



Connection

A young On-Call Angel on why she gives • Five steps to feeling more connected • Inspiration from kids who care
Building a safe haven for families • Saving Klaus



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If you do, please help us celebrate our 30th Anniversary! See the envelope insert for how you can spread kindness and compassion in the months ahead. Thank you!



NICOLE FORSYTH
President and CEO

future by strengthening the bond between people and animals.

When I think back to the thousands of suffering animals that RedRover has helped since 1987, I feel such gratitude for you and others like you who share your compassion. Thank you for helping us keep families whole and bring hope to so many.

This issue of the *Companion* focuses on connection. Fostering awareness and empathy builds connection and a sense of belonging in a community. The importance of empathy is woven into everything we do at RedRover, and I hope you, as a valued member, feel this sense of connection and belonging with RedRover and the animals and people we help.



Nicole, with Jasper and Gertie

Greetings!

WE HOPE YOU ARE AS EXCITED AS WE ARE to be celebrating our 30th Anniversary this year! You have been a critical part of helping RedRover put our best #pawsforward to help animals in crisis and create a kinder



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Ballot for election of board directors

Make your vote count



For your vote to be counted, please mark your vote on the enclosed postage-paid envelope and mail it by March 10, 2017. For a director to be elected by written ballot, he or she must

receive a majority of affirmative votes, with at least six percent of members voting. Votes withheld are not counted for or against a director. The board of directors will vote for directors if members do not return a quorum of ballots.

* To start her first three-year term on RedRover's Board of Directors

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A young On-Call Angel shares her feelings on giving

MELISSA EMERZIAN

wanted to teach her nine-year-old daughter, Kate, the importance of giving back to the community, so she and Kate joined RedRover's family of On-Call Angels in 2015. After reviewing several RedRover Relief cases, Kate got to choose the pet she wanted to help.



Here is what Kate had to say about her experience of giving back as an On-Call Angel:

Q Why do you think it's important to help people/animals in your community?

My mom always says that our community is like an extended family. So, these animals are my family, and I feel it's right that we help them.

Q Why did you choose to help animals through RedRover?

I think it's really cool what RedRover does [with] all three of their programs. I would like to volunteer at RedRover one day.

Q How does it make you feel to know you're helping an animal in need?

It makes me feel, honestly, like I am doing the right thing. It also makes me feel really good inside.

Q What would you tell other kids about giving back to the community, especially by helping animals?

I would tell other kids how exciting it is and how good it makes you feel. I would ask them how they would feel if their pet was sick or if something happened to [their pet] and they couldn't afford the hospital or vet bills.

We are grateful for Melissa and Kate's support as On-Call Angels, and for the hope and inspiration that Kate brings for a kinder future. Thank you, Melissa and Kate! Read the full interview at RedRover.org/KateGivesBack.

To learn about the On-Call Angel program, please visit RedRover.org/Angel. ♥

Meet your 2017 board candidates



Kasey Miller*

Kasey Miller is a passionate animal-welfare advocate from Chicago, Illinois.

In addition to being a RedRover Responders volunteer and an On-Call Angel donor, Kasey volunteers for her local animal rescue and welfare organization. Kasey is a Licensed Social Worker and serves as the Vice President of Talent & Engagement for a national non-profit association. Kasey and her partner Dan are allowed to live with their two cats, Court and Hope.



Donald Garlit**

Donald Garlit was on the RedRover Board from 2005–2011 and just completed a three-year term from

2014 through 2016. He has been Board Chair and Treasurer several times and deployed to Kansas after a tornado in 2007. He is involved with several other animal groups at both a hands-on and board level and is a retired automobile industry executive. He lives in Canton, Michigan, with his wife, Bee Friedlander, and two cats, Julia and Stella, who are both rescues.



Anna Straus***

Anna Straus was raised by a generation of animal lovers with a shared passion and commitment

to volunteer time, energy and resources to the family legacy of helping animals. Anna has over 15 years of experience in sales, business development and leadership positions with a degree in Business Management and a certification in leadership coaching. She resides in Sacramento, CA, with her husband, Paul, and their rescued fur baby, Lulu.

Connection starts with awareness

by RedRover President and CEO, Nicole Forsyth

IN OUR REDROVER READERS program, we help children develop awareness of others — both animals and people — through literature. We believe this is a skill that requires practice and is necessary in order for children to grow up to become kind and compassionate members of their community.

We also believe everyone — adults included — can benefit from further developing their awareness of others.

RedRover supports this in all the work we do to help animals and

the people who love them. **When people share the experiences and emotions of others, they feel better connected and are more likely to experience a sense of belonging** in their home, school, workplace, volunteer work or community. Feeling connected also builds compassion resilience, which is so critical for all of us who feel distress over the suffering of animals and people.

