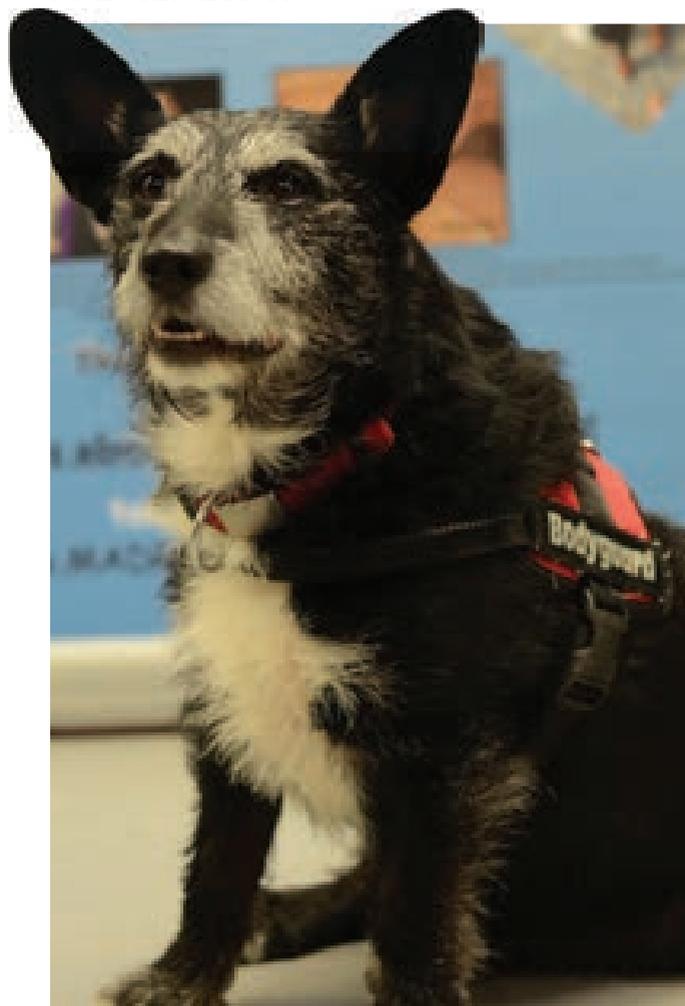


IVNA Charity of the Year: MADRA

In December 2015, the Irish Veterinary Nurses Association (IVNA) asked its members to vote, via an online poll and email, to help choose our charity of the year. From our shortlist of three, MADRA was chosen to be our 2016 charity, writes Lorraine McDonnell RVN



Jasper, the MADRA mascot.

Mutts Anonymous Dog Rescue and Adoption (MADRA), located in Galway, is a volunteer-run organisation and is managed by Marina Fiddler and Tara Nic Dhiarmada, both qualified dog trainers with many years of experience between them.

MADRA actively supports, encourages and promotes neutering of pet dogs as an ethical solution to the overpopulation and killing of dogs in Ireland. It also aims to improve the welfare of dogs through general education of the public by running education programmes for both adults and children.

MADRA's main objectives are:

- To place all animals under their care in permanent, loving homes;
- To educate members of the general public in good pet dog husbandry; and
- To reduce the number of healthy dogs euthanised in county pounds.

MADRA's centre is situated in Connemara, Co Galway. Located in this centre are purpose-built, insulated kennels, which include infrared lamps for extra heating. Outdoor runs are also provided. At the centre is a team of dedicated staff and committed volunteers who tend to each dog's individual needs and hope to repair their lost trust in humans. Each dog is walked three to four times daily and 24-hour supervision is also provided at the centre. Galway County Council rents four kennel spaces at the MADRA facility and these spaces are used as the West County Pound. There is a clear protocol in place when the dog warden brings stray dogs to the pound kennels; as soon as they arrive, each dog is vaccinated, microchipped and kept for five days as per the legal requirement. They are then moved to the MADRA rescue centre regardless of age, breed or size. MADRA visits local authority pounds, both Galway County and Mayo County, every 7-10 days to collect the dogs in these facilities. These dogs are then assessed and treated, if necessary, by a vet, and are then wormed, de-fleaed, and neutered. Once this process is completed the tireless work starts to rehome them through the MADRA Facebook page, website and at local events.

Since 2005, MADRA has aided in the reduction of dogs being euthanised from a high 83% to 11% in Galway in 2015. In 2015, MADRA cared for approximately 750 dogs; these dogs varied from healthy unwanted pets to animals in dire need of medical care. These dogs come from local authorities, veterinary clinics, members of the public and abusive situations. Each dog is temperament-tested individually by qualified dog trainers.

