



Animal Alliance of Canada

221 Broadview Avenue, Suite 101,

Toronto, Ontario M4M 2G3

T/ 416-462-9541 F/ 416-462-9647

“Holiday Season” 2005

Dear Friend,

This is the time of year when we make a special effort to show our love to those who share our lives, and to those who can trust only us to give them hope.

We call it the “Holiday Season,” but for me, it’s the season when I fear most for the lost and abandoned pet dogs and cats shivering, starving, and struggling on chill blown streets and in dark, dank, derelict buildings.

When bitter winter nights are blackest and coldest, I’m most thankful for the loving, hopeful support from people like you. Your contributions make it possible for our *Project Jessie* volunteers to find homes for the most desperate of these animals.

Across Canada, humane societies and animal protection organizations are working to save these lost pets. They rescue them, shelter them, and try to return them to their homes, if they have one. Or, if that’s not possible (so many of them are abandoned), they try to find every one of them a new, loving family. Thankfully, they often succeed.

Too often, however, they don’t succeed, and they confront a terrible choice: euthanize the pet or, if the law demands, sell him or her to a research facility. It’s called “pound seizure” and when it happens it means lab technicians can inflict excruciating cruelty on these loving pets. The researchers buy only the friendly animals – the most adoptable – because they trust people and are, therefore, easier to handle. These animals will endure suffering often for years – until Death grants them the only mercy they will ever feel.

Project Jessie rescues these animals: the lost and abandoned pets no one wants or who are doomed to end their lives in fear and pain as experimental animals.

Charley and Sam are the black and white cats who live with me. Someone left them to die on an icy street when they were just kittens. That “someone” treated my friends like bags of garbage. The volunteers of *Project Jessie* – thanks to generous donations from people like you – rescued Charley and Sam, and now they share my life. Actually, Charley and Sam think I share their lives.

In the spirit of this season’s love and hope, please, find it in your heart to include in your Holiday giving the lost and abandoned pets whom our volunteers are rescuing through *Project Jessie*.

Project Jessie is a rescue network of volunteer drivers, foster homes, and supportive veterinarians. We started it in 1991, the year after we founded Animal Alliance of Canada. We named the program after a young dog whom an Ontario pound sold to researchers, even though they knew we had a home waiting for her. We couldn't save Jessie; *Project Jessie* is our way of insuring that Jessie and what she suffered will never be forgotten, and that one day no other pets will suffer her fate.

Project Jessie's mission is to help the homeless pet dogs and cats whom others have abandoned: condemning them to researchers or to being killed for no other reason than convenience.

It costs about \$50 for *Project Jessie* to rescue a dog from a pound, and \$35 for a cat. Just like everyone, we have to *buy* the dog or cat from the pound to rescue him or her.

However, the costs don't end there. We usually spend another \$100 to \$200 helping each animal. We have them spayed or neutered, vaccinated and micro-chipped. We pay for the veterinary care they need, which often includes dental work, treatment for parasites, eye care, setting broken bones, and heart surgery. We place them in foster homes for short-term care and convalescence. Then, we find them permanent, loving homes.

We even find homes for the animals that pounds and humane societies have decided are "unadoptable." It is a testament to human kindness that no matter how mistreated or abused a dog or cat might have been – or how debilitating or permanent his or her injuries – there is always some remarkable person who will love and adopt them.

Thanks to generous gifts from people like you, each year, the *Project Jessie* team – under the supervision of Animal Alliance director Shelly Hawley Yan – saves about 300 dogs and 150 cats. *Project Jessie* – which is you, me, and the volunteers – is the only hope these animals have. We are their last and only hope.

Let me tell you about two *Project Jessie* rescues that Shelly recently shared with me. Ibsen was one of those dogs whom no one wanted, except the people of *Project Jessie*.

Shelly told me that "Ibsen (aka 'Ibby') was a sweet, older dog between 8 and 14 years old. When he was picked up by animal control as a stray, he was very underweight and very scared. Animal control deemed him 'unadoptable' and scheduled him to be put down.

"When [*Project Jessie*] rescued Ibby," Shelly said, "all was not well with him. The vet told us he needed to have a dozen teeth removed. The pain from his bad teeth was why he wasn't eating. Once the dentistry was done, Ibby made up for lost time, putting 4 pounds on his 12 pound frame. His foster Mom has helped him to regain his confidence. Ibby's not scared any more.

