



Helping Misty Find Her Way Back



Misty came to UPAWS after her owner passed away. For a shy cat who had only ever known one quiet home and one person who loved her, her entire world was suddenly gone. She shut down.

Day after day, she stayed hidden away, barely moving, barely interacting, growing more withdrawn as time went on. Staff moved her to a larger open room, hoping more space and quiet would help.

Something still wasn't right. So, the team began trying everything they could to help her feel safe again.

A volunteer noticed Misty rasping when she breathed. She still wouldn't come out. She wasn't eating reliably. She was quietly, slowly fading. Staff and volunteers who loved her were concerned.

Misty was moved into an upper condo where staff could watch over her closely. Her coat was brushed gently every day. Different foods were offered, warmed to tempt her appetite. Slowly, the staff learned that Misty would eat at night, and that small victory felt huge.

Caregivers harnessed her and carried her to the windows so she could watch the world outside. Volunteers like Tom and Kathy took her on stroller rides. Volunteer Mara pulled up a chair and read storybooks aloud, a quiet companionship for cats who needed time, patience, and kindness.

Veterinary testing confirmed asthma, along with the need for significant weight loss and ongoing care. Whatever comes next for Misty, one thing is certain: she is loved, she is seen, and she is not alone.

Misty's story is a reminder of how important careful observation, individualized care, medical support, patience, creative thinking, and compassion are for every animal that comes through our doors.

At UPAWS, no two animals' journeys are ever the same. Thanks to your support, animals like Misty are given every chance to heal, grow, and thrive.





**Upper Peninsula
Animal Welfare
Shelter**

815 S. State Highway
M553, Gwinn, MI 49841
906-475-6661
www.upaws.org

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Mission

UPAWS champions the
well-being of pets
by providing safe shelter,
promoting adoption,
and fostering a
compassionate community
through education and
supportive services.

.....

Vision

A compassionate
community where all pets
are safe, cared for, and
treated with respect.

.....

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From the Manager

Hello UPAWS Supporters!

I am incredibly honored to introduce myself as your new Shelter Manager. While many of you may have seen me around the shelter over the last few years, I am excited to step into this role and continue serving our community and the animals we all care for so deeply.



My journey with animals began long before I joined the UPAWS team. Growing up downstate in the small town of Belding, I had a childhood filled with a diverse array of pets. From dogs and cats to ducks, chickens, goats, fish, and even a parakeet, animals have always been the center of my world. That early exposure sparked a lifelong passion for animals and set me on the path toward animal welfare.

I moved to the Upper Peninsula to attend Northern Michigan University, where I earned my bachelor's degree in Biology. During my time at NMU, I met my wife, and we decided to make her hometown of Marquette our permanent home.

My story at UPAWS began six years ago, when I started volunteering during my final year of college. Since then, I have had the privilege of growing with this organization. I served as an Animal Caregiver, Shelter Operations Coordinator, and Shelter Support Specialist before stepping into my current role.

For me, animal welfare is not just a career, it is a lifestyle. My passion for our mission is reflected in my own home, where my wife and I are raising our 11-month-old son alongside a full house of UPAWS alumni! Our family includes our dogs, Ivy (in photo), and Poppy, our cats, Willow and Rose, Rex the leopard gecko, and Clarence the goldfish.

I am deeply committed to giving back to this community and ensuring every pet that walks through our doors receives the love and care they deserve. Thank you for your continued support of UPAWS and for welcoming me into this new chapter!

~ Ryan McLaren
UPAWS Shelter Manager

Rudy's Story: From Broken to Brave

On Halloween 2025, two little scared dogs were brought to UPAWS, untouchable, terrified, and later diagnosed with broken jaws. One knew only two states: panic or complete shutdown. The other's outgoing nature helped him come around after about four weeks. Not this one.

For six weeks, he couldn't leave his kennel. A leash sent him into flailing panic. A hand reaching toward him ended in frightened, aimless biting. He only ate in the silence of the night. UPAWS Behavioral Animal Care Coordinator, Julie Mahan, sat with him anyway. Read to him. He'd shut down completely and stare at the wall. He never barked. Never growled. Never made a sound.



Julie started with a backscratcher, gloves, and a pet stroller, a safe enclosed space where the world could come to him without anyone reaching in to touch him. Countless gentle exposures, no pressure, one tiny step at a time. Different people tossed him treats so he could slowly get used to strangers. On cold winter days, she'd wheel him through the UPAWS Holiday Store, soft lighting, quiet music, people shopping without a second glance. Just the world, at a safe distance.

This did not happen quickly. Little by little.



On February 20th, he went home with Julie as a foster. He slept for three straight days; that's how exhausted he was.

Then the sparkles started. A yawn when stressed. A shake-off. A nose finding something worth sniffing. One day, a cow hoof. Another day, playing with a cat toy, when he thought no one was watching. Then, suddenly, he found his voice and aimed a sassy little bark right at Julie.

Through all of it, Rudy was doing something remarkable too. Every tiny step forward, every treat accepted, every leash tolerated, every new person weathered, was an act of courage from a dog who had every reason never to trust a human again. Rudy was very brave. Every single day, he was brave.

And most of all, this little guy deserves to bloom into the dog he was supposed to be before people broke him. He deserves love, kindness, safety, and someone who gently pushes him toward that.

Today Julie can pick him up and hold him. He even evolved into a real snuggler. This spring, he walked on the shore of Lake Superior. And on a bright May morning in 2026, just six months after arriving at UPAWS scared and silent, Rudy went on his first doggy pack walk.

