

FRED'S FRIENDS

A GREEN SHIELD DECK BUILDERS MAGAZINE



GET TO KNOW FRED.

How one rescue dog is rescuing them all. Page 4.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

BEER CITY DOG BISCUITS
SHOP, PLAY, DINE WITH PUPS
AVAILABLE SHELTER ANIMALS
NIPPING PUPPY BEHAVIORS

ISSUE 001
AUGUST 2024

*A pet-friendly magazine for the people and companies who
love rescues as much as we do.*



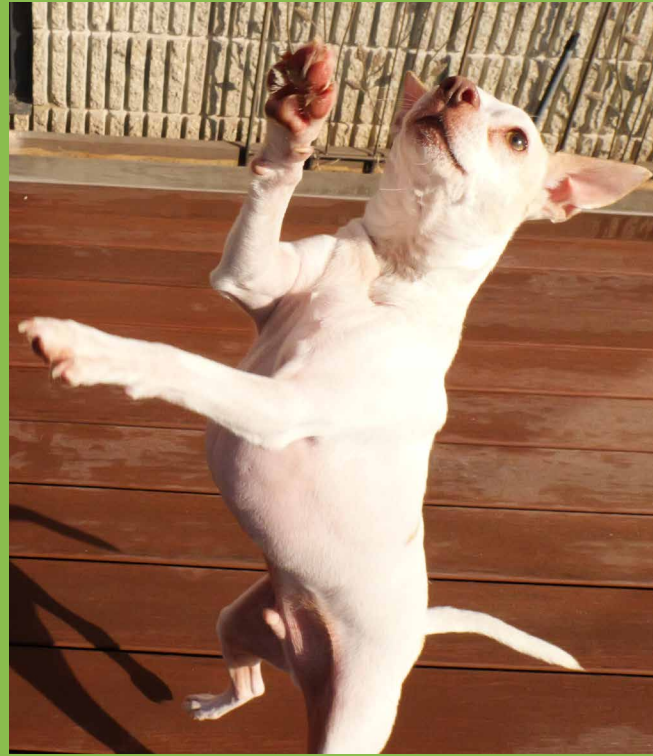
Pizzacat

Owned by Nolan G.



Michigan

Owned by Taryn C.



If you've seen our billboards, you already know how cool Fred is, but did you know our decks have heat-blocking technology that naturally keeps them more than 20° cooler than other composites? Now that's something to bark about!

Hi Friends!

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Fred's Friends Magazine. We are thrilled to share our passion for pets and our commitment to helping animals like Fred find their forever homes. It's our heartfelt mission to extend our efforts across the region, and with a little bit of Fred's help, we're making it happen!

The purpose of this magazine is to give you helpful tips, connect local rescues with loving homes, and introduce businesses who love pets as much as we do. We're all Fred's Friends. One of his newest friends is Beer City Dog Biscuits. It's been such an honor to learn about this fabulous company and how they're making a meaningful impact in our community through

tasty biscuits your pup will love. **Learn all about them on pages 18 and 19.**

The bottom line is, Green Shield wants to help the best pets (and decks) get matched with their forever home. That's why a percentage of the decks we build goes toward helping rescue pets.

We are beyond excited to share our love for pets and our commitment to building amazing decks. Please join us.

Here for all the barks and boards,

ADAM ROUGHT

Owner and CEO

Green Shield Deck Builders

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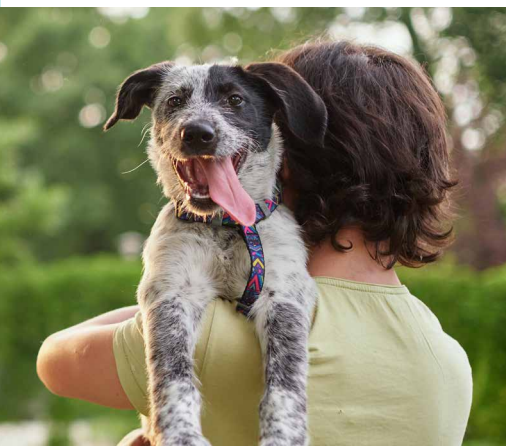
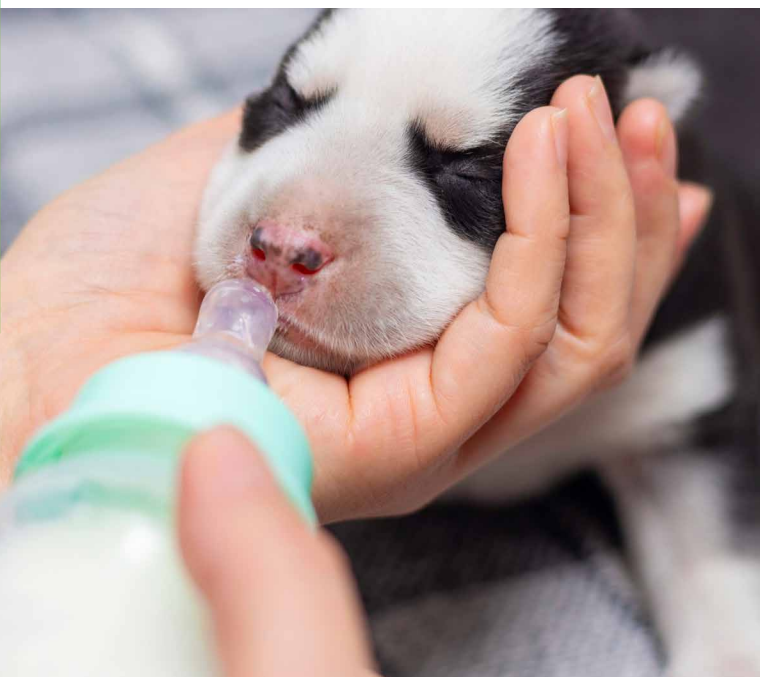
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How Can the Ads in Fred's Friends Help You?

