

***Small Angels Rescue  
Fiscal 2006 Annual Report  
July 1, 2005—June 30, 2006***

# Introduction

## Mission Statement

The mission of Small Angels Rescue, Inc. is to place gerbils, guinea pigs, hamsters, mice, rats, and chinchillas from animal shelters and the public into foster care homes and find adoptive homes for them, as well as to educate the public about small animal care and overpopulation.



The Small Angels “staff”—our unpaid board members and adoption coordinators:

**President:** Angela Moxley (membership chair), hamster coordinator; hamsters@smallangelsrescue.org

**Vice President:** Michelle Clowe (foster care chair), gerbil, mouse, rat, chinchilla coordinator; gerbils@smallangelsrescue.org

**Secretary:** Sophie Wilmot

**Treasurer:** Kathy Clowe (finance chair)

**Member-at-Large:** Sue Wilmot (fund-raising chair), guinea pig coordinator; guineapigs@smallangelsrescue.org

**Members-at-Large:** Deana Greenberg, Sandy Lamparello, Peter Szydlo, Roberta Szydlo

**Past Board Members:** Nancy Gardner, Angelee Maus

**Membership Coordinator:** Paula Pennell

**Webmaster:** Zack Moxley

## Small Angels Rescue by the numbers (July 1, 2005—June 30, 2006)

Petfinder.com views: 332,794

Average Number of Intakes per Month: 44 (1.5 per day)

Average Number of Adoptions per Month: 40 (1.3 per day)

Average Number Available in Fiscal 2006: 140

Dues-Paying Members: 166

Foster Families: 50

Number of Shelters Assisted: 9

Board Members: 9

Paid Staff: 0

	Intakes	Adoptions	Died/PTS
Total July 2005—June 2006	535	477	53
Total October 2003—June 2006	1,595	1,282	134

# Table Of Contents

President's Letter .....	4
Small Angels Rescue: Past and Present .....	5
Year at a Glance	
Gerbils.....	8
Guinea Pigs.....	10
Dwarf Hamsters .....	12
Syrian Hamsters.....	14
Mice.....	16
Rats .....	18
Chinchillas.....	20
Thank You.....	22

# President's Letter

## Changing Attitudes, Saving Animals' Lives

It's hard to believe anyone would ever be cruel to an animal as small and defenseless as a hamster, mouse, or guinea pig. But at Small Angels Rescue, we've witnessed some unbelievable cruelty. We've helped animals who were abandoned by a trash bin, set floating down a river in their cage, kept in small containers, paralyzed from lack of movement, dumped in front of a pet store, set out with the trash, turned in as snake food, and even stuffed into a mailbox. And we deal with subtler forms of cruelty and neglect all the time: animals who don't get proper nutrition, housing, and attention from their caregivers.

Small Angels is here to act as a safety net for as many of these abandoned creatures as we can. We're here to give them hope and a new start to life. We're here to show them that humans can be kind. Luckily, we've seen lots of acts of compassion along the way to act as a counterweight to all the terrible things we've witnessed. We've seen foster caretakers work with the most nervous, skittish, or standoffish animals and transform them into outgoing, happy, cuddly pets. We've had adopters make a nearly half-day round trip for an animal, spend thousands of dollars on their medical treatment, or even offer to take the most "unadoptable" animals into their home—and then seen them blossom under their loving care. We've seen adopters testify to how much joy the animals have brought them and how they've served as "pocket pet" ambassadors to show others how wonderful these small, fragile creatures can be.

I hope you'll stand with us as we continue to reach out to homeless small animals. Just like the problem of cat and dog overpopulation, this issue isn't going to go away, and it will only get worse if we don't help. There will always be many more homeless animals than we can possibly help, but if we've each saved and improved the life of at least one, we'll have made a dent in the problem, however tiny. I hope you'll enjoy reading on the following pages a few of these stories of new, better lives, as well as get a better understanding of the vital work you support on behalf of homeless gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, mice, rats, and chinchillas.

Sincerely,

*Angela*

Angela Moxley  
President, Small Angels Rescue

# Small Angels Rescue: Past and Present

## Foundations of Small Angels Rescue

Small Angels Rescue started in 2003 when a small group of women in the Frederick, Maryland, area—Kathy and Michelle Clowe, Angela (Pfeiffer) Moxley, and Sophie and Sue Wilmot—decided to find a better way to help the “pocket pets,” or small animals, at Frederick’s animal shelter. At the shelter, we’d fostered small animals, coordinated adoptions, cleaned cages, supplied fresh food and vegetables, and tried to brighten the animals’ lives. We started a nonprofit rescue corporation so we’d have direct control over the foster and adoption program and be able to use our own care information and adoption application and contract. In this way, we also set ourselves up to take animals from other shelters and directly from the public.

## Small Angels Today

From our humble beginnings with just a handful of foster homes in October 2003, Small Angels Rescue has grown into a vibrant, busy 501(c)(3) organization with about 30 active foster parents and more than 150 dues-paying members. We’ve also helped shelters far beyond Frederick, and we’re well on our way to rescuing 2,000 animals. We’ve done all this work without having any paid staff or a shelter. Our rescue is made possible by the hard work and contributions of our foster care providers, who offer their homes to our animals, pay for supplies, and socialize and (where needed) medicate the animals.

We have three unpaid adoption coordinators who oversee intakes and adoptions. When an animal shelter calls

us for help, the coordinator determines whether space is available in the rescue and, if so, arranges for the animal(s) to be picked up and placed into a foster care home. Having assessed the animals for temperament, age, and health, the coordinator photographs the animals and creates postings for them on Petfinder, then screens adoption inquiries and reviews applications. Sometimes, it is necessary to take the animals to the vet for medical conditions or, in the case of guinea pigs and chinchillas, spay/neuter surgeries. Coordinators spend time with each adopter, thoroughly covering the details of care and supplies and answering questions. And we send each adopter home with a signed contract and an adoption certificate.

Our work isn’t limited to the animals in the rescue; we also reach out to the public to inform them about small animal care, through publications such as animal care sheets and a guide that walks people through how to rehome a small animal without giving the animal to a rescue or shelter. We answer many calls from people looking to give up their small animals and try to find solutions. And we give presentations to library groups, Scouts, and other gatherings.

