

## PUT YOUR PAWS TOGETHER FOR THE COULEE REGION HUMANE SOCIETY!

Established in 1971, the Coulee Region Humane Society (CRHS) is La Crosse County's sole humane society and stray-holding facility. "A lot of people do not know that we do more than just adopt animals," says Erin Olson, Community Engagement Coordinator at Coulee Region Humane Society.

CRHS works with Animal Control onsite to take in all stray domestic pets from young to old, healthy to sick, friendly to aggressive, and small to large, allowing every animal in La Crosse County a safe refuge while working diligently to find their owner. CRHS also takes in hundreds of injured and abandoned wildlife animals every year and work hard to successfully release them back out into the wild. In addition, CRHS accepts surrendered pets and manages intake to ensure there is room in their facility for the new animal. Recently in 2015, CRHS implemented their Foster Care Program which enables CRHS, through the dedication, love, and hard-work of the foster families, to provide specialized care to animals that would not thrive in a shelter environment. "Animals that just need extra attention and socialization also do well in this program and are more easily placed in loving homes. There is nothing better than just seeing the pure joy in the animal's eyes when they get to finally enjoy a wonderful home with unconditional love," says Olson.

CRHS offers many programs to support pet owners not only financially during difficult times, but also through providing educational resources so that pet owners can take the best care of their pet as they possibly can. CRHS assists income-eligible pet owners in La Crosse County with emergency medical needs, spay &



neutering costs, pet food, dog training consults, and so much more. CRHS provides low-cost dog training courses and Humane Education programs to teach humane care and animal safety to local schools and organizations. Ambassadors of Love is another valuable program that provides pet therapy to nursing home residents, hospital patients, students, and other community members, touching the lives of more than 60,000 residents in the Coulee Region each year!

However, during the pandemic, maintaining a community presence proved challenging for CRHS with the halting of many of these outreach programs paired with the cancellation of crucial fundraisers. CRHS found themselves mobilizing their social media platforms and turning more to virtual methods to engage community members, such as by offering virtual tours of the shelter and recording educational programs for children.

Despite the challenges faced by CRHS during the pandemic, Olson reflects with much gratitude on the level of community support that CRHS has received: "It was incredibly heartwarming the amount of support that poured out of our community. This was a very uncertain time for everyone at CRHS and we were not sure what the path forward was going to look like, but we found so much assurance in a community that continued to adopt, foster, and support us in any way that they could."

To assist nonprofits like the Coulee Region Humane Society, Altra has partnered with NetGiver to enable credit union members to give 100% of their donation freely to nonprofits. "We are able to use every penny of that donation to provide the best care that we possibly can for the animals that arrive at our door," says Olson, and to help fund the valuable programs CRHS provides community members & pet owners in the Coulee Region.

