**Sandy Paws Rescue, Inc.**
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# Nomination Essay: Lending A Paw – Supporting Families in Hard Times

Sandy Paws Rescue is a 100% volunteer-run nonprofit. We do not have any paid staff. In addition to our core mission, we operate Lending A Paw, a small but growing program designed to support pet owners experiencing hardship. In 2025, this program provided assistance to families both on Martha's Vineyard and off-island who needed help caring for their pets.

Lending A Paw was created in direct response to requests from community members who were not looking to surrender their pets, but who needed short-term, practical support. These requests often came from working families, seniors, or individuals in transitional situations—people doing their best, but stretched too thin by rising costs or unexpected emergencies.

In 2025, the program provided:

- Assistance with emergency veterinary bills
- Coverage of basic veterinary care, such as vaccinations
- Spay and neuter support
- Help with prescription foods for specific medical conditions
- Distribution of basic pet supplies including crates, leashes, and collars
- Short-term food support for pets in homes experiencing financial strain

Additionally, Sandy Paws Rescue began working more closely with a local professional dog trainer to offer basic behavioral guidance and tools to help prevent rehoming due to manageable issues. For some families, this meant a training session and a crate. For others, it meant identifying a better feeding schedule or walking routine. While not a full training program, this support helped several families retain their pets through direct, targeted solutions.

The Lending A Paw program includes an intake form on our website and is supported by a small but intentional social media marketing effort to ensure families know help is available. It exists because the need is real, and because our team believes that keeping pets in homes is just as important as placing them in new ones.

A $5,000 Community Choice Grant would allow us to:

- Say yes to more requests for vetting, spay/neuter, and food
- Cover the cost of commonly needed supplies and prescription foods
- Assist more families struggling to meet the growing demand and rising costs of prescription diets and ongoing medical needs
- Continue partnering with a local trainer to assist with basic behavioral concerns
- Work even more closely with the community veterinarians we already have strong relationships with, helping bridge financial gaps so pets can receive timely care

The program is run entirely by volunteers who handle each request individually. Every dollar goes directly toward purchasing supplies, covering veterinary care, and supporting families in need. Families ask for help, and we do our best to meet that need quickly and responsibly.

We are proud of this work and grateful for the trust the community has placed in us. Thank you for considering Sandy Paws Rescue's Lending A Paw program for the 2025 Community Choice Grant.

"Dogs have a way of finding the people who need them."