# Small Angels Rescue: Past and Present

## Where Do They Come From?

Small Angels Rescue places first priority on assisting animal shelters in the Washington, D.C., area. We take gerbils, guinea pigs, dwarf and Syrian hamsters, mice, rats, and chinchillas from the shelters when they ask us to, and we offer them up for adoption. Sometimes animals come to us pregnant, and so we always have a number of animals looking for homes who were born in our foster care program. We also assist individuals looking to surrender their animals directly to us. As we try to always leave room in our foster care program for animals at shelters—who face the immediate threat of euthanasia—sometimes this assistance comes in the form of Petfinder.com posts that we create as a courtesy to such individuals. We also give them resources for solving pet issues and let them know other ways to rehome their pets.

## How Do Adopters Find Us?

At Small Angels Rescue, we work hard to find new homes for our animals and to get the word out that people don't have to go to a pet store to find a small animal companion. We post all of our animals on *www.petfinder.com*, where we create detailed posts describing each

## Second Chances by Brenda C.

I would highly recommend Small Angels Rescue to anyone looking to adopt a small animal. I have adopted a number of gerbils from Small Angels. Their commitment and dedication are the main reasons I will continue to support Small Angels and recommend them to others.

Angela Moxley and Michelle Clowe in particular have gone out of their way to help me. They have both been very thorough in making sure I was capable of providing a good home for my new pets and were completely honest with me about potential problems, such as the extremely shy gerbil I adopted—who is now living happily with a gerbil companion.

I have also been impressed with the individual attention given to each animal. It is obvious that the people who foster these pets devote a good deal of time to them, not only with day-to-day care but also in socializing them. I have never seen an animal offered for adoption by Small Angels who was anything less than very clean, well-fed, active, alert, and happy.



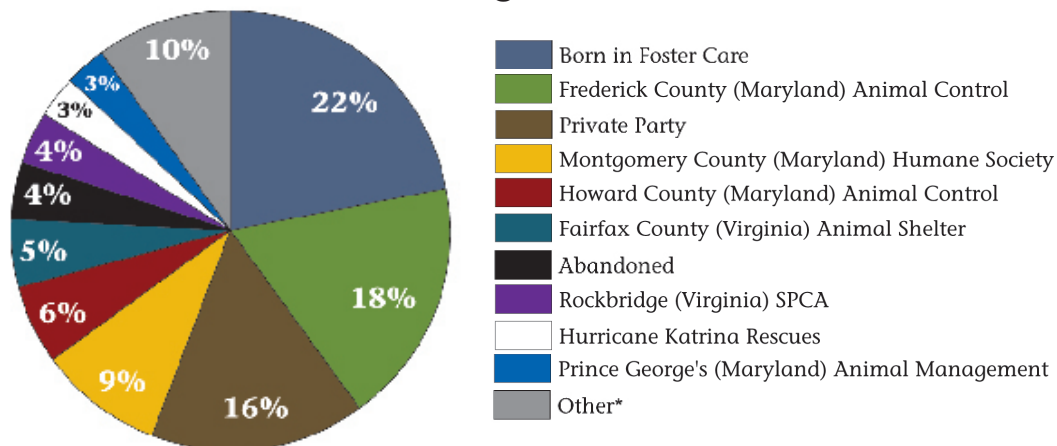
Constantine, adopted  
by Brenda C.

# Small Angels Rescue: Past and Present

animal's personality and containing several photos. We give presentations at libraries and to Scouts and other youth education groups. We run regular ads in *The Washington Post's* Precious Pets section, circulated every Thursday in the Maryland Extras. The Maryland Guinea Pig Rescue (MDGPR) Web site ([www.mdguineapigs.org](http://www.mdguineapigs.org)) lists guinea pigs available at Maryland area rescues, including ours, and makes our adoption application available on their site.

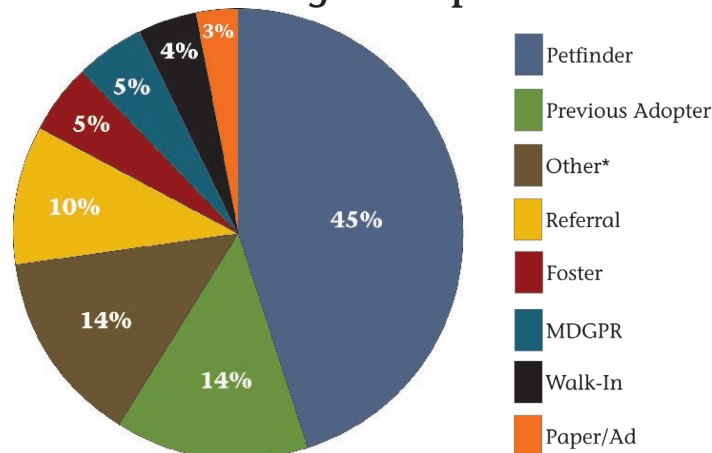
Previous adopters may come to adopt more animals from us—or they tell their friends, who soon become adopters. We have an adoption event every Sunday at the Frederick Towne Mall. The event enables us to meet potential adopters and is a great way to educate people about small animal care and make ourselves visible to the community. Finally, there are occasions when foster parents fall in love with their charges and end up adopting their foster animals.

**Sources of Small Angels Animals: Fiscal 2006**



\*Includes the Berkeley County (West Virginia) Humane Society, Washington (DC) Humane Society, and Baltimore (Maryland) Humane Society, as well as animals who were returned.

