

2021: Dubuque National Service Recognition Award Nomination Form

Category nominated for: Volunteer Service Impact Award

Name of nominee/member: Laura Feipel

National Service Program and/or host organizations: Dubuque Regional Humane Society

Nominator Name: Holly Schmidt, Volunteer Manager

Please tell us a little about the background and personal circumstances relating to the individual or organization being nominated for the award:

Laura began volunteering at an animal shelter 9 years ago before moving to Dubuque. By cleaning kennels for hundreds of dogs and socializing those animals that needed more attention, her service in that shelter was vital to the needs of the animals and community.

After moving back to the Dubuque area and getting settled in with her rescue dog, Sadie, Laura knew the first activity she wanted to get involved in was helping homeless dogs in the community. Laura excitedly began her volunteer service with the Dubuque Regional Humane Society in August 2016.

Please tell us about the service effort relating to the Nominee. Please include what have they done and how long have they volunteered, how frequently, how many hours, etc:

As this nomination is being written, Laura is at the DRHS facilitating a potential adopter visitation adding to her 3389 hours of service since August of 2016.

In her daily routine, Laura assists in leading the Morning Walk Crew; a program which provides routine morning exercise and enrichment to canines awaiting forever homes. Later in the day, Laura returns to the DRHS on those really busy days (and many others) to assist in adoption meet and greets, dog introductions, kennel care, enrichment, and so much more. Laura always jumps in wherever she sees a need and has a way of uplifting any environment. The DRHS regularly attends community events where Laura is happy to introduce adoptable dogs to visitors and share the story of animals looking for homes.

In October of 2018, Laura decided to graciously open her home to dogs needing additional care in a foster home. Since then, she has fostered a mom and puppies and several dogs with extensive socialization or medical needs.

In the last year, Laura began an additional venture with the DRHS by learning our recording software. This allows her to set up up the digital intake and medical process for animals being transported in from overcrowded shelters throughout the United States. This helps streamline the time it takes for staff to have the information they need to get the animals ready for adoption. Not only does Laura complete this time consuming task, she also comes to the DRHS on transport days to assist in kennel setup and intake of animals off the truck. After all those animals are off the truck and getting settled into their temporary homes, Laura buzzes around the shelter collecting fecal samples from the newcomers to ensure they are healthy prior to adoption. She also recently learned to prepare these samples for microscopic testing which allows our vet team to rapidly diagnose and treat animals.

How has the Nominee made a significant contribution to a population, organization, or community through their volunteer service:

Because of Laura's continual efforts to our no-kill animal resource center and shelter, 1190 cats and dogs have been transported to the DRHS. Before even arriving to Dubuque, Laura ensures all animals have digital intake and medical records which allows staff to adequately prepare for their arrival. Through these transports, families in our tri-state community and beyond were able to provide homes for over a thousand lost, abandoned, and unwanted animals from over-crowded shelters.

How has the Nominee demonstrated exceptional initiative and involvement in their community:

Not only does Laura volunteer her time inside the shelter, she is also an integral volunteer for our community outreach program. This entails attending and promoting community events, usually with a dog in hand. Through these events, the DRHS is able to reach more of the Dubuque population, providing access to those unable to visit our building. Recently the DRHS purchased an adoption trailer to further our community outreach. The trailer will assist the DRHS in uniting

Dubuque community members with adoptable animal companions. This trailer was sponsored in part by Laura who believes there is a great need for this resource in our community.

How has the nominee demonstrated a spirit of service among groups of people and organizations:

Laura is an exemplary leader in the volunteer program by dedicating additional service time to mentoring new volunteers. This ensures these new volunteers have the support they need to have success in their future service. Due to Laura's exceptional character, many volunteers and staff gain confidence and enthusiasm during sometimes grueling tasks.

How has the nominee displayed exemplary dedication and commitment to their volunteer service?:

Laura's dedication to the mission of the DRHS shows through her completion of over 100 service hours each month. Laura devotes her time to the shelter almost daily and even several times a day if needs arise in the shelter. She is always just a phone call away no matter the time of day.