Not only is MADRA a rescue service, it is part of the local community and it strongly encourages older dog owners and helps to support them in caring for their dog. It provides an ambulance service to aid senior citizens with bringing their dogs to and from the vets for routine visits. MADRA also provides short-term boarding, if required. It does not charge for this service.

Unfortunately, with all the hard work that these volunteers do, they rely heavily on public generosity in order to run this organisation. MADRA has two charity shops, one located in Moycullen village and one in the Westside area of Galway City. It also runs various fundraising events throughout the year. Its annual running costs are heading towards €200,000 per annum. MADRA receives an *ex gratia* grant from the Department of Environment at €3,000. With every surrender, it asks for a donation in order to offset the cost of care, transport, and medical expenses that may be incurred. MADRA is also in the process of developing mother-and-puppy units at its shelter. It also hopes to develop its education programme, as well as expansion of its services to the older people in the community.



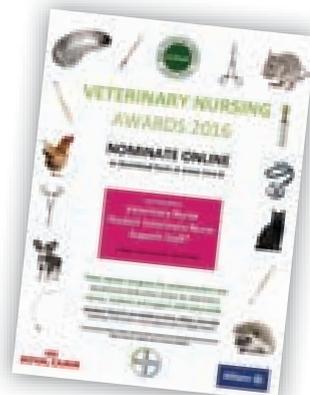
MADRA volunteer, Tara.

MADRA was 10 years old in 2015. Marina and Tara, along with a close-knit team of volunteers, have come a very long way since the start. During this time, there have been many pooches who have stolen a piece of each volunteer's heart. There have been many heartbreaking cases, long hours and sleepless nights. However, for all of these sad cases, MADRA has been part of many, many happy stories, too. Over 5,000 dogs rehomed in the past 10 years is a phenomenal achievement. This does not come easy and MADRA is always looking for new volunteers to help in what seems like a never-ending task. It is always looking for people to help with foster homes, dog walkers, drivers, shop volunteers, home checks and, most important of all, fundraising. Please support this great cause by attending any or all of the many events taking place in the coming year, from the 'Dogs Dinner' event in spring to 'Dogathon' in May. The MADRA Facebook page is updated regularly so please like and share its page. You can also donate by going to its website, www.madra.ie, and clicking on the 'donate' button. At the IVNA congress, taking place in Galway Bay Hotel on May 21-22, a raffle will be held in aid of MADRA. We will be taking part in both the Dublin and Cork mini-marathons,

so if anyone wishes to participate and join members of the committee in these events please do not hesitate to contact the IVNA at enquiries@ivna.ie. Please support this very worthy cause.

IVNA VETERINARY NURSING AWARDS

The deadline is fast approaching to nominate someone in the categories of Veterinary Nurse of the Year, Student Nurse of the Year and Support Staff of the Year (this includes receptionists, kennel assistants, etc). If you know anyone worthy of receiving these titles, please visit www.ivna.ie to fill out your nomination form.



Make your nomination for the 2016 Veterinary Nursing Awards now.

IVNA CONGRESS 2016

The seventh annual IVNA congress is fast approaching. This year, we are heading west to the Galway Bay Hotel on May 21-22, 2016. There is a mixture of lectures this year covering topics for both the experienced and newly-qualified nurse. Lectures will cover multiple and current issues being seen in practice on a daily basis, topics this year include nursing flying solo, low-stress handling of cats, oncology and anaesthesia. Prior to lunch on Saturday, May 21, our annual AGM will take place, which any IVNA member is welcome to attend – even if you have not registered for congress – and we encourage every member to come along. If there is any topic you wish to have addressed at congress please send your topic to secretary@ivna.ie. Don't forget our awards evening on Saturday night, May 21, an evening to let our hair down and celebrate the achievements of three individuals who have been highlighted by colleagues and clients alike for performing their jobs to the best of their abilities and going above and beyond.

Sunday, May 22, sees the return of our popular practical sessions. This year, we are running a two-stream session: new techniques in wound management and bandaging; and introduction to orthopaedics post-op rehabilitation. So don't miss out on our early bird rates for congress and register now – spaces are limited for the Sunday, May 22, sessions.

COMPETITION TIME!

IVNA is running a competition on Facebook. To be in with a chance of winning a €50 One4All voucher, it's very simple:

- Like our page and share the post;
- Tag two friends and always remember, sharing is caring!; and
- Leave a comment below the competition poster.

We will announce the winner once the nomination for the IVNA awards close.

