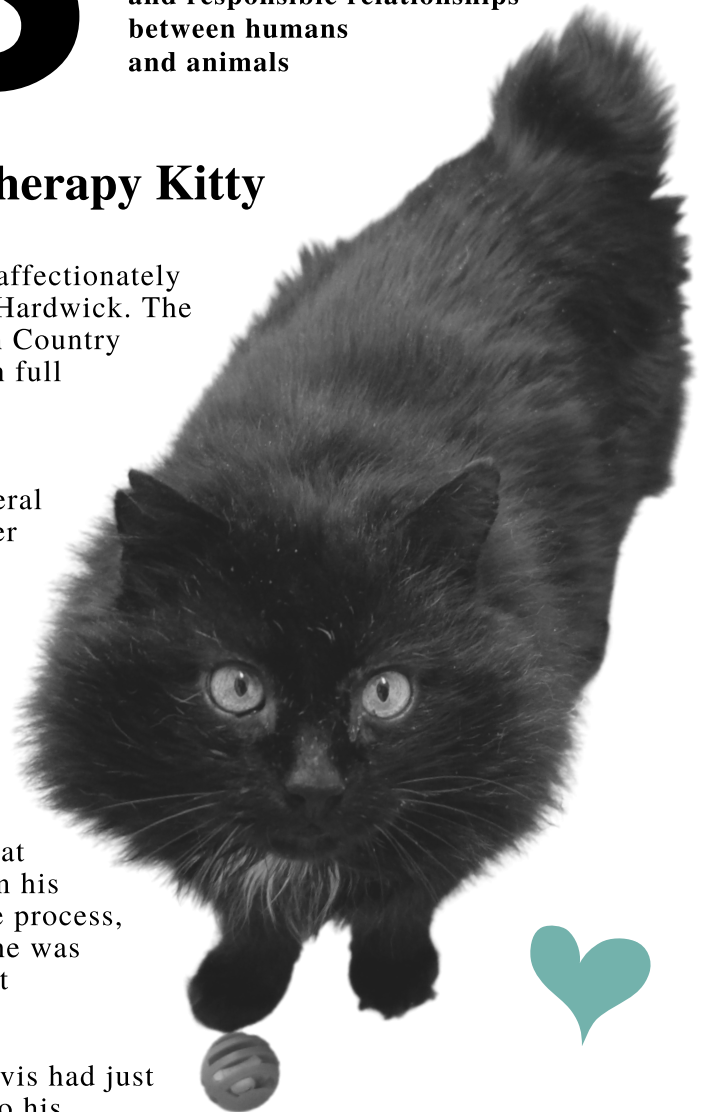
Tails

A newsletter promoting compassionate
and responsible relationships
between humans
and animals

Vesuvius - From Feral Feline to Therapy Kitty

One fine summer day, a 3 year-old 'cat-dog', as he affectionately came to be called, decided to trespass into a home in Hardwick. The homeowners managed to catch and bring him to North Country Animal League, where he made his presence known in full feral glory, and was thus named Vesuvius.

We knew that Vesuvius would be a challenge, but resolved to give him a storybook ending. Due to his feral nature, Vesuvius was given his own room at the shelter to get acclimated. For over a month, he was territorial and aggressive, and our animal care team had to tread carefully into his space as he was severely under-socialized. After attacking staff multiple times and going on bite-hold, it was decided he would be best suited as a barn cat. But after being adopted out to a farm, he bullied the resident dog and sheep, and was such an anomaly that he let mice crawl over him and eat his food! So after failing at his job as a mouse-hunter, he was returned to NCAL. Realizing that Vesuvius needed to be the only four-legged member in his home, and since he had become more socialized in the process, we felt he was ready to be an indoor-only cat. While he was keeping everyone on their toes, little did we know that Vesuvius was also under his forever person's radar!



