

J MADILL

Animal Sanctuary Guardian

Don't let the cows, pigs, goats and other domesticated animals fool you — The Alice Sanctuary is no farm. The 250 or so Sanctuary residents come from different backgrounds: some were abused, neglected or surrendered; some were orphaned or abandoned; others were born prematurely or with injury. But, regardless of their circumstance, Sanctuary guardian J Madill offers them a forever home where they can thrive.

"We're lifelong caregivers," explains Madill (who uses they/their pronouns). "If the animals come in with so much trauma, the last thing they need is to be displaced into another space and have to rebuild their lives again."

With a background in social work, Madill is no stranger to helping the vulnerable, but, while much of the work at The Alice Sanctuary involves caring for the animals, a big part of the job is telling their stories. Some visitors to the sanctuary see their own struggles and adversity reflected in the stories of particular residents. "I never really thought I would be a storyteller until I started doing this, and then, all of the sudden, I learned that I love to tell stories, especially when there's meaning and purpose behind it," Madill says. "I think a lot of people want to experience belonging and triumph, and they tend to not actually experience that externally. So, they listen to the stories of the animals, and it resonates with them."

Take Maggie, a goat born prematurely in the middle of winter. Her twin passed away, and Maggie came down with a terrible case of frostbite that took the tips of her ears and resulted in the amputation of her back legs. The farmer who had raised Maggie to that point reached out to The Alice Sanctuary for help, and thanks to Madill's round-the-clock care, Maggie has been given a chance for a long and happy life.

"She represents courage and strength to overcome obstacles and challenges; a traumatic beginning to her life leading into triumph," Madill says. "Her bravery has helped her to survive. We hope that Maggie's story will help others who face hardship and overwhelming challenges, who feel worn out, that they can resonate with Maggie's bravery, strength and courage to overcome the challenges she has faced."



**"I NEVER REALLY
THOUGHT I WOULD BE
A STORYTELLER UNTIL I
STARTED DOING THIS."**

J MADILL