

LILBITS

Playtime Pals Prosper

By Sarah Wetzel
For the Plain Talk

When the weather is less than pleasant outside or even if it is fine, the Vermillion Public Library always provides a welcome retreat for little playmates looking for a new adventure.

Two of these were Jane, 3 and Andromeda, 3.

"Let's play with the animals," suggested Jane. "Waddle, waddle, waddle like a penguin!"

The girls quickly gathered the plush puppets in the children's play section of the library.

But the soft, fuzzy friends needed other animals to join them.

"We need some dinosaurs to play with," Jane said, bringing in some red Lego dinosaurs to join the party. "Let's snuggle with our favorite animals."

To the girls, the puppets were more than fuzz and fluff.

"These ones are my friends," said Andromeda. Jane agreed.

"These are my friends too!" she said. "Her name is Smarky and her name is Clarky. All day in the summer these are my friends."

With the elephant Smarky and the skunk Clarky, the other animals needed naming.

"Her name is Blbway!" declared Andromeda hugging the dolphin.

In some cases the animals became more like family.

"I'm going to have a baby girl," Jane said. "Her name's Clara. I need a big elephant."

This was not the first time these two friends found themselves having

fun at the library together.

"Last time I went here I saw you too," Andromeda said to Jane. "But you look different."

"I have a sweater," Jane explained.

Good point.

The girls continued to look for new friends.

"I need a kangaroo friend," Andromeda said.

"Well I need a kangaroo friend too," Jane replied. "I'll take the duck."

With two girls and only one kangaroo friend, tensions arose.

"This is mine," Jane said. "You cannot come here to my home."

Andromeda retreated with a few plush pals a few feet away.

"Then I'll go to my home," she said.

Even with separate home bases, the girls continued some banter.

"That's my friend and his name is Jolley," said Jane holding up the kangaroo.

Andromeda disagreed. "That's MY friend and his name is Fissy," she said.

Despite disagreements, Jane and Andromeda didn't stay apart for long.

"Ooo, ee," Andromeda said coming over to Jane about five seconds after the argument and ringing an invisible doorbell. "Can I come to play?"

No hesitation from Jane. "Sure," she said. "Let's play hopscotch."

"We can play hopscotch on the playground," Andromeda suggested.

After Jane pointed out that it was still raining, the girls returned to their animal friends who had apparently run into trouble.

For an Extended Version of this Story visit www.plaintalk.net



Caley and Haley Molzen pictured with their daughters Norah (left) and Maeve (right).

SONIA HERNANDEZ / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

SALES, From Page 1A

Other examples of ISOs include lost pets, volunteers, help wanted, houses and rentals, roommates wanted or general questions – as long as they follow the page's rules.

"We are a positive site," says Molzen. "There is drama that goes with it, and we get complaints, but it helps to keep consistent rules."

Molzen established a set of rules for members, and has been diligent in making sure these guidelines are followed. Molzen enlisted the help of two administrators, Ellen and Amber Margheim, who delete any posts that stray from the rules.

"We had both been members for more than a year," says Amber. "In the fall of 2013, there was an uptick in people posting items incorrectly and negative chatter back-and-forth between members. I messaged Haley and volunteered to help – unbeknownst to me, Ellen had done so as well."

Ellen, Amber's mother-in-law, helps with general site cleanup. "Haley handles most of the administration of the page – and does a great job of screening requests and handling complaints," says Ellen. "My and Amber's roles are mainly to help with deleting old posts, and notifying Haley if we notice a problem."

Molzen, currently a Special Education Aid at Jolley Elementary, met her husband Caley in Vermillion and the two got married in 2010. Haley was a stay-at-home mom

when she started the page in 2012.

"We weren't originally from here, so we didn't know a whole lot of people initially," says Molzen. "But I've met tons of people through the site, and it's really brought people together."

Molzen says the page is all about keeping deals in Vermillion, and creating a sense of community that is readily available to all kinds of people.

