

LEADERSHIP

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Katie Vecchi

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Senior Director of Communications

Chief Programs Officer

Chief Development Officer

Chief Shelter Operations Officer

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A Community of Friends

2024 IMPACT REPORT



Animal Friends volunteer with resident dog, Gigi.

Our Vision

A humane and
compassionate future
for every animal friend.

Our Mission

To rescue, rehabilitate and rehome
animals in crisis, ensure healthy pets
through education, advocacy and
affordable services, and inspire a
community where the animal-human
bond is celebrated and nurtured.

Our Core Values

We are **Solution-Driven**,
Resourceful
and **Compassionate**
Driven by **Integrity**
Committed to **Excellence**



Dear Friends,

I am so grateful for the community that surrounds Animal Friends. The Pittsburgh region is a community built on love, compassion, and a shared belief in the power of second chances – a community of, and for, both pets and people. Truly, we are a community of animal friends.

Throughout 2024, we've witnessed heartwarming stories of resilience and transformation. We've seen scared, abandoned animals find loving homes. We've watched shy, timid souls blossom into confident companions. We've celebrated joyful reunions between lost pets and their frantic families. And, we've been honored to play a role in keeping so many animals in their homes, healthy and supported, right where they belong. These are the moments that fuel our passion and remind us why we do what we do.

Please take a few minutes to read more about the lifesaving work that you made possible. Like the growth of our Animal Friends for Veterans program, filling a critical niche for this important community of heroes. Or our innovative Uber Pet transportation program ensuring struggling families have access to vet care. And, of course, our community clinics where we provide free vaccinations, pet food and supplies to our neighbors in need.

We are an amazing community of a committed volunteers, strong neighborhood partners, generous donors, enthusiastic sponsors, and passionate staff who drive our mission and ensure a humane future for all of our animal friends.

Thank you for being part of our lifesaving community in 2024, and in the years to come.

With gratitude,


Kathleen Beaver
President & CEO



A COMMUNITY OF CARE ADMISSIONS

In 2024, we welcomed 1,429 animals who had nowhere else to turn. We gave lifesaving second chances to 1,017 cats, 305 dogs, 32 rabbits and a few other species.

Animals arrive at our door in many ways – as strays, transfers from partner organizations, rescues from humane investigations and municipal police, and as owner surrenders when their family can no longer care for them.

Animal Friends is known for admitting animals with some of the most complex medical and behavioral challenges. Not every shelter is able to do what we do. It requires a highly committed and skilled staff and volunteers with an unparalleled combination of patience and passion to give our residents the highest level of care.

A great deal of thought is put into every animal that comes in. The question is always: What can we do to give each one of them their best chance to be adopted and to live a healthy and contented life?

SHELTER MEDICINE

Keeping our population healthy is a top priority and it begins immediately at intake. Every animal is medically evaluated to ensure they get appropriate care right from the start. If an animal is unwell in any way, our shelter medicine staff work together to develop a treatment plan to help them get well and stay well while they are here.

In 2024, we performed dozens of dental surgeries and mass removal surgeries and treated residents for parasites, skin diseases and a wide variety of other conditions and illnesses, as well as injuries.

Preventive care is an equally important part of our work. When our animals leave us to go to their new homes, we send them off in the best of health. All of our residents are vaccinated, microchipped and undergo spay or neuter surgery before becoming available for adoption.

Sugar, a stray kitten who was brought in with severe eye infections, is now living the sweet life with her adoptive family.

1,429
ADMISSIONS

878
SHELTER SPAY &
NEUTER SURGERIES

4,112
SHELTER VACCINES
ADMINISTERED

One of our devoted shelter veterinary technicians bottle feeding a newborn kitten.



Resident dog Chakra gladly gives a paw in exchange for a treat from our Placement Manager.



BEHAVIOR

Our animals' behavioral health is as important to their well-being as their physical health. Just like people, animals can be affected by their environment. Some have been neglected, abused or abandoned. Some have lived on the streets as strays. Others come to us from hoarding cases.

We assess each animal's temperament, their likes and their dislikes. Some animals need more time and attention than others to adjust to shelter life and require our behavior specialists, caregivers and foster families to be especially patient and meet them where they are in their journey. Some animals need socialization to help them live comfortably. Others benefit from one-on-one training.

ENRICHMENT

Shelter environments can be quite stressful for some animals. The kennels can be noisy and overstimulating . . . and even boring. To keep our residents engaged, we provide them with daily enrichment activities designed to address their species-specific needs.

