

# PAWS4 A CAUSE

## Helping Pets Get Home in McLean County

**Q**uick! Name the most popular pet in America. Did you say dogs? You probably did.

Technically, the answer is fish, but more households have at least one dog in them than any other pet, which makes dogs the most popular pet in the world. There are nearly 75 million pet dogs in America alone!

Is there a dog in your home? Do you smile when you see a dog riding in the car next to you—head out the window, tongue hanging out, the wind ruffling its fur? Do you secretly smile to yourself when you see a little child playing with a puppy, perhaps remembering your favorite childhood pet? It seems like almost everybody does.

But do you really love dogs? Meet Sally and Kendra. They really love dogs. They love dogs so much that in 2016, they founded Paws 4 A Cause, a non-profit that works toward a goal of creating "no fill" animal shelters.

Co-Founder Sally Krostal explains, "Our mission at Paws 4 A Cause is to make sure that every pet in our community has a home and can get back home if they get lost. We work with the local rescues and shelters to find homes for homeless pets and make FREE ID Tags to help pets get home."

"We put a lot of focus on dogs from McLean County Animal Control (MCAC) because they are an open admission



Photo courtesy of Justin Miller

shelter and have the tightest limits on space. We support any rescue that transfers dogs from MCAC. Our motto is not to talk about "no-kill" shelters, but to work toward a "no fill" model, in which shelters simply aren't full because every pet has a home or has an ID tag to get home. Living in a crowded, kennel environment is very stressful for animals. The sooner we can get them into a foster or forever home, the healthier they will be, and the less damage that will have to be undone."

Sally has been working with dogs for over 40 years as a trainer, groomer, and founder of the Urban Carnivore, a

Health Food Store for Dogs and Cats. Sally founded Urban Carnivore about 15 years ago because she believed there were tremendous benefits to feeding dogs fresh foods over processed foods. More and more pet owners are sharing her belief as raw diets have been growing in popularity nationwide.

Kendra founded Nilla's Tub Do It Yourself Dog Wash and Health Food Store in October of 2014 and Karley Eash assumed ownership of the store in 2017. When Sally decided to close the doors of The Urban Carnivore in 2015, she asked Kendra if she would be



interested in taking over the Health Food side of things, and since Kendra has been in preventative health for 15 years, it was a perfect fit. They soon discovered a shared passion for helping shelter animals find their forever homes. Their vision led to the creation of Paws 4 A Cause in 2016. Now officially a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, Paws 4 A Cause operates with just a few volunteers and donations from the community.

"The biggest factor is helping shelter animals get adopted is visibility," Kendra says. "At Paws 4 A Cause, we take an adoptable shelter dog on a 'Puptown Adventure' every week." These Friday afternoon adventures alternate between trips to Uptown Normal and trips to Downtown Bloomington. "Each Adventure starts with a bath, donated by Nilla's Tub. After their bath, we put a donated 'Adopt Me' vest and a bow tie on the lucky dog and head out on a walk in either Uptown or Downtown."

"The businesses in both areas are happy to let us bring the dogs in to cool down (or warm up, depending on the season). Some of them even make special treats just for their Puptown Adventure guests. At Lunker's in Uptown Normal, owner Angel Rosencrans makes "Adopt-A-Burgers" for us and takes photos when we're there. These Adventures give us a good look at the dog's personality, which helps us to provide a better description and make a better match to their foster or forever homes."

Puptown Adventures just celebrated their first anniversary in July. Since the Adventures began, 37 dogs have found their forever homes as a direct result of being seen out and about around town. Since all the dogs can't go out on an Adventure, Paws 4 A Cause posts photos and videos on their Facebook page and links to the profiles of adoptable pets at MCAC. The publicity helps families review the animals that are available for adoption and go and visit the ones that would be the best fit for their home.

Finding good foster homes for the shelter dogs (and other animals) is an essential step toward the Paws 4 A Cause goal of a "no fill" shelter world. "There are several reputable, well-organized rescues in the area," Kendra says. "Each rescue operation has a unique foster family application, which you can find on their respective websites."

"On Wednesday nights, we take one of the shelter dogs to the agility class at Creations Dog Training," Kendra



*Abbey Jo starts her puptown adventure with a bath at Nilla's Tub.*



*Paws 4 A Cause received the Community Hero's Award at the Wish Bone Canine Rescue Wine and Wishes Gala. L-R: Sally Krostal, Margie King, Jennifer Jordan, Kendra Duquette, and Angel Rosencrans*



*Zach has just found his "pawfect" family.*





Don't shop,  
Adopt



ra says. "We choose a well-tempered dog who just needs to build up some confidence. The agility classes offer a great opportunity to raise visibility for that particular dog and for our organization. The dogs all enjoy the classes and the chance to meet new friends."

Paws 4 A Cause gets lots of inquiries about volunteering for their organization, but Sally says that the best way to help is to volunteer at an area shelter or to become a foster family. "The biggest objection we hear when we ask people to foster a pet is that they will be too sad when the animal gets adopted and they have to say goodbye. But we flip the script on that objection. When you foster a pet, you're really helping two homeless animals—the one you foster, AND the one that gets to take their spot in the shelter that they're leaving. Fostering is the best way to help the most homeless pets!"

While they operate with just a few volunteers and funding that comes exclusively from donations, Paws 4 A Cause still attends as many pet-related community events as they can. There are two more volunteers, Jennifer Jordan and Margie King, who help at the events by offering free ID tags for your pets (donations are welcome!), and Sally provides nail trims on the spot for just \$5. "Those nail trims are actually our biggest source of donations," she says, "although sometimes we get money from private donors and donations directly from our Facebook page."

Nilla's Tub has offered support for Paws 4 A Cause since the beginning, and Karley continues to support their mission. "I love my job," she says. "I've been helping shelter dogs since I was in college. I have three dogs of my own, and I often have a foster dog from Wish Bone Canine Rescue. I enjoy the connections I get to make with our customers and their pets, and I am happy to donate baths to Paws 4 A Cause and to make donations to our other animal rescue organizations."

"Because of our generous donors, Paws 4 A Cause doesn't have a lot of overhead costs, so when our donations exceed our expenses, we give back to the other animal rescue organizations," says Sally. "We recently donated eight rope harness leads to Wish Bone, and we make regular donations to the animal health fund at MCAC."

"Exposure is key to helping shelter animals find their forever homes," Kendra says. "We would like to see a world of "no fill" shelters. A world where every adoptable animal has a loving home. Ultimately, we'd like to create a successful animal rescue model that other communities can replicate."

If you'd like to help Paws 4 A Cause help animals in need, volunteer at an area shelter, apply to be a foster family, or follow them on Facebook and share their posts.

**Learn more about Paws 4 A Cause on Facebook at [facebook.com/bnpawsforacause](https://facebook.com/bnpawsforacause). Nilla's Tub is located at 211 Landmark Dr., Suite B-1, across from Sherman's in Normal and is open Wednesday through Sunday. No appointment is necessary. For more information, call 309-451-9274, visit [NillasTub.com](https://NillasTub.com) and follow them on Facebook.**

By Julie Workman