John Davis had just moved into his apartment at the Rock Point School in Burlington, where he is an on-site staff member. Frequently visited by students, John was ideally looking for a kid-friendly dog. Having volunteered for NCAL when he was young, John had been checking our website for the right dog. But he kept coming back to Vesuvius. *"There was something about his eyes that spoke to me. I saw that Vesuvius was described as a dog in a cat's body and that he was missing a tail which I found endearing,"* said John. *"His rugged charm, missing ear chunks, snaggle-tooth and big tom-cat cheeks made me fall in love before I had even met him! **Within 15 minutes of meeting him, I knew this cat was mine!**"*

CONTINUED ON PAGE THREE



TAILS is published by NCAL and welcomes letters and questions from its readers. If you have a query or thoughts to share, please email info@ncal.com.

Board of Trustees

John D. Miller Jr, President
Holly Berry
Lynne Eyberg
Tom Hubbs
Terry Itameri-Kinter
Maggie MacDonald
Beth McCormack
Theresa Meis
Jessica Russell

Trustee Emeritus

Lisa Darden
Beth Gadbios
Wendy Old
Annie Strobel
Donna Wheeler
Linda Wood

Administrative Staff

Tracy Goldfine - Executive Director
Carlee Brion - Operations Director
Lusana Masrur - Development & Communications Manager
Lucy Hankinson - Administrative & Development Assistant

Shelter Staff

Jamie Dutil - Medical Care Manager
Tasha Baker - Pet Adoption Center Manager
Meagan Ferris - Animal Care Coordinator
Emily Peterson - Customer Care Coordinator
Jess Mcleon - Animal Care & Adoptions
Schae Wolff - Animal Care
Glenn Cover - Animal Care

Stable Staff

Becky Wheeler - Barn Manager
April Taylor - Animal Care & Instructor
Kate Parent - Animal Care

Mailing Address

16 Mountain View Meadow Road
Morrisville, VT 05661
(802) 888-5065 phone (802) 888-4408 fax
www.ncal.com

Pet Adoption Center

Visits to our Pet Adoption Center to meet available animals are by appointment only to protect our staff and community from the risks imposed by COVID 19. To schedule an appointment, please call (802) 888-5065 x 101.

Printing by L. Brown & Sons Printing

Letter from Executive Director **Dear Friends,**



Over the past several months we have learned a lot about ourselves, our community, and our incredible supporters as we've navigated the COVID-19 pandemic together. You have helped us continue to make an impact on both animals and pet owners in need during these difficult times, and we could not be more grateful for you. While our operations have changed significantly during this time, I have been so inspired by the resilience of our staff, volunteers, foster caregivers, and adopters as we strategically pivoted to meet the health and safety guidance for operations as well as the very real needs of our community and beyond.

Since closing our facilities to the public, more than 252 animals have been placed in loving homes, 124 homeless animals have been spayed or neutered, 56 animals in crisis have received urgent medical care, and we have been committed to providing free food to pet owners in need. This is all thanks to your incredible outpouring of support during this critical time.

While our world is far from back to normal, we can move forward knowing that we have supporters like you by our side. For more than 26 years, we've been committed to providing second chances for homeless and unwanted animals in need, and with your support we'll continue that fight through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

I hope that you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy, and I look forward to continuing our lifesaving work in 2021 with you by our side. As always, if you need anything, please don't hesitate to let us know how we can help you by calling us at 802.888.5065.

Tracy Goldfine
Executive Director



NCAL Pet Food Shelf - Saving Pets, Serving our Community

Provided on an honor-based system and accessible to anyone in need since April 1st, the NCAL Free Pet Food Shelf continues to be an important resource for local households and limits potential pet surrenders during these challenging times. As of October, there have been an estimated 422 individual pick-ups of over 3,165 pounds of pet food and supplies. The sheer amount of donations that continues to make this service possible is a testament to our community's collective spirit in addressing this crisis together! To learn more, call 802-888-5065 x 101 or email info@ncal.com.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

Vesuvius - From Feral Feline to Therapy Kitty

"Vesuvius is everything I hoped for and more! He's becoming more loving each day," adds John. "He follows me everywhere but makes it clear when he wants space. He loves to hang out on the couch and watch TV. He's so dog-like that I got him a harness and we're learning to walk on a leash. Another big thing about his life now is that he is a fan favorite among the young students who stop by regularly to interact with him! It's been heart-warming to witness his therapeutic effect not only on me, but also these kids living away from home. I couldn't have asked for a better roommate!"