Scent games allow dogs to use their instinctive sniffing skills. Cats find toy birds dancing from a string on a stick very tempting – they're hunters by nature. And our resident rabbits get crunchy pinecone treats from the trees around our campus to address their innate need to chew.

In 2024, thousands of hours were invested in enrichment activities to help reduce stress, redirect extra energy, relieve boredom and add to our animals' overall quality of life. When they engage with their environment more, they tend to be less agitated, less fearful, more peaceful and ready to be adopted.



Lunch buddies Pearl and Loki share a meal.

Two-year resident Tattianna (left) finally found her family with two of our volunteers and their other rescue, Jasmine.



A COMMUNITY OF LOVE PLACEMENTS

Congratulations to everyone who welcomed home a new family member in 2024. In total, we provided a second chance for 1,361 animals with almost 50% of our adopted residents having the benefit of living with a foster family prior to their adoption.

We match people with companion animals for the best chance of success based on conversational counseling, lifestyle compatibility, the number of humans and pets in the household and on-site meetings. We do everything possible to set pets and people up for success.

We don't always know a lot about the lives our animals lived before coming under our care. One thing is certain, we stand firm in our commitment to give every animal a second chance at a safe and healthy life. The measure of success for saving lives is the live release rate. In 2024, Animal Friends' live release rate was a laudable 96%. It reflects the fact that we don't give up. It's what sets us apart.

1,361
ANIMALS PLACED

96%
LIVE RELEASE RATE

Congratulations to Appoline and her humans – she was our 1,000th adopted animal of 2024.



Our Animal Enrichment Specialist distributing information and supplies at one of our four community outreach events in Mt. Oliver, Allentown, Wilkinsburg and Homewood.



A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

PET RETENTION & CHOW WAGON

The number of people facing food insecurity in our region is rising, And if people are hungry, so are their pets. Animal Friends' Chow Wagon Pet Food Bank supports families and their pets by providing free pet food on a monthly basis. This service is intended to ease the financial cost associated with pet care and help promote pet retention thereby reducing surrenders to animal shelters. In addition to individuals, we also work with 40 food pantry partners to ensure food is accessible across the region.

In 2024, Pet Retention made its programming more equitable to communities and individuals by establishing a standardized distribution process for our onsite pet food pantry days. The new system increased efficiency and ensured proper distribution through pre-determined package sizes based on the number of animals cared for by an individual pet owner.

Last year we also addressed transportation barriers and improving accessibility to vet care. We are especially proud that the Uber Pet transportation program we developed for families who struggle to find pet-friendly transportation was recognized nationally.

39,365
PET OWNERS ASSISTED

203,487
POUNDS OF FREE
PET FOOD DISTRIBUTED

Our Pet Retention Liaison distributes resources at a Wilkinsburg outreach event.



A COMMUNITY OF PROTECTION

HUMANE INVESTIGATIONS

Humane Investigations was committed to transition, training, and rebuilding in 2024, poised for necessary and positive change in 2025. Although without a sworn-in humane officer for most of the year, the team remained committed to supporting the community through empathetic listening, education, and diligently offering resources and referrals.

Through strengthening relationships with community officials, the team also successfully navigated unresolved cases affecting animals who were being boarded long-term, resulting in the ability to adopt them into loving homes. We look forward to expanding the team in 2025 with the swearing in of officers, and the building of relationships in the community.

Mischief and Millie are two of the animals helped by our Humane Investigations team.



A COMMUNITY OF HEALING
HOWARD ASH ANIMAL WELLNESS CENTER & CLINIC

As with any animal welfare organization, admissions and adoptions are at the core of what we do. But our vision of a humane and compassionate future for every animal friend calls us to provide a safety net of services for ever changing and growing needs of the pets and people of our community.

