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Group of Pet Lovers Helps Animal Shelter Group Effort Raises Hundreds of Dollars for Thundershirts

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – Using social media and a shared love of pets, Mindy Smith Pierman and several dozen friends found a common ground. As summer and the 4th of July approached, they noticed their pets were completely shaken by the sounds of fireworks and/or thunder. Mindy used the Thundershirt to calm her dog, Murphy, a golden retriever.

"Murphy is a rescue, and she is scared to death of loud noises and storms. The Thundershirt keeps her calm when storms hit," Mindy said. "I felt so badly that the shelter dogs were just as scared but with no one to comfort them. I discussed it with my friends and other dog lovers, who all jumped on board, with no questions asked." Mindy asked for donations on facebook, and held a garage sale in hopes of raising enough money to provide the Kent County Animal Shelter with Thundershirts. In all, more than \$1300 was raised for the effort.

"The daily routine in the shelter can be frightening or confusing for many dogs," said Dr. Laurie Wright, Shelter Veterinarian for the Kent County Animal Shelter. "Veterinarians and dog trainers use Thundershirts to decrease stress for dogs in a variety of situations. Mindy's generous contribution will help us provide increased comfort for the dogs in our care."

With the support of Chow Hound (at Breton and Burton) and Pet Supplies Plus (at Alpine and 4 Mile) Mindy was able to purchase 54 Thundershirts for the Kent County Animal Shelter. "Shelter dogs are under stress on a good day," Mindy said. "My hope is that it will make their stay less traumatic and maybe even more adoptable if they're not acting out because of stress and anxiety. That would make it worth every bit of work we put into it."

"We see so many animals that are traumatized; lost, scared, abused," said Adam London, Administrative Health Officer of the Kent County Health Department. "We are so fortunate to have people like Mindy and her friends supporting our mission."

PHOTO OP: Mindy will deliver the Thundershirts to the Kent County Animal Shelter on Tuesday, September 17 at 10 a.m. The shelter is located at 740 Fuller NE, Grand Rapids, in the same complex as the Health Department. Mindy Smith Pierman and Adam London will be available at that time for additional comment. Please come by for this event!

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.