Shepherd’s Green Sanctuary is a 501C3 public charity
Recognized since 1996 by the IRS
State certified
Financial and other information about our organization can be found at GUIDESTAR.org and GIVING MATTERS.org, a directory of state certified Tennessee charities.

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Our Cover Pig Is Scarletto
How grown up he is!
Dear Friends,

It’s that marvelous time of year; plentiful rain to keep the woods safe and the ponds full and the grass growing. Lots of morning sun to warm a sun bathing pig and ripen the apples.

And it’s time for our best fundraiser of the year, giving us a boost to catch up on vet bills and feed bills and get the mower fixed (again!). The summer Double Donation is our ace in the hole! For every dollar you give, a dollar is matched! So dig down in the sofa and fish out those quarters and dimes for the piggies. The month of August will magically convert them to twice their value!! Send a dollar in August and we take two to the bank!

We have come through the darkest hour of our history with pneumonia taking the lives of some of our dearest old friends. It has been the nightmare we all pray will never happen; the learning experience we hope never to need. I have to remind myself that a sanctuary is ultimately a place to die at home, with love, respect and the kind of care money can’t buy.

For the pigs,

Peggy
Pneumonia, like any disease, is treated by a combination of medical skill, drugs and husbandry/nursing. And the number of things most of us don’t know about this, or any disease, fills whole medical libraries. I had a six month “course” on Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae (APP). Listening all day and all night to the painful breathing of my pig children, I plagued our sanctuary vet and our other vet advisors, the vets I could reach at Novartis and Merck and anybody else with medical expertise that I could strong arm into submission long enough to impart knowledge to me. I was watching my pigs die and nothing we were giving them helped. Every change in weather ratcheted the sickness to higher levels. Many battled it for months before finally being overcome. Some got well. We didn’t know what the differences were. Necropsy followed necropsy until we built a picture and knew the name of the enemy. It is a common pneumonia. One we have no doubt treated without any problem in the past. But the sub level of the various strains is where the difference lies. There are 15 serotypes of APP and we had no idea which one we had. Some are mild, some are deadly. And you can have multiple types at once. Our vet took calls and answered texts at all hours, changed dosages, added another drug, suggested treatment methods, checked hay under the pigs to see if ammonia was a problem and always left me feeling that we could get these pigs through this. And we have. Not without losses but the two herds it struck have average ages of 18 and are compromised by disease or surgeries, so we saved far more than expected. According to the medical literature, mortality can be as high as 80%. We had <4%.

Here are a few things that stood out as especially significant.

- Drugs all work differently and work differently on different pigs at different stages of a disease. Flexibility will save lives. Draxxin, Excede and various others including Baytril and LA200 may be used alone or in conjunction. Late in the game something I read on a commercial hog site suggested herds affected with APP be treated with SMZ so we started making SMZ sandwiches for everyone affected or exposed. I think the SMZ, humble common drug that it is, did some real good, perhaps damping down secondary infections.

- As pneumonia progresses it causes fibrosis in the lungs. Preventing / reducing inflammation while they are fighting the bacteria is necessary or some who survive will have badly damaged lungs. Our Tribe has such damage. We used Banamine –S, Dexamethazone and prednisone at various times (always under the direction of our vet).

- The more bacteria present in the environment the more serious the individual’s disease will be. Sounds simple but usually we think of more bacteria meaning we’re more likely to get a disease, not how serious it is. So changing water several times a day, replacing bedding daily, washing dishes after every meal with soapy water and every time the temps permit, opening all the doors and windows and turning on fans. All reduce the numbers of bacteria. Nothing is the answer but Everything counts.
VACCINES and antibiotics at work

When you are using antibiotics, it’s like sending an army into battle with only one weapon. No matter how much ammunition is carried it won’t get all the enemy. It takes an army with many types of backup soldiers (the immune system) to clean up the stragglers, the hideouts and the guerillas. With the older folks, the immune system is weaker and there may not be enough backup immune system activity.

So vaccines either raise the level of immunity to prevent the disease or reduce its severity, with or without antibiotics.

Vaccines need time to work. The APP vaccine took 2 weeks for the first shot and a week or so more after the booster. If already sick, it’s too late for a vaccine. If the bacteria is already in the upper respiratory system and you vaccinate, the stress could cause it to move into full blown pneumonia. It’s not the vaccine itself causing the disease, it’s the vaccine creating an additional stress factor. The Novartis vaccine vet was very clear on the risks. Our vet determined, pig by pig, who should not be vaccinated.