**Sources of Small Angels Adopters: Fiscal 2006**



\*Includes Internet searches, personal contact, and presentations

# Year At A Glance: Gerbils

By Michelle Clowe, Gerbil Coordinator

## Gerbil Snapshot: July 1, 2005—June 30, 2006

Intakes: 64

Adoptions: 59

Died/PTS: 1

Average Intakes per Month: 5.3

Average Adoptions per Month: 4.9

Number of Adopters: 19

Average Age Where Known:  
215 days (about 7 months)

Age Unknown at Intake: 52

Males: 28

Females: 36

Average Time in Rescue: 64 days  
(about 9 weeks)

Longest Time in Rescue:  
225 days (7.5 months)

Shortest Time in Rescue: 14 days

Number of Litters: 0

Average Size of Litters: 0

In our most recent fiscal year, Small Angels took in almost two-thirds of the gerbils for the entire year in just seven days. On August 26, 2005, we took 11 gerbils from an animal shelter—not an exceptional request, especially since gerbils can live together in same-gender groups. This group consisted of Constantine, Selma, Mommy Oreo with her three wee sons, and Mommy Patty with her two wee daughters and two wee sons. We sorted and settled everyone into foster care and felt we were in good gerbil shape.

But just seven days later, on September 1, we got a call from a different shelter that had received 31 gerbils. They

informed us that the gerbils had 24 hours before they would be euthanized. Feeling ambitious, we picked up all 31 gerbils the next day. These gerbils were already divided

into four groups: Jesse and James, Pudding and Oatmeal, a group of 12 boys, and a group of 15 girls. Thankfully the males and females were separated correctly. With this second group squared away, all we needed was adopters—and a lot of cardboard tubes!

We could have fretted about finding homes for almost four dozen gerbils, but instead we went ahead with a positive attitude. One month after intake, nine gerbils had found homes. By the end of the second month, half the gerbils had been adopted, and after four months all but eight had. Selma was adopted and paired with her sister Oreo, after Oreo's sons left the nest for a home of their own. Constantine's new mom, Brenda C., informs us that Constantine believes he's human and often demands to accompany his mom everywhere. Patty and her family were adopted by their foster mom. Jesse and James went to live in gerbil paradise with Amy and Mathias B., and Pudding and Oatmeal captured the hearts of a previous adopter. Pair by pair (and sometimes by group) the gerbils became members of forever families.



Jesse & James



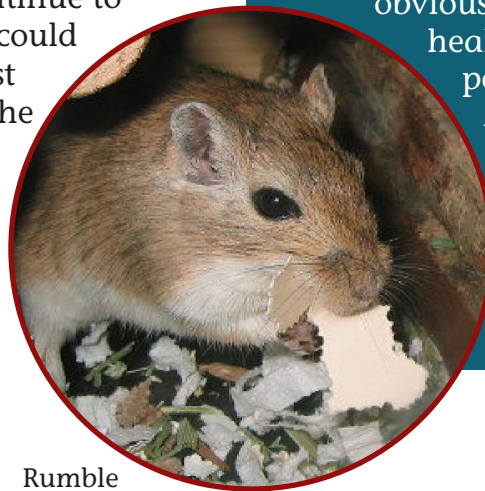
In the second half of the (fiscal) year the intake pendulum swung to the other side of the spectrum. From March through June we only took in one gerbil—just one! In June, Nina joined us when her young adult guardian no longer wanted her. (Nina was



Nina

actually the only gerbil to come directly from the public in the fiscal year; every other gerbil we accepted came from a shelter.) As gerbils are highly social and do best with a buddy, Nina was successfully introduced to another single Small Angels gal named Millie. Nina and Millie became fast friends, and the pair was quickly adopted.

Gerbil numbers currently continue to run low, but as we learned, that could change at any moment. This past year has reminded us to expect the unexpected and shown us that with teamwork and a positive attitude we can rise to any occasion.



Rumble

## Going the Distance for Gerbils By Nancy L.

We first discovered Small Angels Rescue and wonderful rescue advocate Michelle Clowe on Petfinder.com. After keeping gerbils (mainly from pet stores) for several years, we felt it was time for us to take in some who needed a second chance. Two boys on Petfinder, Klaus and Tweedle, called to me. We adopted Klaus and another boy, Ozzie (Midnight Moon), on our first trip to Maryland in September 2005. Then, when Rumble, whose photo and story caught my attention, came up for adoption, we made another trip in November 2005. By happy coincidence, Tweedle, the other of my two original choices, was up for adoption again, so we got him too!

Small Angels is quite a distance from us, about a 7–8 hour round trip, but definitely worth it. Our four Small Angels boys were obviously well cared for and very healthy. They've all been terrific pets with great personalities. And it feels good knowing we've helped somewhat in reducing the population of unwanted pets instead of putting money into some uncaring commercial breeder's bank account.

# Year At A Glance: Guinea Pigs

By Sue Wilmot, Guinea Pig Coordinator

## Guinea Pig Snapshot: July 1, 2005—June 30, 2006

Intakes: 145

Adoptions: 128

Died/PTS: 4

Average Intakes per Month: 12

Average Adoptions per Month: 11

Number of Adopters: 75

Males: 72

Females: 73

Average Time in Rescue: 50 days  
(about 7 weeks)

Longest Time in Rescue:  
233 days (about 8 months)

Shortest Time in Rescue: 1 day

**W**hen taking guinea pigs into the rescue, we usually try to give priority to local animal shelters, where they're often under threat of euthanasia. Unfortunately, we're limited in the help we can offer by the number of foster homes that are available at any one time, and this in turn depends on the success we have in finding forever homes for the animals in our care.

Occasionally we get calls regarding animals who've been found abandoned. Sometimes they're found by sheer chance in a box with little or no food and water. Lilly was one of these piggies; she was found in a box in an old cemetery, by two funeral directors. It was in the first week of March and

she was a lucky girl in that she didn't have to wait too long, as the cold weather would have ended her life miserably had she been there much longer. She was very hungry and thirsty but otherwise none the worse for wear. A few weeks later she was adopted



Lilly

to live with a new friend and no doubt has shared her story many times over with her new family since then!

Sadly, some guinea pigs find the experience of being abandoned more than they can handle. Patience was found on the grounds of an apartment block in Frederick. She was obviously pregnant and was very depressed. She was diagnosed with pregnancy toxemia, most likely caused by stress and starvation. We nursed her day and night, trying to cope with her physical and emotional needs to bring her safely to the delivery of her babies. Unfortunately, she succumbed to toxic shock and we had no choice but to have her euthanized to end her suffering. It had all been too much for her.