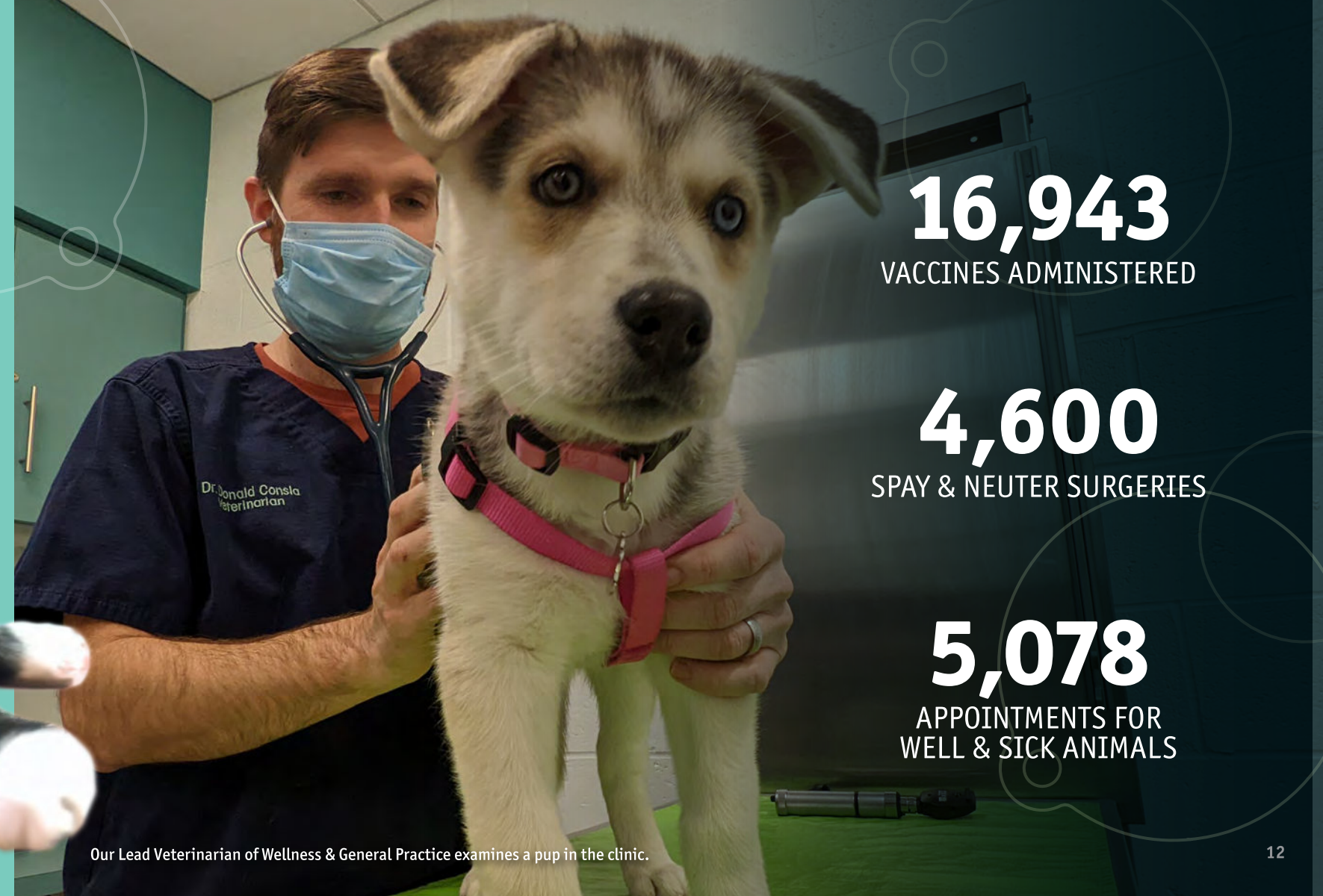
Last year was a year of growth and refinement for our community clinic. With the tremendous need for affordable veterinary care in Allegheny and surrounding counties, we increased our wellness and sick appointments by 5% and increased our special procedure surgeries by 30%.

And to help keep pets healthy and up to date on lifesaving vaccines, over the summer we doubled the number of clinics we hosted in communities where affordable care was a need.

To improve efficiency and provide a stronger focus on client services, we implemented a new software system that combined multiple systems that we had utilized previously. The new system also allows for a client pet portal and text messaging. Additionally, we focused on answering calls live whenever possible, providing direct support on the phone more immediately. These changes have improved communication with clients and have helped with expediting the care that their pets need.

30%
INCREASE IN SPECIALTY
PROCEDURES PERFORMED

Jimmy was adopted early in 2024 and later visited us as a clinic patient for a medical procedure.



16,943
VACCINES ADMINISTERED

4,600
SPAY & NEUTER SURGERIES

5,078
APPOINTMENTS FOR
WELL & SICK ANIMALS

Our Lead Veterinarian of Wellness & General Practice examines a pup in the clinic.

90

ANIMALS ADOPTED
BY VETERANS

2,323

VETERAN CONTACTS

141

THERAPETS TEAMS

96,933

THERAPEUTIC
INTERACTIONS



An AFFV client and his service dog welcomed a new feline friend into their home.

