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12 Days of Caring: Merrick Fund aids sick and neglected animals

By [LARA BRECKLE, The Patriot-News](#)

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Every year over the holiday season, The Patriot-News presents [12 Days of Caring](#), highlighting a dozen charities that provide services in our community. Each of the organizations featured depends on donations to help underwrite their operations. Today's story about The Merrick Fund Foundation is the third in the series.

The [Merrick Fund Foundation](#) is a Lower Swatara Township-based nonprofit whose sole mission is giving otherwise adoptable animals the emergency medical treatment needed to save their lives. The fund, co-founded by Amy Wimmersberger and Evelyn Bertoni, is named in honor of Merrick, a yellow lab found in deplorable conditions in East Pennsboro Township three years ago. Merrick died, Wimmersberger said, on the way to an emergency vet, more than 12 hours after being found sick, starving and with a bee-infested tumor. The delay in medical attention came because the shelter where he was taken couldn't afford immediate treatment. "We said, if the reason that dog didn't go anywhere [for treatment sooner] is because they couldn't pay for it, we would," Wimmersberger said.

After investigating some options with local shelters, Bertoni and Wimmersberger decided to become their own nonprofit entity. That way, they said, they could help as many animals as possible. Because there are no offices and no paid staff, every dollar the Merrick Fund receives goes toward helping a sick animal, Wimmersberger said.

This year, the fund — which helps cats and dogs — has given out \$17,479 to shelters in central Pennsylvania.

HOW TO HELP

- Donations may be sent to The Merrick Fund Foundation, P.O. Box 4323, Harrisburg, PA 17111. Contributions can also be made through their Web site, www.merrick-fund.org. The foundation is also looking for volunteers.
- Shelters with animals needing emergency care can apply for a grant from the fund by filling out an application, which is also available online.