This year I would like to say “THANK YOU” to our community and our volunteers. Thank you for the support of the generous people and businesses in the community. You show up to our fundraisers with smiles. You donate when we need you. You send positive notes of encouragement. And you adopt our wonderful pets! Without this support, we would not be able to continue to help so many pets and their families.

Helping Hands Rescue also has a very talented group of volunteers. They work tirelessly to foster, fundraise and tackle whatever needs to be done. There are only 12 of us that consistently help with so much! I know they get tired of me asking for more! Our “crafty” ladies are amazing! Most of what we sell at our craft shows is made by our own volunteers. Most of our beautiful pictures seen on Facebook and Petfinder are taken by one of us. Our volunteers are constantly coming up with new ideas to serve the community, to fundraise and to help more pets in need.

This year we had our first Spaghetti Feed. We were so afraid to dive into this! What if nobody showed up?! At 4pm, on the day of the feed, people were lined up waiting to come in and eat. It was so wonderful that several of us were moved to tears. This will now be an annual event.

Now I get to brag a little about an accomplishment that we work so hard to achieve each and every year. We go above and beyond to provide the very best care to all of our Helping Hands Rescue animals. It is so important to us that all of our adoptable pets are given the chance to lead a healthy life. So many of the animals we take into our care are not in the best of health and have not had the chance to see a vet. We pride ourselves in being able to make a fresh start for so many of these pets. Our spay/neuter program remains a top priority and the number of animals altered rises annually. We spay/neuter, vaccinate, provide a wellness check, dental, and tackle larger problems such as broken bones, eye infections, and tumors. Our vet bills are high! Thanks to our community and our volunteers, we can hold ourselves to the very highest standards. Helping Hands Rescue is so lucky to have such support.

It has certainly been a very good and successful year for Helping Hands Rescue! Thank you!

Polly Benson, President

Watch for announcements about our “Share the Love” spaghetti feed to be held February 11, 2017, at the Salvation Army building.
**A Poem to My Foster Dog**

*By Diane Morgan*

I am the bridge,
Between what was and what can be.
I am the pathway to a new life.

I am made of mush,
Because my heart melted
when I saw you,
Matted and sore, limping, depressed
Lonely, unwanted, afraid to love.

For one little time you are mine.
I will feed you with my own hand.
I will love you with my whole heart.
I will make you whole.

I am made of steel.
Because when the time comes,
When you are well,
and sleek,
when your eyes shine,
And your tail wags with joy
Then comes the hard part.

I will let you go—not without a tear,
But without a regret.
For you are safe forever—
A new dog needs me now.

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**Special Fosters**

Every once in a while there are those special foster pets that you think of often and if you’re really lucky you get to keep tabs on.

This spring my niece was interested in fostering a cat. Not a kitten but one old enough to withstand two young boys. I just so happened to have the perfect cat. “He’s different,” I told her.

Newt was a black, six-month-old, neutered kitty. He had a rough start in life. I received him with an ulcerated eye. It was so bad, but the vet thought it could be saved. So they had to sew his third eye lid closed and it stayed that way for a whole month! After it was unstitched, it looked awful. I was sure he would lose the eye anyway, and it would all be for nothing after all the pain he had gone through. I felt terrible. The vets were still hopeful and after another month of medicine and checkups…voila he was healed!!

So, back to the different part - Newt thinks he is a dog. He is sure of it. He can fetch like no other. He will retrieve anything that is thrown for him. Sometimes even catch in midair! He is a black cat that thinks he is a black lab. Not long ago, my niece sent me a picture of his stash of straws, just like a dog would have sticks! He has even been known to take a bath with the boys, more than once!

Soon after he went to his new foster home with my niece and family, the youngest son decided he needed a better name. It became Mowgli. His reason was he had just watched “The Jungle Book” movie. The little boy who lives in the jungle is named Mowgli, who thinks he is an animal and not a human and Mowgli thinks he is a dog not a cat. Needless to say, Mowgli didn’t make it to any adoption events. He was home. I was so happy.

As a foster, you tend to become very attached, especially to the ones that need special care and nursed back to a health. Being a foster mom for Helping Hands Rescue is a big part of my life. It is happy and sad, easy and hard, frustrating and very rewarding. I wouldn’t change it for the world!

