



May 5, 2013

Regarding: Request for Emergency Financial Assistance/President's Fund

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to request funding to offset the nearly \$2,000 in expenses related to our unforeseen move.

In April 2012, Dogs Forever moved to a rental space at 3800 Wilson Avenue SW, which we used as a state licensed no-kill dog shelter until the last week of February, 2013. Penny Novak of Skogman Realty helped us secure this location, which had a number of benefits:

- The rent was \$500, a great find in the Cedar Rapids commercial rental market.
- We were not required to pay utility deposits or a rental deposit.
- We could rent month-to-month.

By late fall 2012 we knew it was time to look for another facility. While we had only been at 3800 Wilson Ave. for a matter of months, we felt we had no choice but to move due to circumstances that made it difficult to conduct business:

- Despite the fact that we paid our rent in a timely manner, the landlord did not always pay the utilities. We were without electricity (leaving us without air conditioning and lights) for several days in the summer and twice during the winter (leaving us without heat and lights).
- On more than one occasion the man who rented the space adjoining ours was seen by volunteers late at night "entertaining" people. This had us concerned for the safety of dogs and volunteers.
- One night a Dogs Forever volunteer found the front door (used by a third business, a church) was unlocked. We did not have a key. We called the landlord and her building manager but neither could be reached. Our volunteer jerry-rigged the front door so that she would hear anyone entering the building. She stayed that night and slept with the dogs to be sure they were safe. We finally had a call from the building manager later the following day.
- We were without hot water (making it difficult to clean kennels) and without a working light in our storage room. It took weeks before we could get permission from our landlord to make these repairs and take it off of our rent.

- One morning around 7 a.m. we had a call from the volunteer on the morning shift at our shelter. There was something wrong with the lock and she could not enter. We called a locksmith who came and fixed the lock, allowing the volunteer to enter the building and care for our dogs. The locksmith charged us a mere \$50 (his normal fee is \$100+) and when we asked to have this amount subtracted from our rent the landlord said, "You're stealing from me."

Although we knew it would create a burden on our finances, we had no choice but to move. We relocated to 809 and 817 Rockford Road SW in Cedar Rapids on the third Saturday of February 2013. We are renting two small side-by-side buildings.

Because of our move, we have been faced with expenses that we did not encounter at our last location, mainly large deposits:

\$75 water/sewer at 809 building

\$275 electric at 809 building

\$150 electric at 817 building

\$1350 rental

\$1850 Total Deposits

We now owe our veterinarian \$2,000 because the money normally assigned for medical expenses was used for the deposits. Dogs Forever is a small volunteer-driven not-for-profit and we do not have large amounts of cash on-hand at any given time. Our projected total income for 2013 is \$35,000. Our 2012 total income was \$31,151.78, expenses were \$29,984.57 and net income was \$1,167.21.

We knew that renting a facility for \$1,350 when we were used to \$500 would be a challenge. But we shopped around with Penny Novak's help and the building we are now renting is by far the best match for our needs (a dog shelter is only allowed in limited areas of the city) and was affordable in comparison to other rentals on the market. We believed that the only way we could stay in business was to rent the 809/817 Rockford Road location.

Support from the President's Fund will make a huge difference in the life of our young organization. I appreciate this chance to submit a request on behalf of Dogs Forever.

Sincerely,

Nancy Crist
Vice President
Dogs Forever



Organization Background

Dogs Forever is a 501c(3) founded in March 2011 by Mike and Nancy Crist, who have 20 years of combined animal welfare experience. Dogs Forever operates a no-kill dog shelter, Safe Place, on the SW side of Cedar Rapids as well as 10 state-licensed foster homes. We accept dogs of all breeds, sizes and ages, but have a special focus on senior dogs and dogs with medical needs. We sometimes take dogs at risk of being euthanized at Cedar Rapids Animal Control but more often the dogs come from Cedar Rapids area residents who are facing a financial or health crisis and can no longer care for their dog. We are an all-volunteer organization; we have no paid staff. Three shifts of volunteers come to Safe Place each day to walk, feed and socialize dogs.

Board of Directors

Mike Crist, President & Treasurer

Nancy Crist, Vice President

Kim Ketelsen, Secretary

Fulfilling a Need

Eastern Iowa needs an alternative to killing adoptable dogs. Our organization meets that need. We often take senior dogs or dogs with treatable illnesses that other shelters euthanize because they will not invest the time or money to provide treatment. By bringing dogs back to a healthy state, we are providing a service that is lacking at the two shelters in the Cedar Rapids area.

Dogs Forever also provides elderly and low-income people in the Cedar Rapids area with an alternative to surrendering their dog to Cedar Rapids Animal Control, which charges a fee of \$50 per dog, and euthanizes dogs at the staff's discretion. This is often an unmanageable amount of money for elderly and low-income populations who are also worried that their dog will be euthanized. Cedar Valley Humane Society is not an alternative either, as they will not accept Cedar Rapids dogs because the city has its own shelter (animal control).

Projects

Through Dogs Forever's Seniors for Seniors program, seniors can adopt a senior dog (seven years and older) without paying a fee. All dogs are spayed/neutered, current on vaccinations, and have been treated for all health issues. Once adopted, a Dogs Forever volunteer will transport the adopted dog to vet visits if the owner is unable to do so. In the event that the adopter's health declines and they can no longer care for their dog, Dogs Forever will find the dog a new home.