

Coffee Break

Do you have a hero or mentor in the animal welfare field—someone who inspired you or taught you the ropes? Who was it, and what made them so influential?

That was the question we asked you for this issue's Coffee Break. We were inspired by your incredible stories of the heroes in this field, and heartened to see that so many of you have benefitted from dedicated mentors! We could only fit a few of the great stories here; to read more of your answers, visit animalsheltering.org/coffeebreak.



In 1977, when I had been working in sheltering for just over three years, I went to an HSUS regional conference. I attended a workshop given by Phyllis Wright, [then] the vice president of companion animals for HSUS. The title of her workshop was "How Humane is Your Humane Society?" I was mesmerized by Phyllis's talk about standards of care for those in our care. Those words have lived inside of me for over 30 years and have inspired me every day to provide the highest level of care to the animals in my shelter. That question has been the fuel that drives my passion. I have in turn asked that question of staff many times over the years, challenging them to always be looking at the quality of care they provide. One hundred and fifty words are much too short to do justice to Phyllis Wright. Thanks for the opportunity to honor her.

—Penny E. Cistaro, Executive Director
Whatcom Humane Society
Bellingham, Washington

Mike Schallock would be a hero and mentor. Mike was one of our organization's founders 40 years ago. Over the years, when turmoil has hit our organization, Mike has always been a calming but determined force, reminding us that "It's about the animals," not politics, personalities, or public pressure. Do what is right for the

animals and you will always be fine. At 80-plus, Mike still is active with horses and embraces life to its fullest. Even with health issues that challenge him, he is more productive than many 30-year-olds—no excuses, just action in the right direction, every day. I wish to grow to be more like him in tenacity and commitment, perseverance and attitude. One doesn't have to be flashy, but simple dedication without planning and activity will not change the world. You must rationally act out a plan daily to make a difference.

—Lynn Olenik, Executive Director
Humane Animal Welfare Society of
Waukesha County
Waukesha, Wisconsin

My husband, Paul Miller, executive director of Humane Society of Washington County, is my hero. We met in 1982 at an HSUS Animal Control Academy in San Mateo, Calif., and he is my inspiration and guiding light as we've worked together helping animals ever since. I was working at the Marin Humane Society, he was at Tucson Humane. Eventually he joined me in California, where together we founded and for 13 years published the CHAIN Letter (Collective Humane Action and Information Network), conducted the largest cockfight bust (San Jose) in California history, assisted San Francisco

Animal Care and Control with a massive dogfight raid, and more. In Maryland, in December of 2006, we impounded 75 neglected horses (largest livestock case in Maryland history) and subsequently cared for 32 of them on our farm; a year later he impounded and cared for 35 starving Holsteins. He is my hero, my partner, my friend, and my life.

—Pat Miller, Volunteer
Humane Society of Washington County
Fairplay, Maryland

One of the most inspiring people I have met is Barbara Conrad. Barbara is the Humane Society of Utah's foster coordinator. Barbara finds the animals that need to be fostered either because they are sick or because they need special attention before they are adoptable. Barbara is a tireless worker who is always willing to take time for the animals. She is also very good at talking to customers to make sure the animal they take home is right for their situation. Barbara often comes in on her day off and does emergency fostering for the Humane Society of Utah. Barbara is truly inspiring because of her concern, care, and knowledge of the animals in her care. She is also helpful to her fellow workers and often performs tasks that are not her responsibility, and she does it without complaining.

—Carrie Glavin, Volunteer and Special Events Coordinator
Humane Society of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah

We have two sisters who are 10 and 12 years old who created a club called Kids 4 Paws specifically to raise money for our shelter. They planned fundraisers and raised \$1,000 their first year. Soon after, they came to us asking if they could run an educational program each month for kids and have managed to get some great presenters in to talk so far! These kids inspire me more than anyone!

—Chris Arnott, Community Outreach Coordinator
Lowell Humane Society
Lowell, Massachusetts

Amanda Arrington of Durham (HSUS state director for North Carolina and founder of the Coalition to Unchain Dogs) is our hero. She has inspired us to start ChainFree Asheville, and we have now freed 15 dogs in Asheville by building fences just as she does! Go Amanda!

—Peggy Irwin, Founder
ChainFree Asheville
Asheville, North Carolina

I am writing as a tribute to a truly remarkable woman and friend to animals whose life, while short, touched many people and animals not only in Richmond, but across the nation. Elizabeth "Pixie" Williams was the executive director of the SOS PenPals program, a volunteer for Richmond Animal Care and Control, and a supporter of many animal welfare charities. Pixie worked day and night educating people on how to take better care of their animals, to ensure people were looking to shelters and rescue groups when thinking of adding a new four-legged friend to the family, and raising money at a local bingo game to fund it all. Our animal care and control division regularly referred to her as our Fairy Godmother, as she regularly provided both staff and animals with resources the city could not. Her PenPals program focused on taking animals with mild behavioral issues and placing them with inmates in prisons under the instruction of experienced trainers to provide both inmate and the companion animals with the skills and compassion they would need not only to survive but thrive in the outside world. It would be only fitting for Pixie to provide one last "coffee break" in memory of her never-ending support for the AC&C team and animals in our community, as Pixie [recently] lost her battle with cancer.

—Jody Jones, Manager
Richmond Animal Care and Control
Richmond, Virginia

Animal Sheltering congratulates Carrie Glavin of Salt Lake City, Utah, whose submission was selected in a random drawing from those published in this issue. The Humane Society of Utah, where she works, will receive a free coffee break: a \$50 gift certificate to a local coffee shop. "Bone" appetit!

How does your organization handle naming adoptable animals? Who does it? Are any names forbidden? Do any names seem to have more appeal to adopters?

Please submit your responses (150 words or less) at animalsheltering.org/coffeebreak or send them to Editor, *Animal Sheltering*/HSUS, 2100 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20037. **Your answer may be printed in a future issue of *Animal Sheltering*.** If your response is chosen for publication, you will be entered into a drawing to win a **free coffee break (valued at \$50)** for your organization. Responses may be edited for length or clarity; no donation or purchase is necessary to win. See animalsheltering.org for contest rules, or send an e-mail or letter to the above addresses to request a printed copy.