

A woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a dark blue t-shirt, is smiling and holding a black and tan dog. The dog is looking towards the camera. In the background, there are shelves with various items, a sign that says "I", and other people, suggesting a pet store or adoption center setting.

A Day Inside Pets Alive

*There are some things you can only learn
by standing quietly in the corner of a room.*

An editorial feature by Autumn Allor



Inside the surgery suite, the work is focused and precise. But the story people tell later rarely starts with the procedure.

A Day Inside Pets Alive

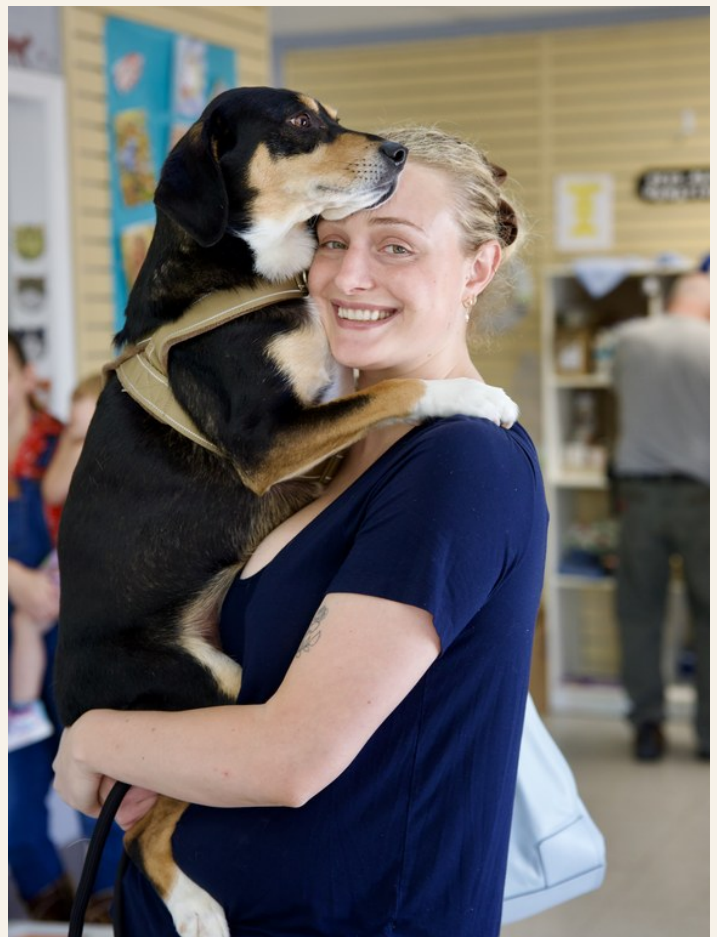
There are some things you can only learn by standing quietly in the corner of a room.

Every day I witness tremendous acts of service.

Some are big. Most are quiet.

They happen when someone comforts a frightened animal before surgery, stays a little longer with a worried family, or notices a detail that no one else would have seen. Those moments rarely make headlines, but they tell the real story of Pets Alive.

People often ask me what it is like to lead Pets Alive. The truth is, I wish everyone could spend just one morning here. Not because I want them to see how much we accomplish. I want them to see what I see.



The Conversations Never Start With Surgery

One of my favorite parts of this role is meeting people throughout our community.

Almost everyone has a Pets Alive story.

What I have come to notice is that the conversation almost never begins with the surgery.

It begins with the kitten that still sleeps at the foot of the bed years later. The dog that found its way home because of a microchip placed during a routine appointment. The stray that became part of the family. The relief of knowing a beloved pet received the care it needed.

The stories are rarely about procedures.

They are about relationships.

Because long after appointments are forgotten, the bond between people and the animals they love remains.

Every animal that comes through our doors deserves to experience the very best of humankind.



That sentence has become the heartbeat of this story. It does not describe a program or a service. It describes a way of working.

At Pets Alive, the work is carried by people whose names are not always known outside the clinic. Some prepare. Some organize. Some teach. Some comfort. Some notice the small things before anyone else sees them.

The people you are about to meet would probably tell you they are simply doing their jobs. Spend one morning beside them, and you may not believe them.



