



PAWS Print Quarterly

A Program of: The Albany Damien Center
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"They'd just snuggle up next to me, keep me warm, and keep me company. They really gave me the support I needed to get through those treatments" states Greg Louganis, the world's greatest diver and a fine athlete, in the July/August issue of HIV Plus magazine.



Greg was interviewed by HIV Plus to discuss the benefits of pets when dealing with HIV. The article talks about the importance of organizations like PAWS to HIVers. Quoted in the article is Perry Junjulas, Executive Director of the Albany Damien Center that offers support to HIVers through its PAWS (Pets Are Wonderful Support) program. "A support program like PAWS offers something else besides companionship for people who are tackling HIV - it also offers a routine, says Junjulas." "Having pets forces you to get up out of bed every day to feed them, to take them for walks and to play with them," he explains. "Studies have even shown that people bounce back from illnesses more quickly when they know they've got to get back to their pets and back to their routines of taking care of them."

Also quoted in the article is Douglas Cohn, who is Director of the Animal Resources Center at Albany Medical Center and the PAWS Advisory Committee Chair. "Many HIV-positive people are ostracized from their families, and many feel very much turned away by the rest of the world", Cohn explains. "Companion animals provide unrelenting love and affection, no matter who you are. They don't care if you're infected or you not infected. And for people who are dealing with a serious illness, having that sort of constant in one's life provides a mental stability they couldn't necessarily otherwise count on."

Animals are not just nice, warm and snuggly. For many of us, they are our family and the only thing that keeps us going. Greg Louganis also considers his four dogs to be family. "For me", Louganis says, "the most important thing I've learned from my dogs is to be quick to forgive, which is not always easy. And I've learned not to judge. Just think of how non-judgmental your pets are. You can spill your guts to them, share your frustrations, share everything, and there's no judgment at all, just love. We have so much we can learn from our animals."

A program like PAWS enables pet owners to keep their pets during difficult times and hold their family together. The PAWS program of the Albany Damien Center has over 85 members that receive this support. Thank you to everyone who so graciously and generously helps to keep this program going.

Testimonial

By Vanity C. Mulero
PAWS Client



I want to share an experience I had while helping set up for the PAWS event held at Washington Park this past summer. For those of you who missed this event, many portraits of the pets and clients were displayed, giving a face to families served and their short biography. Everything was so bright and absolutely beautiful one couldn't help but smile. Who knew that when I was done setting up, I would have a place in my heart for all the families, as if an extension of my own. The picture I had taken took my breath away, but I couldn't help but think that if I could go back in time, I would have a photograph done of me with my other two chows, Vico & Simba. Maybe the short intro would have said:

During some very difficult times of my life, unable to continue working, waiting for the wonderful world of "fixed income" to kick in, I was exhausting my savings in order to live. Sick, fighting depression, putting up a happy facade in order to appear as if all is good - I was suffering. The Albany Damien Center was there for me - they never failed me and my family. The PAWS program was just getting up and running yet found time to help me w/my family needs.

I had purchased Vico at 8 weeks old and Simba found us when he was about six months old. I had these two for over fifteen years. I couldn't love them more. The last years were hard for me to watch them grow old, but during these difficult times PAWS was there for me - and they never failed Vico and Simba. They always had food, treats, and their health care issues taken care of. I could not thank PAWS enough. When it was time to say good-bye to; first Vico, then Simba a couple of years later. PAWS made sure everything was taken care of. All I had to do was grieve. Somehow with the assistance of the Albany Damien Center & PAWS and the support of their staff I got through it. May God bless you Perry, your staff, and all the volunteers that makes PAWS the great program it is!

Sincerely - Vanity

Portraits by Tammy Loya Studios

Lend a Helping Paw

The PAWS (Pets Are Wonderful Support) program cannot do all of the good work for our clients and their pets without the dedication and hard work of our volunteers.

We have a great group of people lending their time and talents to ensure that our clients' pets are receiving all of the care and compassion they need.

BUT we are always looking for new folks to join our PAWS family and we are sure to have a volunteer opportunity that will fit your time schedule and talents.

- 🐾 **Dog Walkers** - Volunteers on dog walking teams help walk dogs for clients who are physically unable to do so.
- 🐾 **Cat Care** - Volunteers feed and water cats once a day and clean cat pans.
- 🐾 **Pet Transportation** - Volunteers get pets to necessary vet or grooming appointments.
- 🐾 **Pet Food Delivery** - Volunteers delivers donated pet food and supplies to our clients and their pets.
- 🐾 **Pet Food Drop Spots** - Identify, visit and maintain locations that may be willing to be a PAWS food drop off location (vets, pet stores, churches, social clubs, etc).
- 🐾 **Office & Inventory Help** - Volunteers provide in-office and pet food inventory help at the Albany Damien Center

Wish List

Dog & Cat Food

dry & canned - all varieties

Cat Supplies

Litter

Litter Scoops

Cat Beds

Litter Boxes

Scratching Posts

Monetary Donations

Pet Wellness Clinics By David Chico D.V.M.

The PAWS program has been holding Wellness Clinics for program clients since April, 2007. These clinics are provided at no charge and cover annual vaccinations, physical examinations, de-worming, and routine diagnostic tests.



