Penny Lane is in Our Hearts

“As told by Kelly, Penny’s mom.

We had just moved into our new home in April, 2020. One day later, my daughters and I visited the Humane Society of Manatee County. I was on a mission to find a black lab to be our new protector and anytime snuggler. The adoption hours on this day were 10 AM - 5 PM by Appointment. We brought home a black and white colored cat named Josephine and we had our hopes set on a new black lab. My kids were excited and I thought: “at least we got a cat”.

The staff was nice and we really didn’t think too much about the little white coded cat who was sitting on top of her cage. We simply asked: “Who’s the best one you’ve got here?” Without hesitation, they said: “Josephine” and took us back to meet her. Ugh, a Pit Bull. “No way” was my first thought. The first thing the staff did was bring her into a room and immediately she flipped over her back and began to lick with excitement. My kids started petting and talking sweet to her and the tail and tongue wags began to escalate. “She sure was friendly, I’ll give her that”, I thought.

The next step was to take Josephine home for a four night, no obligation slumber party. “Why not, I thought” and besides, my two daughters weren’t leaving there empty leashed. When my husband received my text as to what breed she was, it went silent. “Oh great, I thought, this is going to go over well”.

As we drove home she peered happily out the back passenger side window. During this trek back to our house, the girls decided to name her Penny…Penny Lane.

As we opened the door to our home, Miss Penny Lane ran directly to the middle of our L shaped couch, hopped up on a heap of pillows and made herself right at home. Over the next few days, the cat gave Penny a beating on her nose, creating scratches and scabs. Even Libby began barking for several days in discontent and went silent. “Oh great, I thought, this is going to go over well”.

Here we are one year, two months, and a never-ending pandemic later, and it seems like we have always had her. Penny Lane is the sweetest, gentlest, and most loving cuddle-bug I’ve ever known. Needless to say she is here for the long haul, a part of our family, our protector and anytime snuggler. We know every dog is different, but what we found in Penny Lane has changed our minds and hearts for this breed from here forward.”

As told by Kelly, Penny’s mom.
When Amy Taylor started volunteering at HSMC four years ago, she could not have imagined the turns her life would take. The Second Chance Adoption Center was able to reduce the shelter animal population by 50 percent capacity by quickly finding foster homes for many shelter animals. The veterinary clinic reduced operating capacity to 60 percent in order to allow for increased safety protocols and procedures. The shelter and clinic have remained open to the public, providing the essential services our community’s animals need and deserve. We remained fully staffed throughout this challenging time. We continue to plan for the future. HSMC’s purchase of 2407 & 2411 14th Street W. was completed; this purchase increases our total lot size and building square footage by 30 percent. This was, perhaps, the only opportunity to expand our campus to meet the growing needs in the community and boldly plan for future growth over the next twenty (20) years. Renovation is complete and two (2) additional wellness exam rooms have been added as well as a dedicated vaccine clinic area. These improvements will allow for continued expansion of services that will include Dermatology Services and Basic Orthopedic Surgery in the future. A new Dental Surgical Suite has been added which will allow for increased dental capacity to meet the growing demand and dental x-ray is now available. The Second Chance Adoption Center, under the direction of Shelter Manager Monica Morgan, has exciting plans moving forward. A full-time, donor-funded behaviorist will be joining the shelter staff in the coming months. Plans are underway to expand the foster program, and increase the number of amazing HSMC volunteers. Despite all of the recent challenges, adoptions continue to grow—thank you! Dr. Lindsay Rollend, HSMC’s Wellness Director, has created a new Veterinary Technician Assistant Internship Program that was subsequently approved by the Florida Veterinary Medical Association. Two new staff members have joined the clinic medical team filling these two paid internship positions.

We are forever grateful for the continued support of our community.

On behalf of the animals,

Rick Yocum, Executive Director

When Amy Taylor started volunteering at HSMC four years ago, she could not have imagined the turns her life would take. She knew she wanted to improve the life of the dogs at the shelter; give them the love they deserve and make their lives a little less lonely while they wait for their new families. Amy’s dedication knows no bounds. She walks the dogs, plays with them, and of course, finds them foster homes. When Amy arrived she realized that the shelter was overwhelmed with dogs who needed help. She quickly became a “hospice” volunteer for Belle, a beagle with cancer, and Abby, an elderly Jack Russel mix with seizures. Her current hospice dog is Bear, a 4-year-old mixed breed with an enlarged heart. His condition is so advanced that the veterinary cardiologist didn’t expect him to live more than a few months from when he arrived at the shelter. His one-year anniversary of living with Amy is coming up next month.

Six months ago Amy was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and went through grueling chemotherapy. Bear and her other dog Caesar comforted her as she fought this terrible disease. Through it all, Amy rarely missed volunteering at HSMC. Helping the dogs gave her joy and lifted her spirits, even in the darkest times. She is now in remission and anxious to get back to living her life to the fullest.

Amy knows that Bear won’t be around forever, but she is willing to make whatever time he has the best life a dog can have. When Bear passed away, Amy was devastated but realized her healing powers were needed. She took Bear’s place and adopted him as her new “hospice” volunteer. Bear was a source of comfort for Amy during her difficult times. His presence lifted her spirits and gave her the strength to keep going.

When Amy passed away last year, Bear was devastated. He refused to eat or drink and his spirits plummeted. It was difficult for this sweet kitten. However, a woman who had just had hip surgery. It was apparent that the cat didn’t have a home and had been roaming freely, but realized her healing powers were needed. Pepper (as she was named) immediately jumped into bed with Millie, never left her side and with a little “meow” told her everything would be okay. This was Pepper’s home now and the two were inseparable.

Pepper’s mom contacted HSMC, praying that we could help. She was on a limited income and didn’t have the funds to help her best friend. When they arrived, Pepper was barely moving and extremely dehydrated. Her body was shutting down and it was tough and go for special feline companion. She stayed overnight at the HSMC Veterinary Clinic while IV fluids and antibiotics were administered as a last ditch effort. The next day Pepper ate a few bites and slowly began to improve. Pepper is now home with her beloved owner and is back to her feisty self. She has resumed her bed hogging and nursing duties. Thanks to your generous donations, we were able to save Pepper’s life so she can continue to watch over her eighty-eight-year-old mom.