A COMMUNITY OF COMPASSION ANIMAL FRIENDS FOR VETERANS

Animal Friends for Veterans (AFFV) staff hear from veterans that their companion animals are what gives them purpose and keeps them going every day. Knowing their animals are waiting for them with wagging tails or hungry meows gives veterans something to look forward to each day, despite the physical and emotional pain many of these heroes are experiencing.

We're proud to have more than doubled our Animal Friends for Veterans program in both the number of companion animals adopted and the number of veterans whose lives we touched through the program.

We expanded our reach through partnerships with the Veteran's Administration, Career Link and Operation Vet Now. We also continued to collaborate with local universities such as Robert Morris' Student Veterans office and initiated new partnerships with the Student Veterans Association at the University of Pittsburgh and the veterans' services offices at Westmoreland and Beaver County Community Colleges.

Together this year, the Veterans Ambassador Council and AFFV staff attended 38 events in total, hosted by local legislators, suicide prevention organizations and addiction treatment centers, among other organizations. Staff also delivered a presentation to the VA hospital's trauma based recovery unit to share program information with their employees.

THERAPETS & PALS

Therapets, our animal assisted therapy program, celebrates the healing power of animals. Each of our Therapets teams participate in specialized training and a certification process. Accompanied by their human handlers, the dogs, cats and rabbits visit hospitals, schools, nursing homes, treatment centers and hospice facilities throughout our region, bringing comfort and affection to people in need. Therapets teams were also invited to participate in the Humane Education curriculum through the addition of the "We Met a Therapets Team" school-based program.

For students, our PALS program engages youths in reading to a companion animal as a way to enhance literacy skills and foster a love of reading. PALS teams also participated in the "We Time Weekends" family reading program at Animal Friends.



Our Therapets teams bring love and affection everywhere they go.

A COMMUNITY OF LEARNING HUMANE EDUCATION

Whether increasing volunteer participation, developing new educational programming, or expanding our reach into the community, the Humane Education department grew by leaps and bounds last year.

With a focus on empathy, respect and the humane treatment of animals, in addition to offering programs on-site at Animal Friends as well as in schools, Humane Education tripled our offerings for scouts this year, adding programs for Daisy and Cadette Girl Scouts. Additionally, Humane Education's presence in the community grew, sharing our message where it will have a direct impact on future animal advocates. The team participated in community vaccine clinics where they distributed children's books about animal welfare and shared information about bite prevention, attended Halloween trunk-or-treat events to spotlight our adoptable black cats, and the participated in a Community Day at the Science Center which focused on how to safely interact with dogs.

The Humane Education team was awarded a generous grant provided by the Latham Foundaton in 2024 which funded the development of a new and exciting Animal Advocacy Summit for high school students, to be offered in the coming year.

4,549
HUMANE EDUCATION
PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Animal Friends offers popular camps, classes, scouting programs and teen summits for preschoolers with their parents, grade school, and high school students.



Whether you're looking to improve your pet's skills or enhance your own knowledge, Animal Friends University has something for everyone.

4,705
ANIMAL FRIENDS
UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

ANIMAL FRIENDS UNIVERSITY

Just as each animal comes with a unique set of challenges and circumstances, so do their human companions. In order to give as many community members as possible access to our classes and trainings, the solution-driven AFU staff helped find workable ways to help.

For those unable to attend in-person classes last year, training tips were offered through our "helpline." Pet owners who couldn't afford classes were offered scholarships through generous funding from Edgar Snyder & Associates. In 2024, ten scholarships were awarded.

Our curricula ranged from scent work for canines in "The Nose Knows," to human training classes to help people make their pets' lives happier, healthier and safer with our Pet CPR & First Aid Class. We offered classes to help cat guardians understand their cat's unique and amusing behaviors. And helped new bunny adopters and experienced rabbit wranglers alike learn how to strengthen the bond with their long-eared family members.



A woman with brown hair, wearing a blue t-shirt with the text "LOVE ALWAYS" and dark shorts, is sitting on a wooden bench. She is holding a black and white dog in her arms. The background is a lush green field with trees.

1,658

ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS

SUPPORT OUR WORK WITH

373,575

HOURS OF SERVICE

VOLUNTEERS

One thing we know without a doubt is that our volunteers are a loyal, passionate and an incredibly giving group of animal lovers. Last year they donated an extraordinary 373,575 hours of their time – the equivalent of 173 full time employees – to help us carry out our lifesaving mission.

