

## Do You Have the Cutest Pet? Enter Now to Win \$3,000.00

**American Profile's First-Ever Pet Contest Announced**

**Pet Owners Urged to Enter Early - Contest Ends Dec. 31, 2008**

*Portion of Entry Fee to Benefit Happy Tails Humane*



Will this dog win \$3,000.00?

Franklin, Tenn. - America's hometown magazine, *American Profile*, recently announced that they've launched the search for America's Cutest Pet. "Pets are part of our family, not just an animal. There are so many heartwarming stories for people, we felt it was important that we find the cutest pet in all of America," said Laurel Myers from the magazine.

Upon entering, pet owners will be able to enlist friends and family to vote for their pet, thus increasing their chances of winning. Voters and entrants will have a daily view of how their pet is ranked in the contest.

Mary Sue Nelson from Wisconsin plans to enter the contest as soon as it opens. She is not so humbly said "My Border Collie Charlie is older than my husband, and certainly older than any other pet I've ever seen."

Entrants will have the opportunity to win \$3000.00, and a portion of the proceeds will go to the Happy Tails Humane shelter in Franklin.

To enter the contest or vote:  
1. Go to [www.AmericanProfile.com/pets](http://www.AmericanProfile.com/pets).  
2. Click on the Enter Contest or Vote button in the middle of the page and follow the online instructions.

3. VOTE! Encourage your family and friends to vote to put you in the winners circle.

NOTE: As an added bonus, the winning pet will be featured in an upcoming issue of *American Profile*.

Complete contest rules can be found at [www.AmericanProfile.com/pets](http://www.AmericanProfile.com/pets).

Hot when published. Open to legal residents of the continental U.S. who are age 18 or older at the time of entry. Contest begins October 10, 2008 and ends December 31, 2008.

## Hometown Hero

In November 1990,

art teacher John Hartom wanted students at Labor High School in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. (pop. 59,449) to participate in a local food drive, so he came up with a unique idea—students would craft ceramic bowls, invite the faculty to a soup lunch and request donations.

Students loved the idea, and on the day of the lunch, Hartom and his wife, Lisa Blackburn, also an educator, spoke to the group about hunger. At the end of the meal, they related how students and teachers weren't hungry because they had just eaten, while many in the community still had empty bowls. Hartom then invited the staff to keep the empty ceramic bowls as a reminder of those less fortunate.

"There was a moment of stunned silence, and the whole environment changed," says Hartom, 59. "In that moment, Lisa and I knew something special had happened—and that we had a responsibility to make it happen again."

By the following year, the couple had created an information packet of materials, using that first event as a model for others to emulate, which they presented to art teachers and at pottery shops and conferences during their summer travels throughout New England. They also created Empty Bowls, a nonprofit organization, and helped raise more than \$1 million that year for World Food Day, Oct. 16.

Over the next few years, the Empty Bowls idea spread, and Hartom eventually retired from teaching in 1999 to devote more time to the cause.

## FILLING EMPTY BOWLS



John Hartom, of Burnsville, N.C., created Empty Bowls to help feed the hungry.

Today, schools from elementary to college level, civic organizations and individuals sponsor community Empty Bowls events in almost every state.

Although the Empty Bowls organization provides guidance to those wishing to hold a fundraising event, they are primarily hands off. "We only ask organizers to use the Empty Bowls name and to distribute money locally,"

says Hartom, who now lives in Burnsville, N.C. (pop. 1,623).

Overall, tens of millions of dollars have been raised through Empty Bowls events around the country. "Each sponsoring organization decides where to donate funds," he says, "so all money raised benefits local food banks, soup kitchens and shelters."

Bodger Hauer has spearheaded an annual Empty Bowls fundraiser for 10 years in Dripping Springs, Texas (pop. 1,548). "There's such great community support that

we often have more volunteers than we need," she says. More than 1,000 colorful bowls, made by area potters, were donated for last year's event.

Hauer even contacted Hartom about attending her Texas fundraiser. He politely declined, Hauer says. "John said, 'It's not about me. He didn't want his presence to detract from local workers.'"

"The soup lunch raised \$25,000 last year for the Dripping Springs Helping Hands food pantry, more than half its annual budget. These funds let us supplement donations of canned goods with fresh items like eggs, cheese and meat," says Mike Carr, president of Helping Hands. "With this money we're able to offer a variety of groceries at no cost, so we can let families 'shop' for foods they actually want and will eat."

Events in larger cities often include silent auctions or art sales, and can bring in donations totaling up to \$100,000. But wherever an Empty Bowls event is held, the basic concept remains the same: In exchange for a donation—usually between \$10 and \$20—participants get a meal and a bowl to remind them of hunger.

"Empty Bowls events educate people and provide a means to create positive and lasting change in their own communities," Hartom says. "The empty bowl has become a metaphor for the power people feel when they help ease world hunger."

Hauer embraces that powerful feeling. "All I had to do was act," she says. "Now I don't think I'll ever stop." \*

Story by Beverly Barrow of Austin, Texas. Click on this story at [americanprofile.com](http://americanprofile.com) for a link to Empty Bowls' website.



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