Photo is of Lola Rose. She came in during the worst part of the pneumonia outbreak, had spay surgery and promptly got sick. She was terribly ill but recovered 100%. She is young. It saved her
When pigs are their own worst enemy

When pigs are young they will make nests in the woods or find a corner in a barn and fill it with grass and twigs. But the backyard pig is totally dependent on you for everything and can’t search out a safe spot to sleep. And age changes everything. Youth flees and often takes that cleverness with it.

Dry, draft free in bad weather and well ventilated in summer. Our little barns all have windows of some sort (some are just plexiglass over openings cut out with a chain saw). On May first they are removed and on Nov first replaced. Keeping housing in shade and out of prevailing winds is very important.

The territorial instinct is the most dangerous of the older pigs’ behaviors. Maybe they get a little senile or just have enough aches and pains to not want to move. They will stay in their house when common sense would say get outside under a tree. They will stay inside until they go into heat stress. And if you try to force him to stay out he will just lie in the hot sun as close to “home” as he can get waiting for you to let him in. To keep him cool, good air flow and maybe a cooling fan will help. We find solar fans an excellent value and they function even on cloudy days. They come in various sizes and prices. Check out Rand solar fans on line. These fans install with just a screwdriver. Install them and forget them.

The Complication of Stress on the Sick

With other animals, good vet care, good drugs and good husbandry practices are a winning hand. But with pigs the stress factor, by itself, can be the game changer. We aren’t talking about emotional anxiety, porcine stress is a deadly biological response to change and pressures you and I don’t have. Changes in weather, especially hot and humid after cool and dry. Moves. There were dozens of times that we wanted to move a pig into isolation or a safer zone but their size, mobility or age, said no. Our vet understands stress better than anyone I know. It is weighed in every medical situation. The stress of being moved can be the final straw for a sick pig. Age plays a HUGE role in stress response. And stress is cumulative so a long illness brings more and more stress. Add it up and the stack can be too high for a 19 year old pig.

Stress is at the root of heat stroke, strep suis and other conditions. Of all the stressors, handling is the worst. While pet pigs adore a belly rub, the screaming that ensues when you attempt to hold or restrain him is a warning that you are creating an irrevocable base of stress. He isn’t “mad”, he is stressed. For a prey animal, being held is the step right before being killed. These pigs are socialized, they are not domestic. We have to think about that first in how we handle them.
Hooray for Summer

Clifford

Mikey

Princeton

Walter

Breakfast Rush hour
Cameron

Dior & Dominic

Big Farm pig Daisy with wee KY pig rescued from a dog fighting ring.

Breakfast Buffet
I am Walter. I am incredibly handsome and oh so mysterious. If they made a movie about my life, Omar Sharif would play me. Or maybe Richard Gere.
Sanctuary Walk About

This year’s garden is a mass of planted vegetables totally overwhelmed by volunteer vegetables. No problem! They are hardier than new plants any day. Hundreds of squash, pumpkin and tomatoes are welcome foods for our handicapped and old pigs.

The reservoir keeps pure spring water flowing; it never freezes, it never dries up. There is nothing better than fresh cool water to wade in on a summer day. Coaxing it from a bog to a stream took several years but where there is water, there is a way!

Follow a piggy trail as it winds through the woods to a secret hideout.
One day after completing the days vaccinations, Sherry and I were hot and dirty and went up to the river above the Green for a swim. An awesome bit of nature’s grandeur with rock palisades that rise above you over 100 feet tall. The waters are cool and studded with huge sun warmed rocks and little waterfalls. As I ducked under to wet my hair, swimming along beside me appeared a small cottonmouth carrying his lunch to the bank to eat. An unexpected companion!

We have a lot of water snakes around the ponds and spring here. No pig (or person) has ever been bitten.
During the pneumonia outbreak we felt it too risky to take in any pigs. The only one we brought in got sick. So for 6 months we could take in no pigs while pigs still needing homes reached out for help. Our Helping Hoof fund ran so far into negative numbers it had to just be ignored. Our primary foster farm had a significant rise in population. And a new foster was brought on line in Kentucky where so many pigs have been rescued from dog fighting rings. We are hugely grateful to Angie, who does rescue in KY, for putting up the funds to get fencing ready and to Darla who owns the farm and gives so generously of her time to care for the pigs. Left is Maximillian, her first foster, enjoying his new home.

