

# Humane Society seeks donors for annual dinner auction

BY GRACE BOATRIGHT  
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The Humane Society of Marshall County is seeking donors in preparation for its largest fundraiser of the year, the Furry Friends Fiesta.

Previously known as the Sweetie Paws dinner, the annual event consists of a dinner, a silent auction, and a dessert auction. Board president Donna Smith said the theme change was purely because the board wanted to try something new.

The event overall remains the same, with only the theme and food changing. Historically the event was a pasta dinner, but now attendees will have the option to choose between beef or chicken tacos.

The event set for Feb. 21 at the Marshall County Exceptional Center in Benton, and the search for donations is in full swing.

Smith noted that the dinner is far and away the largest fundraiser each year.

"If you are a small business owner, or just a citizen, and you would like to donate something to our fundraiser, this fundraiser brings in more than double of our next biggest fundraiser," said Smith. "So, it goes a long way."

After seeing a considerable jump in the number of animals through the facility in 2025, the 2026 auction has become especially



Photo Courtesy of Humane Society of Marshall County  
Among the adoptable animals at the Humane Society of Marshall County is a 2-year-old German Shepherd/Border Collie mix named Griffin.

important. Smith noted that the adoption fees for each animal are not enough to cover the cost of care the animal receives while at the facility.

"I have gone through and done it to the penny," said Smith.

"Our adoption fee doesn't even come close to us recouping the amount of money we put into an animal. Even if it was adopted the very first day it came in."

Each animal receives a visit to a veterinarian, flea and tick prevention, dogs receive heartworm prevention, and more. That care comes in addition to the costs associated with feeding and housing the animals, staffing the facility, and more.

As a 501(C)(3), the facility operates entirely on donations and fundraisers. In hopes to encourage more donations, the dinner will feature the board and staff sharing about the work they do on a daily basis to care for the animals.

"We're going to do the 'why, why you're here,'" said Smith. "We're going to talk numbers. We're going to talk the kinds of animals we were able to help. We're going to introduce you to the staff and the board, all while you're eating dinner. Then the fun starts. We're going to have a silent auction, and of course our dessert auction, and it just makes for a really fun night. We want to educate people on what we do and the why. We

just don't want people just constantly giving money. We want them to know what that money's going towards. It makes the giving a little easier if they know what their money is being used for."

Tickets for the dinner will cost \$10 for adults if purchased ahead of time, or \$12 at the door.

Tickets for children age 10 and under will be \$5.

For food businesses or individuals interested in sponsoring the event, the organization has established a tiered system ranging from \$50 to \$250.

Donated items for the auction will be accepted until approximately Feb. 16. More details can be found on the Humane Society of Marshall County Facebook page.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### JANUARY 26

The Calvert City Cemetery Board meeting is being held via Zoom and may be viewed on the Calvert City YouTube Channel.

### JANUARY 27

The Calvert City Board of Adjustments meeting is being held via Zoom at 5:30 p.m. and may be viewed on the Calvert City YouTube Channel.



WILL SPENCER  
The West Kentucky Allied Services main office is located in downtown Mayfield at 328 E. Broadway.

## WKAS highlights Winter Crisis program to help heating needs

BY WILL SPENCER  
FOR THE TRIBUNE-COURIER

West Kentucky Allied Services is overseeing the annual Winter Crisis rollout of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP.

The federally funded initiative aims to help low-income households manage heating costs during the coldest months of the year.

"We have been having appointments all day, every day, since the program has opened up in each county," Rushing said. "It's about the same as previous years, maybe even a little bit more. We're off to a pretty good start of how many people we're helping, and then with utility companies, we've reached out to all of our local partners to let them know we have this program going on."

In just over a week, SEE WKAS/PAGE A5

project that is a part of the district facility plan. The board approved the offer.

The board then approved a pay application DPO in the amount of \$54,333.85 for the recently completed technical center renovation and addition.

The board also approved the 2026 and January 2027 meetings schedule. The board changed the meeting schedule to be the first and third Thursdays of each month at 5 p.m. The meetings set for the first Thursday will take the place of planning meetings, which

have been held on the Monday prior to the third Thursday in recent years.

There will be some months with no first Thursday meeting during times like spring and fall break or similar circumstances. The full schedule will be posted on the district website.

It was also announced that Thorpe and Smith are working to schedule a grand opening for the newly renovated technical center. It is expected to be held in February or early March.

The board's next regular meeting is set for at 5 p.m. on Feb. 5.

## BOARD

FROM PAGE A3

principal in January, following the retirement of Shannon Solomon. Merrick was previously an assistant principal at MCHS.

Merrick noted that the school was ranked green, and the school had consistently shown growth over the prior year. He shared that the school is looking to implement new ways to support students to encourage them to meet KSA benchmarks.

The school has also seen an increase in college and career readiness and an increase in the graduation rate. Merrick also noted that the school is working to provide support to prepare students because the state is set to transition from the ACT to the SAT for college exams.

Jill Darnall, principal of Central Elementary School, was unable to attend, and is expected to present in February. Following the presentations, the meeting shifted into monthly reports.

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The reports began with the student advisory board report. Student Board member Reagan Mason has taken the role of sitting on the board and giving the presentation for the spring semester. She shared that the students had begun using the new multi-purpose space in the tech center. Mason also shared a Staff Spotlight the student board had organized. They chose to spotlight Merrick, stating that the students at the school were happy to

repair the chiller system at the high school to ensure the air conditioning would work properly by spring.

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The meeting then transitioned to the action items on the agenda. District Director of Finance Brooke Gibbs presented the monthly treasurer's report as well as the draft budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

The draft budget served as a "first step in the process," according to Gibbs. She noted that it was based on the working budget from September, with a variety of unknowns remain-

ing. With the Kentucky General Assembly entering a "long session" there will likely be a number of discussions that could impact school funding.

Among other unknowns, Gibbs noted payroll costs, federal funding, enrollment, and more.

The board approved the draft budget.

Gibbs then presented the School Facilities Construction Commission offer of assistance, which she explained would allow the board to receive state funding to help pay debts accrued by bonding to build a

project that is a part of the district facility plan. The board approved the offer.

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*His Faithful Love ENDURES*  
Psalm 136:1

JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL  
*Widow's Valentine's Dinner*

Fun. Food. Fellowship.

Join us for a fun night full of games, a delicious meal and inspiring guest speaker.  
This is a free community event, open to all who have lost a spouse or significant other.

FEBRUARY 12 5:00 PM

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