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**Mak**

In March, my husband John was checking out Facebook and came across a post about Mak through Helping Hands Rescue. John, working the night shift, sent me photos of Mak in the middle of the night saying we need to adopt this little dog, he needs us.

Already having three elderly dogs (the geriatric ward), I was nervous about adopting a young dog and bringing him into our family. After several hours of discussion, we filled out the adoption application and were accepted. We were not able to meet Mak right away as we were in North Dakota working. Helping Hands decided they would hold him for us until we could come and get him.

In April, we drove the 16 hours to Idaho to meet Mak and bring him home to join our family. It has been an adjustment for Mak, but he surprises us daily. He has learned it is okay to play. Instead of grabbing a toy, he gets excited about being able to grab some dirty clothes and run through the house like a mad dog. He howls like a hound when you sing to him, and likes to swim in the creek, but hates baths. He loves the deck on sunny days and needs to be carried out the door on those cold rainy mornings as he thinks he may melt.

From day one, we have never regretted adopting Mak; he has brought so much love into our home.
Whisker and Toby

These are my two boys, Whisker and Toby. They both called shotgun that day and neither would budge and move to the back seat!

Whisker, chow mix, was rescued from the streets of Missoula. The caller said he had been a stray over there for quite a while. She also said there was not a rescue group like Helping Hands in that area. Because of his age, she didn’t want him going to the shelter. I Googled rescue groups in Missoula, but had no luck finding one. She finally wore me down and I met her at Three Rivers and picked up Whisker. That was July of 2015. He’s now 14 years old with a bit of dementia and is a little quirky, but otherwise healthy and happy.

Four years ago Toby was rescued with his two brothers and his sister with her seven puppies. He’s now my little love and lap dog! He will soon be eight years old.

These two dogs were just tossed aside by their owners with no thought for the animals. Neither of them was neutered, neither had been loved.

I’m so happy that Helping Hands was able to rescue them, neuter and vaccinate them and I got to foster them. They have both found their forever home with me!

ATTA BOY

Each year Helping Hands Rescue likes to recognize individuals, organizations, and businesses that go above and beyond for us during the year with an “Atta Boy” bone award.

Our 2016 recipients are:
- Jackie’s Jpegs
- KLEW TV
- Lewiston Petco
- Orchards Pet Hospital
- Riverview Animal Clinic
- Shannon Moudy – KLEW TV
- Sherry’s Tail Wag’n
- Sportsman’s Warehouse
- Tawny’s Tails

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU - YOU ARE APPRECIATED!

Helping Hands is always in need of foster homes for kittens, cats, puppies and small to large dogs. If you can help, please call 743-3157.

In Memory of Mike Blair

Mike Blair was a good friend to Helping Hands Rescue. Mike and Sandy helped co-found Helping Hands back in the late 1990s. He was a kind man with a huge heart for animals.

He used to pull the Helping Hands Adoption trailer to Petco every Saturday. He would help set up on adoption day and also gave vaccinations when there was no one else. Mike and Sandy transported animals all over the northwest. We could call on him at anytime, whether it was for HHR or if we personally needed help with something.

Our annual yard sales were held at Mike and Sandy’s for years. He was always there for us, helping any way he could. I know we must have driven him crazy! He was the best car detailer, too!

This is a picture of Mike and his beloved Juno. Juno was a happy boy when Mike would visit with pockets full of treats, give him a good brushing and lots of love. Mike passed away on October 9. We will miss him very much.
Day One of a New Foster Dog
By Jennifer Wik
I’ve been fostering dogs for Helping Hands Rescue for five years! You would think I’ve got it all figured out by now. Well, I have learned a lot and I’ve got a few tricks up my sleeve, but there is something about bringing a new foster dog home and making it through that first 24 hours that is always something of a hurdle. It is the great unknown. What will the dog be like? Will it be friendly? Will it be house-trained? Will it want to play with my dogs or start a little combat with my dogs? Will it love the kids or try to take down the kids? Will it want to sleep on the furniture or eat the furniture? Will it bark at my husband? Well, I can almost always answer “yes” to that question. Something about day one and meeting my husband always requires a little barking. So, on day one, my life kind of goes on hold while I watch the new dog adjust to my home.