News of Small Angels is spreading into neighboring states. In the spring we helped out an animal shelter in West Virginia that had received some guinea pigs, including a very pregnant lady piggie named Kiki. Happily, she went on to give birth to four beautiful babies—Delia, Petra, Heidi, and Sigmar. It was wonderful to have a happy outcome to this pregnancy.

There are several root causes of unwanted guinea pigs in the community. Pet stores still sell incorrectly sexed animals and pregnant females too; that's a nasty surprise for the

# Year At A Glance: Guinea Pigs

*continued*



Kiki and  
Petra

new owners but cannot be news to the store owners, as often little or no effort is taken to separate the sexes while they're in the store. Then there are the families who see those gorgeous baby guinea pigs in the stores and buy them. Then a few

weeks or months later, reality sets in and as the piggies grow up, they are seen as "too much work" or as "boring" (most likely because they are in a very small cage with no room to do anything but just sit there).

The calls for us to take guinea pigs from private homes and animal shelters are never-ending. Hopefully as we educate families about these endearing creatures and the sort of life they deserve, it will become socially unacceptable for stores to sell them, and people will do the right thing and adopt. For now we have to focus on the ones we can help, one or two piggies at a time. We know it means the world to them.

## Finding New Friends By Mary O.

I'm not sure how I found out about Small Angels, but since I'm a newspaper reporter, I'm always surfing the Web. What I do know is that our wonderful old guinea pig Dragon passed away last spring, and my son Harry and I still had tears in our eyes when we looked up the Small Angels Web site. We immediately spotted a pair of sweet little pigs looking for a forever home, and we knew we could turn our sorrow into a force for good.

One of the pigs was named Camden. The other, an Abyssinian like our dear Dragon, was coincidentally named Harry. In no time at all we were talking with Sue, visiting our boys, and taking them home, along with a beautiful new cage. They have been wonderful pets. They make us laugh every day and are always ready with a cuddle. Thanks so much, Small Angels!



Harry and  
Camden

# Year At A Glance: Dwarf Hamsters

By Angela Moxley, Hamster Coordinator

## Dwarf Hamsters Snapshot: July 1, 2005—June 30, 2006

Intakes: 41

Adoptions: 58

Died/PTS: 1

Average Intakes per Month: 3

Average Adoptions per Month: 5

Number of Adopters: 22

Average Age Where Known:  
12.7 weeks (about 3 months)

Age Unknown at Intake: 8

Males: 25

Females: 16

Average Time in Rescue: 79 days  
(about 3 months)

Longest Time in Rescue:  
290 days (about 10 months)

Shortest Time in Rescue: 21 days

Number of Litters: 3

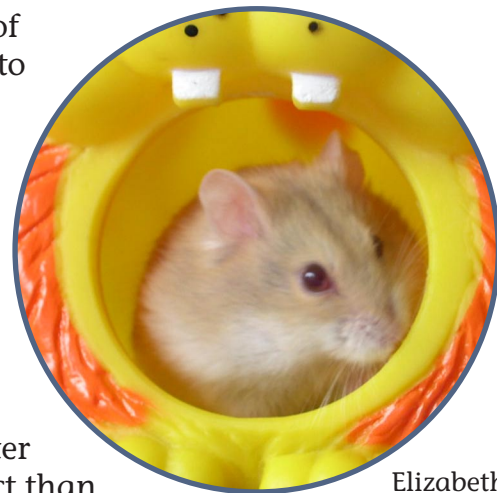
Average Size of Litters: 6

**D**warf hamsters are prodigious breeders, and we deal with the consequences. Many times, dwarf hamsters come to Small Angels Rescue pregnant. They have six to eight babies per litter on average (and can even have up to 20!) What's more, they can get pregnant again as soon as 24 hours after giving birth. So, at Small Angels, it's our responsibility to separate animals by gender as soon as we get them. Luckily, when a dwarf hammy has babies, the first two weeks are easy on us, as the mom requires hands-off care with feeding and watering only. Just before the babies open their eyes, we start to handle them. As the babies grow, we handle them more, carry them around the house in our pockets, introduce them to solid foods, and marvel at the ability of the mom hamster to give birth to and care for so many little mouths.

We rescued a large group of dwarf hamsters—15 in all!—from an animal shelter just before the fiscal year started last year. It wasn't long before two of those hamsters gave birth. Elizabeth gave birth to five boys (meaning, sadly, that she'd have to live on her own once they got older). Eilene, a

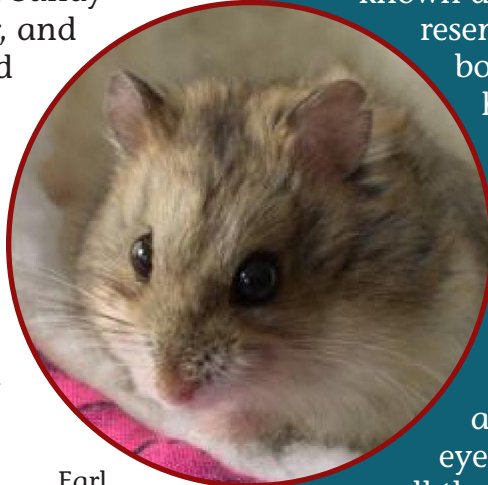
three-legged hamster, gave birth to two boys and three girls. By Christmas almost all the hamsters had been adopted except for Elizabeth and one of her sons, Jake (who'd been separated from his brothers due to fighting). As time passed and the hamsters aged, their prospects for adoption got weaker. We ran an ad in *The Washington Post* featuring Elizabeth and her story. Soon after, a family called, very excited about adopting her—but sadly and unexpectedly, around the same time, Elizabeth passed away. Her family was sad—but they agreed to adopt Jake, in kind of a fitting tribute to Elizabeth's memory. Our dwarf hamsters wait a little longer than some of our other animals to find their forever homes, but they do almost always find a home, and sometimes in the most unexpected of ways.