Within the pages of this issue of Fred's Friends, you will see advertisements for local companies who provide home services that you may need. These are trusted business partners, who have been carefully vetted by the Green Shield team. We trust the owners and their work. So can you. A heartfelt thank you to the following companies who chose to support and join Fred's Friends:

-  *Bay Harbor Financial Group*
-  *Enviro-Decon Services*
-  *KGuard Leaf Free Gutter System of West Michigan*
-  *Outdoor Lighting Perspectives*
-  *Premier Edge Concrete Solutions*
-  *Quality Underdecking*
-  *Red Box+ Dumpsters*
-  *Superior Fence & Rail*
-  *Veteran Roofing & Exteriors*

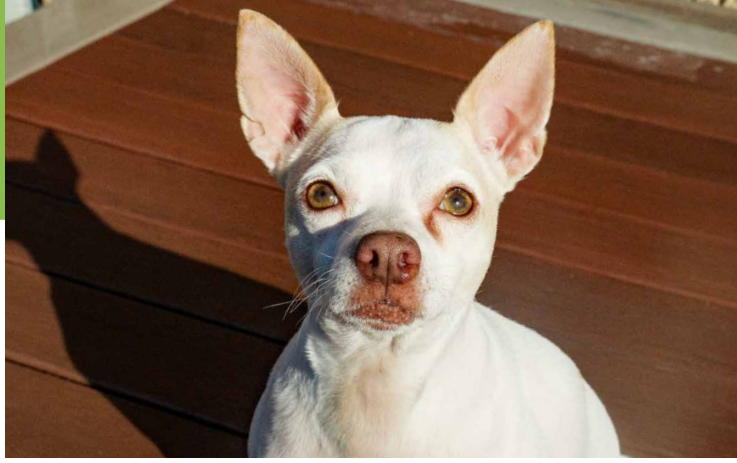


Interested in becoming a Fred's Friend?

Maybe you have a good story idea or would like to advertise with us. We would love to talk to you! Please leave a message for the Green Shield marketing team at 616-682-7428, ext 5. Or you can use our Fred's Friends contact form online at www.greenshielddeckbuilders.com/fred.

Do you know someone who loves pets and you'd like to add to our mailing list? **Please email marketing@greenshielddecks.com**. Be sure to watch your mailboxes for the next issue coming out in November 2024.

Fred's Story



Meet Fred, the Chihuahua mix with a Texas background, now strutting his stuff across 62 billboards in Michigan.

Rescued from a life on the streets without treats and cozy beds, Fred's journey went from stray to star at Green Shield Deck Builders.

In a nutshell, Fred, the Green Shield's four-legged sensation, conquered anxiety and malnourishment by claiming a special spot in his mom's office. His favorite treats? **All of them.** His favorite attention? You guessed it. **All of it.**

Fred's got a big dog attitude in a little dog body, and at the ripe age of somewhere between 5 and 6 (*who's counting?*), he's the heartthrob of Green Shield Deck Builders.

Recently, Fred spilled the kibble on his rags to riches tale.

LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS ABOUT FRED

He's a Chihuahua mix with plenty of attitude. He photographs best from his right side. And oh yes, he prefers chicken over beef.



Young Fred in the shelter shortly after he was found. He was malnourished and quite shy at first, but he's become the life of the party in his loving home!





FRED'S REAL-LIFE RESCUE

Fred comes from less-than-ideal circumstances. He was living on the streets in Texas just trying to get by. Day to day life was a battle to find food and a safe place to sleep at night. One day, some people came across him and began shooting him with a paintball gun. That was a terrible experience, but it was the experience that got him picked up off the street. The local shelter picked Fred up and posted him online. That's when he met the wonderful woman who would become his Forever Mom.

