

Draco is asking . . .

Will you help more animals, like you helped me? Did you know when you helped me, that you educated and inspired many?

Draco was among six dogs recovered in a 2014 Illinois Humane neglect investigations case that was prosecuted in Sangamon County.

The dogs were undernourished, most were documented as emaciated. Illinois Humane was called into the case when one dog was found eating another dog that was dead. A dog had died in the household, and the remaining dogs were hungry enough to eat the dead dog.



Draco

Your donation played a role the moment Illinois Humane was faced with the intake of multiple severely neglected animals. Inevitably, in a neglect case where animals have not been fed they also have not received medical care, nor have they been trained or properly socialized. Such was the case with these six. The question was, “Could we afford the thousands of dollars in care entailed in recovering severely neglected animals?”

For Draco, the answer was “yes” – but only because of your donations and that of your fellow Illinois Humane supporters.

Draco was the quintessential need sponge. Not only did he have a medical problem but he also had behavior issues that kept him in Illinois Humane’s care for months. Upon intake, this 4-year-old intact male Chocolate Labrador Retriever weighed 53 lbs – he was emaciated. Heartworm positive, he had three additional parasite infestations – Giardia, tapeworm and roundworm.

Draco spent his life in a backyard, without socialization – completely left to his own devices. His favorite device was to posture dominance. Draco displayed incessant mounting behavior. With a few groceries in him, he got stronger and stronger and his determined mounting behavior became more and more of an issue.

The first priority with Draco was to eliminate the three more minor parasites and then the heartworms. Draco could not be neutered prior to treatment. He had to be kept quiet; when the heartworms die during treatment, activity can cause the dying worms to clot and obstruct the pulmonary system.

Nearly unmanageable and unable to undergo training during treatment, Draco had to be contained in commercial kenneling during the months of treatment – an expensive option.

Illinois Humane relies solely on foster home care for sheltering animals, believing in the benefits of individualized attention.



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Since the animal will ultimately be kept as a household pet, rehabilitation in a home setting is desirable.

No foster home had the time, ability and skill to handle Draco and keep him quiet. On the days of his treatment injections he was kept in a foster home, but then returned to the confines of commercial kenneling.

As soon as Draco's treatment was complete, he was neutered and moved into an Illinois Humane foster home with special skill in training. It took a few months, but Draco now sits and stays seated when people approach him to visit. He walks beautifully on a leash. Working and playing with other dogs, Draco has proven to have a great cooperative temperament. He is responsive to training and now keeps an eye on his human, looking for the next direction.

Draco's foster dad, Nate, took short videos of Draco's training sessions from the day he arrived to the day Draco met his training goals and objectives.

Hundreds of people followed Draco's story, learned what socialization neglect can mean for a dog, and what is entailed in rehabilitating bad behaviors.

Draco is a really good dog. He is lucky. You, the donor, made it possible for him to come from the depths of neglect and realize his potential as a wonderful companion animal.



Draco and Nate



Illinois State Fair

Illinois Humane has held Draco long enough to be confident that the training has taken hold. He has been re-evaluated for permanent placement. The next step is to locate that perfect permanent adopter who will work with the foster home to successfully transition Draco and maintain the structure of Draco's training long term.

Illinois Humane uses Draco's story at every opportunity to educate dog owners about the tragedy of improper care and the joys and benefits of good socialization and active enrichment. Techniques utilized with Draco were featured at Illinois Humane's State Fair Conservation World exhibit tent that hosted thousands of fairgoers. Draco himself was often there, a beautiful healthy Chocolate Lab sitting nicely any time someone reached to pet him.

Casper and **Danny** are two cats that were part of another large intake of animals – 17 cats and one dog. They arrived in Illinois Humane's care in November 2013, just a couple months before Draco's case. At 11-12 years old, both Casper and Danny are senior kitties.

Late in February 2014, Illinois Humane received an inquiry about Casper, a real looker - white with orange, medium- to long-haired cat whose photos had just started to appear on Illinois Humane's electronic media pages.

John and his wife Victoria have a friend who is a huge animal lover and spends time scanning shelter postings. John and Victoria live over 100 miles away from Springfield, Illinois Humane's home base. They recently lost a kitty, and now able to adopt another, their preference was to help a senior.

At the time of John's first inquiry, Casper was still being evaluated and treated for the bacterial, protozoal parasite and viral infections that were prevalent in these cats and causing chronic intestinal upset and diarrhea. Many of the cats also needed significant dental work. In addition to the medications, special food, Vitamin B-12 injections and a supplement that introduces digestive tract "good bugs" were provided to restore a more normal intestinal balance.

