

# Humane Association Provides Care for Pets of People in Crisis

Pet owners who are battling adversities such as homelessness, domestic violence, or medical emergencies can focus on their crisis because the Monroe County Humane Association (MCHA) will focus on their animal.

The nonprofit organization provides a temporary animal crisis housing center, pet food and supply pantry, and low-or-no-cost veterinary services delivered directly to Bloomington's homeless encampments and transitional housing apartments.

Launched over the past five years, these new programs reach beyond a traditional animal shelter's walls and reflect a commitment to keeping pets united with their families, says MCHA Executive Director Andrew Krebbs. The goal is to have fewer animals surrendered into shelters and a stable support system for owners temporarily unable to care for their pets.

Christi Mathis, a Bloomington resident experiencing homelessness, was ordered into work-release in October and says there would have been "no purpose for me to get out" if she wasn't waiting to be reunited with her dog, Max, who received housing, meals, and preventative care at MCHA's E. Susan Bartlett Crisis Housing Center. Mathis, 45, says she came to Bloomington fleeing domestic violence, and Max makes her feel loved, important, and safe at a time when nothing else does.

Roughly 70% of individuals who escape domestic violence indicate they would not have left if they had to leave their child or pet behind, Krebbs says, noting the majority of the nation's homeless shelters and drug rehabilitation centers cannot accommodate pets.

To ensure homeless individuals could seek shelter from January's



(above) The Monroe County Humane Association provides a temporary animal crisis housing center, pet food and supply pantry, and low-or-no-cost veterinary services for those in crisis who need help caring for their animal; (below) Executive Director Andrew Krebbs says the Humane Association "firmly believes your pets are members of the family. To have to go through a crisis and also have to make the decision to give up a family member is just incomprehensible to us. We help pet owners retain that stability and companionship when they might otherwise have none." Photos by Chrissy Alspaugh



extreme cold, MCHA's Street Outreach program paired up with Bloomington Police Department social workers to offer pets transportation to the crisis housing center—as well as a return trip to their encampment once temperatures warmed.

Krebbs says all animals receiving MCHA's housing or low-or-no-cost veterinary services receive vaccinations, preventative care, and are spayed or neutered, if medically safe. Improving the welfare of animals living on the streets is "a huge public health benefit to residents and visitors whose pets interact with pets that live on the street."

MCHA, 791 S. Fieldstone Blvd., operates on donations, sponsorships, and grants. Call 812-333-6242 or visit [monroehumane.org](http://monroehumane.org).  
—Chrissy Alspaugh

**20** | **John Bethell**  
TITLE COMPANY, INC.

*We're the A-Team of B-Town!*  
**GIVE YOUR CLOSING STORY A TITLE!**

*Celebrate 20 Years with us!*