You are a lifesaver and a hero!

Humane Society of
Huron Valley

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOUR NEW CAT

Thank you.

Adopting a cat often comes with challenges—and rewards, too!
We are incredibly grateful to the wonderful people like you who are willing to adopt them and take on their care.

MEDICALLY SPEAKING

We do our best to diagnose and treat known medical conditions, and you'll receive any information our veterinarians know at the time. We wish we knew everything about all animals' past and could predict the future! But just like humans, one day we can be well; the next day not.

There is a possibility your new companion may come down with an illness after you bring them home. **If your cat is acting lethargic, not eating or drinking, or showing any other sign of illness, it is important that you contact a veterinarian.**

If you notice the problem when the HSHV Veterinary Clinic is open, we strongly encourage you to call us at (734) 662-4365 to schedule an appointment. If our clinic is closed, use your own discretion on whether this is a situation requiring emergency veterinary care.

As a new HSHV adopter, you qualify for a FREE 30-day trial of

MetLife Pet Insurance

Call 855-710-7387 to activate

START WITH A ROOM

Cats like routine and having control over their environment. We suggest you set up a bedroom or bathroom for your new friend, and give them that space to acclimate before they are given full access to your home. This "**acclimation room**" should be a quiet spot, where there isn't a lot of traffic, and where you can close the door to make your cat feel safe. **Include:**

- **Fresh water, dry food and some wet food.** Wet food acts as a tempting treat and helps build trust. Remember, though: some cats may not want to eat at first.
- **A large litter box,** using the same litter they had at the shelter (typically clay). You can switch brands slowly, allowing your cat to get used to a new texture. Keep the litter box in a calm, low-traffic area.
- **Beds, blankets and cozy hiding spots.** Often, cats will hide initially—so offering a safe, warm spot to hide away will help your cat get comfortable in your home.
- **A variety of toys.** Your cat may not feel like playing at first, but as they settle in, you may see a more playful side—and a variety of toys can help bring out their personality!

• **Vertical space to climb.** Cat trees are great! Many cats want a taller vantage point to feel safe and in control, or simply an extra vertical space to burn off energy. Plus, a cat tree may help prevent your new buddy from climbing less desirable surfaces, and you can move it around your home as needed.

• **Rugs on hard floors.** Typically, cats get used to tile and wood floors, but initially putting down rugs can help them acclimate.

LITTERBOX SUCCESS

Did you know all cats are individuals when it comes to their litterboxes (i.e., what works for one cat may not work for another)? So it's important to provide lots of resources to set your new cat up for success!

• Once your new cat has free roam of your home, keep a litterbox in the acclimation room, and have another box available. Once your cat is reliably using another box, you can move the original one.

• A good rule of thumb: 1 box per cat, plus 1 box; so 2 cats = 3 boxes.

• Boxes should be easy for your cat to find—not hidden in a basement, closet or scary place like the laundry room! And we suggest keeping them throughout your home (vs. lined up all in one room) so that your cat can always find one when needed!

• Avoid electronic/self-scooping boxes and covered boxes until you know your cat is comfortable with them. Offer them along with the current box; once kitty is reliably using the new box, you can remove the old.

• Begin with clay or clumping litter; litter alternative should be introduced slowly to ensure your cat is comfortable with it.

The First Day

Every cat is a little different when first coming home. **What's important is that you help your cat feel safe.**

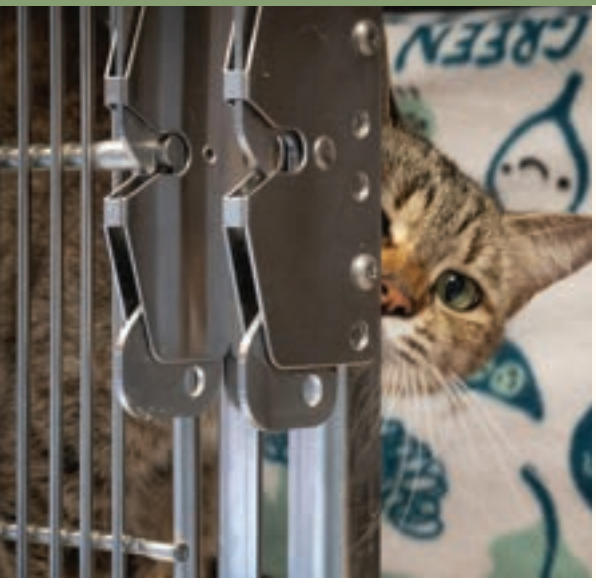
• Open the carrier in the room you've set up, and let your cat come out on their own. Don't try to remove or pick up your cat.

