



He's Got Talent

Youngster befriends animals in need

Micah Staub knows how it feels to be different: The tall, strapping 12-year-old's learning disabilities have made him the frequent subject of teasing throughout his life. But rather than becoming bitter, Micah has opened his heart to others who are different—a bulldog pup with spina bifida, a blind pug, and frightened puppy mill dogs who have never known human affection.

The easygoing Paris, Ill., boy is one of six children of Candice Staub and her veterinarian husband, Mike. He has grown up surrounded by the family's pet cats and dogs, as well as foster animals from various rescue groups. Great Danes and pit bulls share space with pugs and poodles, while out back are a passel of potbellied pigs and horses saved from slaughter.

Micah has always deftly handled the rescued dogs, a talent that Candice chalks up to simply not being afraid of them. "The bullying behavior that you see in dogs when they're frightened just didn't register

with Micah," she says. "He would just sit down and scoop [them] up, and the dogs were like 'Oh, OK.'"

The youngster is drawn to the dogs, perhaps because they don't judge, says

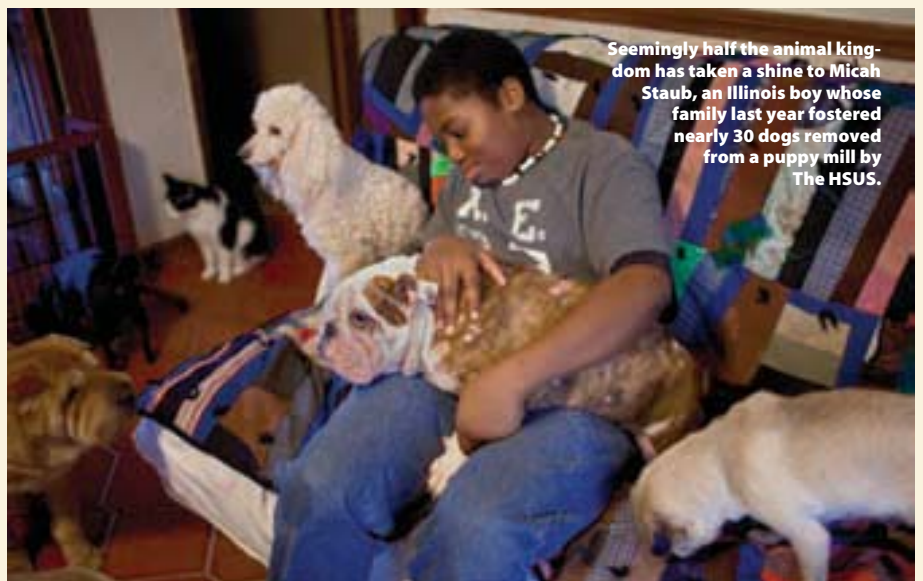
his mother. "He still doesn't have a lot of friends," she says. "... He'd come home [from school] and be upset." But at home "there's constantly a pack of rescue dogs. There's always somebody happy to see him and say 'I want to be your friend.'"

Last December, the Staubs fostered nearly 30 of 122 dogs removed from a Bloomfield, Ind., puppy mill by The HSUS Maddie's Fund Puppy Mill Task Force. Newborn puppies started making their appearance shortly afterwards, boosting the number even higher. "It was all hands on deck," says Candice. Micah took on the role of "official dog walker," spending his free time each day walking neglected animals who had never before touched grass.

The HSUS honored Micah's dedication by naming him an honorary member of the task force and outfitting him with a T-shirt, backpack, leashes, and a letter of recognition. His pride in the gifts was a boon for a boy who "gets so few things that he can be proud of," says his mother.

Micah doesn't do any of this for the ego boost, though; he does it for the dogs. Their treatment at the hands of puppy millers "hurt my heart and my feelings," he wrote in an email to The HSUS. He sees the difference his love and attention have made. "I just like making them happy and [helping them have] fun," he says.

— Arna Cohen



Seemingly half the animal kingdom has taken a shine to Micah Staub, an Illinois boy whose family last year fostered nearly 30 dogs removed from a puppy mill by The HSUS.

