There’s a renowned episode of the classic TV series *The Twilight Zone* called “The Dummy,” in which paranoid, hard-drinking ventriloquist Jerry—played by Cliff Robertson—believes that his dummy Willie has come to life and is determined to destroy him. Of course, this being *The Twilight Zone*, it’s all true. At the end (spoiler alert) Willie, played in the creepiest of cameos by veteran character actor George Murdock, has taken over and reduced Jerry to the wooden sidekick on his lap.

I am neither paranoid nor hard drinking, but I’m beginning to have some suspicions about my cat, Rhiannon. Granted, I adopted her as a kitten because I loved her bold eccentricity (let’s put it this way—in the first year of her life, her preferred sleeping spot was my bathroom sink). Lately, I’ve noticed, she’s expressing some distinctive feline vocabulary: Her vocalizations have become much less random and more purposeful. There’s the “pay attention to me” meow, the “I want some treats” whine, the resentful “get off my bed” bark (yes, it’s actually *my* bed) and the casual “hey, *que pasa*” chirp. On occasion, she strings sounds together in a way that seems almost conversational. When she wants something specific, she’ll sit by whatever she thinks demands attention before speaking—for example, her erratic water fountain. It’s like living with a mini-C.E.O.

I’ve also found that when I want her to do something, she follows my meaning with eerie precision. If I say, “Why don’t you sit on the couch,” you can bet that she will at least look at the couch. If I say, “Mom’s not a bottomless food bank, finish your dinner,” she often hops to it. If she fusses when I’m on the phone or computer—the two things she hates most to see me do—and I tell her “I’m busy, go take a nap,” by God, she finds a place to curl up.

One of “The Dummy”’s scariest moments comes when Willie tells Jerry that it is *he* who is responsible for making Willie human: “You poured words into my head . . . You jerk! Don’t you get it? You made me what I am today.” Because Rhiannon is my only roommate, and I am compulsively verbal, she hears all my conversations with myself: about the weather, my plans for the day, my frustrations with my family, my landlord, and (particularly when watching cable TV news) contemporary politics. Sometimes, I wonder whether she’s retaining any vocabulary from these monologues, and in my more heated moments, I especially worry what words she might be picking up.

Do I imagine that one day Rhiannon and I will go through what “The Dummy” refers to as “the old switcheroo”—that she’ll become a malevolent feline-human and I’ll be the one on four feet, using the litterbox and eating food from a dish on the floor? Don’t be silly. (Although, as I say that, I’m reminded of one of TZ creator Rod Serling’s key lines: “Improbable . . . but let us hesitate to say impossible.”) Nonetheless, I think a teleplay of this idea could make a great update to “The Dummy.” Any takers?

**Volunteers and Their Rescues from the Robin I. Kroogman New Haven Animal Shelter: A Love Story**

Do I imagine that one day Rhiannon and I will go through what “The Dummy” refers to as “the old switcheroo”—that she’ll become a malevolent feline-human and I’ll be the one on four feet, using the litterbox and eating food from a dish on the floor? Don’t be silly. (Although, as I say that, I’m reminded of one of TZ creator Rod Serling’s key lines: “Improbable . . . but let us hesitate to say impossible.”) Nonetheless, I think a teleplay of this idea could make a great update to “The Dummy.” Any takers?

**Patricia Grandjean, volunteer**

**“Adopting a shelter animal is so rewarding...”**

I adopted Forman in August 2016. Forman was five years old and on the smaller side for a pit bull terrier. What drew me to him was his very calm demeanor - despite the noise from the other barking and jumping dogs, Forman was usually found relaxing on his bed, waiting for a walk. Forman wasn't particularly affectionate early on, but over time he has become a big love bug. Cuddling on the floor amidst blankets is a favorite pastime as is destroying squeaky toys and walking down to our neighbors at Clover Nook Farm to view the cows and their calves. Forman has become such an integral part of the family that it's difficult to remember what life was without him. Adopting a shelter animal is so rewarding and results in giving a second chance for a "furever" home to a needy dog or cat.