Our volunteers assist us in every way, every day. They help to feed the animals and clean the kennels. They exercise, socialize, enrich and rehabilitate our residents. They administer medicine, help to maintain our 75-acre campus and assist with events and special projects. They are business leaders and consultants, retirees and teachers, veterans and college students, Board members and Committee members and most importantly, they are very much appreciated members of the Animal Friends family.

Without our volunteers, we simply could not be the successful, progressive organization we are today.

FOSTERS

Fostering accounted for over 75% of the total volunteer hours donated to Animal Friends last year. These are our superheroes – the 221 dedicated foster volunteers who opened their homes and their hearts to care for 547 cats, 186 dogs, 31 rabbits – and even a few birds – who were waiting to be adopted.

Some foster animals are healing from surgery and need a calm, quiet place to recover. Others are stressed by the shelter environment or depressed by having been here a long time and need downtime in a homey atmosphere. Even animals in hospice care can live in a loving home in our foster hospice program, which was launched in 2024.

Animal Friends is also fortunate to have some of our dogs fostered off-campus at SCI Fayette, in our successful prison program where selected inmates are paired with dogs that they live, play and train with until the animal is adopted. It's a win-win for animals and inmates alike.

770

ANIMALS FOSTERED

303,399

VOLUNTEER FOSTER HOURS

A COMMUNITY OF CELEBRATION EVENTS

Each year, Animal Friends hosts four much-loved and well-attended fundraising events: Alley Up in February, Bow Wow Bingo in March and the Animal Friends Golf Open in June . . . all leading up to our signature event, Black Tie & Tails in September.

In 2024, over a thousand attendees, hundreds of volunteers and dozens of sponsors, along with Animal Friends staff, joined together to celebrate the animal-human bond and to raise the funds needed to carry out our lifesaving mission.

It is the generosity of our donors that makes it possible for Animal Friends to do the work we do such as taking on the toughest medical and behavioral cases and providing community resources to help keep pets out of the sheltering system and in their homes.

A COMMUNITY OF GIVING FUNDRAISING

There are many ways to support Animal Friends' lifesaving mission. Last year, Animal Friends received an extremely generous gift in the form of a bequest from the estate of Marlene Cornelius. Marlene was an avid supporter of Animal Friends for over 33 years as a volunteer, event coordinator, adopter, member of the Board of Directors and much more.

The impact she will have on the lives of animals for decades to come through the programs she funded, our Save My Pet Fund and Humane Education, is immense.

Marlene is a very special part of Animal Friends' history, and we wouldn't be where we are today without her generous support, friendship and dedication. We are honored by Marlene's legacy of love and compassion.



We remember Marlene, with her beloved dog Zoey, as an incredible friend whose generosity will continue to make a difference.



1,000+
EVENT ATTENDEES

Black Tie & Tails – It's a Pittsburgh Thing featured fabulous auction items, a nationally-known band, shelter tours and local celebrities.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Late last year, the Communications team began the huge undertaking of re-designing Animal Friends’ website. The goal was to improve the site with user-friendly and intuitive navigation, concise copy and compelling visuals, cyclical links between programs and a cleaner, more streamlined design. The project continued through year-end with a successful launch in the new year.

New in 2024, Animal Friends became a monthly guest on KDKA’s afternoon show Talk Pittsburgh. Segments featured our foster program, summer pet care and a segment on Take Your Child to Work Day that taught the children of KDKA staff members about how to meet and greet a dog. We also made appearances to promote Black Tie & Tails and Adopt a Senior Pet Month.

Changing stations, Animal Friends was interviewed by WPXI for their story about the solar eclipse and its effects on animals and also for a story on “how to get quality pet care without breaking the bank.” We continued to spread the word about Animal Friends’ work through social media, *Petsburgh Magazine*, *Pittsburgh Magazine* and various other media platforms.