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT FRED'S FOREVER MOM

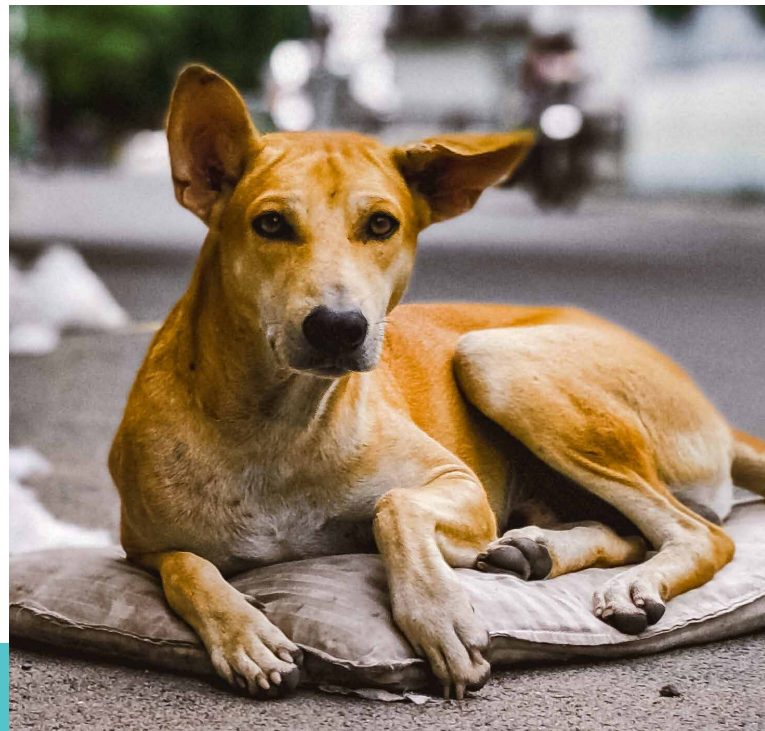
Fred considers her a rockstar! She's been with Green Shield since (*nearly*) the beginning. In fact, she sort of got Fred this gig. Well, that, and his face of course. When Fred first got to Michigan, he had a lot of anxiety about being left alone, so his Forever Mom made him a nice safe space in her office. He quickly became very popular among office workers and guests. It was only natural that he would become the mascot and billboard star.

More Fred Facts

-  Fred was a stray in a Texas town (and recently paintballed!) when he was found.
-  He's thankfully come a long way from his days of anxiety and malnourishment.
-  He's a tiny dog with big dog energy. Likely 5 or 6 years old.
-  He prefers chicken over beef but will happily eat any treats sent in by his adoring fans.

Fred reminds us just how far a little bit of love and compassion can go – and that sometimes mutts make the best friends (*and products on the market!*).

Stay tuned for how you can help change the lives of some very deserving dogs and cats.



It's a "Ruff" Time to be a in a Local Shelter

Did you know that more people in West Michigan are surrendering their pets to shelters than ever before?

In a recent report for Fox17 News, Kate Timber, executive director of SPCA of Southwest Michigan remarked, *"There's a common misconception that the reason people started to surrender was after they went back to work [in person following COVID],"* but the reasons are much more stark.

Factors like eviction, veterinary shortages, markups on pet food, medication, and lack of affordable housing are all contributing to an astounding 67 percent of pet owners nationwide reporting they can no longer afford the pet they have. Some people feel they have no choice but to leave their pets at the shelter because they've begun living in their car.

While our local SPCA exists to help pets in need, Timber says they're doing all they can to help families keep their beloved pets at home. *"We don't want the animal to just come into the shelter. It's better for everyone if you're able to keep the animal in your home."*

If you've been thinking about bringing home a rescued pet to love, the research proves there's never been a better time to act.

To see how you can volunteer, donate, foster, or adopt locally, visit [sspalliance.com](https://www.sspalliance.com) to get started.

Adapted from an original article by Yasmeen Ludy





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All Doggos Welcome

Dog-Friendly Spots around Grand Rapids

While cities like Los Angeles, Austin, and Denver are often recognized for their dog-friendliness, these cities are not necessarily considered “fast growing...” *But you know who is?!* According to Rover and Zillow, Grand Rapids is among the 20 fastest growing Dog-Friendly Cities in the entire U.S.

Shop, play, or dine with your pup here:

Shopping

FIDO AND STITCH

A pet boutique, featuring retail products, grooming, and a self-service dog washing station. They also host a Saturday morning running group where your pup can join you for a jog around the city.

