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The rescue squad

Alumni and faculty who act on animals' behalf



They love dogs. Or cats. Or horses. Or – well, they just love animals.

Plenty of alumni, faculty and staff of the Law School spend their off hours making a better life for the animals they love. A sampling finds them putting their time, their money and their hearts into four-legged life – and reaping inhuman rewards.

Ginger Schröder '90, a well-established labor lawyer in Buffalo, made the cover of *Upstate Super Lawyers* magazine recently in a feature about the equine and poultry farm where she lives in rural Cattaraugus County. Amid the ducks and chickens, she has – at this point – eight horses that she bought at auction to save them from the slaughterhouse.

They include off-track thoroughbreds, a couple of work horses, a “big paint,” and a spotted draft horse in which she has invested north of \$30,000 in medical treatment and trainer’s fees. The farm goes through 1,700 bales of hay a year and employs a full-time caretaker/trainer.

“The ultimate goal is for me to give them forever homes,” Schröder says. “If I found the appropriate circumstances, I might be willing to let them go to another person, but I would essentially lease them so I could keep my eye on them.”

Lucinda Finley, Frank G. Raichle Professor of Trial and Appellate Advocacy, a rider and horse owner since forever, co-founded Finger Lakes Finest Thoroughbreds to help find good homes for post-career racehorses from Finger Lakes Race Track. Founded in 2011, the group has placed more than 650 horses.

“Racehorse trainers are immersed in their little world,” Finley says. “If they have a horse that’s done racing or is not working out, for too long they really didn’t know what to do with them. Organizations like mine help fill that gap.”



Ginger Schröder bought these horses at auction to save them from the slaughterhouse.

That means taking photos and videos of available horses, writing them up for the group’s website and Facebook page, even arranging transportation.

Finley herself is not immune to their charms: She owns six horses, five of them off-the-track thoroughbreds.

Karen R. Kaczmarek '89, associate dean and director of development, has been on the board of the SPCA Serving Erie County for more than a decade. Much of her work focuses on development efforts with the organization, which is in the midst of a \$9 million capital campaign.

“It’s not just about rescuing animals,” Kaczmarek says. “It’s about humane treatment of all creatures. It’s the idea of protecting animals that can’t protect themselves, or that are sadly abused.”

She herself is partial to cats, and says she adopted her first SPCA cat while she was a law student. How many does she have now? “Too many!” she says.

Down the hall, **Jill M. Domagala**, assistant director of development programs, runs canine operations for Pets Alive of Western New York and serves on the organization’s board.

Pets Alive takes dogs from individuals and, mostly, from overcrowded shelters, and works to find homes for them. Domagala oversees the foster program, “making a determination of sending

this dog here or moving this dog there if something is not working out in that foster home.” And doing intake work, making veterinarian appointments, dealing with behavior issues, checking out prospective adopters . . . the list goes on.

She has three dogs herself, and knows how emotional it can be to foster a dog. “You hate seeing the bad things, the sad things,” she says. “But when there’s that happy ending and you know you’ve had a part in making that happen, that’s what makes it rewarding.”

Lisa Patterson, associate dean for career services, has just one dog. But Abby, a 3-year-old black Lab mix, does important work.

At exam time and during bar review season, Patterson brings Abby to O’Brian Hall as an unofficial therapy dog. “When we know students are coming out of the exam rooms, we’ll walk the hallways or hang out in the lobby,” Patterson says.

Sometimes you just need to pet a dog. Especially when it looks like the laptop software has eaten your final exam. Patterson tells of one student who came out white as a ghost, and while the IT team worked to retrieve her hard work, she sat on the floor and hugged Abby the whole time.