93.3k

FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

11.3k

TIKTOK FOLLOWERS

15.8k

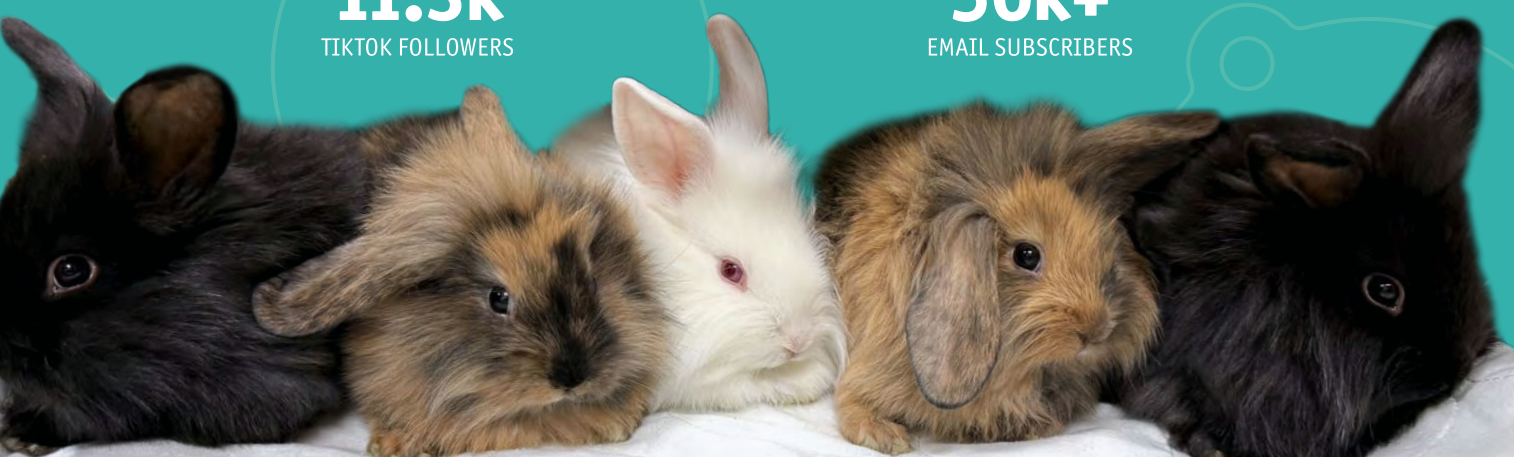
INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

50k+

EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS

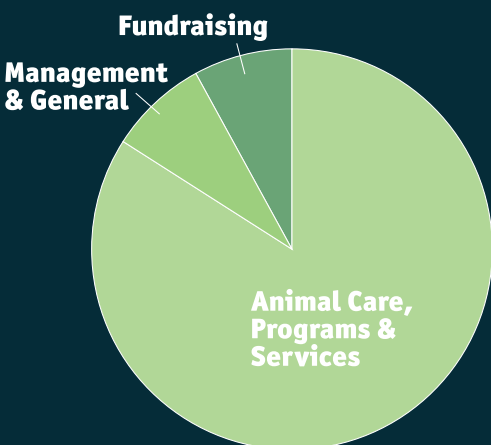
158.4k

MONTHLY WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS



Did you know rabbits are the third most popular pet in the U.S.? Visit our website to see a fluffle of bunnies.

2024 Operating Activity
(unaudited)

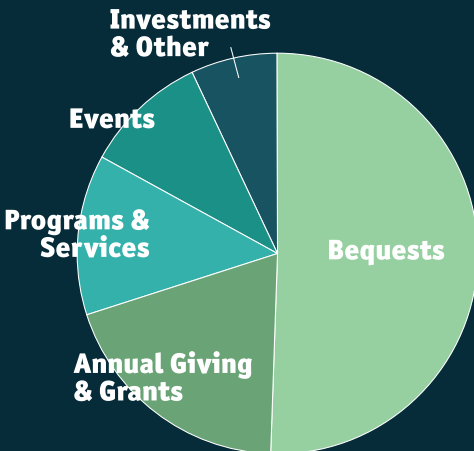


Expenses

Animal Care, Programs and Services	\$6,526,153	84%
Management and General	\$612,539	8%
Fundraising	\$630,538	8%
Total Expenses	\$7,769,230	100%

Revenue

Bequests	\$5,315,591	51%
Annual Giving and Grants	\$2,075,141	20%
Programs and Services	\$1,381,989	13%
Events	\$1,009,374	10%
Investments and Other	\$735,859	7%
Total Revenue	\$10,517,954	100%



It is our community of friends who truly make our lifesaving work possible. Every hour volunteered, every event attended, every animal fostered or adopted, every partnership established and every dollar donated supports us in rescuing, rehabilitating and rehoming animals in crisis.

Your passion empowers us to carry out our mission with confidence and compassion. And it is with gratitude that we acknowledge all individual donors, all corporate sponsors, all volunteers, community leaders, dedicated staff and compassionate neighbors throughout the city and beyond. Thank you for a strong and successful 2024.

If you are new to our work, we invite you to join our community of animal friends. To learn more about us, go to ThinkingOutsideTheCage.org.