• Let your cat explore. Your cat may be curious and smelling things or may run and hide. Either reaction is normal! It's important you spend quiet time with your cat during these first moments. Don't pet your cat yet; just talk softly.

• If your cat is out and about after a few minutes, you can pet gently on the face and cheeks. **Do not try to pick your new cat up in these first few days, as this could be upsetting.** If your cat hides, just put food and water nearby and spend some time chatting. Offer treats to establish a bond. Eventually, they'll begin to feel safe and venture out to explore.

• While your cat is in the room, introduce other family members and ensure everyone is spending time with them. Introduce children slowly and quietly, one at a time. Once you know how your cat will react, you can increase the time they spend with kids (always supervised). If your cat is playful and outgoing, encourage the use of cat toys. If your cat is shy, go slowly and offer treats—your cat is learning the sounds and voices in the house, and that these strange people are the key to food!

All cats are different. Some may need only a week in their initial acclimation room (see previous page); others need longer. When your cat is out, feeling happy and safe, you can open other rooms. If you give too much room before they're ready, your cat may have difficulty settling in and can get lost. It's fine to put your cat back in the acclimation room at night if they're still not entirely brave about your entire home!



CHOOSE A VET SOON

Don't wait! Veterinary care is an important part of keeping your cat happy and healthy, and you'll want to have a doctor to call when you need to.

Making an appointment at a clinic will establish your pet with their practice, give you an opportunity to ask questions, and discuss ongoing care.

HSHV offers a full-service, non-profit veterinary clinic with convenient hours and affordable fees. And the money goes back into helping homeless animals in the shelter! If you choose another clinic, be sure to bring your cat's HSHV medical history, provided in your adoption folder.

Thank you for saving a life!

COMMON AILMENTS TO WATCH FOR

Some illnesses are common in kennels and shelters. If your cat is ill shortly after their adoption from an illness that may be related to the shelter environment, treatment at the HSHV clinic may be available at a discount.

Diarrhea & Vomit

It is common for a cat to have some softer stool, diarrhea, or vomit within a few days of moving to a new environment. This can be due to stress, diet change, intestinal parasites/worms or other causes. If symptoms persist for more than a few days or are accompanied by lethargy or loss of appetite, please contact a veterinarian.

Vaccination Reactions

Some cats may experience vaccine reactions. Mild reactions include pain at the injection site, fever, lethargy, lack of appetite, and swelling of the face or ears. Severe reactions include difficulty breathing, major swelling, excessive vomiting, collapse, and gray or pale gums. If your cat shows any of these symptoms after vaccination, please seek veterinary care immediately.

Coughing & Sneezing

Due to the high volume of cats and kittens we care for, Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) is not uncommon. Even if your cat were healthy when you came home, the incubation period for URIs is 2-14 days, which means your cat may start showing symptoms only after adoption.

If your cat has no other symptoms and is sneezing or coughing minimally, it's probably not an emergency, and you can schedule a regular vet visit. If your cat is also showing lethargy, lack of appetite, dehydration, or cloudy/colored nasal discharge, please contact your veterinarian to schedule an appointment immediately.

CAT HEALTH BASICS

Ongoing preventative care is crucial for cats, whether indoor or outdoor.

FVRCP (Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia)

This vaccine is highly recommended. Your cat received it at our shelter. Kittens under 5 months will require FVRCP booster vaccinations typically every 3-4 weeks. Once they've received their first adult FVRCP vaccine (after 16 weeks of age), a booster should be given every 1-3 years thereafter or at your veterinarian's recommendation.

Rabies

This vaccine is highly recommended and is given to all cats over 4 months old at our shelter. The first vaccine is good for one year. After that, your cat may receive a rabies vaccine every 1-3 years based on your veterinarian's recommendation and the vaccine administered. Vaccination for indoor cats is recommended due to potential exposure from a bat or other animal who has entered the house.

