Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

Senior pets and senior people are a great combination. Much has been written about the benefits of having a pet. Pets provide companionship, a sense of security and of purpose. Pets can provide seniors with a better quality of life and improve aging in place. A pet may relieve stress and anxiety, encourage you to exercise. Pets can keep your social – taking the pet to the vet, groomer, pet store, meet-ups in the dog park and visiting with people while you take a walk.

Sometimes the pet owner's lives change. They may become ill and not able to care for the pet. They may not be able to live at home, they may have passed away. When the pet owner can no longer care for their pet, a decision must be made about the future of the animals. Often family members are delighted to bring the pet into their home. When my mother passed away, her dog Button went to live in Chicago with my sister and he really liked being a city dog.

Some people do not have family to lean on or their family is unable to care for the animals. The Northwoods Humane Society welcomes those animals in need – young or old. It is hard to for some people to surrender the animals to a shelter. It is an unknown future for them and you are giving up control. The word 'trust' needs to enter your thoughts. Do your homework, know the philosophy of the shelter or rescue group you are working with and if it matches your expectations, trust them to do the right thing for your pet.

When surrenders come to the Northwoods Humane Society we assess their needs – do they need medical care, will they do better in a foster home or at the shelter, what kind of home would be best for them. Our shelter manager, Alecia, recently had to say good-by to a foster dog that was surrendered and dying and considered to be in hospice. The dog had been with her for 2 years and had a gentle passing.

On the other side of the coin are the seniors that do not have a pet and may be feeling isolated, in need of an exercise partner and a purpose. Senior people adopting senior pets is an ideal match. Senior pets are more settled, housetrained, love pats and rubbings and will listen to you as long as your talk. If you are a senior with limited mobility, maybe a senior cat will be the best solution – no outdoor walks – but lots of purring. Birds are also company. My grandmother had a parakeet named Binky who was her companion until she passed away.

Pets are more adaptable than people. If treated with love, respect and care, the will most likely adapted to their new environment. Change isn't easy for us as we age, but we can learn to make it work.

So if you are an owner of a senior pet or a senior in need of a senior pet, open your hearts and relieve the worry of an owner no longer able to care for the pet and enrich your lives with someone to love and care for.

If you are considering a senior pet and working with the Northwoods Humane Society, please go to our website www.northwoodshumanesociety.org and download the preadoption form or call the shelter at 715-634-5394 or download from our website – www.northwoodshumanesociety.org. Indicate that you are interested in an older cat or dog (or bird).

December 5 – 9 am to 3 pm – Canes Christmas Craft Fair and NHS Bake Sale – Hayward High School – Bakes goods needed – See our facebook page for information.