THIS PAGE: WHITNEY CURTIS; OPPOSITE PAGE: WILLIAM LEAMAN/ALAMY



Barn Busters

The rescuers had hats, gloves, double-layered jackets, and toe warmers to gird themselves against the cold and damp. The dogs they'd come to free from the dilapidated hog barn had no heat, no light, not even a scrap of newspaper for comfort. The puppy mill owner had jammed old dog food bags into chinks in the metal roof, but rain had melted the bags into paper lumps, and an icy wind blew through the gaps. In a second structure, the urine-soaked floor was collapsing.

An anonymous tip had brought the Marshall County Sheriff's Department and the Tennessee Department of Health's Division of Animal Welfare to this Lewisburg property, where numerous violations of the state's animal cruelty laws were documented. In February, The HSUS Maddie's Fund Puppy Mill Task Force and United Animal Nations responded to the sheriff's request for assistance, working long hours in freezing temperatures to remove 97 dogs and one cat from the appalling conditions typical of a large-scale breeding facility.

Feces-laden cages held bowls of filthy water and moldy food. The dogs suffered from the usual ailments brought on by chronic neglect: severe matting, advanced dental disease, eye and paw injuries, fleas, intestinal parasites. One little poodle's overgrown fur had formed dreadlocks over his entire body, obscuring his vision.

"It was very obvious that these animals weren't being touched," says task force manager Justin Scally. "Their cages were wired shut. There was no way that someone went in there and took off the wires and petted them."

With nutritious food, grooming, and medical care covered by grants from The HSUS, the dogs are thriving and being adopted quickly from the shelters that took custody. The Bowling Green Warren County Humane Society in Kentucky has already found homes for the 15 dogs it sheltered. And Brownie, the dreadlocked poodle cared for by the Nashville Humane Association, is soaking up warmth and attention from his loving new family.

▶ **WATCH A VIDEO** about Brownie's new home at humanesociety.org/magazine.



Guru to the Cars

When mice take up residence inside your car, having a sense of humor helps. Not that it's easy to do. Many people get drawn into Wile E. Coyote-type revenge scenarios, trying to trap or even kill animals who just keep coming back.

That's where Virginia Tech wildlife biologist Kieran Lindsey, who completed her graduate work with The HSUS's help, figures she can make an important contribution. Last year, she volunteered to be the "animal-vehicle biologist" for *Car Talk*, which has nearly 4 million listeners on 550 public radio stations. She provides information on the show's website, responds to emailed questions, and is available just in case the famously silly hosts, Tom and Ray Magliozzi, should ever be stymied by a question of an animal nature.

Since being appointed wildlife guru, Lindsey has dealt with rats chewing the wires that charge electric cars (her advice: keep parking garages clean and the rats will go away), and spiders showing up in the fuel line of a certain model of Mazda (it turned out the company had already recalled cars for adjustments to keep the arachnids out). Also a listener's dream involving Tom, Ray, and a turkey in an engine (she couldn't help with that).

Mainly, Lindsey coaxes people to see their cars through the eyes of the animals who from time to time invade them. Make your vehicle less attractive as habitat, she says, and they'll go away: Clean up fast-food debris and stray Cheerios left by toddlers, and don't store human, pet, or wild bird food in or near your vehicle.

Or you might consider sharing your car, says Ray, only half joking: You drive it during the day. The critters will be waiting for you to return.

"You go into dinner, and they'll go in for a nice, long sleep," he says, laughing. "... It's a wonderful system, and it works very efficiently most of the time."

— Karen E. Lange

**TO THE
RESCUE**

Confronting Cruelty and Saving Lives

Recent HSUS deployments result in new homes for hundreds of animals

► **LOCATION:** Gordon, Alabama

► **ANIMALS SAVED:** 197 dogs and 31 cats

For the chained residents of Dirty Sally's Pet Pals, the scenery was endlessly stark. Circles in the dirt demarcated the extent of their travels. A tree stump revealed how long one dog had been retreading the same spot day after day, his chain rubbing a deep groove into the bark.

Starker still, though, were the physical conditions of these animals owned by people claiming to run an adoption organization. Many had untreated wounds; one with mange had lost his hair to reveal cracked, bleeding skin. Housing, if it existed at all, consisted of dilapidated trailers and feces-ridden outdoor pens. And amidst evidence of others satisfying their thirst—heaps of empty beer and soda cans—were traces of only the slightest sustenance offered to the animals: scummy buckets of rainwater and bits of stale bread.