fidoandstitch.com

CHOW HOUND PET SUPPLIES

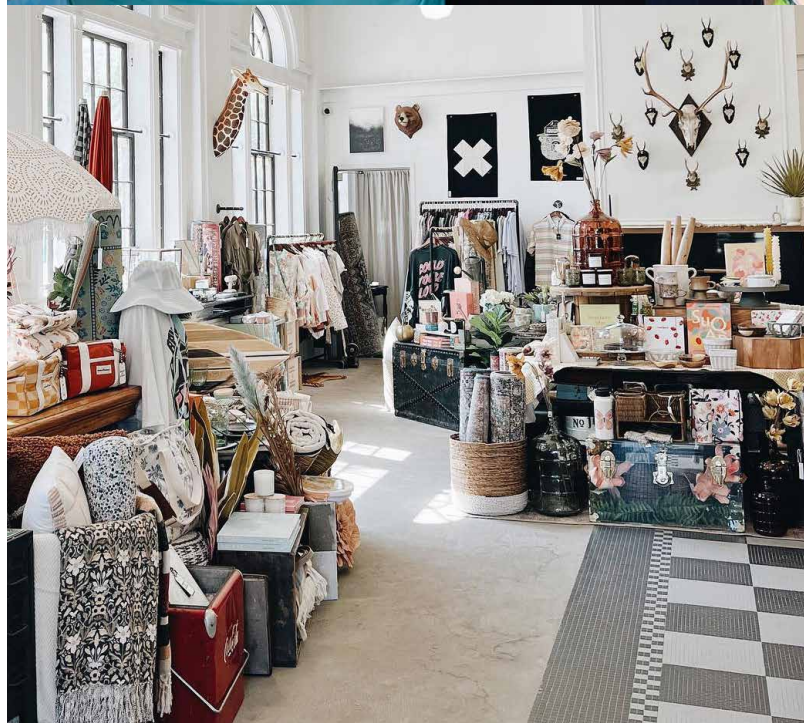
West Michigan’s largest family-owned pet specialty store chain with everything you need, whether your pet is a pup, bird or iguana.

chowhoundpetsupplies.com

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Dog Parks

DOWNTOWN DOG PARK

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facebook.com/DowntownDogParkGR



WEST SIDE DOG PARK

307 Summer Ave NW
Grand Rapids, MI

facebook.com/WestSideDogParkGR

CASCADE DOG PARK

3810 Thornapple River Dr SE
Grand Rapids, MI

facebook.com/CascadeDogPark



THE PACK INDOOR DOG PARK, RESTAURANT AND BAR

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Comstock Park, MI

ThePackDogPark.com



Restaurants

According to BringFido.com there are currently 91 pet-friendly patios in GR. Here are just a few of our favorites:

GARAGE BAR AND GRILL

garagebargr.com

BIG BOB'S PIZZA GASLIGHT VILLAGE

bigbobspizza.com

THE MITTEN BREWING COMPANY

mittenbrewing.com

THAT EARLY BIRD

thatearlybird.square.site

LUCY'S

lucysgr.com

ELECTRIC CHEETAH

electriccheetah.com

FURNITURE CITY CREAMERY

furniturecitycreamery.com

OUTSIDE COFFEE CO.

outsidecoffeeco.com

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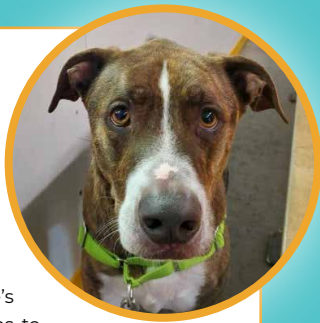
Available Shelter Animals

Saving Souls Pet Alliance is a small group of friends and volunteers who have joined forces to make a difference in the lives of animals across West Michigan. SSPA is a 501c3 non-profit volunteer animal rescue organization. Every rescue pet lives in a foster home while they complete medical care and training, before being placed with forever homes. As of this printing, the following pets are available for adoption.

Sid

Sid is a 4.5 year old hound mix with beautiful, big brown eyes and a bright smile. After suffering neglect in his early years, Sid was saved by an animal rescuer, who fixed him up and showed him kindness. He's a large boy at about 70 lbs, but loves to cuddle like a baby next to his person on the couch or under the covers at night. Sid enjoys walking and hikes. He is the perfect car rider and likes to bring his ball with him wherever he goes.

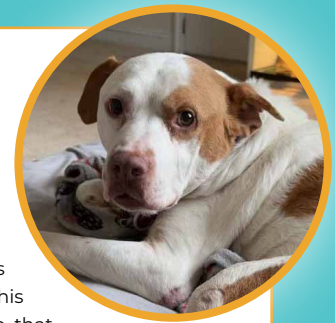
Sid's perfect home would be someone who can maintain his ear hygiene and respect his clean diet. Sid would love a family with older children, who wouldn't mind taking him along on camping trips or a nice drive. Sid also wouldn't mind another respectful dog as a life-long friend either. Sid is potty trained, walks well on a leash, and is up-to-date on his medical care.



Max Green

Max Green is about eight years old and is the calmest, sweetest dog his foster parents have ever met. Max Green arrived at a rescue for help covered in ticks on St. Patrick's day with Mardi Gras beads around his neck. He has been in rescue since that day, where he has battled through a tick borne illness, but is still as wonderful as ever.

