

Local Everywhere®

Our employees live and work in the same communities you do. Every month, we will be sharing a story of one of our teammates with you. They might be your neighbor, or that guy on the trail running with his dog, or that gal sitting next to you cheering for the high school team. These are the same people who greet you when you call Animal Supply Company, or deliver orders to your store – and we couldn't be more proud of them. We are Animal Supply Company and we are local everywhere.

Karen Risked Her Marriage for a Little Cat Named Gracie Ann



Karen Shepler

TEAM

Customer Credits

HOMETOWN

Wadsworth, OH

"Gracie Ann was just a small feral kitten when she chose to crawl up under my van when I was at the gas station," Karen explained. "I can still see the image of Gracie Ann's head popping out above the tire on the rear of the van. I was then able to grab her and pull her the rest of the way out." Karen felt that it was faith that brought Gracie Ann into her life. "My daughter had wanted a cat for as long as I could remember so I went against my better judgement and my husband's wishes, and took her home with me. Since her dad was out mowing when I got home, I snuck the cat into the house and introduced her to my daughter. It was love at first site. My husband wasn't very happy with me for a few days, but he eventually got over it and agreed to keep her. That is how she got her name. It is by the Grace of God, that we still have her!"

Gracie Ann fit right into the family and became fast friends with Ollie, their shih tzu-poodle mix. "They like to play and chase each other and provide constant

entertainment," she said, adding, "His full name is Oliver George, which is only used when he doesn't listen, and he is one of the biggest spoiled babies on the planet. Even if I am in the middle of the swimming pool, he feels the need to be right next to me!"

The pool is where Karen and her family spend a lot of their time during the summer months. "I also love gardening, cooking and photography," she said.

They are also very involved in their church. "My husband ushers on Sundays and I am a greeter," she said. "We also lead a senior ministry at our church where we plan outings and events specifically for seniors. I also plan and host events for our kid's ministry."

This past year, Karen and her family initiated the first church-wide Thanksgiving dinner. With the help of numerous donations and others willing to serve, they were able to provide a Thanksgiving dinner for people who may not be able to afford it, nor have family or friends in the area to spend it with. "Neither of us want to see anyone alone for the holidays," she said. "My husband and another family also invited and picked up a

local homeless man along with his cart and brought him to the church for dinner. We were so honored to have this gentleman join us and lead us in prayer." They all want to make the Thanksgiving dinner an annual event.

Karen, her husband Curt, and their son Justin, and daughter Kayla, live in Wadsworth, Ohio. "This is where my husband and I grew up," she said. "After the birth of our son, and living in Southern California for 11 years, we returned to Wadsworth to raise our kids around family. I came from a very large extended family and we wanted our children to be part of that. We are not fans of the Ohio weather, but nothing can replace family."

And, what an amazing family Karen has, and that includes Oliver George and little Gracie Ann.



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