All Vesuvius needed to turn his life around was a second chance, or third. But most importantly, **what he needed to reach his potential were friends who were willing to help him get there!**



Foster Parents Rise to the Challenge!

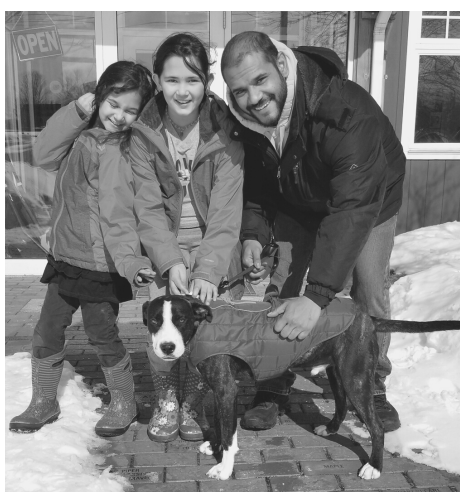
When Vermonters were ordered to stay home and stay safe in April, we went from full operations and adoptions to needing to close to the public and operate as an essential business serving local animals in urgent need. As adoptions came to an abrupt halt, the animals that remained in our shelter and those we took in during that time were looking to stay with us for a while. With no outlet of adoption, but a high intake of animals due to owner surrenders and local strays, our kennels were filling up quickly.

Several community members answered our call for foster homes, allowing us to place 83 dogs, puppies, cats and kittens while they waited for their chance of adoption. Without this lifesaving network, many animals would have risked losing safe placements and we would be unable to make room for the many others who arrived at our doors for emergency intakes. A few of these animals even became 'foster failures', or 'foster successes' as we like to call them, like Rocky, pictured here with his mom.

Compassion Without Borders

Manny was rescued by The Sato Project, along with many other dogs who were left to perish on the beaches of earthquake-devastated Puerto Rico. Thanks to lifesaving partnerships nationwide among animal welfare organizations such as St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center, who transport these dogs to the mainland, Manny and three of his friends made their way to Vermont to be matched with forever homes by NCAL.

Operating under the 'compassion has no borders' philosophy, NCAL is in a unique position to serve as a resource for hundreds of animals in crisis each year near and far. NCAL has the ability to accept all adoptable animals, including seniors and those with health needs, from overburdened shelters who have limited resources, both within and outside our state boundaries. By partnering with rescues and transport groups, these animals are brought to Vermont, medically and behaviorally rehabilitated, provided with shelter and given any other necessary support to place them in loving adoptive homes.



During the Essential Business phase from March through June 2020, shelters were advised to restrict intakes to only local animals in crisis. Unfortunately, our sending shelters in the south who had worked hard for decades to go 'no-kill' by forming partnerships with northern shelters like ours, suddenly found themselves back to square one. This situation alone emphasized why stakeholders involved in saving the lives of animals nationwide, need to work collectively to impact as many lives as possible. Since June, now that transport restrictions have been lifted, we are more determined than ever to save as many lives as we can, and for as long as we can.

Today, Manny is living his best life with his adoptive family. It does not matter to Manny or his family where he came from, but thanks to our compassion without borders philosophy, his second chance is a lasting one.

Legacy Giving

By making a gift to the 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 Tracy Goldfine, Executive Director by phone at 802-888-5065 x 106 or by email at tracy@ncal.com to learn more.

Virtual Times Call for Virtual Training!

We are excited to partner with Goodpup, a virtual dog training program that caters to you and your dog's individual needs. Friends of NCAL receive two weeks of free dog training. Certified trainers provide one-on-one virtual classes on science-backed positive reinforcement methods that are current and proven successful. Goodpup is not just exclusive to NCAL adoptees, but for anyone who is interested in virtual training at the comfort of their own home! Email info@ncal.com to learn more.

Abandoned Dog Lives, Because You Give!