In spite of this obvious betrayal by humans, most of the 197 dogs and 31 cats eagerly greeted the arrival of HSUS Animal Rescue



HSUS rescuer
Rowdy Shaw

Team members in late February. Assisting the Houston County Sheriff's Department, the team navigated what HSUS director of animal cruelty investigations Adam Parascandola describes as "a sort of hoarders' commune" filled with trash and suffering.

The rescue was the first funded by a \$250,000 Pepsi Refresh grant, which The HSUS won following an online voting campaign. After the aptly named Dirty Sally's relinquished ownership, the animals were brought to an emergency shelter set up in partnership with United Animal Nations; they would eventually be placed for adoption through partnering agencies. As the cats enjoyed fresh food, clean litter

boxes, and soft hammocks, a three-legged shepherd walked up to the side of her cage to wag at HSUS rescuer Rowdy Shaw. Though so terrified during the rescue that she'd almost bitten him, gentle Hannah later won Shaw's heart—and his home, which she now shares.

— **Catherine Hess**

Though he'd already seen images of the property while coordinating the rescue with local officials, The HSUS's Adam Parascandola was overwhelmed by the sight of so many animals starving for food and attention.





HSUS rescuers removed 43 neglected horses from a rundown Texas farm.

► **LOCATIONS:** Lindale, Texas, and Viola, Arkansas

► **ANIMALS SAVED:** 43 and 114 neglected horses, respectively
The kind quarter horse with the Hollywood name and platinum blonde hair is slowly bouncing back from the brink of death.

Doris has put on weight, and her shiny new summer coat is beginning to cover old bald spots. At The HSUS's Doris Day Horse Rescue and Adoption Center in Texas, staff have been building her muscle mass and getting her used to a human's touch.

Named after the new center's benefactor, the palomino has been living up to the honor, notes director Anne Favre; in her films, "Doris Day was kind of a perky, curious, a little bit naughty, and very funny actress who captured the hearts of many."

The young mare was one of 43 neglected horses rescued in December from a decrepit farm in Smith County, Texas, where white skulls and decaying bodies dotted the terrain. The horses were so starved, so desperate, they had taken to eating bark off trees.

The case offered the opportunity to strengthen ties between the Murchison center and its east Texas community. More than 20 horses were placed in new homes, while five were sent to the HSUS facility and 14 more to foster trainers. Some of the latter will attend

the center's grand opening May 14 to participate in a "rescue makeover," showing off just how far they've come.

"Rescued horses aren't old, broken down, worthless animals," says Stacy Segal, HSUS equine cruelty specialist. "They just need the time and the knowledge to become good equine citizens and good partners for people."

An additional 114 horses inched closer to that same second chance with another December rescue, this one from an overrun Arkansas property of a horse trader and auctioneer; three had already died of starvation, while many more were suffering from a respiratory virus called strangles.

As of early March, The HSUS and ASPCA had spent hundreds of thousands caring for the rescued horses, while awaiting a final court disposition with hopes of taking custody and holding an adoption fair.

Ironically, the horses were given safe, temporary housing on the grounds of an abandoned livestock auction, where Baxter County Detention Center inmates assist with their care. Notes HSUS Arkansas state director Desiree Bender: "They're thriving."

— **Michael Sharp**

► **VIEW MORE** photos, videos, and stories about other recent HSUS Animal Rescue Team deployments at [humanesociety.org/magazine](https://www.humanesociety.org/magazine).



After his rescue, Lovie got a little TLC at an emergency shelter.

small mammals needed long-term treatment and care.

The Sacramento SPCA was just the place to provide it, offering an in-house behaviorist, dog trainers, and a large volunteers corps. Enlisted through The HSUS's Placement Partner program, the organization is part of a national network of more than 100 shelters prepared to take in animals following a puppy mill raid, dogfighting bust, natural disaster, or other emergency requiring the assistance of the HSUS Animal Rescue Team.

In Sacramento, TLC for the fearful Kern County dogs included daily walks and socialization from volunteers and staff specially dedicated to their care. The efforts paid off: Dogs who initially wouldn't let anyone near them ended up energetically licking staff members' faces, tails wagging. Many have been adopted, including an elderly Chihuahua whose teeth were green and decayed at the time of the rescue.

"When I first got him, they were calling him Dr. Death because he just looked so bad," says adopter Erin Long-Scott.