**Holly Darico, volunteer**

**"It's like living with a mini-C.E.O."**
Volunteers and Their Rescues from the Robin I. Kroogman New Haven Animal Shelter: A Love Story (cont’d)

I fell in love with bulldogs many years ago after seeing the 1946 movie The Spiral Staircase, a spooky Victorian thriller. An unknown killer is stalking the women of the household and through it all, Carlton, the family bulldog, is always underfoot, sleeping by the fire—and, when he can, exiting the house to court the neighbor's dog. His rubbery face, cobby body and lackadaisical attitude had me sold from the start. It was bulldogs or bust.

After adopting four bulldogs over the years, I am privileged to currently share my home with Lily, a 5-year-old female who feasts on pumpkin dog biscuits, salmon and sweet potato kibble, laps filtered water, lounges on a bright pink 'anti-stress' bed, and bathes monthly in oatmeal soap. She is the unofficial Empress of Hamden.

Her life wasn’t always this idyllic. When we met at the shelter two years ago, Lily was underweight, overbred, had several rotten teeth and intestinal worms and suffered from a double ear infection. She looked defeated and depressed, but that demeanor would soon change. I took her outside; she hauled herself up with her big meaty paws and licked my face. Never was an adoption application completed so quickly.

Her medical treatment lasted several weeks, but once home with me, Lily quickly settled in. Now she wanders throughout the house until she decides that it’s nap time, when she plops on the floor and lets out a huge sigh. Window-rattling snoring begins, ended only by the gentle woofing of her pal next door, Willow. Then it’s outside for a doggie chat a deux through the fence, followed by a short bask in the sun.

Our evening routine is always the same: dinner followed by Jeopardy! and ending with a Turner Classic Movie or two. Lily climbs on the couch and positions herself so that I’m not crushed by her 50-pound frame. A word of caution to the uninitiated—bulldogs are incredibly lazy and tenacious. They are not designed to be jogging partners, preferring instead to sit, Ferdinand the Bull-style, under a shady tree watching the world go by. The message? Slow down, what’s the hurry? Words to live by.

Elaine Spinato, volunteer

I am lucky enough to have two dogs adopted from the animal shelter as part of my family. I’ve fostered animals for the shelter for years, but Sydney was my first foster failure. She came to the animal shelter after sustaining substantial injuries upon being hit by a car. Her original foster mom had to travel for work, so Sydney came to stay with me. Walking on only three legs and barely able to trot half a block on her own, Sydney’s personality still shone through.

While she went back to her original foster mom after that first stay, Sydney kept returning to me for one reason or another. As her foster stint continued due to ongoing medical issues, I took her to a couple of adoption events, as well as a fundraiser for the Friends. Her expression as she looked at me from the adoption van as I walked away from her broke my heart, and I realized that I wouldn’t be able to let her go. Her spirited nature and her sweetness always brighten my day.

My second dog, Luna, came to the animal shelter under different circumstances. After a snowstorm, when our chief animal control officer went out to clear our fenced-in dog runs, he suddenly saw movement out of the corner of his eye and realized that there was a white dog camouflaged in the snow. He brought her inside and soon discovered that she was not well, having ingested rat poison.

I assume her family didn’t have the means to get her medical attention and thought that the shelter and the Friends would be able to help—luckily, this assumption proved true. I took her home to foster, as she had to go through additional treatment before she became adoptable. After seeing her play happily with Sydney in my backyard, I knew that Luna would become part of my family.

The Friends of the New Haven Animal Shelter, using the funds raised by the organization and donated by our generous supporters, was able to pay for both of my dogs’ medical treatments. I am not exaggerating when I say that neither of them would be alive today without the help of the Friends and the shelter, and my life is forever better because of them.

Deb Wan, volunteer

I have adopted three dogs from the New Haven Animal Shelter, all of whom have taught me various lessons about animals. My first adoptee was Nico. As a result of his adoption process, I learned that one could be a volunteer at the shelter and that’s when my volunteering began. He also taught me just how trusting animals can be. Even though he had lived in the shelter for an entire year, the day we picked him up, he hopped right into the car, never questioning a thing, never looking back or resisting. When we got home, he curled up in our laps and fell asleep as if he knew he was home and belonged with us.