Beauty Beyond Breed

You may have noticed a shift on our dog profiles. Under the 'Breed' section, all dogs are now listed as American ShelterDogs.

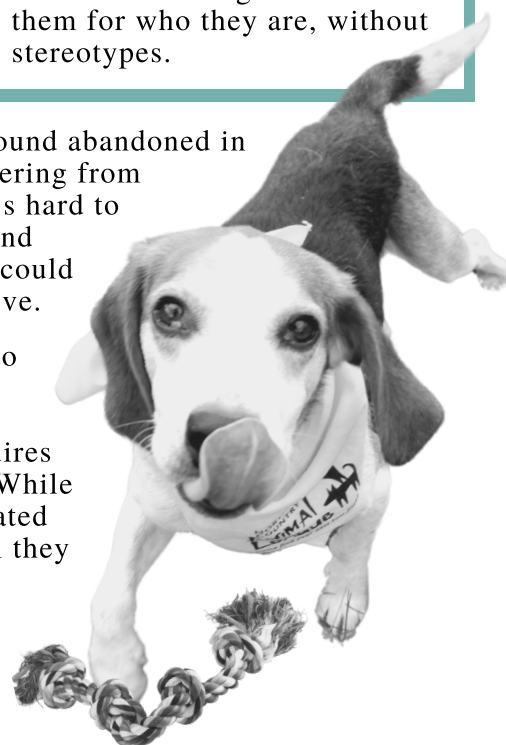
Following a growing trend amongst leading animal welfare organizations across the country, we made this transition as we concur that looks don't equal behavior.

Free of blanket statements and assumptions that are based on known pedigrees, breed labels, or physical appearances, each individual dog deserves the chance for us to get to know them for who they are, without stereotypes.

Our guess is that Crawford's life before NCAL was a sad one. Found abandoned in a field early this summer, he came to us in poor condition and suffering from excruciating pain as a result of a series of health complications. It's hard to imagine everything he has been through but we are glad that the kind stranger who found him, knew to bring him to us right away so he could have access to the resources and care he needed to survive and thrive.

Given his friendly nature and that he readily entrusted our staff to care for him, it was evident that while he was used to humans, he was deserted by those he called his own before he came to us. Today, Crawford's health is improving drastically, but he still requires medical support before he is fully ready to find his forever home. While Crawford may have only known a life of neglect before, our dedicated medical team, animal caregivers and veterinary partners will do all they can to make sure that this happy dog's future is bright!

Consider a gift to NCAL's Medical Fund, which allows us to respond to homeless animals like Crawford who come to us in critical need.



Starting a Horse Farm During a Pandemic 101

It was a typical cold, grey December day in 2019, but now it seems so long ago. We met and shook hands to celebrate the purchase of the 16-acre neighboring horse farm and the incredible anonymous donation that supported it. We had a plan - one that didn't include disinfecting schedules, PPE requirements, and shortages of toilet paper - to begin operating our horse boarding and riding facility in the Spring of 2020. Through our strategic planning process we were excited to create the future vision for the new facility under the guidance of our mission: *to promote compassionate and humane relationships between animals and people.*

Originally, the Ryder Brook Farm was built as a community equestrian center in the 1960s and has since traded hands several times. The future of the property was uncertain. NCAL's vision was to acquire the property and preserve it for the benefit of animals and the people who love them. Thanks to an incredible visionary donor, that dream quickly became a reality.

Horses moved in for boarding in March 2020, and we looked forward to beginning our community programs later in the spring. Then, like so many others, our plans were derailed by the reality of the pandemic. At first, with such a fledgling business, we considered closing down as we were faced with both health concerns and the financial uncertainties of the future. However, unlike many organizations in this position, we have a responsibility for the animals that we house as they depend on us for care. Turning these animals away with nowhere to go was not an option.

As the spring pressed on, we also recognized the need for outlets for the kids in our community, who had been home and isolated from their peers since March. Once camp and program restrictions were lifted in early June, we realized that we could provide a great resource and opportunity at the barn for both children and adults. With carefully thought-out safety protocols and social distancing measures in place, we launched our lesson and summer camp programs in June and were met with great enthusiasm and interest from adults and kids alike.

