

Visiting Hours

Volunteering Brings Out The Best In Everyone

BY CARLA HUMMEL

Avera Sacred Heart Director Of Volunteer Services

I am fortunate to be able to enjoy the sights and sounds of volunteering on a daily basis.

The other day, I heard the appreciation of a family member in the Surgery waiting room as she was comforted with coffee, a cookie and a little conversation to help pass the time.

As I walked across the lobby, I heard a couple kids running over to the statue of Jesus, tussling over who got to sit on His lap first.

The sound of greetings from the front desk warms the entrance into Avera Sacred Heart Hospital. And the delivery of newspapers and flowers helps extend that welcome into the patient rooms. Walking through the halls, you will almost always see one of the Team volunteers delivering items to a department which, in turn, helps staff provide excellent service to patients. As the day goes on, there are volunteers bringing communion around, as well as volunteers that are helping patients get access to their medical information.

In meeting with some staff at Avera Majestic Bluffs, there were outpourings of stories of how great their volunteers are and what a difference they make in the lives of the residents.

If only we had more! A volunteer that started coming to visit residents has gathered groups that now meet on a regular

basis, and he has residents that holler at him when he doesn't stop to see them.

The National Honor Society from Yankton High School has been coming and helping with some activities and have truly become a highlight of some of the residents' day. With Avera Majestic Bluffs expanding this year, the need for volunteers will also be growing exponentially.

An under seen role is definitely that of the hospice volunteer.

Their volunteerism is only witnessed by the patient and family but so appreciated. Families are grateful for the time they get and are comforted to know someone is sitting with their loved one while they are gone. And for the patient, it is nice to have a conversation with a new caregiver.

Opening our hearts to people enduring a difficult time often opens our hearts to the blessings in our own lives.

No matter what the journey is – whether walking in the hospital, at the long-term care facilities or in someone's home – there are so many scenes of people helping people. The sights and sounds of helping others are all around us.

If you aren't hearing or seeing it – you are missing out.

Please consider joining us at Avera Sacred Heart as a volunteer.

Hummel can be reached at chummel@avera.org, or (605) 668-8104.

The Next Best Thing To Farm Dogs: Farm Cats?

BY DR. MIKE ROSMANN

Sponsored By L&C Behavioral Health

After the recent Farm and Ranch Life edition on farm dogs, several readers let me know they felt their favorite animals, cats, were neglected. Does this mean cat aficionados want equal time with dog aficionados?

I hope discussion of farm pets isn't becoming political, for I like cats and dogs, and I'm not declaring a preference!

Cats were the second animals, after dogs, to become domesticated, according to scientists in the disciplines that study these things.

Smaller members of the cat genus who are ancestors to today's tame cats and weren't a threat to humans were allowed to hang around hunter-gatherer habitations to collect scraps of food. They gathered in greater numbers when farmers began to deliberately raise grains, legumes and other edible foods some 13-15,000 years ago in the Fertile Crescent of Southwest Asia.

Cats preyed on the rodents that invaded granaries. Some cats were bold enough to accept the food humans left for them, like some people provide to feral cats today. Eventually cats accepted what humans offered them directly.

Who tamed whom? Cats probably chose to become affiliated with humans, rather than the other way around.

Still today, some kitties won't accept human touches but will eat the food offered to them. Other felines take great pleasure when purring and curling around our legs or being held and stroked.

Generally, cats choose which humans to adopt as reliable caretakers, whereas humans choose the dogs they can trust as affiliates. One of our favorite adopted feline pets, Smitty, rode at the front of our bobsled whenever my family sledged down our farm's snow-covered hillsides, followed by the kids, Marilyn, our dog and finally me,



Dr. Mike ROSMANN

animal affiliation hierarchy.

Two kittens we adopted four years ago, Dusty and Poof, showed up meowing outside a window of our farmhouse as I was reading magazines and watching a televised football game one fall evening. Probably abandoned, they had bellies swollen from worms; we figured they had survival skills, for they found their way to our farmhouse as youngsters.

I wormed them the next day and had them spayed later. They now "guard" our house and act like they are "the cats' meow."