Erik

Long before the first patient is brought into surgery, Erik's work is already complete. Every instrument has been cleaned, inspected, sterilized, wrapped, and prepared with the understanding that excellence begins long before anyone makes the first incision.

Most families will never meet him in that moment, yet every patient benefits from the quiet standard he sets before the day has even begun.



Kari

Walk into the feline recovery room and you notice something different. The lights are softer. Nature sounds replace the noise of a busy clinic. Recovering cats rest in an environment intentionally designed to reduce stress.

That does not happen by accident. It happens because Kari believes healing deserves peace as much as it deserves medicine.



Tinley

There is something special about people who are never satisfied with simply knowing enough.

Tinley has an eagerness to learn that is impossible to miss. She asks thoughtful questions, welcomes new challenges, and is always looking for another opportunity to grow. Her quiet confidence and gentle nature have a calming effect on the animals in her care, while her determination continually pushes her to become an even better veterinary professional.

The future of veterinary medicine depends on people who never stop learning. Tinley represents that future. Every day she arrives ready to listen, observe, and build on the knowledge of those around her. Her commitment to learning is matched only by her genuine compassion for every patient she encounters.

Dari

For Dari, every detail matters.

Whether she is preparing medications, completing documentation, or learning something new, her focus is always the same - getting it right. She understands that accuracy is not just about paperwork or protocols. Every detail contributes to the care each patient receives.

She has a genuine desire to continue learning and growing, always looking to strengthen her knowledge and better understand the work she does. That willingness to learn, paired with her commitment to doing things correctly, continues to shape her into an important part of our team.

In veterinary medicine, the smallest details often matter the most, and Dari approaches them with the care they deserve.



Shellee

If you arrive at Pets Alive on a busy morning, there is a good chance Shellee will be one of the first people you meet - and one of the last people you see before you leave.

There are few things more difficult than handing someone your beloved pet and trusting they will care for them like you would. Shellee never loses sight of that responsibility.

She has a joyful, spontaneous personality that naturally puts people at ease. Whether she is welcoming families, walking them through their appointment, or providing discharge instructions after surgery, she helps each visit feel a little less overwhelming.

Her positivity is contagious. It encourages her teammates, reassures our clients, and reminds all of us that compassion can be felt in the smallest interactions.



The front of the clinic carries its own kind of responsibility: helping people feel welcomed, informed, and cared for before their pet ever enters the medical area.

The First Hello

Norma brings a sense of warmth and adventure to each day. You can often hear her walking owners through the appointment experience, offering additional information, answering questions, and making sure families know what to expect. She has a way of helping people feel less uncertain simply by taking the time to explain what comes next.

Codi is the steady presence behind many of the systems that keep the front desk moving. Organization may not always be visible to the public, but everyone feels it when it is done well. She helps create the consistency that allows the rest of the clinic to keep moving with confidence.

Together, Norma and Codi also help shape the culture of the team. They remember birthdays, celebrate milestones, and create moments that remind people they are more than coworkers. That kind of care matters in a place where the days can be busy, emotional, and full.



The Medicine and the Mission

Dr. Brunn's low-cost vaccine clinics are part of a larger belief: preventive care should be within reach. Her work allows families to protect the pets they love before illness creates hardship. She brings skill to the exam room, but she also brings patience - the kind that gives people room to ask questions and understand the care their pets receive.

Dr. Simmerly carries much of the surgical work that makes the mission possible. Her focus in the surgery suite is quiet and complete. Every day of surgery represents fewer unwanted litters, fewer animals entering already full shelters, and more families able to make responsible choices for the pets they love.

Zoie returns to Pets Alive each summer while on break from veterinary school. That choice says something. She comes back to learn, to help, and to keep growing beside people who share her love for animal care. Her kindness and patience are easy to see, especially when she is assisting Dr. Brunn during vaccine clinics.



Looking Forward

As Pets Alive continues to grow, we are excited to welcome Casey Taylor as our new Clinic Care Coordinator. Casey's heart for service, passion for animal welfare, and collaborative spirit beautifully align with the values of Pets Alive. We are excited to welcome her to our family and look forward to the compassion, leadership, and fresh perspective she will bring to our patients, clients, and team.