"I just wanted something local, and the site allows access to goods that you may otherwise have to leave town for," says Molzen. "It's bringing people together, especially if you're not from here – like college students – through updates and advertising. The page has evolved into a community thing."

The page commonly cycles through certain items, such as furniture, baby clothes and women's clothing, but also features scheduled events, local art, offers and deals, and even custom crafted items.

"It changes every week," says Molzen. "There are a lot of recommendations for dentists, physicians, and places to work. We've even had folks post group or research surveys for class."

The Vermillion Online Rummage Sale page continues to evolve as members find new, creative, and useful ways of taking advantage of the site.

Locals who are interested can request to join, and upon approval from Molzen, will find a wealth of information on how the site works. If you are local and looking to make some cash or save some cash, the Vermillion Online Rummage Sale page is a fantastic place to start.

Vermillion, HHS, Have Polices to Ensure Animal Safety

Editor's Note: This is the last of a three-part series looking into how well Clay County takes care of its animals, pets or otherwise.

By Katie Clausen
For the Plain Talk

The City of Vermillion details the legality of Animal Control issues in their official documents. They define animal cruelty and abuse, and also fund the programs which are intended to prevent these things. Some animal owners, however, are calling for more to be done. Sometimes there is a point of stress between animal lovers and rules and regulations.

Jim Balleweg, has been an asset to the Vermillion community in his regard to code enforcement and animal control. When he collects an animal, he goes by the rules and regulations set in place by the city.

"We hold them seven days, and then we take them to Sioux City to the Humane Society," Balleweg said. "They try to adopt them out."

Balleweg keeps busy by helping law enforcement in the area on occasion as well. If there are issues with an animal, he is often a big help.

"Jim has been a resource for us," Sherriff Andy Howe said. "Sometimes there's a bite and we've had him help us impound the dog."

While there is a small facility located in Vermillion that Balleweg can use to make sure that both pets and people are safe, Vermillion is also receiving the benefits and rewards of having a more local facility, Heartland Humane Society, located in Yankton.

A private non-profit organization, Heartland Humane Society offers a shelter and care for animals who have been removed from abusive environments or abandoned.

"Heartland Humane Society is local organization that is funded 100 percent by local personal donations," Julie Becker said. "We are a private nonprofit 501c3 corporation, so your donations are tax deductible. HHS



Sasha was a stray that had been picked up and was eventually surrendered because the owner moved to a no-pet rental. Sasha enjoys affection and having her belly rubbed. She is a one-year-old female cat looking for a forever home.

COURTESY OF HEARTLAND HUMANE SOCIETY

is governed by a volunteer board of directors from the Yankton, Vermillion and surrounding areas. We actually serve 14 surrounding counties in South Dakota and Nebraska area, we would love to make our presence known in all of these counties."

Becker is extremely passionate about the Heartland Humane Society and what it stands for. The protocols they have in place ensure that animals and people can interact safely. There are a variety of cats and dogs currently living at the shelter, but the open arms of the facility aren't just limited to canines and felines.

"Currently we have staff and regular volunteers that care for the cats and the occasional guinea pig, hamster, bird, rabbit or ferret that are housed at the shelter routinely every morning and evening including weekends," Becker said.

"There is a great gal who comes every Saturday and usually one evening a week to socialize the cats. She works with them to help become more comfortable and overcome their fears of being at the shelter in hopes of adopting them into a loving home."

Animals brought to the shelter without veterinarian records are treated for maladies and given vaccinations.

"If an animal were

surrendered without vet records or found as a stray we make sure they are up to date on shots, have routine tests done and seen by the veterinarian if we feel there may be other health issues," Becker said. "Once we are assured that the animal is healthy, they are made available for adoption to the public. They are posted on our website."

The society also uses social media to post about pets available for adoption. Currently the society houses cats at their facility, and dogs are put in foster homes. Heartland Humane Society hopes to expand their facility in the future to include a place for dogs, on site.