Max Green is great with cats, dogs, and children. He loves tummy rubs, hand holding, cuddles, snuggling in bed and treats. He enjoys the outdoors, but prefers a leisurely time. Max Green free roams in the home while his foster family works and is a responsible, good boy. He does take medication for arthritis, as he is a big-boned, senior guy.



Freckle & Dior

These sweet brothers are sure to melt your heart. Freckle is an industrial-sized love machine! As playful as he is loving, Freckle loves his siblings and the excitement of a household with children.

Dior is a lean, mean toy machine. He prefers playtime to pets, and can be independent and a little mischievous! Long and sleek, handsome and reserved, this man of few words is definitely in touch with his inner tiger. Affectionate with his brothers and sisters but still a bit wary of human love, Dior warms up a little more every day.

These 2 boys are a bonded pair and will need to be adopted together.

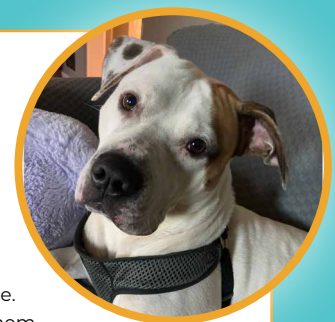


Jasper

Jasper is young, full of life, and always up for a game of fetch. He's super sweet, always ready to make new friends and share a laugh... or a bark! He's playful, and stuffed toys are his absolute favorite.

He can spend hours playing with them, tossing them in the air and catching them. Jasper is currently working on his manners with the help of the trainer but is very gentle with kiddos (including the two he's currently living with)!

If you're looking for a loyal friend, look no further - Jasper has so much love to give. He arrived at the rescue from Detroit after his owner passed unexpectedly and was left with her daughter. Unfortunately, the daughter lost her housing and left Jasper behind. The landlord was ready to take him to the shelter but luckily a distant family member stepped up, took him in, and has been fostering him.



Visit sspalliance.com to see all available pets, make a tax deductible donation, apply to foster, or learn more about their organization. You can also contact them directly at contactsspalliance@gmail.com or **616-805-9050** to adopt!





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5 Puppy Behaviors *to Nip in the Bud Early*

We can all probably agree there's nothing quite like the soft, squishy joy of having a puppy. We love their paws, their energy, their snuggles, and even their breath. But anyone will agree, taking care of them is a lot of work.

That's why lots of new pet owners find themselves frustrated or overwhelmed once the puppymoon wears off... and some even choose to rehome their new pet simply for doing normal things puppies do! So how can you distinguish between what's normal, "good" behavior and "bad" habits that should be nipped in the bud?

Determining whether a behavior is "good" or "bad" often starts with you. What one pet parent can tolerate (let's say, jumping up on the furniture) could be an absolute no-no for someone else. So first you have to determine what's appropriate for your home. That said, here are 5 behaviors that can be dangerous and should be stopped.

1

Jumping up on people.

Jumping pups are just looking for attention, so the best way to dissuade them of this behavior is to ignore them. Literally turn your face or whole body away and stay silent until they've returned all four feet to the floor or sat down. Once they do, wait a second or two and then reinforce the behavior with a treat, pet, and positive affirmation.



2

Poor leash manners.

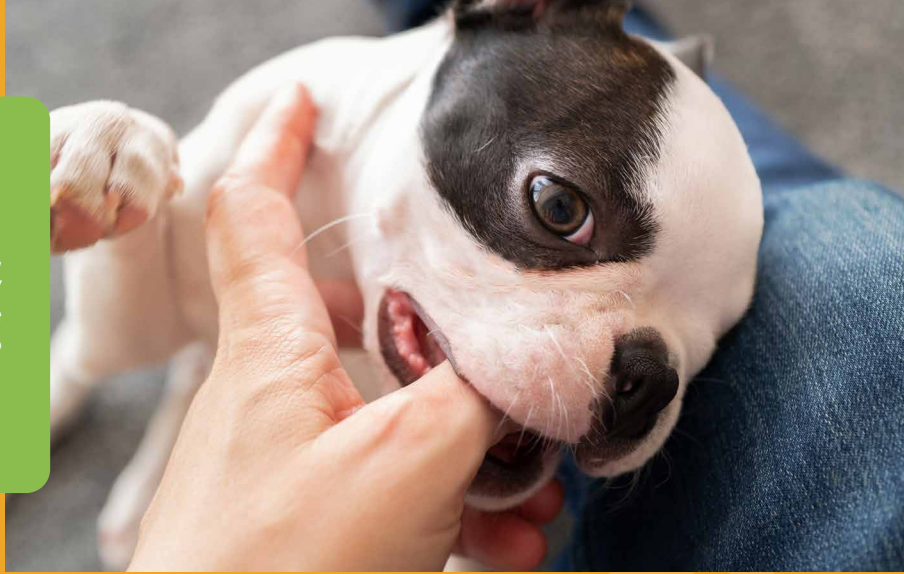
When a dog is small, poor leash manners are annoying, but they aren't dangerous. However as your pup grows and becomes stronger, you stand a greater risk of being pulled along, or having to chase them as they get loose to chase another dog or squirrel.