Parasites, Worms and Fleas

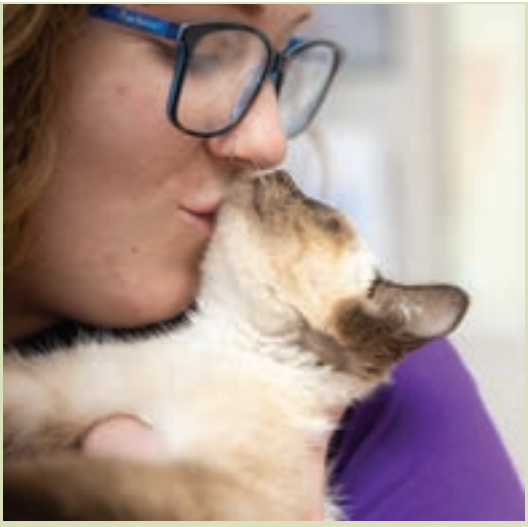
While in our shelter, all cats receive heartworm and flea prevention, and a de-wormer to address the most common types of internal parasites. However, we recommend you bring a fecal sample for evaluation of intestinal parasites at your first veterinary visit, as additional treatment or medication may be necessary. This is also a good opportunity to discuss methods of ongoing preventative care.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus

Testing for FIV in a shelter setting is not considered best practice. The available tests can give false positives, especially in young kittens, which can cause unnecessary stress and delay adoption. In most cases, testing is more appropriately done in consultation with your veterinarian, particularly if there are specific concerns. However, it's important to note that maternal antibodies can also cause a false positive, so we would not recommend testing immediately after adoption.

Other After-Shelter Recommendations

The medical care your cat received at HSHV is appropriate for life in a shelter. However, after adoption, your veterinarian will likely make other recommendations based on your cat's needs in your home. These could include additional vaccines (e.g., for Feline Leukemia Virus/FeLV), tests (e.g., fecal test, test for FIV, re-test for FeLV) and preventatives (e.g., heartworm). Yet another reason to make an appointment with a veterinarian soon!

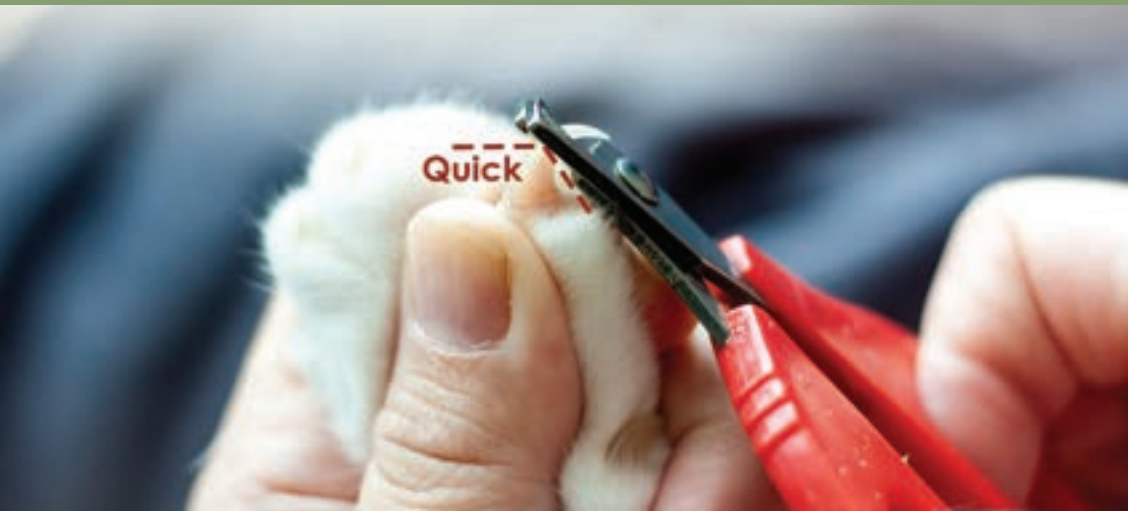


Patients over profit.

As a nonprofit, all fees from the Humane Society of Huron Valley Veterinary Clinic go toward helping the homeless animals in our shelter.

Call for an appointment: **(734) 662-4365**

Humane Society of Huron Valley
VETERINARY CLINIC



How to Trim Claws

Just like us, cats have nails that grow and need trimming, generally every 2 weeks.

1. Know those nails

Most cats have 18 nails (5 on each front foot, 4 on each rear). Cats' nails naturally retract while at rest. Extend them for trimming by applying simultaneous gentle pressure on the top and bottom of each toe. Practice to get comfortable. And know where the quick is! The quick contains blood and nerves; if you trim too short, you'll cut the quick, causing pain and bleeding. *Look for the pink or red tinge at the base of the nail; that's the quick. Avoid it!* If you accidentally hit a quick, apply corn starch or styptic powder.