Tune into when and why you're feeling sad, angry, anxious or experiencing more complex, mixed emotions and name them.



A survivor of the 2016 Louisiana floods and her pet connect with a shelter volunteer.

So, how can you build your own awareness? Well, just as with kids, this starts with self-awareness. **Naming your own emotional states is critical to understanding others' emotional states.** Tune into when and why you're feeling sad, angry, anxious or experiencing more complex, mixed emotions and name them. Spend quality time with yourself. Take long walks; write in a journal. *For more tips, see the next page.* ♥



Karly, Director of Education & Outreach, connects with a student after reading a book about a child who learns a valuable lesson about friendship with his dog in our RedRover Readers program.





Feeling in tune with your own emotional state?

Now share and reach out to understand and connect with others.

Here are a few ideas for how to do that:

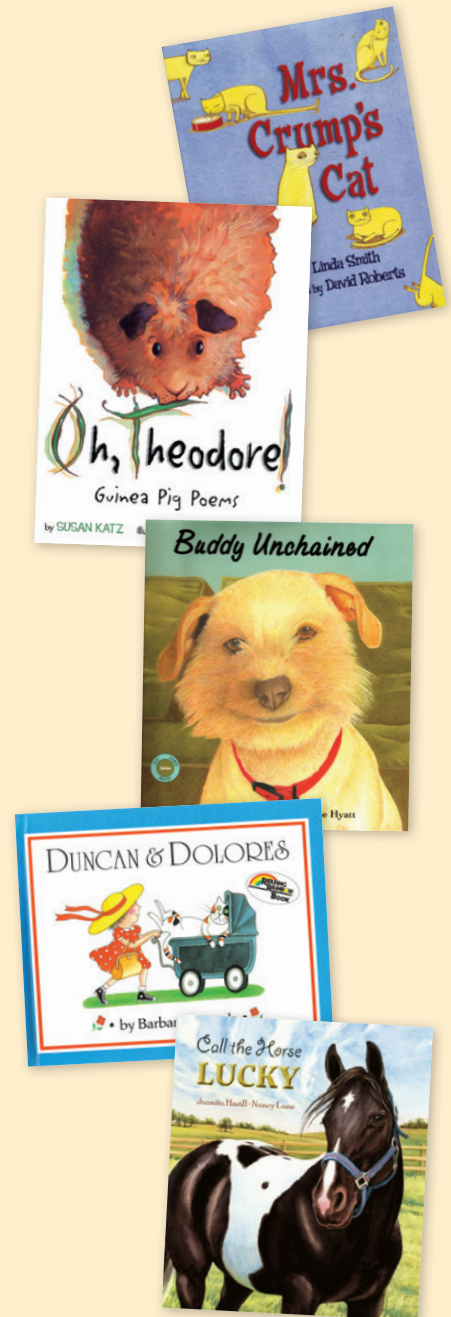
1. **Smile and make eye contact** with those you meet.
2. **Spend time listening** to your pets, family and friends.
3. **Acknowledge emotional states** when you experience them or see them.
4. **Start conversations** while waiting in line or when you meet someone while walking your dog.
5. **Seek to understand** the experiences of **those different from you**. Reading high-quality literature is a fantastic way to build empathy because a reader naturally takes the perspective of various characters in books. Read a memoir from someone who lives in a different country, someone with a different sexual orientation, physical appearance or disability or someone who practices a different religion.

Practice connecting openly with everyone in your life. And **be kind to yourself** when this doesn't always happen. Recognize when you need to go back to spending quality time by yourself or recharge by embracing the unconditional love your companion animals offer. ♥



Fostering empathy through books

For a complete list of books used in the RedRover Readers program, visit RedRover.org/books.



You're supporting a new generation of changemakers

REDROVER AND IKEA partnered for another exciting collaboration, this time creating a Reading and Friendship space at Westmore Oaks Elementary School. For the students in Anika Swisher-Shukuya's fourth grade classroom, who organize fundraisers for animals, this space will bring further positive change and connection. According to Ms. Swisher-Shukuya, **"RedRover has been instrumental in helping my kids feel connected to the community."**

President and CEO Nicole Forsyth sat down with the students to talk about their new space.

Q What do you think about the RedRover Readers program?

"It helps the students realize that it doesn't matter how much money you have or where you live, everybody is equal in their own way. All students would benefit from it. **This program would cause less bullying and abuse in the world.**"

If you know a class that wants to help animals through our On-Call Angel program, visit: RedRover.org/Angel.



Q How do you change people who don't care for animals?

"You open them up to how they feel, like how the dogs feel. Like when we read the book *Max Talks to Me*, it showed me that they were having a conversation with each other. They were having fun. It was a good book."

Q What do you want to include in your new Reading and Friendship space?

"Pictures of all of the animals we have helped and how much we've donated."