3

Nipping.

Learning bite inhibition (also called having a soft mouth) is crucial to keeping your dog, loved ones, and strangers safe. If your puppy starts nibbling at your fingers and toes while playing, offer a toy instead. If they continue to nip, stop the play session immediately. You can also redirect by asking them to sit and then reward with a toy or treat.



4

Guarding behavior.

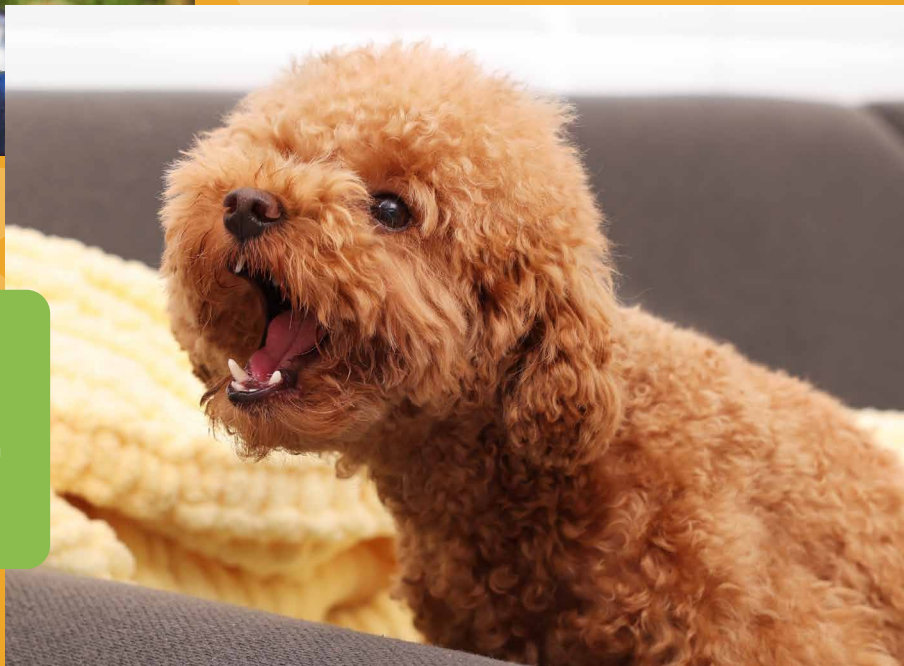
There's a big difference between guarding and aggression. Dogs "guard" when they feel they need to hide or protect what they have (like toys or food). With dogs who tend to "guard," avoid tug-o-war games, and work slowly with them rewarding when they drop a toy and allow you to pick it up. Keep repeating this activity until they're comfortable.



5

Barking.

This is how dogs communicate, so it's essential to let your dog know you hear them. Teach them when it's appropriate to bark and when they need to be quiet.





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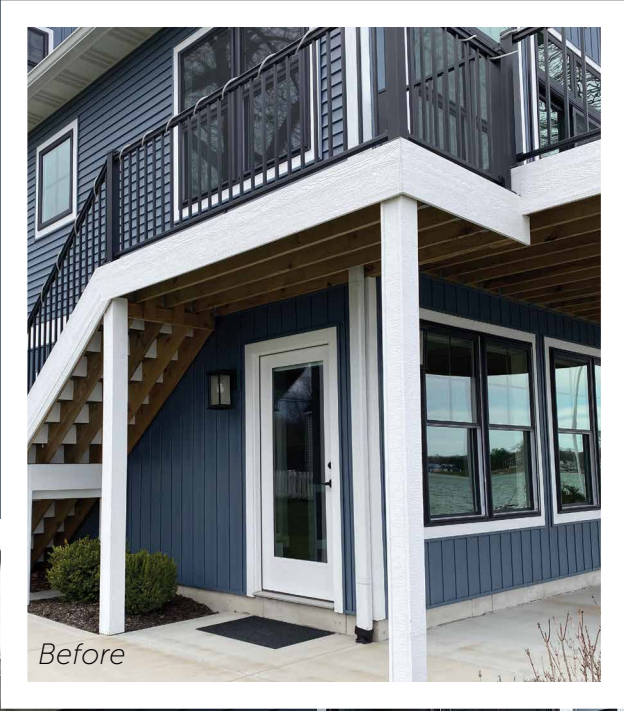


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Before



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Changing Lives One Biscuit at a Time



Everything tastes better when it's made with love. That's the story of Beer City Dog Biscuits in a nutshell.



BCDB was created by two Grand Rapids friends who wanted more for their adult sons – Gavin, who is on the autism spectrum and Tanis who is blind. At first, Leslie Hooker and Suzanne Wilcox thought they'd open a group home to support their sons once they transitioned out of Kent County ISD programming at 26, but soon found themselves tweaking a recipe for dog biscuits instead. They realized that founding a place where their sons could learn new skills, be productive, and build community checked so many more boxes.