How many cats and dogs are there in the US? The Humane Society of the US estimated that 83.3 million dogs were claimed as pets by people in 2012, the latest year for which statistics are available, while 95.6 cats were claimed as pets.

There are lots of feral cats in the US—currently about 58 million, according to the Wildlife Removal Professionals Association—and far fewer feral dogs, but reliable statistics are difficult to obtain.

I've observed feral cats on all the continents to which I've traveled, usually hanging around parks and streets where they can feed on overly abundant birds, rodents, picnic leftovers or road kill. These adaptations can be beneficial for humans as well as cats.

Can cat diseases harm humans? Like other zoonotic illnesses (any

illness that can be passed between animals and humans), cats can transmit bacterial, parasitic, fungal, and viral infections to humans, but these illness vectors are infrequent.

Humans with compromised immune systems are most vulnerable to cat pathogens, as well as to most other sources of infections. Cat bacteria, fleas, digestive tract worms, ringworm, viruses and some types of cancer can be contracted from petting cats, or from their scratches, bites or ingestion of their feces (such as toddlers consuming cat excretions), but they are fairly rare, according to veterinary and zoonotic research reports.

Illnesses, like influenza, are more commonly shared among swine, birds and humans than feline diseases, possibly because cats kept their distance from humans over previous eras. For centuries, Southeast Asian farmers in particular, kept and often still maintain pigs, chickens, ducks and geese in portions of their domiciles.

So, we shouldn't blame cats if they are disdainful of humans. Cats provide much more benefit than harm to people, especially farmers, partly because of their irresistible determination to capture small rodents and their companionship.

Cats can teach us. When I was hunting rabbits around our farmstead and on nearby rental property a few years ago, Smitty gave me a lesson.

I failed to find any rabbits, but when I parked my jeep in our driveway after hunting the entire afternoon, Smitty greeted me. He clutched a large cottontail that he willingly offered to share. I was humbled.

Yup, Smitty got all the parts of the rabbit my family didn't consume for dinner. I learned cats can be devoted to our welfare in unexpected ways. You may have stories to tell as well.

Share your comments with Dr. Mike on: www.agbehavioralhealth.com.

SE Job Link, Yankton Area Literacy Council Officially Form Partnership

Job seekers entering the workforce require strong, transferable skills in today's rapidly changing, technology based economy.

Job seekers who cannot demonstrate those skills create a significant burden on productivity, revenue and competitiveness in businesses across the nation.

The non-profit organization, ProLiteracy, defines literacy as "the ability to read, write, compute and use technology at a level that enables an individual to reach his or her full potential as a parent, employee and community member." The group reports that, in the United States, 14 percent of people over the age of 16 do not have the reading and comprehension skills required to fill out a job application.

Both Southeast Job Link (SEJL) and the Yankton Area Literacy Council (YALC) are non-profit organizations that seek to address the above needs. SEJL is a Career Learning Center, whose purpose is to provide employment training services that meet the needs of employers and job seekers in the region.

As part of its mission and purpose, SEJL provides English as a Second Language (ESL), and Adult Education and Literacy Services (basic skill development and/or GED® attainment) to adults

in Yankton and the surrounding area.

The Yankton Area Literacy Council's (YALC) mission is to improve literacy skills for individuals of all ages through the use of trained volunteers and by expanding community awareness. As an organization, it acts as a referral source for all ages in literacy related services; provides support and materials to individuals and organizations interested in promoting literacy in the community; tutors adults and children in reading, writing, speaking, math and English as a Second Language; and coordinates services with other educational and social service providers to meet the basic needs of the individual(s).

Education towards GED® completion to post-secondary education and on to long-term employment options cannot currently be effectively provided by YALC, and SEJL cannot currently provide literacy services to all members of the community due to funding restrictions prohibiting them from providing services to individuals under the age of 18.

Therefore, in order to provide a broader range of services to a larger group of individuals and to avoid duplication of services, YALC and SEJL have partnered,

with a goal to improve literacy at all levels and to prepare all community members for successful educational and employment opportunities.