Perhaps no dwarf hamster better exemplifies this fact than



Elizabeth

Earl. He'd been rescued as part of the same crew as Elizabeth and Eilene. Earl was a typical dwarf hammy; there was nothing special about his appearance or personality. He had his grumpy days when he'd do nothing but box like dwarf hammies are prone to, and he had his friendly days where he loved to take tofu and eat it out of your hand. Of course, we think all of our hammies are special, but apparently there was nothing about Earl that stood out in potential adopters' minds. Months passed, a new year came, and still Earl waited for his forever home. Then in early March, Small Angels got an e-mail about Earl. Sandy L. had seen his post on Petfinder, and he'd caught her eye—she wanted to give him a home. His new mom even understood that dwarf hammies often box and didn't mind. And so, after 256 days in the rescue, Earl was adopted—proving that every single one, even the seemingly ordinary ones, is worth a second chance and the sometimes long wait for a forever home.



Earl

## A Hamster by Any Other Name By Angela Moxley

Hamsters kept as pets belong to one of four species, with Syrian and dwarf hamsters by far being the most popular. Small Angels has rescued at least one of each species. Each hamster type is nocturnal, and they have short gestation periods with the ability to give birth in high numbers. Here's a quick breakdown of the distinguishing characteristics of each type:

**Chinese hamsters**—These hamsters are 3–4 inches in length and belong to a group known as the rat-like hamsters. They resemble mice, with long, slender bodies, and they have a tiny hairless tail. They can live in same-gender pairs and trios. It is illegal to have Chinese hamsters in some states.

**Roborovski hamster**—The smallest of the hamster species kept as pets, these hamsters are 1–2 inches in length and have distinctive white eyebrows. They are the fastest of all the hamster species. They can live in same-gender pairs and trios.

**Russian Campbell's dwarf hamsters**—These hamsters are 3–4 inches in length. They are sometimes incorrectly referred to as Siberian hamsters. A cousin, the Russian winter white dwarf, turns white in winter. Dwarf hamsters can live happily in same-gender pairs and trios. They are prone to diabetes.

**Syrian hamsters**—The largest of the hamster species, these hamsters grow to 6–8 inches in length. Long-haired Syrian hamsters are sometimes referred to as teddy bear hamsters, and black Syrian hamsters are called black bear hamsters. Syrian hamsters are territorial and must live alone.

# Year At A Glance: Syrian Hamsters

By Angela Moxley, Hamster Coordinator

## Syrian Hamsters Snapshot: July 1, 2005—June 30, 2006

Intakes: 83

Adoptions: 99

Died/PTS: 11

Average Intakes per Month: 7

Average Adoptions per Month: 8

Number of Adopters: 76

Average Age Where Known:  
5.5 months

Age Unknown at Intake: 17

Males: 52

Females: 31

Average Time in  
Rescue: 55 days (about 2 months)

Longest Time in Rescue: 184 days  
(about 6 months)

Shortest Time in Rescue: 1 day

Number of Litters: 5

Average Size of Litters: 7

The most common reason people gave to animal shelters or to us for giving up their Syrian hamsters (if they gave a reason) was that they had too many. Time and time again, we've read or heard of how people bought a hamster at the pet store, and she gave birth to a large litter shortly after. Or the person bought two "male" hamsters and would then receive the surprise and shock of newborn babies. Or, people may keep a male and female together not realizing how quickly and how often they can breed. One person told us she'd just wanted her daughters to experience the "miracle of life."

This presents a challenge to the rescue because all too often when we are asked to take Syrian hamsters, it's not just one but large numbers such as eight or 10. As Syrian hamsters are territorial and must be kept alone, finding foster spots for each hamster can be a challenge. And because hamsters are ready to breed as early as four weeks, some young ones may come to us already pregnant—so we have to find homes not just for the original litter but also all of their offspring.

Fortunately for us, the hamsters are sometimes a little more enjoyable to work with than the people, and this year we had the privilege of working with some awesome hammies. There was Mum and her eight babies and sister Wendy, who came to us from a shelter in southwestern Virginia in the fall. Despite losing an eye and going through the stress of having babies and being shuffled to the shelter and then to us, Mum kept her friendly spirit and found a great home (see sidebar). Wendy and most of the babies also found wonderful homes, though sadly one, Sycamore, passed away after suddenly developing cancer at a very young age.

Then in the spring we helped Hazel and her 10 children. Like Mum, Hazel was just about as friendly as could be despite all the chaos she'd been through. Her



Poppy, one of Hazel's babies

# Year At A Glance: Syrian Hamsters

*continued*

forever family showers her with the love and tenderness she's shown to them, and they report that she's become kind of a like a hamster ambassador to humans, showing people how great hamsters can be as companions.

One by one, we've found homes for her children where they're cherished as members of the family.

Sometimes, we work with hamsters who aren't so sure about people. Whether it was

because of the way they were treated or handled in the past, or just because they have shyer personalities than most, a few hamsters just don't care to interact with people. One such hammy was a strikingly beautiful male named Firecracker, who displayed classic defensive behavior whenever someone attempted to pick him up. But Cindy U. fell in love with his picture on our Petfinder site and agreed to adopt him even after learning about his timid personality. Sadly, Cindy only had a few months to enjoy with Firecracker before he suddenly passed away—although she did later adopt Maple, one of Mum's children.

Cases like Firecracker's are one of the reasons we do what we do—to help the ones who would otherwise be cast off as unworthy of saving.



Firecracker

## Mum

By Carly H.

I first learned about Small Angels from my friend Maria. My family was looking for a guinea pig friend for our guinea pig, Charlie. We went to the Frederick Towne Mall to meet with the Small Angels volunteers and find out what we needed to do to find and adopt a guinea pig.

While we were there, I saw Mum for the first time and she went straight to my heart. She was an adorable mommy hamster who had been through a rough time with a huge litter of babies and an eye infection that caused the veterinarian to have to close up her eye socket. I had another hamster for almost four years who had recently died and it was the saddest thing I had ever been through. I wasn't sure that I ever wanted another hamster because it would be too painful when it died.

But that all changed when I met Mum. I was afraid that some people would be turned off by the fact that Mum only had one eye, but all I saw was a friendly, energetic hammy who needed a good home. So I talked about adopting her with my parents and we went through the adoption process. The Small Angels people were all so nice and Mum became my new pet.