2. Try to make it pleasant

Anything that your cat finds comfort in—be it dangling toys, treats, or just gentle, loving attention—can help during a nail trim. If your cat starts to get upset, stop. Cats have good memories, and if you fight to trim their nails, the procedure may only get more difficult! If you can only manage a few nails at a time, that's fine. Come back to it when your cat has had time to calm down.

3. Work as a team

Whenever possible, get help! Holding kitty is the harder job because it requires a bit of finesse — the goal is to hold cats without their knowing they're being restrained. It should be done gently and lovingly, but a good holder won't let the cat get up and walk away (unless they start to get upset). Wrap the cat in a towel, if that's comforting, or place the cat on your lap. Holding the cat still or simply distracting them long enough will be key to success.

4. Work quickly

Very few cats will tolerate a 10-minute nail trim. Know what you're doing, respect the anatomy, and don't bumble around. If you're good, the nail trim will be over before the cat even knows they've had a manicure. Again, if kitty gets upset, stop and come back to it later.

5. Use good equipment & technique

Whatever style of trimmer you use, it's important they not be dull. Dull blades can shatter the nail, which will make it hard for you and painful for kitty. Extend one paw at a time, gently squeezing the pad until the nails are extended. Trim just the tip off each nail. When in doubt, it is better to remove too little nail than too much. Then, reward with a favorite treat to remind your cat that good things happen when their nails get trimmed!

HOW TO MANAGE SCRATCHING

By nature, cats need to scratch to meet many psychological and physiological needs; they do not scratch out of spite! Claws provide self-defense, and even indoor cats must know they can defend themselves. Additionally, cats use their claws to stretch, relieve frustration and express fondness for items or people. And though they do not inherently know what is ok and not ok to scratch, they can be trained!

1. Learn what your cat likes

What do cats scratch? Anything with a nubby, coarse, or textured surface—something they can really sink their claws into.

How do they scratch? Some like to stand up vertically; others get horizontal, sticking their rear end up. Some cats enjoy both.

When do they scratch? After a nap, when wanting to mark territory, or when they're excited—like when you come home!

There are many things that can satisfy your cat's need to scratch: a rope-covered upright post, a scratch pad of corrugated cardboard, the back side of a square of carpet, even a small log with the bark still on (be sure it hasn't been treated with chemicals before bringing it inside).

A scratcher can be free-standing, lie on the floor, or hang from a doorknob...whatever your cat desires. Some cats don't care, just as long as they can scratch, so why not have a variety?

2. Make off-limits areas undesirable

Once you've figured out your cat's preferences, you're halfway to the finish line.

Cats love texture, so cover "no no" spots with unappealing textures like sticky tape, aluminum foil, sheets of sandpaper or a plastic runner, pointy side up. Or, attach cotton balls soaked in scents they don't like (e.g., citrus, menthol).

Keep these items in place until your cat is using scratching posts consistently, then remove.

3. Place scratchers in off-limits areas

Place an approved scratching item next to the no-no areas, showing what's the better choice!

Rub catnip into the scratcher, spray Feliway on it, or attach a toy to make it even more attractive. You can also try feeding near the scratcher to really bring it to their attention. Praise your cat for using objects that are ok to scratch!

4. Correct the right way

If you catch kitty scratching what they shouldn't, redirect to an acceptable item. Do this consistently to teach things like "sofa wrong; scratching post good."

Remember: this only works if you catch your cat in the act. If you correct afterward, kitty won't know what they've done wrong! **Never yell, hit or use a squirt bottle, or your cat may start avoiding you!**

Why we don't declaw, and you shouldn't either

Declawing can leave your cat with lifelong problems including infection, nerve damage, arthritis and chronic pain—and declawed cats are more likely to have litterbox and aggression issues.

While it may seem easy, declawing amputates the last bone on each toe. The equivalent for humans would be to cut each finger off at the top knuckle!

And did you know declawing is illegal in over 40 countries, numerous states and several U.S. cities? The American Veterinary Medical Association discourages the practice, too. Please, don't declaw.

Thank you for adopting a homeless animal!

THE NEED TO PLAY

Cats, like people, benefit from keeping fit and active, both physically and mentally. Excercise through play is essential for your cat's health because it relieves stress and boredom, improves circulation, and can prevent or reduce behavioral problems! Offer several types of toys —wands, balls, hide-and-seek, etc.—to discover your cat's favorites. They don't have to be expensive; search "DIY cat enrichment toys" online to see how things you already have at home can be used for playthings!

Remember: cats' instincts drive them to bite toys while playing. This is normal, but don't encourage biting hands/fingers; redirect onto a toy (especially a wand toy) when this happens to avoid unwanted and potentially harmful behavior in the future!