Julie loves and embraces his awkwardness. He is nothing she was ever looking for, not her size, not her style, not her plan. But sometimes the dog you never would have chosen chooses you right back. Julie and her husband, Dave, made it official on April 9th. They adopted him. And that little dog who never made a sound finally has a place where he can be exactly who he is.



Upcoming Events

- **'Tito's Homemade Vodka' Tee Up 4 Tails Golf Event** - June 18 - Marquette Golf Course
- **Party on the Patio** - July 12 - UpNorth Lodge in Gwinn
- Visit UPAWS at the **Downtown Marquette Blueberry Festival** - July 31
- Find us at the **Marquette County Fair** - August 13 - 15
- **Sally's Ride Fundraiser** for Sally's Fund - September 19 - Marquette County Fairgrounds

Save the Date Strut Your Mutt

Join us for the biggest dog party of the year! **Strut Your Mutt** is on **October 3rd** at Mattson Lower Harbor Park along beautiful Lake Superior!



Raise donations, win prizes, enjoy a scenic walk along the bike path, visit vendors, play games, and enter fun doggy contests, including the best costume contest! Most importantly, every step helps support the animals!

To inquire, contact Nikki at fundraising@upaws.org

2027 Pet Photo Calendar Contest

ENTER thru June 30
VOTE July 1-31
RESERVE a DAY

Top winners per category
5 Dogs
5 Cats
1 Other Species
1 Random Pick

Every photo helps homeless animals.

SCAN
or visit upaws.org

All proceeds to benefit UPAWS ❤️

Think your pet has what it takes to be a star? Enter the 2027 UPAWS Pet Photo Calendar Contest through June! Pet photo entries will be accepted throughout June, with community voting taking place in July.

Celebrate your pets while helping support the animals at UPAWS. Don't forget to check out our Rainbow Bridge Memorial section, a special way to honor beloved pets who will always hold a place in our hearts.

Learn more at: www.gogophotocontest.com/upaws2027
or scan the QR code to join the fun!

Your Guilty Pleasure Could Be Their Greatest Joy

Go ahead — we all have one. The gas station snack, the second coffee, or the online shopping cart you definitely didn't need to check out. What if once a month, you swapped that little splurge for something that could help an animal at UPAWS?

That's the heart of our GEM (Givers Every Month) program. Even a small recurring gift, just \$5 a month, helps provide food, comfort, medical care, and second chances for animals waiting for homes.

Pick one guilty pleasure. Give it up once a month. Let a shelter animal benefit instead.

Interested in becoming a GEM supporter?
See the donation form on the back page of this newsletter.



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When Animals Need Us Most

Animal sheltering is full of beautiful moments — adoptions, reunions, happy endings. But behind every wagging tail heading home is a lot of quiet, unglamorous work that most people never see.

Sometimes animals arrive at UPAWS healthy and ready for a fresh start. And sometimes they arrive in crisis.

Recently, a group of puppies came to us needing intensive medical care and around-the-clock attention. They were a reminder that shelter needs can change overnight — and that the most vulnerable animals are counting on us to be ready.

Your support helps make sure every animal that comes through our doors gets what they need, especially when they need it most. Because every animal deserves the chance to heal and to find their way home.

A Gift That Lives On

Every animal who has ever stolen your heart has left something behind — a memory, a lesson, a love that doesn't fade. A legacy gift to UPAWS is a way to honor that love and keep it doing good long after you're gone.

There is no minimum. Every gift, whatever its size, makes a difference.

There are several simple ways to give:

In your will or trust: Name UPAWS for a specific amount, a percentage of your estate, or whatever remains after your loved ones are cared for.

Retirement accounts or life insurance: Designate UPAWS as a full or partial beneficiary. No attorney needed, just a form from your plan administrator.

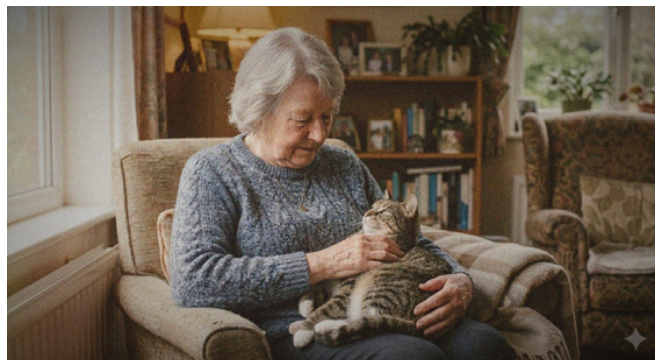
IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution: If you are 70½ or older, you may be able to give directly from your IRA while potentially reducing your taxable income.

You can adjust or change your plans at any time. Legacy giving is flexible, personal, and completely on your terms.

Already included UPAWS in your plans? Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We would love to know so we can thank you personally. Please reach out to info@upaws.org or call 906-475-6661.

Your kindness lives on. So does theirs.

We recommend speaking with your financial advisor or attorney about the option that works best for you.



Thank You Donors & Supporters

Your support plays a crucial role in helping the animals.

Memorials and Honorariums from Nov. 1st, 2025 to April 30th, 2026

Fortunately, our list is comprehensive.

If by any chance we missed someone or something,
we apologize and kindly inform us.



In Honor of:

Karen & Richard Alholm From: Susan & Bob Wright
Christina Anderson From: John & Peggy Anderson
Kristen & James Dale Bailey From: Shelly Bailey
Shelly & Steve Bailey From: James & Lory Racela
Kathy Bell From: Stephen & Shirley Kriegel
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Margaret Peterson From: Mary Jane LaBerge
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Anne Sheret & Cricket From: Betsy Little & Paul Marin

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*Until one has loved an animal,
a part of one's soul remains
unawakened.*

— Anatole France



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one and all!

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