

Northwoods Humane Society – Susan Sams, NHS Board Member

“You won’t be able to do that!!” That was the response my family gasped when I told them I think I will become a foster at the Northwoods Humane Society-Sawyer Co. “You won’t be able to give up a dog that you’ve brought into your home. Dad, maybe, but not you” The thought of this did make me pause and rethink but something in me kept saying you can do this. And so, I did and I have never been as rewarded in my giving as I when I see a dog find its forever home.

Giving what? Giving my time, which isn’t as precious as I think it is, not when you can spend it with something that truly needs you like a scared, confused, or even suffering animal. Giving my home, if you know me (this is directed to said family & NHS folks) I’m a bit of a clean freak so dirty paws, hair and the occasional accident are things I just had to get past for the greater good. Giving up attention, yep, that same man that says this fostering is “your thing” has bonded and been a bigger part of the foster process than he’ll admit. Thus, taking attention away from me, attention from the dog that is! And finally giving of a piece of my heart (Argus, Marley, Chloe aka Cloud) that is the hardest. Each of the sweet souls I have brought home have made me love them and taken a piece of my heart with them when they went to their forever home. But the reward of it all is so very worth it.

We were able to be part of the has-to-be-experienced transformation of a scared, confused, sometimes crappy feeling animal that learns life can be good. For some of them, good again. I love it when the fur parents pass along how great the dog is doing and how they can’t imagine life without them. Often there are circumstances that force animal owners to surrender their animal. As hard as it is on the people, I can see the same in the eyes of the animal. What just happened, seems to be the answer they are searching for when they look at you. Or when an animal is returned because it’s not a good fit somewhere, I am sure they really tried but some animals just need more time or attention than imagined. And then those that are brought here from far away due to extreme overcrowding in another shelter. Usually from down south so our cold temps and snow are a shock to them when they come out of the transport van.

The change I have seen in the several dogs we have fostered is amazing. The comfort of a home, free of the bright lights, noise & business of the shelter brings out the kind of dog we all see on Instagram, or those commercials. Tails rise, play is joy and sleep is deep. Snuggles and belly rubs for most but the more independent are content to lounge in the sunbeams or on the cool floors. This brings out the real dog or cat that allows potential adopters to see them in the right light. It is amazing but logical to see the difference in the animal outside of the shelter. I can share this via Facebook which I believe helped placed several dogs we’ve fostered.

Don’t for a minute misread this and think the shelter doesn’t do all they can to give the best care to each animal. As a volunteer who has spent a lot of time at the shelter, I see how busy every day is and how all of it could become so easily overwhelming for the staff. But they don’t let any animal slip through the cracks, daily going above and beyond what is asked of them. That is why any help is so appreciated, especially if you can take one of these dogs or cats into your home to help them get placed. If your heart has been stirred by this, please contact the Northwoods Humane Society Sawyer Co. and ask for more

information on fostering. Ultimately, you will be asked to complete a Foster Home Care Volunteer application. If fostering is not an option, time and attention are so very helpful, too. But that is another conversation. We are between fosters now but this won't last. There are plenty of sweet, goofy doggos that are so ready to go to a home. And for some, experience a Northwoods winter!

Dates to Save – October 11 – Purple Cat Van – free spay or neuter for owned or feral cats – call the shelter for an appointment – 715-634-5394

October 22 – Redbery Books – Fundraiser for NHS – 10 am to 7 p.m. – Cable, Wisconsin. 15% of all sales will be given to NHS