

New play area improves quality of life at the Municipal Dog Pound



By Nate Smelle

Cold wintry weather didn't stop a crowd of 25 animal lovers from gathering at the Municipal Dog Pound on Monck Road in Bancroft to honour local animal lover and activist Cathy Archambault and the team of hard-working volunteers who worked alongside her while constructing a new dog run and play area for the animals staying at the shelter. Her crew consisted of Dave, John, and Kenny Bowers, James Anderson, Josh Brown, Jeff Graf, Genny Humby, Julie Kamyk, Dan and Wendy Lindembach, and Bob MacDonald. Thanks to the hard work of these individuals, and the generous donation by Archambault from the estate of her mother Lorna Irene Kerr Archambault, the pound now has an outside run and play area for rescued animals to enjoy.

"This didn't happen alone," said Archambault.

"It took many people to make this happen. I took on the responsibility for squaring up the yard, pegging the area, getting the project priced out, organizing for those who would be my committed workers and volunteers, helping to put in the post holes with the propane auger, and assisting with the fencing and the capping of the poles."

The project wouldn't have been possible without the helping hands of the many people who came out to do their part, she said. Archambault took time during her dedication to express her gratitude to each of the volunteers who generously gave their time to bring the project to fruition.

"My Mom died three years ago today," said Archambault.

"She was a great animal lover. Buddy was our dog rescued from the Toronto pound where I used to live. So I decided that I would like to use some money from Mom's estate to do something to help the animals in Mom's and Buddy's memory. So we now have along with the Pound, a new great area behind me here, where the dogs can run and play freely some of the time that they are here awaiting their family or new owners of their forever home. I am sure Mom is very pleased! It was completed over a year ago."

Archambault dedicated the new space to her mother and their old dog Buddy. She decided to host the official unveiling of the dog's new play space on Dec. 11, the third anniversary of her mother's death. She described her mother as a caring and compassionate woman who was a lifelong friend to all animals. She remembers her often referring to dogs as "angels without wings."

"My hope is that in the future people will take proper care of their animals, meeting all of their physical and social needs. When a dog is just abandoned, without anyone knowing his name, age or medical history, it is cruel to that animal and unfair to those who are trying to provide care and find a new home."

With so many animals abused and abandoned throughout the area Archambault considers our community very lucky to have the Municipal Dog Pound and such active animal welfare organizations like Home Again and HART here in the Bancroft area.

?Our dog catchers, Rob Elstone and Wayne Galloway help bring these dogs here to this safe place and are very caring and compassionate guys.?

Elstone said the difference in the facility now compared to when he started is like night and day. He is very grateful for Archambault's donation and how the new space has improved the quality of life of the animals he rescues.

?It's just common sense,? said Elstone, ?if there is an animal that is hurt, or in need than you help it. It won't go away if you just turn your back on it. That's how I was raised. This new play area will make things a lot better for the dogs that come here now.?

Like for Elstone, the decision whether or not to help an animal-in-need is an easy one for Archambault. She sees great value in loving, and being loved by an animal companion. As with her mother, Archambault's affinity with all animals is more than just an infatuation with all things cute and cuddly...it also helps shape her understanding of spirituality.

?I believe that all creatures, great and small, are a very special part of our world,? she said.

?They are God's unique creation and ?gift' to humanity. Domesticated animals are our heroes, our helpers, our loyal companions, our best friends. They have saved lives in times of peace and war, comforted the old, the sick, and the lonely. They brighten the eyes of a child, make us laugh and cry, provide a reason to take a good long walk, and teach us how to live and how to love. We have the utmost responsibility to treat our earth and all creation with respect and humility, being good stewards of this planet and all of its inhabitants. Owning an animal is a privilege, not a right!?

The Municipal Dog Pound serves the dogs and people of the Bancroft, Faraday, Hastings Highlands, Highlands East and Wollaston; providing a safe and caring environment for lost dogs waiting to be re-united with their family. The pound is located at 326 Monck Road in Bancroft, and is open Monday to Saturday from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

For more information or if you have found a dog that needs to be rescued contact (613) 332-2755, or visit www.municipaldogpound.com.

Donations and volunteers are always appreciated.