"Sweet Ibby had been up for adoption for a few weeks, when his foster Mom noticed that his eyes were overly weepy. So she took him to the vet. There were small ulcers in each of his eyes. Immediately, we started a course of ointment every 2 hours, but the ulcers continued to fester.

“A trip to the specialist confirmed the worst. Ibbby would be blind in a matter of weeks if he didn’t get surgery on both eyes. Even with a huge discount, the surgery would cost *Project Jessie* \$2,000. We couldn’t say ‘no.’”

“Ibbby has made a full recovery and delights us with his antics. He is a major licker – faces, hands, legs – they are all good! Going to sleep – only on the big (human) bed of course! Is there food coming? Ibbby needs to be fed first, of course! Woof! Woof! Woof! Going for a walk? On the sidewalk with tail held high and waving, sure! On GRASS!?!?! Never!

“A sweet, kind old fellow, Ibbby will be spending his twilight years in comfort, because *Project Jessie* was there to help him.”

Shelly also told me about “Petey and the Chihuahua gang.” We’re still looking for a home for Petey. Can you help?

“Two months ago,” Shelly said, “we were asked to help five Chihuahuas whose owner had passed away. Unfortunately, she had made no provisions for the care of her animals after her death – something we should all make sure we do. All of the dogs badly needed dentistry, and they needed to be spayed and neutered.

“Petey is the patriarch of the family; at nine years old he should have quite a few years of adventure left to him! Gigi, seven years old, is the mom of the other girls: Mucha, Cleo and Chrissy. They’re all four years old.

“The extra veterinary care they all needed was very costly; *Project Jessie* covered the costs.

“All of the girls have been adopted into wonderful homes and are adjusting very well. However, poor Petey is still looking for his new family. He does have a significant heart murmur that requires ongoing medication, and needs a warm, loving lap to rest on as often as possible.

“Liz, please tell all the supporters of Animal Alliance and Project Jessie that we need to find someone soon who has room in their heart and home for Petey. He truly is a sweet older guy.”

Please, last year your support made it possible for *Project Jessie* to find homes for over 400 abandoned and frightened animals like Ibbby, Gigi, Mucha, Cleo, and Chrissy (and, one day, Petey.) Help us do even more in 2006.

At this special time of year, keep *Project Jessie* and the innocent dogs and cats who need rescuing today in your thoughts. Please, find a place for them in your holiday giving plans.

Project Jessie may save hundreds of animals deemed “hopeless cases” every year, but it’s not enough, because we can’t save them all. In fact, the combined efforts of every humane society and rescue organization across Canada can’t save them all. To save them, we need every jurisdiction – town, city, province – to adopt proven, humane (and cost effective) companion animal programs, just like many enlightened cities have done, including Calgary, Alberta; Brampton and Clarington, Ontario; and Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Thanks to your financial support, thanks to your messages and post cards, we’ve now convinced the Mayor of Montreal that his city – which now kills over 65,000 lost and abandoned pets every year – needs to change its ways.

At first Mayor Gérald Tremblay was furious with us for telling people like you that “The most dangerous city in Canada and the United States for a lost or abandoned pet dog or cat is Montreal.” He accused us of lying, demanded to know where we got our figures, and denied that he and his councilors had refused to meet with us, despite our three years of trying. He had his staff send letters to people like you denouncing us.

But we answered all his questions, and we prevailed. There’s much work to be done and it will take time, but like the other cities and towns where we’ve had laws changed to help companion animals – Winnipeg, Clarington, Markham – Montreal now wants to be one of the safest cities in North America for lost or abandoned pet dogs and cats.

Yes, we need to save all the animals we can – especially, the lost pets whom no one else wants – but we also need to end the necessity for programs like *Project Jessie*. That’s why we’re campaigning across Canada – thanks to your generous, unstinting support – for the laws and regulations that will insure there are fewer and fewer animals in need of rescue.

At this special time of year, please make a generous contribution to *Project Jessie*, and from myself, our volunteers, and our directors please accept our warmest regards for you and yours, and the animal friends who share your home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Liz White", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Liz White, *Director*

P.S. If you’re planning on adopting a rescued dog or cat as a gift for yourself or someone else this holiday season, please wait. The holiday chaos can frighten a newly arrived dog or cat. Instead, give a comfy animal bed, or a basket of treats and toys, and include an “Intent to Adopt” card. Then, after the seasonal rush, visit a shelter or rescue centre. Remember, adopting a dog or cat is a lifetime commitment.