Sheri Duke, Director of Southeast Job Link, says, "When we were approached with this opportunity, we were excited to see what could develop; and how combining the strengths of both organizations could benefit more individuals. SEJL's program is funded through the South Dakota Department of Labor (DLR), from whom we receive federal and state funds as part of a local-provider grant under the Workforce Investment Act. The federal AEFLA funds received do outline certain age stipulations for program eligibility."

Through the partnership that Southeast Job Link has with the Department of Labor at both the state and local level, students also have access to a variety of support services that are available to individuals seeking employment, including National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) attainment, youth programs, Job Search Assistance Programs and Work Experiences. "All of SEJL's programming seeks to look beyond the educational attainment and provide assistance to prepare

for the future. The addition of this partnership adds one more component to that," says Director Duke.

While most of the current program participants will not see much of a change, some could attain the benefit of being dual-enrolled in both a YALC and SEJL program. Duke states, "We have several of our current Adult Education students who could use some additional one-on-one assistance after class to reinforce what they are learning. Having tutors available through the Literacy Council to assist these students not only reinforces the learning, but also builds confidence in their abilities. Vice-versa, students that are currently part of the Literacy Council program who are looking

to transition to a GED®, post-secondary program or into employment, could take part in SEJL classes and keep up with the tutoring as well. I can only see a benefit to the students with more individuals helping them seek success."

Additional services that SEJL provides as a component of the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) courses include components such as workplace literacy, financial literacy, college and career readiness, civics courses and self-sufficiency skills (ie: responsibility, courtesy, team building and problem-solving), allowing students to guide their educational experience.

As SEJL takes the reins to begin the coordination duties for the YALC, they will

continue to seek assistance from the Literacy Council Advisory Board and from United Way in guiding the program.

"Just like with any program, there is always room for improvement. However, I want to first learn how things have been running — what worked, what didn't — and get a feel for the program," stated Duke. "Changes will happen over time as we get a feel for student and tutor needs. I look forward to what lies ahead."

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer tutor, or are in need of Adult Education and Literacy services, please contact Sheri Duke at 605-668-3480.

Noem's Office Seeks Summer Interns

WASHINGTON — Rep. Kristi Noem is accepting applications for spring internships in her Washington office, as well as in her offices in Sioux Falls, Rapid City and Watertown.

Student interns in Rep. Noem's office will assist staff with various constituent service and communications projects, as well as assist with legislative research. Both South Dakota and Washington internships provide students with first-hand knowledge of the legislative process and the countless other functions of a congressional office.

College students who are interested in interning in any of Rep. Noem's offices should submit a resume, cover letter and references to Christiana. Frazee@mail.house.gov by April 20.

For more information, contact Christiana Frazee at 202-225-2801.

25th Anniversary Celebration

Mr. and Mrs. Hoffman

Russell & Lori (Washburn) Hoffman of Mission Hill, SD, request a card shower to celebrate their

25th wedding anniversary.

The couple was married in Yankton, SD, on April 14, 1990.

They have six children and six grandchildren.

Greetings may be sent to P.O. Box 122, Mission Hill, SD, 57046.

50th Anniversary Celebration



Mr. and Mrs. Sampson

Les and Judy Sampson of Viborg, SD will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on April 4, 2015.

Les Sampson and Judy Lundgren were married on April 4, 1965 at the Hurley Methodist Church, Hurley, SD.

An open house will be held on Sunday, April 12, 2015 at the Viborg Community Center from 2-5pm.

The event will be hosted by their family.

Greetings may be sent to: P.O. Box 114, Viborg, SD 57070

The couple requests no gifts.



The first step to being prepared for severe weather is knowing when it's about to hit.

If you have a weather radio in your home you'll have advance warning when severe weather is heading toward you.

The Press & Dakotan and both locations of Kopetsky's Ace Hardware will be giving away a weather radio (\$37.99 value) to two lucky readers.

Just fill out the entry form and drop it at either Kopetsky's Ace Hardware. Locations are 2404 Broadway or 103 W. 3rd St. by Tuesday, April 15, 2015.

A winner will be drawn from each location and announced on the Severe Weather Awareness page running in the April 20 Press & Dakotan in conjunction with Severe Weather Awareness Week in South Dakota.

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