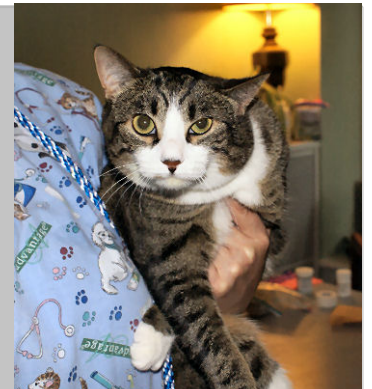
Supplies, vaccinations, and professional services have been donated and are provided by New York State veterinarians at no cost. In addition to supplies and medical services, clients receive information on important issues such as how to reduce the risk of disease transmission between pets and people as well as other services.

Clinics are held four times a year. Providing free well care not only helps the clients, it also allows PAWS to provide services to a larger number of pets. The clinics are not meant to replace the care of a client's regular veterinarian. The goal of the clinics is to provide for the *well care* of pets so that clients can use their annual PAWS vet care stipend to cover the cost of sick visits, emergency treatment or more thorough diagnostic evaluations.

PAWS was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Banfield Charitable Trust to help fund the wellness clinics.

Obesity in Dogs and Cats – by Douglas L. Cohn, D.V.M.

Obesity is the most common nutritional disease occurring in the dog and cat. It is defined as an excess of fatty tissue in the body. Obesity is more common with advancing age and more so in females than in males. However, many owners may not realize that their pets are overweight. If the ribs are easily felt, then your pet is probably not obese. If the ribs are difficult to feel or, worse, cannot be felt at all, then obesity is most likely present. In some pets, particularly cats, the presence of a pendulous abdomen indicates obesity, and excess tissue over the ribs may not be present.



Most obesity is caused by consumption of calories in excess of need. There may be too much food consumed, too little exercise, or a combination of the two. As we draw closer to the wintertime, we tend to exercise our pets less than in the warmer months. Pets fed home cooked meals, table scraps, treats and snacks have a higher incidence of obesity than those fed only commercial rations. Overfeeding puppies and kittens predisposes them to obesity as adults by increasing the number of fat cells. After maturity, fat cell numbers do not increase as readily. Instead, the size of the fat cells can increase. Weight reduction, regardless of age, primarily decreases fat cell size, but not numbers. Thus, puppies and kittens that become obese during growth will frequently have a problem with obesity throughout life.

Obesity is dangerous in animals for the same reasons that it is for humans. It causes or worsens locomotion problems (like arthritis and hip dysplasia), lung disease, heart disease, liver disease, diabetes, gastrointestinal problems, and heat intolerance. It can pose additional risks for animals undergoing anesthesia and surgery.

The first step in managing obesity is the recognition by all members of the household that the problem exists and then gaining the total commitment from all to implement a program. The goal of the program is to have your pet burn more calories than are eaten: caloric intake must be reduced and exercise increased. Exercise may be inappropriate for pets in poor health, so consult with your veterinarian before starting a program. Together you can set a specific goal for weight reduction and estimate the time that it will be required to reach that goal. At home, certain steps can be undertaken as part of the program: keeping your pet out of the food preparation room and dining room, feeding obese pets separately from other pets, avoiding table scraps and treats, feeding pets before humans, dividing the amount of feed per day into as many meals as practical, and keeping a daily record of the pet's weight.

The benefit of obesity reduction is increasing your pet's enjoyment of life your enjoyment of your pet.

Welcome Diane!

We are pleased to welcome Diane Metz who started as the PAWS Coordinator in September. The PAWS Coordinator organizes volunteers and works individually with our clients to ensure that each pet is well-cared-for.

Why are you excited about working with PAWS and the Albany Damien Center? As the guardian to many companion animals, I have experienced the importance of the love and acceptance they give us, regardless of what challenges we face. I believe very strongly in the human-companion animal bond that is nurtured so well through PAWS and I am honored to be a part of that.

What experience do you bring to PAWS? In my work and volunteer life, I have organized volunteers for different causes and tasks and have coordinated a variety of projects and programs. However, it is my volunteer experience with animal adoption, rescue, shelter and spay/neuter organizations that will serve our clients best.

What do you see as the two issues most pressing for PAWS right now? In my first few weeks, the

most urgent needs I have seen are that for volunteers to assist clients and donations to our pet food and supply bank. Our volunteers are the backbone to the program, and without them, so much would be left undone. Volunteers are needed for in-home pet care as well as transportation and other tasks that allow our clients, who may be facing temporary or long-term difficulties in caring for their pets, to maintain the relationship that may mean the most to them. And because our clients face not only physical difficulties in caring for their pets but also financial difficulties, our pet food and supply pantry is critical.

Are you a cat person or a dog person? I consider myself an animal person. We have a wonderful dog, Aaron, who is the best foster brother to the foster cats in his life, and variety of permanent, fostered, sanctuaried and rescued cats in our home. I'll confess that I'm a little afraid of reptiles, but have pet-sat them for friends in spite of the fear and have learned a healthy respect for them.

Diane lives in Albany with her spouse, Chris Pagano, Aaron the wonder dog, and a bunch of cats that Aaron takes wonderful care of.

The Albany Damien Center

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