Named for Chicago Bears coach Lovie Smith, the dentally challenged pooch faced the equivalent of a fourth and long. When an SPCA veterinarian pulled all but one of his rotten teeth, Lovie's jawbone shattered. The veterinary program at the University of California-Davis, which often partners with the shelter, stepped in to insert a plate connecting Lovie's chin to the back of his jaw, enabling him to chew.

Today, Lovie runs and plays with a kick in his step. Now over his initial grouchiness, he has bonded with the other three dogs in his home; they often cuddle on one pillow. And he has grown to tolerate Long-Scott holding him, touching his feet, and putting her hand in his mouth.

He also loves to hang out under Long-Scott's orange tree and chew on the oranges. When Long-Scott turns on the clothes dryer during cold weather, Lovie rushes outside to sit under the vent for a warm-air "massage."

His jaw's a little crooked, but he smiles a lot. — James Hettinger

California Teamin'

The HSUS and local shelters partner to rescue animals

Last summer, the Sacramento SPCA in California appeared to be hosting a Chihuahua convention.

The little dogs were "parked everywhere," says executive director Rick Johnson, sharing kennel runs and filling cages stacked in an open area. Chihuahuas essentially took over an entire kenneling area, with staff and volunteers attending

to their every need.

Typically housing at least 300 animals, the shelter found itself in July with an unprecedented influx of an additional 158 following an emergency seizure by The HSUS and Kern County Animal Control. Removed from substandard conditions at a property about 300 miles away, the Chihuahuas and other dogs, cats, and

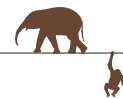
Shelter Spotlight: Sacramento SPCA

adopt

▶ **STATS:** Nearly 100 employees; 1,600-plus volunteers. Cares for 12,500-plus animals yearly.

▶ **SERVICES:** Adoption; dog training; low-cost vaccination and microchip clinics; feral cat and low-cost spay/neuter clinics; pet lost-and-found; humane education.

▶ **SPIRIT OF COLLABORATION:** As a national organization dedicated to ending systemic abuses, The HSUS partners with law enforcement to investigate animal fighting operations, puppy mills, and other cruelty cases. But large rescues would not be possible without places to house and care for the victims. That's where groups like the Sacramento SPCA step in, says executive director Rick Johnson, joining a "collaborative effort that's key to improving the lives of animals in our community."



ANGELS FOR ELEPHANTS—AND ORANGUTANS

"This story is like a fairy tale, except it's entirely true and we don't know yet how it will end," says Academy Award winner Morgan Freeman as he narrates the opening scene of the new IMAX movie *Born to Be Wild 3D*. "But it begins a long time ago, in a land far away, with not one but two real-life fairy godmothers." The documentary follows the remarkable work of this pair of heroes—Biruté Mary Galdikas, who rescues and raises orphaned orangutans in Borneo, and Dame Daphne Sheldrick, who does the same for young elephants in Kenya. And from watching Galdikas share a plate of spaghetti with an orangutan, to seeing a caretaker kindly wrap a blanket around a sleeping young elephant, it's an enchanting, enlightening ride. *Born to Be Wild 3D* hit theaters April 8.

➤ **READ** a Q&A with Galdikas and Sheldrick at humanesociety.org/magazine.

Spay It Forward

It was two days before Valentine's Day and love was in the air at Wisconsin's Madison Area Technical College—along with a healthy dose of playfulness.

While romantic songs from David Cassidy and the Partridge Family played in the background, veterinarian-and-technician teams with names like Hello Kitty, Castration Sensation, and other colorful titles competed for the most creative costumes and monikers.

Silliness aside, the 64 volunteers had a serious purpose: providing spay/neuter surgeries and vaccinations for 86 feral cats. The clinic, hosted by Dane County Friends of Ferals, was just one of more than 650 events held in honor of The HSUS and Humane Society International's 17th annual Spay Day in February. More than 460 event organizers participated, resulting in more than 52,000 pets worldwide who won't contribute to overpopulation.

"As most of us in the biz know, Spay Day is every day," says HSUS senior project manager Vicki Stevens. "But when you do something every day, it's not news. When you take one day to highlight it, then it becomes something people pay attention to."

The lifesaving message spread across the U.S. and 43 other countries. In Manhattan's Lower East Side, The HSUS, ASPCA, and Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals joined forces for a Spay Day fair. Pet owners lined up before dawn for free spay/neuter surgeries, vaccinations, microchips, and pet food. For volunteer veterinarians like Eileen Jefferson, the best moments occurred when people who'd come for the shots ended up scheduling surgeries.