Ouch!

Sometimes cats play rough, using paws or teeth to grab hands or attach themselves to people or furniture. If you've got a new kitten or active cat, the most important thing to know is that they may need a lot of play and enrichment!

- **Offer multiple toys and scratching options.** Make sure the toys actually interest your new cat; sometimes it takes a little detective work to find out what toys your cat likes best. Swap toys out often to keep kitty's interest piqued!
- Is your cat a little too curious of hands or moving objects? **Use wand toys with feathers or other enticing toys** attached to them. Redirect kitty with a wand toy any time they begin with rough play, and offer an active, energetic play session to encourage appropriate play.
- **Use treats** as a good way to encourage safe play and as a way to reward calm behavior.
- **Find ways for your cat to be active while you're away**—that way, they'll greet you when you get home in a calmer manner and will sleep better at night. Battery or motion-operated toys, dangly things hanging from safe surfaces, bird feeders outside of windows, catnip toys hidden to encourage hunting, puzzle feeders… all of these things can help keep your cat stimulated!

MAKING INTRODUCTIONS

We recommend keeping your new cat separate from others for 2 weeks following adoption, both for disease spread and the best introduction.

Introducing your new cat to a dog

When kitty feels safe enough to come out and explore, let them do so at their own pace. During this time, make sure your dog is on a leash at all times. This way, you can control the situation if your dog reacts poorly or with too much interest! Use "sit" and "stay" with your dog, offering lots of good food incentives to make sure doggy is as calm as possible when kitty approaches. Allow them to interact as naturally as possible; don't force interactions by placing the cat near the dog or vice-versa. Curiosity and interest are fine, but if the dog wants to chase the cat or shows any aggression, redirect with cues and treats to break the dog's interest. Once your dog seems to accept the feline friend, it's ok to remove the leash—but be mindful of their time together and take a step back if needed, reinstating the leash or giving your new cat time in their own room. It's helpful to have baby gates up so that kitty has a safe escape route if needed, jumping over the gate to safety. Dogs and cats can easily cohabitate, with a watchful eye and redirection with great treats, while allowing them to interact naturally and at their own pace!

Petcademy

As a new adopter, you get access to a certified positive reinforcement trainer through Petcademy text messaging **30 days FREE**! Look for your text, and opt out anytime.

Introducing your new cat to other cats

While your new cat is in their acclimation room (See "Start with a Room" on the first page of this guide), begin the process of introducing to your other cat(s).

Start by swapping towels/bedding between your new cat and your resident cat(s) and allow them to explore each other's smells. If your new cat seems bold, allow them out in the home for a bit while your resident cat spends time in the new cat's room. This kind of scent swapping makes them aware of one another without forcing interaction. Try feeding the cats on either side of the closed door; using high value treats or wet food can help build positive associations. You can also encourage safe interactions by offering toys to bat around with one another under the door.

If the cats are responding well to these non-confrontational meetings, try putting a baby gate in the doorway and feeding them on either side of the gate. Then, if this goes well, try letting your new cat out of the acclimation room, allowing exploration of the home at their own pace.

Don't force interactions; just allow them to meet naturally. Some hissing can be expected; this is ok. Ideally, redirect any hissing cat with yummy treats or toys. Offer lots of reassurance to both cats when they're calm and accepting, encouraging them to be in a room together with food, toys and attention. Keep things positive; if one of the cats runs off, allow it, but discourage chases with redirection.

Take it slowly; your new cat can continue to spend time in the acclimation room until the cats seem comfortable enough to cohabitate!

This can take time; please be patient and don't be afraid to take a step back as needed.

Scaredy Cat?

Some cats take a little longer to settle into your home. With a little time and patience, you can help them feel brave! Here's how:

• Spend time in your cat's room, talking, reading or singing. Offer lots of yummy food while you're in there. Your cat may not eat the treats then, but if you leave them, most likely you'll find them gone in the morning!

• Offer your hand, and if kitty seems interested, pet kitty's face and cheeks (wait until they're more comfortable to pet the whole body).

• Offer your cat a wand toy. While some cats are afraid of them, many prefer to engage through play, and this can be a great way to bond, too.

• Play a radio or TV in the room to provide white noise, as well as acclimate your cat to "normal" household sounds.

The more time you spend with your cat interacting in a quiet, non-threatening way, the more your cat will begin to build confidence with you and eventually come out of hiding!