Despite the fact that this year took a rather unexpected turn, we are so grateful for all that we have been able to accomplish. Thank you to our dedicated staff, and to all who joined us for our summer camps, took part in a riding lesson, and volunteered their time to help get our operations off the ground. We look forward to a brighter 2021 and to serving our community through programs that help foster a more humane and compassionate world.



Welcome Becky!

Welcome Becky Wheeler! Becky joined our staff as Barn Manager in August, 2020. When she isn't found mucking a stall or teaching a lesson, Becky can always still be found in the barn or on her horse.

"This position encompasses many of my passions, including quality horsemanship, animal welfare, and the ability to share these passions with our community," says Becky.

"There is no greater reward than caring for an animal and providing a healthy outlet for our community's children."



Meet Mirky!

Mirky, our very own 'gentle giant', was donated to NCAL in August. Mirky had been a high-level show horse, competing in over 120 hunter/jumper shows throughout his career and was most recently a team horse for the Cornell University Equestrian Team.

At 20-years-old, it was determined that Mirky needed a semi-retirement home - a change of pace from his strenuous show life. Here at NCAL, Mirky has quickly become a favorite. With care and management to meet his needs as a senior, Mirky is now living his best semi-retirement life. He is an active participant in our lesson and camp program, teaching both young and adult riders of all different abilities, and enjoys hours of daily turn out on green grass pastures with his other horse friends.

Mirky's Quirks:

- Favorite treat: Peppermints
- Best pasture-mate: Bandit
- Favorite pastime: Cribbing
- Most embarrassing moment: Falling asleep on the cross-ties
- Most exciting: Jumping! (and Peppermints...)
- Top Talent: Making riders feel like superstars!



Our Quartet of Young Ambassadors!

Without fail, through nine weeks of summer heat, Penny, Grace, Sarah and Rylee walked around with their masks on leading campers on horseback. They saddled up, cooled down the horses, untacked, mentored campers of all ages and provided support as needed, all the while maintaining positive attitudes! Watching them transition from being beginners to incredible role models for our community's next generation of horse lovers and animal advocates has been a treat for us all!



"COVID 19 has changed everything from school to being with friends. Being at the barn took my mind off things," says Rylee. "I've made friendships with people who I love and care about. If I compare where I was last year and where I'm at now, there's a big difference. I've grown and matured and helped others learn and grow. Last year I was the one learning and now I've become the teacher - well, student/teacher. I feel honored to be able to bring happiness into other kids' lives, and it makes me happy to see others take on a big passion of mine and make it their own!"



A Shout Out to Ada!

We want to thank Ada Rohan, head counselor at our Horsemanship Camps and Fall After School Saddle Club, for making these programs at the NCAL Stables a success during these unprecedented times!

A rider for University of Georgia's NCAA Division 1 Equestrian Team, Ada has competed and earned top placings across the country at the state, regional and national levels. *"To be able to offer a safe opportunity for kids to connect with animals and other kids during this isolating time has been a special experience,"* says Ada. *"I witnessed growth in all the kids in terms of their confidence, riding ability and knowledge, and most importantly, their relationship with the horses! Being on horseback helps young people rely on themselves to make judgements independently. They get to learn how horses mirror their emotions which also teaches them to be calm, gentle or firm and focus in the moment and think on their feet."*





16 Mountain View Meadow Road
Morrisville, VT 05661
802-888-5065
www.ncal.com
info@ncal.com



Eddie says *THANK YOU!*



While you may not see Eddie's face on our website, he has been a popular presence at NCAL since his arrival in October. However, he will not be available for adoption until February 8th, 2021, as he is on quarantine for a deep wound of unknown origin he came to us with, which we assume resulted from being attacked by another animal. We are pleased to say that he is on the path to recovery.

Your help allows us to continue providing high-quality medical treatment, care and resources for our shelter pets, while they await their forever home, however long that may be! **Thank you for making it possible.**

**Together, we make our
community a safer and more
loving place for all.**