

Northwoods Humane Society – Nancy Douglas – Volunteer

“Isn’t it noisy up there?” is usually the first question people ask when they hear that my housemate Donna Post and I live above the Northwoods Humane Society. “Well,” I usually reply, “it’s kind of like living near train tracks...”

But that’s not a bad thing! In the same way that you learn to ignore the engines, or use them to mark the time, we get our wake-up barks when the dogs are let out to play at 7:00 or 8:00 am — and sometimes we sleep right through. We can tell when a bunch of howling hounds arrive or new yippy small dogs or a big deep barker. But it never feels annoying, just interesting. Looking out my bedroom window is like live doggy TV for my little dog.

We don’t hear the dogs at all when they’re inside. We have a great view out our front windows. We see people arrive in the parking lot and come out later with their big smiles and newly-adopted dogs and cats. We also see the wonderfully reliable staff and volunteers walking dogs for exercise and socialization. We can see some of the dogs owned by the public romping in the Large Dog Park, and I can easily walk my small terrier mix, Eliza, down to the Small Dog Park to run as much as she wants.

In the snowy weather, the Humane Society entrance road and parking lot always get plowed, and the kind staff often shovel around our car! We are so darn lucky! When the grass is growing, staff and volunteers mow it. We have our own small area for our potted plants. And we even have a dumpster nearby.

In the past, we volunteered in the cat rooms early in the morning; now, though I must admit it would be convenient, but we sleep in! And our apartment used to be for the caretaker, but now the rent is just income for the shelter. We do feel a responsibility to keep an eye on things when staff are not around, of course, and we’ve called them in the past when we’ve seen anything questionable.

We often get to see the meet and greets when potential families bring their pet to the shelter to meet a possible new family member and we cheer when it goes well. We see some tears when there is a surrender. We watch Glenda and Bob work with the dogs each day and see the cats in their outdoor play yards lounging. It is a great environment.

We have one small dog and one large cat we’ve adopted from the shelter. We’re also fostering a parakeet for a grandson ‘til Christmas. We even had some goldfish for a while. We got them for a tub outside but brought them in for the winter, of course. Then the outside water feature wasn’t working well, so we kept them in year-round. The cat, Felix, enjoyed drinking from the fish tank, but it was a fair amount of work to keep the tank clean and well-balanced. So finally we posted it on Hayward Buy and Sell, and found them a new happy home. Now Felix has a beautiful large bowl where the fish tank was, with a Lego shark in it, and he is reconciled to drinking there without his fish.

NHS Note: When the NHS Shelter was originally built, the apartment was included so that there would always be someone on site for the animals. The thought was that there would be a rent for work arrangement, which sometimes worked and sometimes it was challenging – it depended on the people. The current arrangement is perfect. There is definitely a sense of family and trust and the animals have someone looking out for them 24/7.

Dates to Save: December 2 – My Villa – Shopping for NHS – 10 am to 4 p.m.
December 2 – Hurricanes Holiday Fare – NHS Bake Sale – 9 am to 3 pm. – Hayward High School
December 6 – NHS volunteer party – Out of the Woods Winery – 3:30 pm – 6 p.m.