In addition to combating animal homelessness, the Spay Day clinics educate "the future of veterinary medicine" about pet overpopulation issues, says veterinarian Susan Krebsbach, founder of Dane County Friends of Ferals and consultant for the Humane Soci-



ety Veterinary Medical Association. HSVMA and its student chapters helped fund and staff several events, including one in Corvallis involving Oregon State University students and the Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon.

"We don't touch animals in the first year," says student Laura Niman, vice president of OSU's HSVMA chapter. "So it's nice to be able to get out and remind ourselves why we're doing this."

For some students, it could be a career-deciding experience. At least that's what FCCO operations director Leah Kinnon hopes: "Spay junkies," veterinarians adept at the surgeries, are needed for the nation's growing number of high-volume clinics, she says.

That makes recruitment especially critical, says Krebsbach. "Anything that can be done to make an impact on the almost 4 million animals who are put down every year because there's not enough homes for them is, to me, one of the greatest things I can do."
—Julie Falconer



Texas' Dirty Secret

Perhaps angered by a recent loss, the cockfighter had a friend hold a rooster upside down by the feet. He then clubbed the helpless bird to death with a heavy tree branch.

The horrifying scene was videotaped during The HSUS's yearlong cockfighting investigation in Texas, which uncovered nearly 20 fighting pits in just one region and the desperate need to strengthen the state's law against the blood sport.

"I think that people in Texas were horrified to know that this was happening in the shadows," says John Goodwin, HSUS director of animal cruelty policy. "Most people there abhor cockfighting, and we saw an outpouring of support for this legislation when we put a spotlight on the issue."

The investigation led to two raids—81 birds were rescued in Dallas, 44 more in Tyler—and revealed additional crimes, from gambling to drugs to prostitution. "People even had their children there being exposed to all this," Goodwin says.

State legislators are considering a ban on attending cockfights, breeding or possessing a rooster with the intent to fight, and owning fighting paraphernalia like the sharp knives that are tied to a bird's legs. HSUS officials are also advocating for a tougher law in Alabama, where a \$50 maximum fine does little to deter participants who can win upwards of \$20,000 a weekend.

Such legislation makes crimes against animals a greater community priority. In West Virginia, an HSUS-backed felony law against dogfighting paid off in January with the first arrest since its passage. The Calhoun County Sheriff's Department contacted The HSUS upon finding 19 scarred and suffering dogs chained behind the home of a deceased man. The organization helped analyze the scene and identify a second suspect, who was arrested.

"Hopefully, it's going to be something that other law enforcement in West Virginia can look to and say that cases can be done," says Chris Schindler, HSUS manager of animal fighting investigations, "and that they can get help."

— **Michael Sharp**

▶ **WATCH A VIDEO** of the cockfighting investigation at humansociety.org/magazine.



Last Chance for Lions

The argument advanced by trophy hunters goes like this: To save African lions, we have to let a few rich Americans shoot them. The money that hunters pay to kill a lion on safari—up to \$75,000 or more—will benefit local communities in Africa, persuading them to protect lion habitat and stop shooting, spearing, snaring, and poisoning animals who attack their livestock.

But The HSUS, Humane Society International, and other animal protection groups don't buy it. In March, they filed a petition with the U.S. Department of the Interior to classify lions as endangered. That would make it a crime to import trophies such as hides and heads. And that would discourage Americans, who make up the majority of trophy hunters in Africa, from shooting an animal whose numbers have declined to the point some scientists believe the species may disappear from the wild.

The trouble with the trophy hunters' reasoning is that shooting one young adult male lion sentences to death a half dozen or more animals and disrupts an entire pride, according to lion expert Craig Packer of the University of Minnesota. That's because a new male will move in and kill all the dead male's cubs. The mothers then go into heat and bear the new male's cubs.

After years of research in Tanzania, one of a dozen countries where lion trophy hunting takes place, Packer proposed that hunters kill only males age 6 and up, whose first-born cubs would already be grown and so wouldn't be killed by new males moving in. But except for Niassa Reserve in Mozambique, this plan hasn't yet been successfully implemented. That's why Packer supports the petition. "There has to be an honest attempt to really work towards conservation of the population, not merely to try and shoot as many lions as they can," he says. "This proposal now puts pressure on the hunting operators to clean up their act."

— **Karen E. Lange**