I just love her!! It's great to watch her run around and play. I also love listening to her run in her wheel at night, just like my old hamster Snickers did. It's a very comforting sound to me. I'm so glad that Mum is a member of our family and I would recommend Small Angels to anyone who is looking for a new pet.



Mum

# Year At A Glance: Mice

By Nancy Gardner, Past Mouse Coordinator

## Mouse Snapshot: July 1, 2005—June 30, 2006

Intakes: 20

Adoptions: 8

Died/PTS: 26

Average Intakes per Month: 1.7

Average Adoptions per Month: 0.67

Average Age Where Known:  
young adult (6 months)

Males: 11

Females: 9

Average Time in Rescue: 209 days  
(about 7 months)

Longest Time in Rescue:  
497 days (about 17 months)

Shortest Time in Rescue: 25 days

Number of Litters: 0

**W**hat a pleasure and an honor it was to be the mouse coordinator for Small Angels Rescue during the last fiscal year. Helping out our furry little friends means so much to me and has been so rewarding. I never knew adopting little Lucky the hamster back in the spring of 2004 would blossom into such a rewarding experience!

These tiny, bright-eyed creatures have brought me so much joy. Mice are always active and so much fun to watch. It's fascinating to see them creating their own personal environment just the way they like it. I greatly enjoyed tending to the various duties of being a mouse coordinator—from taking all sorts of adorable pictures of the new mice

who have come into Small Angels Rescue, writing a short paragraph on each mouse and posting them on Petfinder, to keeping track of the numbers of incoming and outgoing mice as well as other

statistics. It means a lot to me to be able to help these little ones in need.

We've gotten quite a few mice in this past fiscal year from various sources. Mostly they have been given up to animal shelters before coming our way—sometimes as food for the snakes they're turned in with. One of our rescued girls named Clara was previously meant to be snake food but was lucky to have found her way to Small Angels—where she made friends with another homeless mouse lady named Miss T—and then to her forever home! Zip, a little boy mouse, was found in a container left in a mailbox. Poor fellow!

Mice make such wonderful pets! Studies show that there are great psychological benefits to having a pet. They bring joy into people's lives and I can't think of a better pet to have than a soft and gentle little mouse.



Clara



Miss T



How can anyone resist their dear little faces looking up at you to say hello? They take up very little space and are easy to maintain. And mice are such great entertainers! They love to explore. If you handle them regularly they are also a lot of fun to hold. I've found the mice aren't adopted quite as often as the other small animals who come into Small Angels Rescue. It's hard for me to understand why, as they're such adorable creatures!

## Percy By Hayley T.

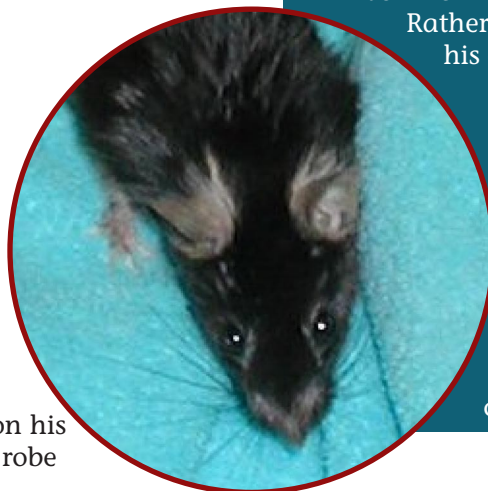
Last September, I adopted from Small Angels Rescue a tiny black mouse named Professor Fuzzyrump. When I took him home, he couldn't seem to concentrate on just one activity. He ran in his wheel for a few seconds, then he went through a toilet paper roll, then to his cardboard box, back to his wheel, etc. I then decided to rename my new friend Percy, because it seemed to suit his ADHD characteristics.

Once he had settled, I took him out to hold him for a minute, and he was very good about it. We bonded almost instantly, and I began taking him out of his cage to play with him regularly. I usually wore a fleece robe when I played with him, and he always loved to crawl into the pockets and gnaw on the belt. He would also run up to my face when we were playing. Usually, he would just stare at me and run away, but there was one day that he actually gave me a kiss (or wiped his nose on me, I couldn't tell!).

We would often play together for long periods of time. If he got thirsty, he would nibble on my finger, and I would put him in his cage. He would run to his water, get a drink, and wait for me to put my hand in to take him out again. There were some days that I didn't really have time to play with him, so I would put him in a giant plastic box with his wheel, toilet paper, water bottles, and cardboard galore while I did my homework. Percy would sometimes entertain himself for well over an hour in his playpen. I also made him a little carrying pouch so that I could carry him around my neck while I cleaned my room, talked on the phone, etc. My funniest memory of him was when he managed to escape from his cage.

Rather than run away, he just sat on top of his cage and waited for me!

He was my best friend; we did practically everything together. Sadly, Percy passed away on July 28, 2006. I loved him more than I thought was even possible, and I will never forget him, or the many memories we made together. Even though losing Percy was painful for me, adopting a homeless small animal changed my life—for the better.



Percy on his  
fleece robe

# Year At A Glance: Rats

By Michelle Clowe, Rat Coordinator

## Rat Snapshot: July 1, 2005—June 30, 2006

Intakes: 169

Adoptions: 110

Died/PTS: 9

Average Intakes per Month: 14

Average Adoptions per Month: 9

Number of Adopters: 40

Average Age Where Known:  
39 days

Age Unknown at Intake: 42

Males: 94

Females: 75

Average Time in  
Rescue: 52 days (about 2 months)

Longest Time in Rescue:  
668 days (about 22 months)

Shortest Time in Rescue: 1 day

Number of Litters: 8

Average Size of Litters: 10

**W**e typically hear one of four reasons for giving up an animal. Accidental or unknown pregnancy, child's loss of interest, allergies, and moving usually top the list of reasons why people can't or won't keep their pets. Small Angels took in 169 rats this year, and their stories went way beyond these typical reasons—one heartbreaking tale after another.