Our foster farm program is for young healthy, fully vetted pigs. Our foster farms are chosen with care. Once a young pig goes to foster it is likely they will stay there until he is 10 years old. At that age they begin to need more health care and are best served here where we have the facilities and vets for dental work and later, geriatric care. We pay all expenses on the foster pigs and they can return any time. It’s not an inexpensive program. But placing pigs without responsibility for their futures is not something we can do.

Whether they are old or young, found on the streets or the result of an arrest, owners moving, divorcing, children grown, whatever... they are going to end badly without someone stepping in. We have found some of the most responsible rescuers and some of the worst to be municipal animal shelters. Hattie, above, was well cared for at Metro AC in Nashville until we could go get her. The boar and babies below, who were in protective custody at a local Humane society in KY, were nearly all lost due to a total disregard for their welfare. Pregnant females were “accidently” released back into the hands of the dog fighting ring and many of the babies shown below “ran away”. I can assure you no baby pig “runs away” from his family. Not ever. We ended up with only the boar and 4 babies out of the 11 they had in their “custody” awaiting the trial. The rest no doubt died brutally in a pit. This is why we feel compelled to provide rescues a safe life, not placing a pig where he may be again at risk, but keeping him safe for his lifetime. SANCTUARY, it’s more than a place, it’s a promise.
Pigs peeing in their pool? Dumping water? Tearing up their blankets? Pushing their hay out of their house? Pigs are going to be acting on their wild instincts at least for another few hundred years. Understanding them is a lot more productive than trying to change them. Changing a pig’s genetically driven behavior is about the same as telling yourself not to eat, ever. So the behavior that needs modifying to have a working relationship with your pig is probably not his behavior but yours.

Pigs are prey animals and all their instincts guide them to avoiding becoming a meal. Unlike dogs and cats who are predators and who operate by a whole different rule book, pigs “must” dig holes, scream at a zillion decibels if trapped, make nests of all materials that shred and pee in water. You just need to look under the surface to see “why” these behaviors are exhibited by looking at their natural existence prior to being “pets”. Someone posted once that their pigs were “decorating” their front doors with rocks and sticks and they thought them very creative. They lived in the desert and the pigs weren’t creative, they were cold. They were blocking the opening of their house for warmth.

The Purpose Behind those Odd Behaviors

**Life in the wild.** Deep jungles with abundant leaves and fallen branches provide materials to weave into nests. The “shredding” instinct turns materials into fibers that bind, tangle and knot, all making a water tight nest. Extra nest materials are brought in to close the opening when they go to bed at night. I have literally stumbled over some hidden nests made here by youngsters playing “wild pig”.

When they go out to forage for food they don’t pee right outside their door, they go a long way from their home to leave scent and if water is available, that is the first choice. Water dilutes. Water flows away. Over thousands of years, prey animals who peed in moving water drew predators away from their nests and lived to pass on their genes.

In the rainforest where they originated, pigs lived in perpetual shade. In our climate they suffer greatly from heat and direct sun. Panting or sweating are not part of their physiology, so they make mud. Dumping their drinking water may not get them much mud but it could be just enough to cool them. The wading pool sitting in the sun looks like a nice cool spot but in reality may be 120 or more degrees and will only make heat stress worse unless the pig can dump it to make mud in the cooler dirt.

Pigs have sound reasons for their actions; they really aren’t being brats!
Suns Rise
Years Pass
The pig you knew has a new set of needs.
Visit the Aging section on our website and share our 24 years of learning about the changes to expect and how to deal with them.
Our Summer Fundraiser is our very biggest and best fundraiser of the year.

And it’s all because of you!

Now through the month of August, every donation we receive is Doubled.

Ka-ching! It goes into our bank account! And ka-ching it goes out to our vets and feed suppliers!

When the music ends we will have funds for the winter’s hay and all the feed and vet bills caught up!!

Go Ahead.. Splurge!! Send another $10! When doubled that’s a bag of special feed for the sick

Thank You!!
If you want extra copies or gifts sent to friends or family be sure to let us know so we print enough.

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June 24, 2014

This time
Vote Green
Vote Scarletto for President
and there will be cookies for everyone! (he said so)