"It will be a lot less work once our new facility has the capacity to house dogs," Becker said.

Heartland Humane Society, which began in 2000, is dependent upon private donations to run successfully, since they are not affiliated with any national organization and therefore do not receive grant funding. The society encourages community involvement by hosting events and having promotions.

"There are lots of different ways they can give," Tonya Graf, Board President, said. "The first of every Saturday we have meet and greets."

There are many ways to donate towards the cause of

animal care.

"On our website we have a donation place, they can sponsor an animal," Graf said. "Sometimes we have a list of wants and needs like beds and supplies, cat litter or food."

Although located in Yankton, Vermillion often is seen as a point of interest for the staff and volunteers.

"We have several volunteers and foster homes located in and around Vermillion and actually the Heartland Humane Society Board is made up of a good mix of volunteers from the Yankton, Vermillion and surrounding communities," Becker said. "We hold events in Vermillion to raise awareness and stay involved in the community."

The society plans on hosting their Taste and Tour event June 13 in downtown Vermillion.

Similar to the City of Vermillion's policy, the Heartland Humane Society does not euthanize an animal unless absolutely necessary.

"HHS is a limited admissions shelter, which means we can take in animals when we have room to care for them," Becker said. "We do not euthanize unless an animal is terminally ill. We strive to promote spaying and neutering in our communities, it is so unfortunate to see overpopulation and unwanted litters."

As far as resources and regulations within the city are concerned, Balleweg directed inquiring minds towards the city's website.

"We just have a shelter that's on the south side of town where our waste water treatment plant is," Balleweg said. "Information is available on our website."

It is evident that social media continues to be a go-to forum for pet owners and interest groups in general. Heartland Humane Society is using it to promote their programs, and local law enforcement uses their social media accounts to get the word out about animal issues as well.

For more information on Heartland Humane Society please visit www.heartlandhumane.org.

Local News Items, Announcements

HHS LOOKS TO GIVE DOGS HOMES ON SAT.

Heartland Humane Society (HHS) welcomes the community to meet their dogs available for adoption on Saturday, April 4, from 10 a.m.-noon at the shelter. HHS is located at 3400 East Highway 50 in Yankton.

HHS will have different sizes, ages and breeds of dogs available for the general public to meet and possibly adopt.

"Meet and Greets allow our dogs waiting for adoption to get out into the public and make new friends. Our dogs are placed into foster-homes so this also gives the public a chance to meet them and hang out with them," says Christa Kranig, shelter coordinator at Heartland

Humane Society.

Staff at HHS encourages anyone interested in adopting to fill out an application prior to the Meet and Greet. Applications must be reviewed and approved before adoption. You can pick up an application at the shelter or find one on the organization website (www.heartlandhumane.org). For more information on this event, contact Heartland Humane Society at 605-664-4244 or email hhs@midconetwork.com. You can view all animals available for adoption on the shelter's website or on Petfinder.com.

RETIRED SENIOR VOLUNTEERS

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program provides individuals 55 years of age and over the opportunity

to stay active and productive through meaningful volunteer activities providing impact based volunteer support to nonprofit and public agencies in your community.

RSVP places volunteers in the focus areas of Healthy Futures, Education, Disaster Service, Economic Opportunity, Environmental Stewardship and Veterans and Military Families.

Volunteers become enrolled into the RSVP and are placed in community needs according to their interests and availability.

Service through RSVP benefits everyone—it

helps volunteers stay active, healthy, and engaged while connecting our communities with hundreds of skilled RSVP volunteers in non-profit organizations.

We are currently enrolling volunteers in the Vermillion area and have volunteer opportunities available locally.

Contact the RSVP office to become enrolled in the program and discover the volunteer needs in Vermillion and the benefits of becoming an RSVP volunteer. To learn more about the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program, contact Deb at 605-260-3100 or email doverseth@iw.net.

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