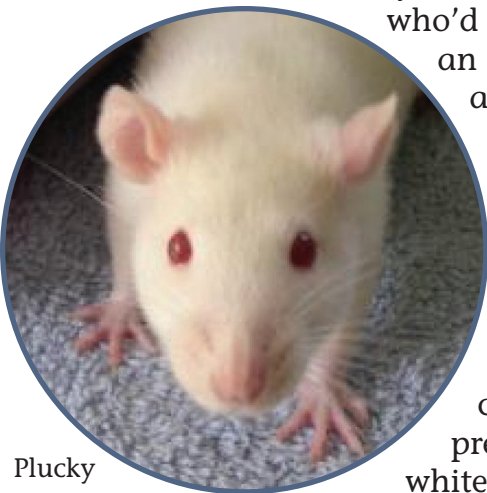
We started things off with the birth of 20 babies to two mommy rats, Candy and Kisses, who'd been abandoned in an empty apartment along with several other rats and a mouse. Plucky joined us a few weeks later, having been found running across a busy city street. This precious pink-eyed white was clearly not equipped to survive outside.

Plucky's "rescuer" kept her in a tiny plastic travel carrier so small that Plucky could not

fully stand up on her hind legs, nor was there enough room for even a water bottle.

Less than a month later, Small Angels took in 18 rats left homeless by Hurricane Katrina. Brought from Mississippi by a kind volunteer from another rescue organization, a group of seven females and a group of 11 males arrived into our care. Katrina was a devastating storm on many levels. People's lives were thrown into turmoil, as were the lives of the Gulf's companion animals. These ratties were no exception. Ragged and bewildered by the effects of the storm on their lives, they settled into foster care "Up North."

And the list goes on. Cornelia, or Corny for short, was found under a tree in a park, left to fend for herself. Arden and Astrid were thrown in the trash in their cage with no hope of escape on their own. We also took in 12 rats who were being kept outside and being fed horse food; we finished out the year with 20 rats who had been abandoned outside of a pet store in two tiny filthy cages. Six of the rats were pregnant, and the group quickly grew to 81 rats!



Plucky



These stories are not shared to evoke sadness. In one way, we should celebrate the animals that come to Small Angels—they're the ones who get a second chance. Candy and Kisses were



adopted together with their three sisters. Plucky lives in a rat palace with rattie girlfriends and well-trained humans. As a matter of fact,

Arden and Astrid Plucky's family adopted from Small Angels three times, giving a home to Corny and one of the outside-horse-food rats (who all found homes). All but four of the Katrina rats have found permanent sunny families. Arden and Astrid now enjoy eating Cheerios on the couch with their parents, and we found homes for the abandoned pet store rats. I hate to think what could have happened to these rats if we hadn't been able to help.

It would be easy to shake heads, cluck tongues, and wag fingers at the seemingly unlimited supply of such horror stories, but that wouldn't change anything. As a rescue and a community, we must identify, explore, and address why these stories are occurring. Let the rats of Small Angels inspire us to change the belief system that animals are insentient and disposable, so that all companion animals know lives of love.

## Rescued Ratties By Alissa P.

I've been a rat lover and owner for more than 10 years now. It's to the point where I don't feel complete without a rat in my life. I'm also a strong believer in adoption and rescue. There are far too many animals out there who need a home for me to go out buying one.

I first found Small Angels through an Internet search. I was excited to find a group dedicated to small animals. So many overlook the rodents and rabbits and end up focusing on cats and dogs. As an exotic vet tech, I am always drawn to the most pathetic of animals: the old, the needy, the crippled, the nasty—the ones who wouldn't be many others' first choice. These are the ones I always ask for when adopting from Small Angels. I ask for the "least adoptable."

Although many end up not being with me long, whether it be due to old age or illness, I enjoy every moment with them. I love discovering their individual personalities. Small Angels shares my enthusiasm for these little critters. This is what I appreciate most about them. I've recommended Small Angels to many people and will continue to do so.

Tom Sawyer, adopted  
by Alissa P.



# Year At A Glance: Chinchillas

By Michelle Clowe, Chinchilla Coordinator

## Chinchilla Snapshot: July 1, 2005—June 30, 2006

Intakes: 13

Adoptions: 15

Died/PTS: 1

Average Intakes per Month: 1.08

Average Adoptions per Month: 1.25

Number of Adopters: 40

Average Age Where Known:  
1.5 years

Age Unknown at Intake: 1

Males: 7

Females: 6

Average Time in Rescue: 47 days  
(about 6 weeks)

Longest Time in Rescue:  
91 days (about 3 months)

Shortest Time in Rescue: 8 days

Number of Litters: 0

Average Size of Litters: 0

Each type of animal that Small Angels helps presents its own unique challenges in regards to rescue work. For chinchillas, one of the biggest challenges is their lifespan—they can easily live 15 years or more. As we certainly want every chinny to have a long, healthy, happy existence, the difficulty is finding guardians who'll be committed to caring for these animals their entire lives.

People often get chinchillas without adequate forethought. They see a cute, soft little creature and think it might be fun to have this unusual animal as a pet. After they've already brought the chinchilla home, people often realize this might not be the right pet for them. Chinchillas, while extremely soft to the touch, are

not cuddly lap pets. They're highly athletic animals who need daily exercise and prefer running around to having a snuggle. They're avid chewers who will be delighted to quickly nibble up your clothes, books, furniture, and wires. They need to have their diet monitored closely, be kept safe from heat stroke in the summer and—did we mention?—they are a long-term commitment. Chinchillas are great companions—for people who have the appropriate expectations and appreciate an independent and inquisitive personality.

We had 13 chinchillas come to Small Angels this year, most surrendered because their guardians chose inappropriate pets for their expectations and lifestyle. Machu, Picchu, and Evie were given up by a college student who realized she didn't have time for them. Ernesto was also given up by a busy college student. Flutter was purchased at a mall pet store and surrendered to a shelter just four months later. Bonnie, Bella, Betty, and Boeey were given up by their young adult guardian due to her lack of time for proper care. A little research would have kept most of these people from making a 15-year



Betty  
and  
Boeey



commitment they couldn't keep and spared these chinchillas the stressful consequences of human impulsiveness.