Pepper was adoptee No. 2. She revealed just how hard being in the shelter is on an animal. I observed her at the shelter becoming increasingly stressed, anxious, confused, and depressed. When the timing was finally right, we decided to adopt her. It took her six months to de-stress, to be able to just lay back and relax knowing she was safe and in her own home—even though she was with me, who she knew well from the shelter.

Lastly, I adopted Primo when he was only a puppy. He has taught me the importance of socializing and exposing dogs to different environments to build their confidence. Primo is cautious and skeletal, constantly looking to us for guidance and approval when there are new challenges. It takes him time to warm up to new people or situations, but at home he’s truly a goodball and a joker.

I am so grateful to have been able to adopt the three of them as well as volunteer at the shelter. They have all brought joy, happiness and love to my life and I hope I have done the same for them. Living with animals is a gift. Each day they make me laugh, show me loyalty and how to live my life to the fullest.

Holly Brown, volunteer
Pet Portraits - Ready For Their Closeups

In February and March of this year, the Miller Branch of the New Haven Free Public Library once again generously displayed portraits of our adoptable dogs and cats. Ms. Kristin Wetmore, an art teacher at Cooperative Arts & Humanities High School, contacted the Robin I. Kroogman New Haven Animal Shelter for the second year in a row to have her students paint portraits of the adoptable animals at the shelter. She had seen a project that an art instructor had done in another state and hoped the shelter would help her painting class with a similar project.

The Friends of the New Haven Animal Shelter sent Ms. Wetmore photos of their adoptable dogs and cats, and the students went to work. Daisy’s happiness, Pogo’s sense of fun and Candy’s sweetness, along with others, were charmingly captured in the students’ paintings. The portraits were displayed in the meeting room at the Miller Branch, bringing smiles to everyone who visited. Local media discovered the project, and subsequent articles helped highlight the animals at the shelter and put a spotlight on the importance of adoption.

Let’s hope next year, this project will be equally as successful!

Camila by Oddo de la Cruz, gr. 12 ~ BP by Rebecca Pedraza Espiritu, gr 12 ~ Pogo by Caterina Eastman, gr. 12
Daisy by Jayden Madera, gr. 12 ~ Candy by Miracle Perez, gr. 11
WE THANK YOU - IN MEMORIAM

