



Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies, Inc.
www.WisconsinFederatedHS.org

humane happenings

April 2011

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Reiki: A Gift for Shelter Animals

There are so many animals in the care of animal shelters, sanctuaries and rescues that would love to be chosen as that pet that would turn someone's house into a loving home. These animals come to the shelter for a variety of reasons and may be experiencing any number of physical, emotional or behavioral issues resulting from their past. Reiki is a complementary tool in the toolbox of support programs that shelters can offer these wonderful animals to help prepare them to find their forever home.

What is Reiki?

Reiki (Ray-key), a Japanese word translated to mean universal life force energy, is a system of energy healing created by Mikao Usui in the early 20th century, utilizing specific Japanese meditative practices and breathing techniques. Reiki has been successfully used with humans to support healing in various medical settings such as hospitals, cancer centers and hospices all over the country. The use of Reiki with animals is growing as more people experience the benefits and want to share it with their animal friends. Reiki may be even more powerful when working with animals.

Why Reiki is Ideal for Shelter Animals

Reiki is an ideal complementary therapy for animals and especially for shelter animals. When animals are stressed, sick or injured, they are energetically imbalanced. The primary purpose of a Reiki treatment

is to create a state of balance, deep relaxation, stress relief and self-healing. Reiki can do no harm and will support the issues that need it most, even if those issues are unknown to the practitioner.

Animals at shelters and sanctuaries are usually very open and responsive to Reiki energy if we use an ethical approach when offering Reiki to them. We first ask the animal's permission and then give them a choice in how they wish to receive Reiki. It is often best to offer Reiki to an animal from several feet away (either in their kennel/cage or in a separate room depending on circumstances) and

allow them to come forward for hands-on if and when they wish. Some animals are open to hands-on treatments and others will prefer to lie down near the practitioner and possibly fall into a "Reiki sleep". The Reiki treatment can be adapted to

many different situations and animal temperaments.

Reiki complements and supports other conventional therapies and techniques used to help animals. Some areas that Reiki supports include:

- Physical issues, such as reducing pain and inflammation and speeding healing
- Lessening the side effects of other medical treatments
- Behavior issues & aggression
- Mental/emotional issues, such as helping abused animals heal from past mental/physical trauma
- The dying process



Reiki continued...

- Preparing animals for their forever home

Shelter Animal Reiki Association (SARA)

About a year ago, I joined an organization called SARA or Shelter Animal Reiki Association so that I had a platform for introducing Reiki for Animals to interested shelters, sanctuaries and rescues in Wisconsin.

SARA's purpose is three-fold:

- To promote and teach a standardized, ethical approach for offering Reiki to animals in shelters, sanctuaries and rescues for their relaxation, stress-relief, and healing.
- To educate others about the benefits of Reiki for animals in need and their human caretakers
- To pioneer the use of treatment documentation to show Reiki's effects for educational and research purposes.

As a SARA Animal Reiki Teacher, I volunteer Reiki for the animals at the organizations I work with, and also teach Reiki and Reiki for Animals to interested staff, volunteers and the public so that more animals and their caregivers can experience the benefits of Reiki. The Reiki classes also serve as a fund-raiser for the sponsoring animal organization.

Helping Boots Find Her Forever Home

About a year ago, I met Boots, a sweet 8 year old black & white Tuxedo kitty, at the Fox Valley Humane Association. Boots had come to the shelter because her family had too many animals and could no longer take care of her. She had been there for awhile when I was asked to offer Reiki to Boots and her suite-mate Smudge. After one session, both soon left for their forever homes. Unfortunately, at my weekly visit a couple of months later, I learned that Boots had returned because she wasn't fitting in well with the other animals at her new home. Boots was sad and felt rejected, and had been screaming in her cage for a couple of days.

I offered Reiki to Boots during my next three visits. During the first

and second sessions, Boots started out being a little nervous wandering around the room, sometimes sitting in the corner or brushing my legs. She eventually sat on a table a couple of feet from me looking out the window. Her eyes then closed as she sat there peacefully, and by the end of the treatment, she had lied down falling into a deep Reiki sleep. During the third session, she quickly jumped in my lap and lied down cradled in my hands sleeping the entire session.

The Reiki sessions helped Boots become calmer and better able to cope with being back at the shelter. And it wasn't long before Boots was adopted into a loving home.

I truly view Reiki as a gift that we can offer to our animal friends, and would like to help make this gift available to



as many shelter animals as possible in Wisconsin. Hopefully more of these animals will find their forever home sooner.

Please feel free to contact Ann Noyce at info@twopawsupbakery.com if you are interested in exploring a SARA Reiki program at your organization.

In future newsletters, I will feature additional stories about animals who have benefitted from Reiki.

By Ann Noyce, Animal Reiki Teacher

*"A house is not a home without a pet."
~ Anonymous*