Small Angels takes several measures to ensure lifelong homes for our chinchilla friends. All chinchillas are spayed and neutered before adoption—a measure that eliminates anyone interested in breeding. We fully inform potential adopters about proper chinchilla care, and we do home visits for every chin adoption. So far we have been successful in meeting the challenge of finding chinchilla guardians who are excited about having these curious animals in their lives for a long time. Machu and Picchu now live with a veterinary student. Evie joined a rescue-friendly family (who even has a rescued turkey), and she got a chin buddy to live and play with too. Ernesto was adopted by a licensed veterinary technician as a companion for her single chinchilla and is living in what can only be referred to as a chin palace. Bonnie, despite being a special needs chin with dental problems, and her sister, Bella, are now living like queens, while Betty and Boeey are enjoying the high life with a very doting and dedicated new dad. The chinchillas and their happy tales show the huge and undeniable positive impact people can have on the welfare of animals by simply giving careful and thoughtful consideration to what is really required of being an animal caretaker.

## About Chinchillas By Michelle Clowe

With lifespans of up to 15 years or more, chinchillas are a long-term commitment. Chinchilla guardians must also pay special attention to their care, as there are detailed care requirements to keep these animals happy and healthy.

Chinchillas require a high-quality pellet such as Oxbow Chinchilla Deluxe, along with fresh, clean water; timothy hay; and nondyed, nontoxic chews. They must live indoors in an environment where the temperature does not exceed 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

Chinchillas need a cage that is large enough to accommodate running and playing. The taller and wider the cage, the better. Small Angels requires a cage that is at least four feet tall. Chinchillas will hop from perch to perch in their cage. Wire or mesh floors should be covered with vinyl or ceramic tiles or other similar material. Wire mesh on the sides of cages should not exceed one inch by one-half inch so their legs do not get caught in the grid.

Chinchillas are happiest in an environment with a moderate activity level—one that provides enough exercise, activity, and interaction to prevent boredom, but not so much as to overwhelm them with stress. They appreciate a hideaway where they can rest in their cage, which should be kept in an area that is quiet and private during the day and offers access to family activities in the evening.

Like other small animals, chinchillas need lots of time out of their cage every day. They also appreciate an exercise wheel that is solid, with no harmful spokes, and at least 15 inches in diameter. Chinchillas also need and enjoy dust baths to keep their coats grease-free.

For more details on chinchilla care, visit [www.chincare.com](http://www.chincare.com).

# Thank You

Small Angels Rescue would like to thank the following generous organizations and people who have contributed, via donations and other resources, to our success:

## Organizations

Animal Welfare League of Frederick County  
Blue Ridge Veterinary Associates  
For Pete's Sake/Vicki Bidle-Kelly and Debbie Gala  
Frederick County Humane Society  
Maryland Guinea Pig Rescue/Steve and Cindy Conard  
New Market Animal Hospital  
The Rat and Mouse Club of America  
Rust (Virginia) Library Board  
The Qwest Foundation

## Individuals

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Cheryl Beaverson  
Robin Brough  
Brenda Crowell  
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Mindy Hanlon  
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Kristina Hopkins  
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Samantha Klein  
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Elizabeth Tuma  
Natalie Weatherby-Nance  
James Wilcox  
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Laurie Wilmot

Finally, Small Angels would like to thank the following people who have fostered for us during the past year:

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Maude McGovern  
Stephanie Mears  
Therese Michael  
Jenny Morris  
Jillian Morris  
Claire Nemes  
Paula Pennell  
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Julia and Maureen Prentiss  
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Terri Rutter  
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Joanne Scott  
Beth Smith  
Kristen and Hayley Tevelow  
Liz Wallace  
Carla Wright  
Karen and Katie Zimmerman

# Fiscal 2006 Financial Statement

July 1, 2005—June 30, 2006

**Mission Statement:** Small Angels Rescue, Inc. is dedicated to placing gerbils, guinea pigs, hamsters, mice, rats, chinchillas, and degus (and other small animals as necessary) in suitable foster care homes, finding adoptive homes for those same animals, and educating the public in general about small animal care and overpopulation. This corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, literary and educational purposes, including for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or any corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

## Income

Adoption Fees.....	\$4,642.50 (29%)*
Donations.....	\$3,039.50 (19%)
Grants.....	\$3,000 (19%)
Cage and Carrier Sales .....	\$2,588 (16%)
Membership Fees.....	\$1,792.90 (11%)
Fund-Raisers .....	\$1,048.96 (7%)
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>\$16,111.86</b>

## Expenses

Foster Care	
Spay/Neuter .....	\$3,625
Other Vet Care .....	\$1,828.34
Supplies.....	\$267.99
<b>Total Foster Care .....</b>	<b>\$5,721.33 (53%)</b>
Administrative** .....	\$3,216.78 (30%)
Fund-Raising .....	\$1,412.71 (13%)
Conferences/Dues.....	\$165 (2%)
Membership .....	\$164.72 (2%)
Other .....	\$66.47 (0.6%)
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>\$10,747.01</b>

\*Due to rounding, figures do not precisely total 100%.

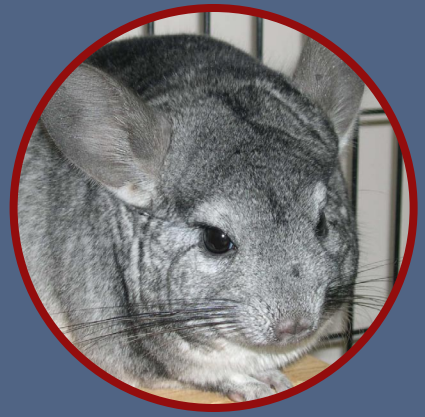
\*\*Includes insurance (\$1,134.12), postage, printing, mileage, printer cartridges, and Web hosting.

Small Angels Rescue is a registered charity with the State of Maryland. Registration does not imply endorsement of any charitable solicitation by the State of Maryland.



Rescue, Inc.

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301-668-0404



*For more information on Small Angels Rescue—including how you can help by providing foster care or donating money or needed items—call 301-668-0404, e-mail [info@smallangelsrescue.org](mailto:info@smallangelsrescue.org), or visit [www.smallangelsrescue.org](http://www.smallangelsrescue.org)*