John really took a shine to Casper. We told him that Casper was still under treatment, and casually mentioned that Casper and another one of the cats in the household, Danny, were undergoing this treatment together. John responded that they could wait for him.

He also said, "funny you should mention Danny, my wife has fallen in love with his homely face." We let John know that Danny kitty had filled out a bit since coming into our care, and was turning out to be a pretty handsome boy in his own right. John was correct, Danny was pitifully homely when he first came in – yet it worked for Danny . . . it worked him right into Victoria's heart.

By late March, the kitties were ready for their debut and a visit with Victoria and John. The couple wanted to meet both. It was a dream come true for both these senior kitties, who came to us so badly impacted by neglect, to have a chance to find a great home together.

John and Victoria agreed to adopt both. Today, Casper and Danny are thriving in their new home. They have Pug siblings and there are other cats in the home. All are getting along very well.

Most of the 17 cats that came in from this case had wonderful temperaments. Despite their good temperaments, they likely would not have survived if turned in to a government facility. The symptoms of the many health problems the cats suffered, and the resources needed to resolve these conditions, were too significant for them to make it to the adoption floor.

Two of our donors made major gifts to support initial expenses incurred in this large intake of cats. And your financial support made it possible for Illinois Humane to complete all care needed for these animals who were at great risk.

Today these kitties bring joy, entertainment and comfort in their new homes – one is the special friend of a young child, another is the favorite of a severely disabled adult, and one is the dear housemate of a widow.

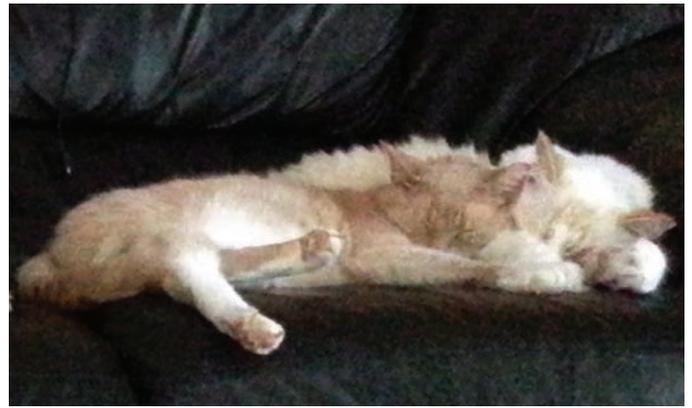


Casper



Danny

About 4 months later, the complainant who drew our attention to the 17 contacted us again. She knew of another household overextended with cats – this time it was 21 cats and she feared they were all sick. We could not say “yes.” We were tapped out. We tried among the other rescue organizations in the vicinity, and no one had the resources and capacity to say “yes.” The need for services for companion animals in our communities remains immense.



Danny and Casper

“What my pet means to me” was the topic of a student essay contest for 3rd through 5th graders sponsored by Illinois Humane in the spring of 2014. Entire classes participated; the response was tremendous. As you might imagine, the judges had their hands full.

Also in an educational vein, with displays touching on just about every aspect of pet care and enrichment of the human-animal bond, Illinois Humane’s State Fair adoption and pet education exhibit tent drew over a thousand visitors each day. Illinois Humane’s day-to-day operations recovering, rehabilitating and carefully re-homing the victims of neglect and cruelty, have a ripple effect.

In all of our communications, be it at our events or through adoptions, we seek to educate and encourage pet care, handling and enrichment activities that enhance the human-animal bond and the many benefits of that bond – laughter, lower blood pressure, physical activity, unconditional love, comfort, security and companionship. Knowledge of a pet’s physical, psychological and emotional needs, allowing for the healthiest existence possible for the pet, greatly enhances the benefits that can be realized from pet ownership.

The need for Illinois Humane’s work is now and urgent. The next call with a single animal in need, or many, is inevitable and we need to be ready and capable. It comes down to one thing – your donation.



Raisin

Your dollars transformed the lives of Draco, Danny and Casper. You turned tragic lives of very good, deserving animals at serious risk, into great companion animals flourishing in wonderful new homes – bringing joy and comfort. In your reflection during this holiday season, please let the warm glow of the good that you have done prevail.

Your investment in Illinois Humane makes a difference, in individual lives and through the educational impact of our work. Illinois Humane remains an all volunteer organization, our overhead could not be more minimal – your dollars go to the direct care of the animals. We ask your continuing support. We ask that you consider making an even deeper commitment this year and increase your gift. Your dollars work hard and make a difference.

We thank you.

Illinois Humane

The logo for Illinois Humane, featuring a stylized red paw print with four toes and a heart shape in the center, positioned behind the text "Illinois Humane".

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