I tend to pick new dogs up from the vet where they have likely been recently spayed or neutered and vaccinated. Not a super fun moment in the life of the dog. The dog doesn’t know me at all and always looks at me like I’m a little mad when I ask it to hop in my car. My husband always raises his eyebrows a bit when the new dog arrives home riding shotgun in the front seat. Well, we are getting to know each other on the drive home! Introducing the new foster dogs to the resident dogs always takes a little time and patience. I want it to be a positive introduction. My dogs know the drill. I think they are a little bored with it. Introductions take place in the front yard – a slightly more neutral territory than the house or fenced backyard. In general, it goes pretty well. Sometimes it is very tense and I’m crossing all of my fingers and toes that the hair raising and teeth baring will subside.

I avoid the indoors for a little while – much too confined inside for new people and new dogs. I hang out in the backyard, observe, take photos and make sure there are not any attempts to jump ship over the fence. Yes, that has happened and it makes for a very frantic jog of the neighborhood. After I have witnessed the dog actually go potty in the great outdoors, they are welcome to explore the house a bit. I usually close off bedrooms and limit the exploring to non-carpeted areas. Some dogs arrive perfectly house-trained. They would not dream of potty in the house. Other dogs? Well, some of them have never actually been inside a house, so how on earth are they expected to know where to pee? So, I treat every new dog like they are not house-trained. I watch them closely. I take them outside regularly and watch them potty before bringing them back inside. They all learn quickly. House training is one of my new skills.

I find out quickly which dogs are chewers. The chewers will inevitably go dashing by with a flip flop or a kid’s stuffed animal. The chewers need to be watched closely, because they are very sneaky and creative at finding things that they should not. I have dog toys everywhere and I spend a lot of time calmly removing the slipper and replacing it with a dog bone.

Then comes the first meal. Will the dog scarf down the food or decide that the kibble is absolutely unworthy of trying? Will the dog be so hungry and afraid of hunger that it feels the need to guard the food? Everyone knows to give the new dog some space when food is around.

Nighttime comes around and the big question is always to crate or not to crate? Will the dog settle down somewhere for the night and sleep peacefully? Will it have an accident around 3:00 am? That’s fun to clean up first thing in the morning. If I think the crate is necessary, will the dog like the crate or feel the need to howl and bark to the moon for long periods of time while we all long for sleep?

After we make it through the night, we have to tackle the next major unknown. What do we do with the dog when we leave the house? I rarely leave a new foster dog loose in my house. I might not have a shred of furniture left if I attempted to leave them all loose. Some dogs can be gated off to a smaller area. Some dogs need to be in a crate. Proper crate training takes time, and I rarely have that kind of time, so I do my very best to get through as many steps as possible in the 24 hours that I have. I leave the house and cross my fingers that I will find a peaceful home when I return.

On day two, something cool happens. It always happens. The foster dog comes to some tentative conclusion that it is safe here. There is food here. There is love here. Nobody will hit you here. It’s going to be okay. The eyes soften. They start to show a playful side. And they start to relax. They find a good spot in the house – sometimes a dog bed, sometimes the middle of the kitchen floor. And I hear this giant exhale. Phew! We made it through day one. It’s going to be okay.

Yard & Plant Sale
Our annual yard and plant sale is held in mid-May each year.
As always, we would appreciate any items in good condition, but no clothing please, because it takes up too much room. All donations are tax deductible.

Find us on Facebook
I got a call to foster a mama dog and her pup. Both were thin and the pup looked like it had been roughed up a bit. I LOVE puppies, but I don’t love to foster them. Pups are a lot of work! But I knew if I was being called, it was the kind of situation that needed me. When I walked into the back of the vet, I saw a beautiful husky mix mama dog with the most bizarre eye growth I had ever seen and a shy white puppy with a swollen face. Oh my! We went home with de-worming meds, antibiotics, first shots and an appointment to see the WSU eye specialist.

Whenever we have puppies in the house, I put my children in charge of play time. Their job? Wear out the pup. They also get to name unnamed dogs. Mama dog became Sundance and Puppy became Avalanche.

About three days into fostering the mama and pup duo, my daughter came in to tell me she thought Avalanche was cold. He didn’t want to play. I brought him inside and offered some wet food. He turned his nose. My stomach turned over with fear. I knew these dogs had passed through a few houses before coming into our care – without any vaccinations. We had given both dogs their first vaccinations the day they entered our care. But one vaccine is not enough to prevent the diagnosis I feared.