Janice Abele in memory of “my 19-year-old Maggie Cat.”
Lynn Autry in memory of Sisko Kitty.
Allison Bailey in memory of Pippa.
Anne Bailey in memory of Crystal.
Mary Lou Beaudoin in memory of Charles W. Beaudoin.
Lore and Imre Berty in memory of Tara.
Brian Blakely and Teresa Freeman in memory of Kate, Nell-Bob, and Betty.
Emily Brink and Robert Mackel in memory of “our cat, Pippi.”
Laurel Casey in memory of Fred the chihuahua.
Moira Cassell in memory of Zina, “beloved dog of the Bettencourt family” and in memory of Sally, beloved dog of Mary Ellen McGuire.
Lynn Childs in memory of Titus, “beloved pet of the Cleary Family.”
The city of New Haven Dept. of Engineering (Dawn Henning, asst. city engineer and daughter) in memory of Edward Charles Henning.
Monica Cofrancesco in “loving memory of Harley D.”
Laura Cricco in memory of Joseph Cricco, “a loving dad to his many fur babies over the years.”
Edward Danaher in memory of Chummy Cat.
Linda Dario in memory of Roxy, “a feisty little girl.”
Stephen Dinino in memory of Rocky 3 “AKA Mr. Bigg.”
Mary Drury in memory of Huey.
Bridget Dunn and Kelly Byron in memory of Violet, “beloved dog of Emily and Chris Anton who was rescued from the New Haven Animal Shelter.”
Katherine Edwards in memory of Roxy and Stella “to help other needy dogs.”
April Feathers in “loving memory of Fred Jungeblut and our cat Shorty. My sunbeam has joined our shooting star.”
Jennifer Ferri in memory of Milou, “our farm friend.”
Barbara and Fina Fre in memory of Tom Fre and “all his cat mates.”
Patricia Grandjean – in memory of Marisa Kalt’s Khaleesi, Rachael Harvey’s Pinky and Annalisa Paleta’s Chica.
Jennye Hansen in memory of Simon.
Liz Hellwig in memory of Calli and Tess.
Peter and Kathrynn Hvizdak in memory of “our dear friend, Karen O’Brien.”
Jennifer Ikekiewicz in memory of Magnolia.
Beverly Johnson in memory of Lori Hilson.
Marisa Kalt and Paddy Nugent in memory of Firefly, “beloved cat of Patricia and Torin Thurston.”
Elaine Kitter in memory of Chunky, Sam, Trump, Jessica, and Jordan.
Cindy Koepe in memory of Jean Koepe; “miss you and love you from your two-and-four-legged family.”
Mara Lavitt and Hayne Bayless in memory of Prima, “beloved dog of Marcia Hatfield and Eric Belt.”
The Lawhorn Family in memory of Waldo/Gadget, “a member of our family for 12 beautiful years.”
Elizabeth Anne Lester in memory of Peppina, “cherished cat of Marsha Rabe and Dave Zukowski.”
Linda Mandolfo in memory of Robert Anthony Roskowski.
Patricia Minier in memory of Cally, Bowser, Black Collar, and O.T.
Anne Ocolt in memory of Khaleesi, “beloved cat of Marisa Kalt and Paddy Nugent.”
Jorge and Gloria Perez in memory of “our beloved Tigger and Lady.”
Laurie Prizzi in memory of “my precious boy Dusty.”
Marsha Rabe and Thom Brown in memory of Luna, “beautiful and beloved pet of Philipa and Gaetano Mannias.”
Amy and Steve Rashba in memory of Michael Segal, “beloved son of Cathy Segal.”
The Reckleff family in memory of Felix Kitty, “the one and only.”
Charlene Rohloff in memory of Ric Rohloff.
Edward Saccu in memory of Lois Stills and “all our cats.”
Priscilla Webber-Sepulveda in memory of Jordan Sepulveda.
Sheri and Keith Shields in memory of Charlene Sanner, in memory of Max Korzen and in memory of Minnie Jacobson.
Ina Silverman and Jay Sokolow in honor of “Charlie Wortman’s high school graduation and in memory of his dog, Barney.”
Anna Simeone in memory of “all my beautiful dogs and one cat in heaven.”
Stephanie And Wayne Stanley in memory of “loving aunts, Anna Gambardella and Phyllis Cahill.”
Sarah Strickland in memory of Stella “AKA Miss Pigg, NHAS alum.”
Virginia Stiggins in memory of Paley.
Len Suzio in memory of Ronald E. Coens and in memory of Dennis Camputaro.
Bonnie Taylor in memory of Luke, “a very good boy.”
Fred and Liz Trotta in memory of Valerie Trotta.
Pamela Tully in memory of Geo.
Deb Wan “In memory of Khaleesi, beloved cat of Marisa Kalt, and Pinky, beloved dog of Rachael Harvey.”
Christine Weideman in memory of Mama, Wylie, Fonzie, and Puff, “rescued by a wonderful woman, Kristine Camp.”
Susan Wilber in memory of Dr. Sarah Wilber DVM.”
Nancy Zaleski in memory of Charlie and Benjamin.

In memory of Carlos Reyes
Pattie and Pete Eagles
Ray and Ann Marie Lodato

In memory of Dennis Walter “and her love of cats.”
Rose Ann and Raymond Castiglione
Debbie Franco
Maryanne and Andrea Lioio
Claudia and Scott Massey
The Myers Family
Gregory Panico
Diana Swanson