In 2018, Leslie and Suzanne opened their non-profit organization, Beer City Dog Biscuits alongside their husbands, sons, and 17 individuals with disabilities who were ready to work. The clever recipe they landed on is 100% natural, utilizing vitamin C as the preservative, and spent grain from Founders Brewing Company's tap room.



SIX YEARS LATER, BEER CITY DOG BISCUITS:

- 🐾 Are available in three flavors – *peanut butter and grains*, *cherry coconut crunch*, and *blueberry flaxseed*, with pumpkin joining the lineup soon
- 🐾 Have been shipped to 48 states
- 🐾 Can be purchased at multiple retailers across West Michigan (*including Meijer stores beginning this fall*)
- 🐾 Are made by 300 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities each week – lovingly called *Brew Bakers* – at their Grand Rapids headquarters and two satellite locations specifically for individuals with mobility or transportation difficulties.

A BUSINESS BUILT ON EMPOWERMENT

Leslie and Suzanne founded BCDB on the belief that every person enriches our community, regardless of their abilities or limitations – and they've crafted every aspect of their business to make accessibility key. According to Executive Director Holly Okonoski, "Everything here is designed for these individuals to have purpose, a vocation, and to develop their fine and gross motor skills. Our top priority is not efficiency, it's community."

This approach challenges the BCDB team to continually

continued on next page ▶





Meet the Brew Bakers

There are currently 4 official Brew Bakers employed with Beer City Dog Biscuits.

Marcus

Marcus is a natural mentor whose hard work and sincere dedication to BCBD are truly commendable. He enjoys helping in all areas of the biscuit-making process and takes ownership of his tasks, while also mentoring other Brew Bakers along the way.



ask themselves, "is this something a Brew Baker could do?" and then adjust the task appropriately. It also led to recruiting Occupational Therapy students from Grand Valley State University to make the production space more functional, intuitive, and accessible, modifying how workspaces are oriented for wheelchair or walker use, and for those with sensory sensitivities.

BCDB has helped their volunteers overcome other unique challenges too, like bridging the communication gap for individuals who want a job beyond their kitchen doors. "One of the biggest barriers to employment for individuals with autism is the interview process," Leslie notes. "We've had opportunities to hop on a call and talk to a potential employer, detailing the skills our Brew Baker can do, and explaining what they can expect [when they hire the individual]." But then again, vouching for these individuals comes naturally to both women, as Suzanne is quick to add, "They're just great. They show up, they don't complain, and they're so happy to be here."

A HEALTHY PRODUCT, A THRIVING COMMUNITY

BCDB is active in the Greater Grand Rapids community too, setting up their booth at local events, and partnering with pet-friendly businesses and organizations who are making an impact. They recently completed a donation match giving 1,500 bags of biscuits to local pet shelters and rescues, and partnered with Fifth Third Banks to provide sample treat bags available at any drive thru teller.

If you have a heart to give back to your community in a meaningful way, Beer City Dog Biscuits is a great place to start. You can volunteer individually or as a corporate group, give a tax deductible donation, or buy their tasty

Liz

It takes a lot of skill to mix the batter and spent grains into a perfect consistency that's mold-ready, but Liz is great at it. She's a cheerful and proactive team player who is always eager to contribute.



Jose

Jose is a master at making dog biscuit dough. He precisely measures ingredients and mixes the dough so it can be passed on to the other Brew Bakers. Jose sets a conscientious example for others by ensuring no task goes unfinished.



Mel

Mel's naturally quiet and reserved manner makes her a great observer, but that doesn't mean she shies away from taking initiative to get any job done. Her impressive drive and multitasking skills helped her immediately stand out. Mel has been with the team since the fall of 2021.



products (complete with a sticker featuring the Brew Baker who personally packaged it). And if you have a loved one who would make a great addition to their kitchen, visit to learn more.

While Suzanne and Leslie may have set out to build something for their sons, that love grew into a meaningful opportunity for hundreds of local people, a thriving community, and a fabulous line of products your pup is sure to love.

No bones about it. 🐾

Scan this code to fill a doggie bag with your favorite BCDB products!



BAY HARBOR FINANCIAL GROUP

Bay Harbor Financial Group LLC, also known as BHFG, is a Michigan-based company that specializes in assisting individuals who are retired or approaching retirement age in safeguarding their retirement funds to ensure they do not exhaust their savings. According to a survey conducted by AARP, the top concern among retirees is the fear of outliving their savings. My name is Tim Klein, owner of Bay Harbor Financial, and I can't wait to guide you through your IFW retirement score! Many of our clients are

uncertain about the amount of retirement income they will require or if they are adequately prepared to meet those financial needs. BHFG was founded on the principle of prioritizing the needs and interests of our clients above all else. Our primary objective is to eliminate the complexity and uncertainty associated with investment strategies and provide our clients with financial peace of mind, allowing them to rest assured that their money is backed by specific guarantees. I collaborate with my clients to increase

