

The Berkshire Eagle

Fundraiser helps two nonprofits

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PITTSFIELD - Gus the golden Labrador may not know it yet, but his life as a tenant at the Eleanor Sonsini Animal Shelter might get a little bit better soon.

That idea thrills Mike Supranowicz, president of the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce.

Here's the connection: Allen Harris, president of Berkshire Money Management and chamber member, has begun his own personal membership drive for the chamber. For every new chamber member he can sign up, he will donate \$1,000 to the Sonsini Animal Shelter, up to \$25,000.

In preparation for the upcoming Berkshire Chamber of Commerce membership drive, Supranowicz said, "we talked to Allen about helping out, and he decided he would donate to the shelter every time somebody new joined the chamber through him."

"We thought it made a lot of sense," Supranowicz added. "Every nonprofit is hurting right now, so when somebody comes up with a way to help two nonprofits at the same time we kind of like that."

Harris and his wife, Stacey Carver, are very active in the New England Basset Hound Rescue, for which Carver serves as president - their passion for the care of wayward pets is already well-known.

In fact, they had previously been working extensively with the Sonsini Animal Shelter on improvement projects - to the tune of about \$30,000 worth of donations.

"They've been great partners and donors for the shelter for over a year," said Larry Hazzard, chairman of the board of directors of the shelter.

"And there is a lot more to do, so Allen kind of came

up with a challenge to get the broader community involved. It's a wonderful evolution of two seemingly separate causes."

Harris and Carver already helped with the installation of a new HVAC system, a new washing machine, and the reconfiguration of some of the kennel spaces.

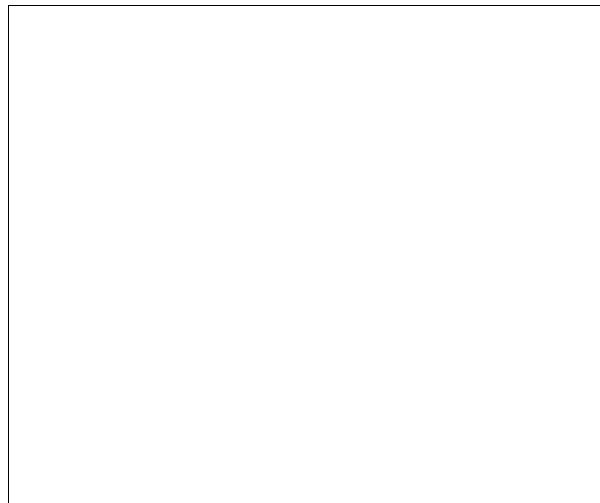
Still needed are some medical equipment, new lighting and further space changes to allow for quarantine space and a bonding area for prospective adopters, Hazard noted.

"The Sonsini Shelter need those improvements to their infrastructure, and we were fortunate enough to get some fairly large projects out of the way that might not have been done so easily," Harris said. "And when we heard about the chamber's membership drive, we wanted to do something different."

Harris noted his gratitude to the chamber for its help in the development when he established his new business, Berkshire Money Management, a few years ago. And his fondness for the shelter and the lost pets it serves gave him the idea.

"Why not put the two things I love together in one campaign," he said. "I thought the conversation with prospective chamber members might be better 'incentivized' if they could do something to help their business and help out the animals at the shelter at the same time."

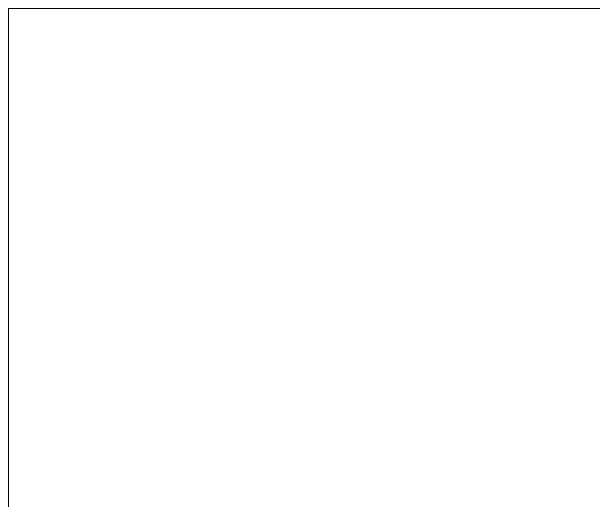
He also liked the idea of drawing more attention to



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both causes.

"I get to help the chamber, I also get to help the other business help themselves, and we all get to help the Sonsini Animal Shelter," Harris said. "It's a triple win."



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