RESETTING YOUR CAT'S CLOCK

Cats don't have the same sleeping patterns as humans; they may sleep all day and keep you up at night. How can we change that?

• Provide your cat with lots of play options during the day

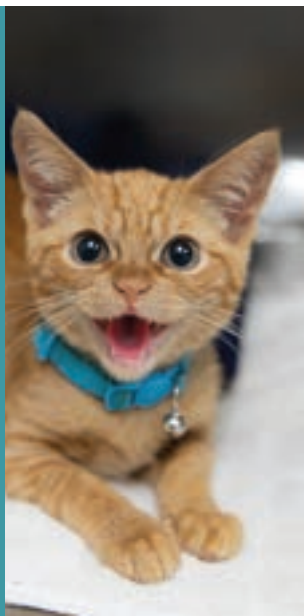
• Engage the hunt/eat/sleep cycle by scheduling a play session when you're home as well as right before bed, then a good meal immediately after. Then, head to bed.

• If kitty tries to wake you at night, ignore! If you keep the cycle of day-play while you're away, fun-play sessions when you're home, and ignoring the behavior at night, it won't take your cat long to catch on and give you a good night's sleep!

Questions?

Behavior Helpline
734.662.5545

Beyond your initial 30-day free access to Petcademy trainers and materials, you're welcome to contact our behavior specialists! Call and leave a message, and we'll get back to you as soon as we can. Lots of great resources are on our website, too:
hshv.org/resources



other (easy!)

ways to help the other animals

We often hear from loving adopters like you that "I wish I could adopt them all." Of course that's not possible, but there are easy ways to help the animals at HSHV after you adopt… and many don't cost a thing!

Shop our Store

We have all the essentials for your cat right in our HSHV Paws to Shop store! We keep our prices competitive with the "big box" stores, AND all the proceeds go to help homeless animals in our shelter. Plus, we carry many unique items for people who love animals. Thank you for shopping Paws to Shop!

Enroll your Kroger Plus Card (it's free!)

Enroll your Kroger card at **Kroger.com/communityrewards** and select Humane Society of Huron Valley as your chosen organization, and Kroger will give back to us at no cost to you!

Shop iGive (it's free!)

iGive is a free service where shopping at any of 2000+ stores like Walmart, Gap, 1-800-Contacts, Travelocity, Shipt and many more mean a donation to the animals at HSHV. Join at **https://iGive.com/CPOwJ** and they'll immediately give a $5 donation to HSHV!

Use WoofTrax (it's free!)

Walking a dog? Download WoofTrax's free "Walk for a Dog" app on your phone, and for every mile you walk, they'll donate to the animals at HSHV!

Get a Bissell or a Petcube or a…

HSHV has other pet-friendly shopping partners that give back to the animals when you use our codes, and sometimes they even offer discounts to you!
See **hshv.org/partners** for more.

Use the HSHV clinic or vet store

Our full-service, nonprofit clinic is focused on exceptional, yet affordable, care. Staffed by the most compassionate folks, we're more concerned with people and their pets than profit, and the reasonable fees we do charge go back into the shelter to help care for homeless animals. You can also buy medications, prescription food, and toys in our online vet store! See **hshv.org/clinic** and **hshv.org/vetstore** for more.

Sponsor a kennel

Good food, a soft blanket, a special treat—these mean a great deal to homeless animals. Sponsoring a kennel shows you're caring for the animal inside! In addition to placing a plaque on the kennel of your choice with your own special inscription, we'll give you regular updates on the animals you're helping. See **hshv.org/sponsor** today.

other
ways to help the other animals (cont'd)

Donate from our wish list

We always need your used bath towels and pet food! In-kind donations can be placed in the blue bin inside our front door anytime we're open. We also have a wish list (**hshv.org/wishlist**) with up-to-the-minute needs. Thank you for your support!

We always need:

- Gently used or new bath towels (the bigger, the better!)
- Pet food in the original can or bag (bags can be opened and taped shut) up to 3 months after the expiration date
- Cat litter (any kind, any size)
- Peanut butter
- Spray canned cheese (the dogs like cheddar!)
- Tuna fish & chicken (small cans)
- Moist dog treats (bags) and wet cat food

Ask friends to "Adopt, Don't Shop"

Spread the word about how rewarding adopting is! Share photos on social media, and share your "Happy Tail" to inspire others to consider adoption: **hshv.org/submithappytail.**

Volunteer, Include us in your estate, Attend an event, Host a fundraiser…

There are so many ways to help! Please visit hshv.org for more.