

Uncertain Times

Staff, volunteers, and community pulled together during one of the most challenging times in HSBH history

The coronavirus pandemic crept up slowly on our communities and businesses resulting in change and disruption like we have never seen. Now, in mid-summer, our community is still dealing with virus-related impacts that are likely to persist for months.

At the Humane Society of the Black Hills the uncertain times required new thinking about policies and processes. No longer could the doors be open casually to the public, adoptions and volunteer programs would have to change, education programs and events would have to be cancelled.

Our first half of 2020 was new and uncertain times in the challenging world of caring for animals; the second half of the year promises the same.

Rising to that early challenge was an outstanding staff, supportive community, committed donors and volunteers all ready and willing to do what was necessary to continue to care for hundreds of cats, dogs, and small animals in need.

Like most businesses, by February the Humane Society of the Black Hills was paying close

attention to the news of coronavirus and discussing potential impact it could have on caring for animals. The actual extent of the impact was unknown so the humane society followed suit with shelters nationwide and prepared for worst-case scenarios.

Outside the shelter, work continued to manage community spread. By mid-March the City of Rapid City was discussing closing several establishments to reduce the spread of the virus. We knew it was important to act in concert with the city intentions and decided to be part of the solution; on March 24 we closed to the public and implemented several new protocols to reduce animal intake and prepare for an influx of animals.

Planning for the worst case meant taking steps to keep the shelter available for animals that might be abandoned or find themselves homeless if their owners took ill. We expanded our foster program to keep animals out of the shelter, tasked Animal Services and Enforcement to do in-field returns whenever possible, and asked people surrendering pets to hold animals temporarily to avoid filling the shelter.



Those steps and the societal factors surrounding the pandemic resulted in a manageable shelter population of both dogs and cats, a steady flow of adoptions, and uninterrupted animal care.

Even with the ongoing uncertainty, the Humane Society of Black Hills operation continues. Above, adoptions are by appointment, socially distanced and masked; left, the look of medical care here changed but not the quality and care for the thousands of animals cared for; and, at right, a volunteer takes a dog out during a scheduled, socially distant visit.

The volunteer, Stacy, has been volunteering with the Humane Society of the Black Hills since October 2016. She has dedicated over 250 hours to animals as a Humane Society volunteer.

She tells Humane Society staff "it is a dream to be here with animals every day."



HSBH volunteers rock!

Volunteers help thousands of animals through their tireless efforts

Humane Society volunteers are true animal advocates. Their dedication does not stop at dog-walking and cat-cuddling. Volunteers often put their unique skills to work to ensure shelter pets have a comfortable, happy experience. Terry Fuller, another longtime Humane Society volunteer, did just that.

Since 2017, Terry and his wife have been very involved in the cat socialization portion of our volunteer program. The Fullers heard about our March for Cats campaign — a campaign aimed to raise funds for cat care and enrichment at the Humane Society of the Black Hills — in early 2020. When word spread of plans to update the shelter's free-roam cat room in celebration of the March for Cats campaign, Terry offered his knowledge and talent in engineering and woodworking to lend a hand in the complete remodel of what is now "Kitty Land."

While our doors were closed to the public, Terry dedicated around 80 hours of hard, seamless work to create brand new structures for feline residents to exercise and lounge upon. Thanks to the incredible planning and construction put in by volunteers and staff, Kitty Land is now complete and open to kittens and cats waiting for forever homes.



Above

Terry and Barb Fuller take a moment for a photo with one of their cats, Niki. A skilled woodworker, Terry hand crafted the new fixtures in Kitty Land, seen in the photo below.



Summer

2020 newsletter

Humane Society of the Black Hills

Questions or comments?

Give us a call at (605) 394-4170
or email hsbhinformation@gmail.com

Shelter Operating Hours:

Currently limited public access.
Adoptions by appointment only

Lost and Found Receiving Hours

Monday – Friday: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Saturday – Sunday: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Missing or found a pet?

Start here: www.hsbh.org/lost-and-found

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One Tough Pup

A dedicated foster family helps a lucky dog become another success story at the Humane Society

At the Humane Society of the Black Hills (HSBH), more than 5,000 animals of all species, sizes, and conditions come through the doors every year. As an open-admission shelter, there is no limit as to what we may see. In a particular case this February, we were reminded of the extreme situations animals face while in the elements on their own.

Squints, a tiny Shepherd-mix puppy, arrived at the humane society in February after wandering Rapid City streets at just six weeks old. He was hungry, dehydrated, lethargic, and suffering from a severe case of mange that left him with minimal hair on his body. The HSBH medical team began immediate evaluation and assessment of his skin's condition to determine the best route of recovery.

As soon as Squints settled in at the Humane Society, treatment of his mange began. Medicated baths, antibiotics, and ointment were given to help slow the advancement of his mange.

After two rocky weeks of medicating and observing here at the Humane Society, Squints was well enough for the next step in his road to recovery — foster care.