"A dog wall of fame."

"Encouraging posters like 'You can do it!'"

"There should be colors — bright colors not dull colors — so we will be happy and awake."

"We want spaces to sit together."

"RedRover books and pillows."

"This space will make me want to make more friends."

RedRover and IKEA were inspired by these young changemakers and by their teacher who empowers them to "be ambassadors for animals and the world." ♥

Learn more about the RedRover Readers program at RedRover.org/Readers.



Hands-on collaboration for families escaping violence

by RedRover Relief Program Coordinator II, Laurel Meleski

IN NOVEMBER, my colleague Rachel and I had the privilege of working alongside our amazing RedRover Responders volunteers on a special collaboration to help domestic violence victims and their pets in Longview, Washington.

Working together with Rescue Rebuild, our task was to transform three rooms in Emergency Support Shelter (ESS) into pet-friendly, co-sheltering spaces.

Over the course of five days, our volunteers — who jumped in with gusto — joined Rachel and me as we learned how to tile, build a chain-link fence, install dog-doors, paint, build adorable cat bridges and a hundred other things! We went home every night sore and covered in dirt, dust and rain...but nobody complained about the work.

The staff and residents of ESS were overwhelmingly grateful. In fact, one staff member told us, “Not even 24 hours after you left, we filled all three rooms with new families and their pets. The need is great, and we are so thankful to have the opportunity to meet the need with our beautiful pet-friendly rooms!”

With your support, we were able to leave a legacy of love for four-legged family members in need. Thank you! ♥

Learn more about our Safe Housing grant program at RedRover.org/SafeHousing.



2016 Safe Housing grant recipients

CASA (Community Action Stops Abuse) St. Petersburg, FL

YWCA of Sweetwater County Rock Springs, WY

Hope Haven of Cass County Harrisonville, MO

Family Crisis Center Farmington, NM

Albany County SAFE Project Laramie, WY

First Step, Inc. Wichita Falls, TX

Marie Detty New Directions Lawton, OK

Harbor House Domestic Violence Shelter New Philadelphia, OH

Rainbow House Domestic Abuse Services, Inc. Marinette, WI

First Step, The Western Wayne County Project on Domestic Assault Plymouth, MI

Turningpoint for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence River Falls, WI

DOVES of Big Bear Valley, Inc. Big Bear Lake, CA



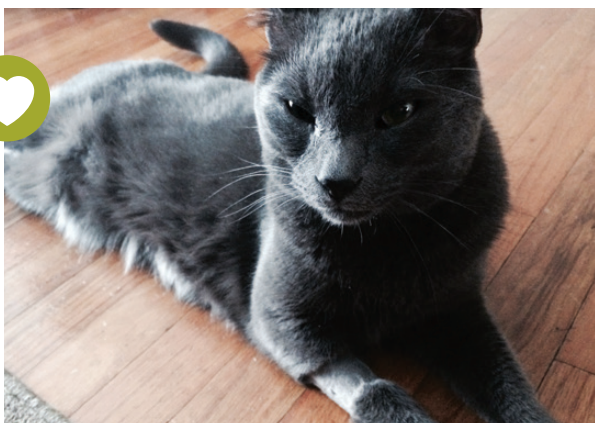
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Your compassion saved Klaus



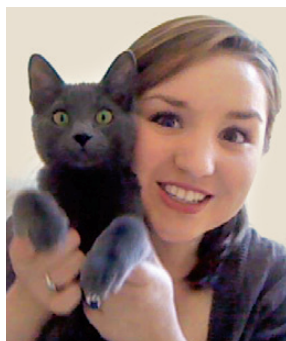
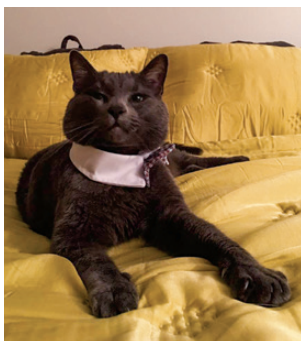
TWO YEARS AGO, Savannah reached out to the RedRover Relief program to get help for her "fur baby," Klaus. After a long, complicated illness, her beloved gray cat had been diagnosed with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy and was facing a bout of congestive heart failure. Savannah seriously feared she would lose him.

"I had nothing left to offer him," Savannah says, "but in our darkest times, RedRover came through and donated money to our vet so we could start giving him the care he needed."

Today, Klaus is alive and well, and Savannah is in a place to give back by becoming a RedRover donor herself.

"Thank you for showing us love and compassion," Savannah told us. "We are forever grateful! You do amazing things and bridge gaps for both animals and people. It's not often one can say they save two lives at once!" ♥

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can say they save
two lives at once!



Your support of RedRover saved Klaus' life.
Thank you for being a member!