

A Letter from the Sanctuary

Dear friends,

It is beyond difficult to fully describe a passionate 20 year journey in a page. But an update on the state of this grassroots organization is long overdue!!

First, some facts, figures, and clarifications:

- Home At Last continues to provide sanctuary to 68 previously homeless, abused and/or neglected animals. Our budget will no longer support the cost of feed, maintenance and vet care for farmed animals, but we are gently carrying three (Jett, a 16-year-old pot-bellied pig and cows, Reba and Gertrude) through their last phases of life.
- We continue to be a 501c3 tax-exempt organization, incorporated and governed by a small board and staffed by volunteers. There are no paychecks and no overhead—every dollar donated goes directly to the care and welfare of the animals.
- 10 animals came to the sanctuary in 2014: four kittens, three senior cats, one puppy, and two senior dogs. We currently have no active adoption program; however, all animals at the sanctuary will receive lifetime care.
- Approximately one third of our current residents are those creatures to whom we made a commitment to prior to 2005, and they are living out their lives in peace.
- The sanctuary now consists of two cat houses complete with electricity and screened-in porches, two large groups of dogs that have full access to the sanctuary grounds as well as various heated/cooled buildings, and two farm animal areas. Six yards stand empty.

Though we have endured several challenges, Home At Last is still standing, and still doing what we can to uphold our original 1997 mission. Commitment, by its very nature, seems to imply overcoming difficulty. It can be said honestly that HAL has encountered its share.

- In 2010, we sacrificed half of the heart of the mission—vegetarian feeding—in order to keep promises made for lifetime care and to continue offering sanctuary to the overwhelming numbers in need. As financial decisions tend to, this decision still haunts. We still believe feeding multiple domesticated animals (yes, dogs AND cats) is healthy and possible, but we have accepted that it is also labor intensive and very expensive. We did what we felt was necessary in order to continue to provide for all of the animals already in our care.
- As some of you may have heard, in 2013, we received a devastating blow when we realized a longtime board member (our treasurer) was stealing money from the organization. Upon detection, this was immediately reported to the police, and now, after a very arduous and emotional trial, justice is finally being served. Just over half of the money that was stolen from us has been paid back, but the emotional toll it has taken is equal to (if not greater than) the financial one, and is perhaps one of the greatest reasons we have narrowed our scope and focus. We remain committed to the animals, though admittedly our view of humankind has been tested.

To those of you that have continued to stand alongside us all these years, that have offered your generous donations, your encouraging words—we thank you. As long as there are animals in need, we will continue our current mission, which is: to remain a voice for compassion, to offer comfort and sanctuary when possible and to help others visualize a more peaceable world.

And, to NEVER give up!

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"And I am my brother's keeper
And I shall fight his fight
And speak the word for beast and bird
Til the world shall set things right."

Ella Wheeler Wilcox
1850-1919