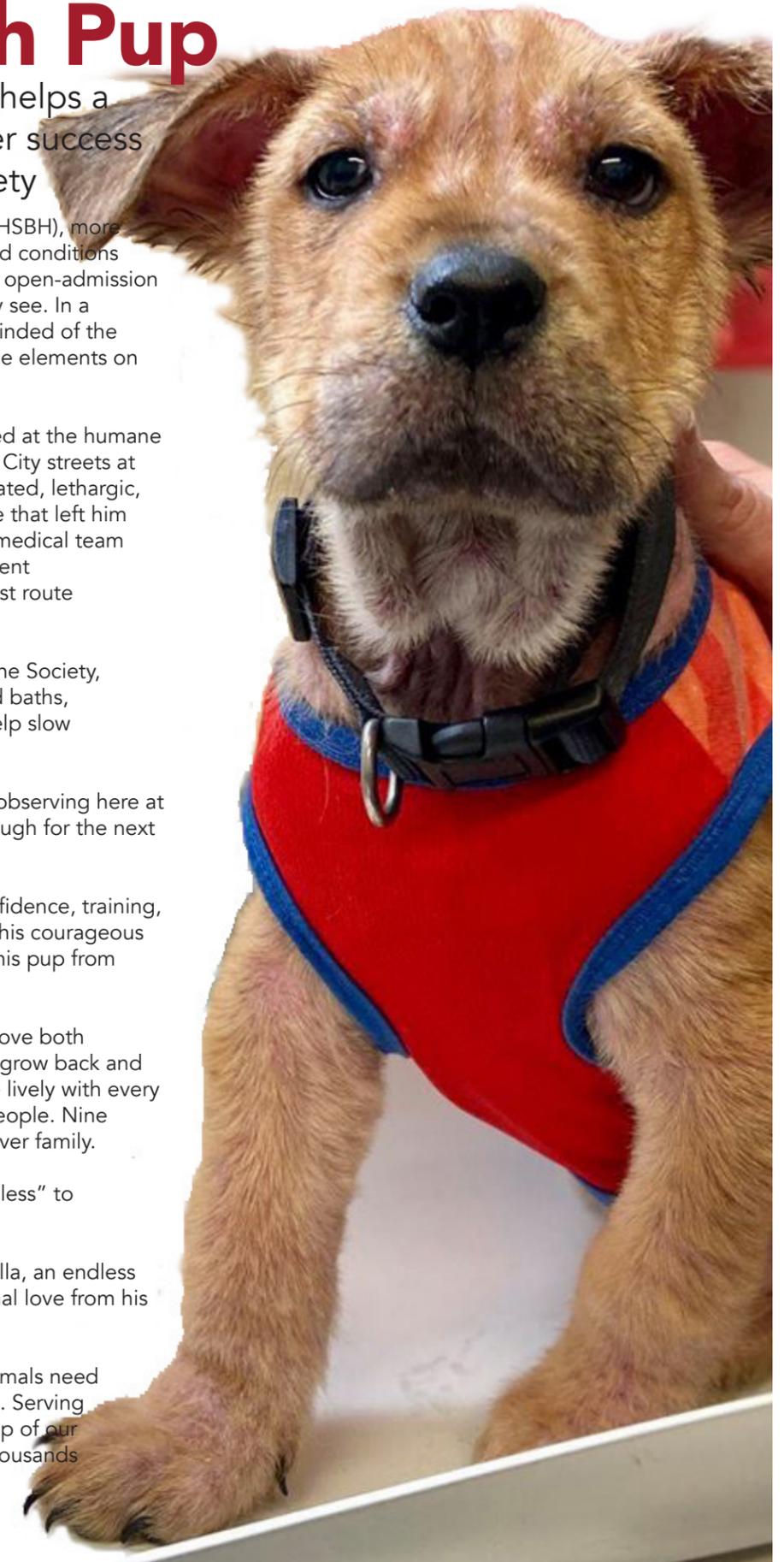
With his foster family, Squints learned confidence, training, and most of all, earned a new name to fit his courageous personality: Sarge. Mange couldn't stop this pup from playing and learning like a normal puppy.

With each checkup, we watched him improve both physically and mentally. His hair began to grow back and irritation to his skin reduced. He was more lively with every visit and sought out attention from new people. Nine weeks after his arrival, he was given a forever family.

This lucky dog's journey went from "homeless" to "adopted" in just two short months.

Sarge now has a "big sister" named Isabella, an endless supply of toys, and unlimited, unconditional love from his new family.

No matter the state of our community, animals need our help. Our mission of "Serving Animals. Serving Community" does not cease. With the help of our supporters, we can continue to care for thousands of animals like this lucky pup each year.



SPECIAL NOTE TO OUR COMMUNITY:

Due to the coronavirus in our community, all summer events have been cancelled or postponed and hours and public access to the facility may be limited. Call the humane society or check the website for the latest information. We truly appreciate your support and understanding as we all get through this together.

Support the animals at your local Humane Society of the Black Hills!

Your support helps your community. All donations are used at the local humane society.

Name _____ Gift amount \$ _____

City/State/ZIP: _____ Phone _____

If donating by check, please make your check payable to the Humane Society of the Black Hills. 1820 E St. Patrick St., Rapid City, SD 57703. If donating by credit card, please visit www.hsbh.org and click the red donate button.

Want to get involved?

Call our office - (605) 394-4170 - for more information about adopting and volunteering!

Thank You!