their income, minimize tax obligations, safeguard against long-term care expenses, and ensure that their spouses, children, grandchildren, and other beneficiaries receive a substantial inheritance. I established Bay Harbor Financial Group LLC in 2001 and have authored a book titled "Remarkable Retirement." Additionally, I am a contributor to the book "Retirement & Income: Keeping Your Nest Egg Safe From Losses, Fees, and Inflation." My achievements have been recognized in publications such as "Unity Magazine," where I was featured on the front cover with an accompanying article. I have also had the honor of hosting two radio shows called "Retirement & Income Radio" and have assisted numerous clients in attaining financial independence using the same strategies that I implement for myself and my family. Outside of my professional endeavors, I enjoy spending quality time with my wife Jenny, our four children, and eight grandchildren. My hobbies include beach outings, hunting, watching movies, and following college football. Above all, I express gratitude to God each morning for the gift of a new day.



The graphic features the IFW logo in the top left corner. The main heading reads "What's Your Retirement Score?". Below this, a laptop screen displays a comparison between a "Current 41%" score and a "Future 99%" score, with an arrow pointing from the current to the future score. Text on the screen says "LEARN WHAT YOUR RETIREMENT SCORE IS TODAY!" and "Get Your IFW Retirement Score" with a right-pointing arrow. The background of the graphic shows a man and a woman hiking in a scenic, hilly area.

The IFW Retirement Score is your key to unlocking financial success in retirement. It assesses the likelihood of achieving your retirement goals.



Tim Klein

IFW Certified Financial Professional

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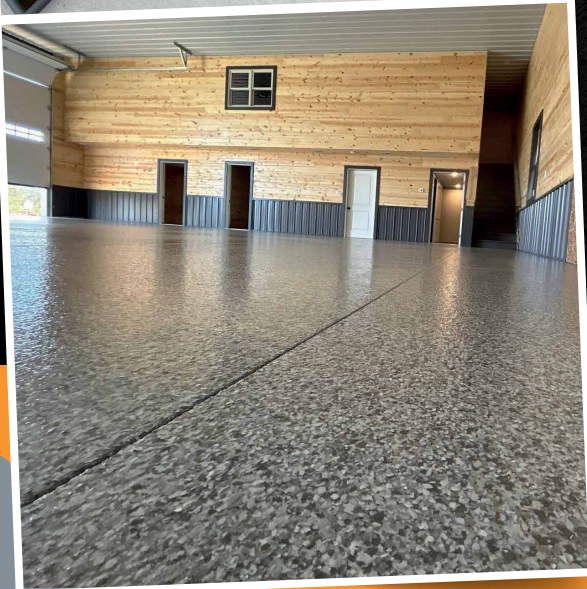
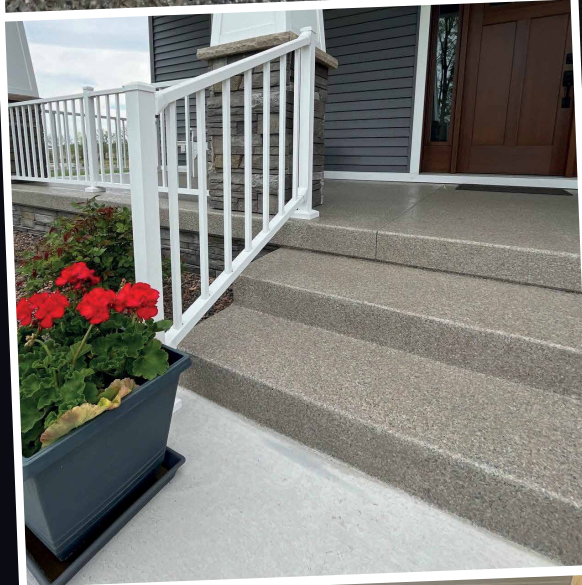
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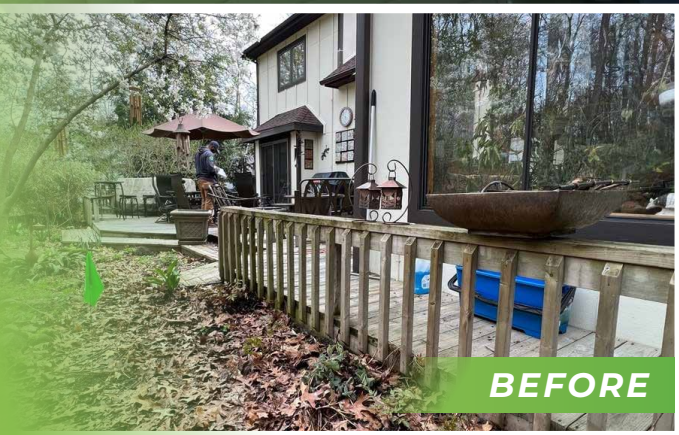
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