In honor of
Joan and Bill Aquillo in honor of C.C. and Zoe, “thanks for finding us a home.”
Kathleen Baldino in honor of Buddy.
Christopher Brown and Jane Beddall in honor of Togo, “formerly Widget, adopted 2011.”
Justine Carter in honor of “my friend Michael Segal.”
Laurel Casey in honor of “my time volunteering while at Yale 2008 – 2012.”
Judith Gouveia and Peggy Ianello in honor of Jake and China.
Mary Hadley in honor of “all animals. May they all find loving homes, so they are safe, warm and not hungry.”
Cathleen Hunt in honor of Mr. Wigglesworth, “adopted in 2018. Best dog ever.”
Lee and Evelyn Harvey in honor of Nathan Dashshund, “King of the Carolinas.”
Peggy Ianello in honor of Jake and China.
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Keeney in honor of “all those who help animals in need.”
Kim and Timothy Krauss in honor of Dolly, “the dog that made life worth living.”
Richard Lebow Ellis Grasso Boulevard Business District in honor of Danny Klein.
John F. Levis in honor of “Cody the pitbull (AKA Cosi).”
Margaret Mann in honor of Lizzy, “adopted 8/10/18.”
Patrick McCarthy in honor of Karen McCarthy.
Tim McNamara in honor of Nyles.
Laura Margolin in honor of “all the volunteer help!”
Eric Maass in honor of Floyd.
Patricia Minier in honor of the FNAS volunteers.
Martha Parvis in honor of Carol Asprelli’s birthday.
Mike and Laura Pol in honor of Raymond Pol.
Tilden Russell and Dominique Bourassa in honor of I.Q.!
Patricia Saint Aubin in honor of “Sable Colwell and her father Cliff Colwell.”
Sarah Strickland in honor of Delilah, “AKA Oreo, NHAS alum.”
Abhishek Trivedi in honor of Vikram Trivedi.
Dana Walker in honor of Maizie, “rescued from the New Haven Animal Shelter and a precious soul in my life.”
Katherine Walker in honor of Droplet, “adopted 2014, now Daisey.”
Karleen Wood in honor of Bob Handschumacher.
Hannah Yarborough in honor of Ayedin Mangi’s birthday.
Our Special Thanks To:

AAA Northeast Charitable Fund
Janice Abele
Alternative Universe
Awning Cleaning Industries
Kimberly Babcock
Kathryn Barringham
Bear’s Smokehouse Barbecue
Judith Cadden
Laurel Casey
Chewy and their Chewy Claus program
CJ Colwell
The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven
The Jane and William Curran Foundation, Inc.
Lisa Dadio
Tiffany Daly
Holly Darico
Robin Diamonte
District Athletic Club
The Hagani Foundation, Inc.
Rachael Harvey
10th Annual Jeffrey’s Joy of Giving Community Donation Drive
John Levis

John S. Martino School Student Council and Alyssa Granata-Basso.
Eric Maass
McDonald’s Foods
Izarelli Mendieta
Sue Mercer
The Daniel and Sharon Milikowsky Family Foundation, Inc.
Prospect Middle School
Deilih Quezada-Coello, Creations By OKISS
John Recalde, The Elm City Dog Project
Rogehni Munoz
The REAP Foundation
Michael Schron
Teresa Sirico
Three Sheets New Haven
Solar Youth
Town and Country Veterinary Associates of Vernon
Abhishek and Vikram Trivedi
Wash and Wag
“Wild” Bill Taylor – animal caricaturist extraordinaire
Leah Zweig and Riley

Amazon and Chewy Wish List Donors

Catherine F. Ford
Soheil Ghili
Carolyn, Bill, Lucky and shelter graduate Maya
Michael Jozwik and shelter graduate Copper
Kaitlin Fish
Sukanya Kanawade
The Kindstedts and shelter graduate River
Marsha Silverman Brunelle
Butterfly Meneo
Sara Anglemere

And many anonymous donors!
Fall 2023

P.O. Box 9056
Brewery St. Station
New Haven, CT 06532
Telephone: 203 946 8110
Fax: 203 946 7495
www.findafriendforlife.org
www.petfinder.com/shelters/CT74.html

Four paws way up to our adopters and supporters. We could never carry out our mission without you. We – and our shelter animals – are so thankful!

AmongFRIENDS contributors: