

# LAWRENCE BUSINESS MAGAZINE

2024 Q4



## IMPACT *of* VOLUNTEERING

Fueling Growth, Connection, and Shaping Our Community

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

Anne Frank

A HUMANE CHOICE

# BENNETT & KRISTIN LYON

## HUMANE SOCIETY

Volunteering is not just for adults. There are options for kids, as well— including the local animal shelter.

by Emily Mulligan, photo by Steven Hertzog

**He only needed 12 volunteer hours, but those led to more than 150 hours—and counting—at the Lawrence Humane Society for 9-year-old Bennett Lyon.**

Because Bennett is a child, his mom, Kristin Lyon, must volunteer alongside him each time he goes. All of the dogs and cats at the shelter have wound their way into her heart, too.

“I love that he’s so committed to that. I always have a good time when we go. The animals always make us feel better when we’re having a rough day,” Kristin says.

The Lyons spend their volunteer shifts focused on dog and cat socialization. The animals leave their kennels to play and get held and petted, and the dogs go for walks or frolic in the play yards. The animals probably are grateful, but they don’t always show it right away.

“Sometimes they can be a little grouchy or shy,” Bennett says. “The cats are more grouchy than the dogs.”

Volunteering at Lawrence Humane Society came about because of Bennett’s martial arts class, which required students to earn a patch for charity by volunteering for 12 hours. At the time, Bennett was 7 years old, and, “It’s hard to find somewhere for a 7-year-old to volunteer,” Kristin says.

They found out that Lawrence Humane welcomes volunteers of all ages when they are accompanied by a parent, so Kristin and Bennett went through the training together. Of course, they had no idea Bennett would love it so much that volunteering would become one of his favorite things.

“In the summertime, he has picked volunteering over going to the pool or going to the park,” Kristin says.

Bennett might have a slight preference for the dogs over the cats, but he knows they all still need his time and attention. He likes the tennis ball launcher the best with the dogs, and he says the dogs like to play with one particular type of toy that makes “a weird sound.”

And of course, the inevitable has happened: They met a dog there last December and fell in love with her, so they adopted her. Bennett admits he is now pushing to adopt a friend for their dog. “Sometimes when I’m with the puppies, I just want to hide them,” he says. “To bring one home?” Kristin asks. “Yes,” Bennett confesses.

Kristin says they have built volunteering into their schedule like they would do with any activity or commitment, and they’ve found they are happy to go each time. Because she has to accompany Bennett for his shifts, they have spent more than 150 hours together, including driving back and forth.

“Last year, we were good about getting free. Now, I get busy after school, so we try to go every weekend,” Bennett says.

Kristin adds that she and Bennett relieve their stress together and leave their problems behind when they go to volunteer. They also have developed friendships with other people who volunteer regularly at Lawrence Humane. Classmates and families from martial arts also cross paths with them in the shelter on occasion.

Bennett has inspired others with his volunteer work, as well. For show-and-tell this year at school, he took all the supplies he uses when he volunteers at the shelter: his volunteer shirt, a pouch for treats, clickers for positive reinforcement with the dogs and his whistle. For Bennett’s birthday, one of his friends gave him lots of toys and supplies for him to donate to Lawrence Humane. ▲

**Local Businesses and their Growth continue to be the  
Foundation of our Local Economy.  
The Lawrence Business Magazine Foundation Awards  
celebrate our local growing businesses adding jobs.**

## **THE FOUNDATION AWARDS**

Honor Businesses located in Douglas County that are  
locally owned or locally franchised,  
have been in business a minimum of three years,  
and shown growth in employment by 20% or 20 employees.

**&**

## **The Minority-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award and The Woman-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award**

Honor Minority Owned or Woman Owned businesses located in Douglas County that are  
locally owned or locally franchised and have been in business a minimum of three years and  
shown stability or growth in employment over the past three years as well as making

LAWRENCE BUSINESS MAGAZINE  
**FOUNDATION AWARDS**

*Presenting Sponsor*

 **INTRUST**  
Bank.

**Has your business grown? Are you adding jobs?  
Are you a Minority-Owned or Woman-Owned business  
making a positive impact and supporting the community?  
Then you should be a part of the Celebration!!  
Applications for the 2025 Awards online now.**

For more details, applications, and information about Sponsorships, Previous Honorees,  
and this years' Lawrence Business Magazine FOUNDATION AWARDS visit:

**LawrenceBusinessMagazine.com/Foundation**