I wrapped that puppy up in a towel and headed straight to the vet. Not wanting to spread any illness into the waiting room, we took a Parvo Virus test in the parking lot. It took one minute for that test to come back positive. Little Avalanche had the Parvo Virus. I had only heard the worst about this disease. I kissed that puppy on his swollen little face and handed him over to the vet for care.

I drove home and tried to think what to tell the kids. I told them, with their help, we had caught the virus really early. There was hope. But I also had to tell them that the vet would not let Avalanche suffer if the virus got the best of him.

We waited three days and then heard some good news. Avalanche seemed to be perking up a bit. He started eating again and was showing signs of puppy mischief. We celebrated at home.

A couple of days later, we got to take the little guy home. He was a little thinner but as sweet and silly as a puppy should be. We decided that the kids had given him the perfect name. Avalanche was the strong and powerful name that he needed to plow through a deadly virus.

Avalanche was adopted as soon as he was fully recovered. He has grown up to be a regal and beautiful dog in a wonderful and loving home. His mama was given the specialized eye surgery she needed at WSU’s Veterinary Hospital. She needed about two months to recover. She became a bit of a puppy herself during that time. Her cares and responsibilities had ended and she was free to romp and play like a one-year-old Husky should.

Her future adopter came by to visit with her high-energy heeler mix. The introduction was tense – two high-energy dogs created a little electricity. The tension quickly turned to an hour-long game of chase and tackle. Sundance was adopted and those two dogs are still playing chase. They look out for each other, they adore their person, and they play and play and play.

Sundance and Avalanche added a little bit of stress and chaos to our home, but I’m so grateful we were able to provide them a safe haven. If it weren’t for Helping Hands Rescue, I don’t think that puppy would have lived. And that mama dog would still be struggling with a weepy eye. Both dogs are thriving and looking forward to their next adventure. We wish them very happy tomorrows.

In 2016, Helping Hands Rescue gave out 496 certificates to help people alter their pets. We rescued 368 animals and placed 355 animals into new homes. We still have many pets in foster care awaiting their forever homes.

If your employer has a “matching gifts” program for contributions to non-profit organizations, please consider Helping Hands Rescue, Inc., when signing up for the program. Thank you!

All of the volunteers in Helping Hands Rescue want to thank you for the support you gave that made our work possible. We hope that in the coming year you will continue to consider us worthy of your support.

THANK YOU to the Helping Hands Rescue volunteers who work so hard for the animals every day of the year.

We would also like to thank our donors with grateful hearts.
Gilbert

Special-Needs Pups need love, too. Sometimes a special foster enters your life who changes everything. This was the case with Gilbert.

On Halloween 2015, I was asked to meet a representative for the Tri-Cities Animal Shelter in Dayton, WA. She had in her possession a special little two-year-old Chihuahua we named Gilbert. You see, Gilbert had a neurological disorder called Hydrocephalus or water on the brain, and Lori from TCAS, along with the shelter manager, felt that Gilbert would not thrive in the shelter environment. So HHR was called and as the Chihuahua whisperer of the group I, along with my amazing husband, went to Dayton to meet her.

Gilbert is not my first dog with a neurological disorder. My personal baby, Arnie, who also came from TCAS, has Cerebellar Hypoplasia. The animal equivalent to Cerebral Palsy. So knowing how to care for Gilbert and knowing what he needed was a snap. However, what we didn’t know was if Gilbert was born with Hydrocephalus or if he had some sort of accident or was abused. Not knowing this info was our downfall, because we had no idea how much damage had been done to his brain. After lots of research, the help of Kathy at Orchards Pet Hospital and a trip to WSU, we found what we hoped would be a medication plan that would at least slow down the leaking of spinal fluid into Gilbert’s brain. But, unfortunately, that just wasn’t enough. All the care and love in the world was not going to reverse the damage done.

In early summer of this year, he started to have what I can only assume were headaches and fits. Eventually, the fits lasted longer than 30 minutes. On July 22, 2016, we made the heartbreaking decision to say goodbye to Gilbert.

Fostering has its rewards and its heartbreak. But it was worth every laugh and tear knowing Gilbert had a loving home, even if it was only for a short time.