Growth at Pets Alive does not mean becoming something different. It means becoming more fully who we are. It means strengthening the systems behind the work, supporting the people carrying it, and making sure that every animal and every family receives care that feels personal, thoughtful, and worthy of trust.



They See Possibility

Looking around Pets Alive, it is easy to see the many hands that care for each animal once they arrive. But our story does not begin when a kennel door opens or a family walks through our front entrance.

More often than not, it begins with someone else.

Someone who answered a call. Opened a cage. Set a humane trap. Loaded a frightened dog into a car. Sat on a shelter floor earning the trust of an animal that had forgotten people could be kind.

Long before we meet them, someone has already chosen hope.

Our shelter and rescue partners have an extraordinary gift. They see beyond the circumstances that brought an animal into their care.

Even if they have known a dog or cat for only a day, they begin to notice the little things - a favorite toy, the way it leans in for affection, the goofy smile that appears when it starts to relax, or the quiet resilience that shines through despite everything it has experienced.

They do not define animals by where they have been.

They imagine where they could go.



The Handoff

One of the greatest honors of our work is partnering with local humane societies and rescue organizations. We are one link in a much larger chain of people working toward the same goal.

By the time an animal arrives at Pets Alive, someone has already said yes to giving that life another chance. Shelter and rescue teams may have known the animal for only a matter of hours, but they often arrive knowing its personality, its fears, and the first small signs that it is beginning to trust.

That handoff carries trust.

It is an honor to stand beside these organizations. Together, we help prepare animals for healthier futures, support adoptions, reduce pet overpopulation, and give families the opportunity to welcome home companions who simply needed someone to believe in them.

By the time an animal leaves Pets Alive, it has already been cared for by more people than most will ever know. Someone rescued it. Someone transported it. Someone cleaned its kennel. Someone created a quiet, comfortable recovery space. Someone stayed with it when it was scared. Someone prepared for surgery. Someone monitored its recovery. Someone will welcome it home.

We simply have the privilege of being one part of that journey.



Office Ambassadors

Every great team has members whose contributions cannot always be measured.

Our office ambassadors provide comfort and companionship to our staff, often bringing smiles on even the busiest days. But their role does not stop there.

We have watched them quietly check on animals recovering from surgery, settle beside nervous patients, and offer a calming presence when it is needed most. Animals often communicate in ways we do not always recognize, and sometimes it seems our office ambassadors understand those moments before we do.

Whether they are offering quiet companionship to a recovering patient or reminding our team to pause for just a moment, they help create the peaceful, welcoming environment we strive to provide every day.

Around here, they are much more than office pets. They are part of the Pets Alive family.

Every animal that walks through our doors represents dozens of quiet decisions made by people who may never meet one another.

Stewardship

Every mission also needs people willing to protect it.

Pets Alive has board members who quietly give their time, experience, and leadership to help ensure this organization continues serving animals for generations to come. Their work often happens behind the scenes - in meetings, planning sessions, fundraising conversations, and difficult decisions that most people will never see - but their influence can be felt every day inside our clinic.

They do not seek recognition. They simply believe this work matters.

Because of their stewardship, our team is able to focus on what we do best: caring for animals and the families who love them.

Community members are part of that same story. Some care for feral cat colonies. Some recommend Pets Alive to a neighbor. Some schedule an appointment because they want to prevent unwanted litters. Some make a donation because they believe affordable veterinary care should exist for families, shelters, and rescues that need it.

Those gifts become something tangible. They become surgeries. They become vaccines. They become fewer unwanted litters entering already crowded shelters. They become one less family forced to delay care because cost stood in the way.

Generosity does not always announce itself. Sometimes it simply makes the next yes possible.



Tomorrow morning, the phones will ring again. Another shelter animal will arrive. Another family will hand over a leash. Another surgery will quietly prevent future litters. Another team member will notice something no one else did.

And somewhere inside Pets Alive, another ordinary moment will take place. Most people will never know it happened. But for one animal, it may change everything.

Pets Alive Spay/Neuter Clinic

Low-cost spay and neuter surgery and low-cost vaccine clinics are available by appointment.

Appointments: petsaliveindiana.org or 812-349-1349

Location: 2444 South Walnut Street, Bloomington, IN 47401

Support: Donations may be made online, by mail, or in person.