



FAIRFAX COUNTY
**ANIMAL
SHELTER**

2023 **ANNUAL REPORT**

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This was a year of tremendous change and growth for the Fairfax County Animal Shelter.

In October, we opened our second campus in Lorton. This facility allows us to substantially grow the geographic reach and impact of our work for the residents of Fairfax County and their pets. Not only are we able to create even more families through adoption, but the second campus provides a hub for essential services, including behavior and training support, veterinary medical care, pet supplies and other critical services that help keep pets with their families. We enjoyed connecting with families and their pets in the southern part of the county who accessed our services and programs for the first time this past year.

We also grew our team, adding 31 additional staff to support the opening of the Lorton Campus.

We expanded our volunteer opportunities, allowing us to provide additional enrichment, exercise and attention to our shelter animals and support to people and their pets through the Pet Resource Center.

I am incredibly proud of the creativity, resilience and commitment demonstrated by our staff and volunteer community during a year of so much change.

Like most shelters around the United States, we faced an unprecedented surge in animal intakes.

We encountered more than a 20% increase in animals coming into our care over the previous year. Many of the animals entering our doors experienced complex medical and behavioral needs that required specialized care and additional resources.

Despite these challenges, the Fairfax County Animal Shelter never turned away an animal in need and our commitment to providing the highest quality of care did not waver.

In 2023, we identified and removed barriers in our adoption process, expanded our foster team, boosted promotions and marketing of our adoptable pets, and partnered with more community organizations to broaden the impact of our services and prevent the unnecessary relinquishment of animals to the shelter — **and we increased our live release rate to 93%.**

Amidst these transformations, our enduring commitment to improving the lives and well-being of both pets and people, one life, one need and one animal at a time, remained steadfast. These achievements would not have been possible without the dedication of our amazing fosters and volunteers, the expertise of our veterinary team, the generous support of the Friends of Fairfax County Animal Shelter and the unwavering support of our wonderful community.



Reese D. Cusker



A YEAR OF CHANGE

In 2023, the Fairfax County Animal Shelter experienced significant growth, with the opening of the Lorton Campus increasing our capacity to serve the community. We launched new programs that expanded the services offered to people and pets in the community. Simultaneously, we introduced additional staff and cultivated a more diverse team, reflecting the vibrant community we serve. Here are some of the exciting enhancements that we made:

- We hired and promoted **31** people to support the Lorton Campus and expand community programs.
- **27%** of our new hires are individuals from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

The Lorton Campus includes:

- Fear Free™ Shelter Program design features that focus on the mental and emotional well-being of shelter pets.
- An upgraded **veterinary suite**, approximately **four times** larger than the existing veterinary suite at the Michael R. Frey Campus on West Ox Road.

With expanded capabilities, we will provide even more services for pets, including blood work, ultrasounds, digital X-rays and full dental surgeries.

- **20,000-square-foot** outdoor space with **seven** individually fenced dog play yards.
- **44 double-sided dog kennels**, including an isolation kennel with windows for natural light.
- **42 cat condos** with multiple levels, exposure to natural light and a view to the outside world.
- **Two catios** that offer cats the best of both worlds: a secure outdoor space where they can enjoy the sights and sounds of nature and snooze in the sun.
- **Four small animal rooms** equipped with adaptable modular cages, allowing for configuration tailored to varying species.





REAFAX COUNTY
WELTER



LORTON
CAMPUS



2023 AT-A-GLANCE



4,325 animals received individualized and compassionate care



3,857 lives saved through adoption and reunification



349 pets moved through the transport program



21,283 volunteer hours contributed, equaling **10** full-time positions



1,166 pets cared for in foster homes



630 pets received training sessions or post-adoption support from our behavior team



480 community cats received spay/neuter surgeries and vaccinations



600 children attended our Reading Tails program



1,383 spay and neuter surgeries performed



2,118 pets in homes provided with free and low-cost veterinary care, pet supplies and support





93% SAVE RATE

KEEPING PETS & FAMILIES TOGETHER

The mission of the Fairfax County **Pet Resource Center** is to preserve the bond of Fairfax County residents with their companion animals and to safeguard complete family units. The Pet Resource Center offers several programs and services to carry out its mission.

VACCINE AND MICROCHIP CLINICS

Fairfax County Animal Shelter hosts monthly clinics at both of our campuses. Our clinics offer Fairfax County residents an opportunity to vaccinate and/or microchip their pet(s) in an accessible and affordable way.

PET PANTRY

Our pet pantry provides pet food and supplies to Fairfax County residents who need assistance caring for their pet(s) or are facing hardship.

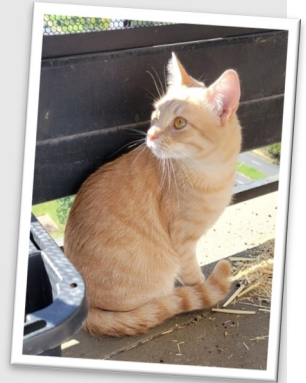
PETHAVEN PROGRAM

Domestic violence and animal abuse are often connected. The Fairfax County Animal Shelter offers a discreet, short-term pet care option for pet guardians who need to leave a bad situation. The goal of this program is to allow pet guardians to not worry about the safety of their pets while finding a safe place for themselves.

1,187 VACCINES
provided to pets in the community

TERESA'S STORY

The Perez family found themselves grappling with the challenges of Theresa, their cat, displaying behaviors associated with being in heat. Faced with the prospect of surrendering her, the family reached out to the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. The Customer Care staff promptly referred them to the Pet Resource Center for assistance.



In discussions with our Pet Resource Center Manager, the Perez family was presented with a proactive solution. Instead of surrendering Theresa, they were offered the option of having her spayed to mitigate the behavioral issues. Eager to keep Theresa as a cherished member of their family, the Perez family happily agreed to the proposal.

In addition to spay surgery, Theresa received vaccinations for rabies and FVRCP, along with a microchip for identification purposes.

Recognizing the need for Theresa's FVRCP booster, the Pet Resource Center provided the Perez family with a voucher to attend the upcoming Vaccine and Microchip clinic. This ensured that Theresa would receive the necessary follow-up vaccinations and preventive care.

Thanks to the support of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter's Pet Resource Center, the Perez family successfully addressed Theresa's behavioral challenges and prioritized her overall health. The Perez family was very thankful and happy to not have to part with Theresa and we were thrilled to keep this wonderful family together.





2,118 pets in homes provided with free and low-cost vet care, supplies and support

17 pets received care through our PetHaven program

25,016 lbs. of food provided to pets in the community

VOLUNTEERS SHOW UP

If there is anything that we can count on through all the changes and growth that we have gone through, it is our volunteers. Whether they are here to socialize with cats, walk dogs, help wash our countless dirty dishes, or are out in the community helping with events or taking dogs out for a long hike, our volunteers show up. In fact, in 2023, they showed up with 41% more hours of service given than in the previous year!



41%
increase in
volunteer
service
hours



THE FOSTER EXPERIENCE

Our network of 222 fosters extends our lifesaving mission beyond the shelter doors and into their homes. In 2023, our fosters provided care for a 26% increase in the number of pets compared to the previous year. Their dedication speaks volumes about why fostering is such a rewarding experience. Here's what some of our fosters have to say about it:

26%
**increase in
the number of
pets cared for
in foster homes**

“I love fostering! Seeing the change from a sick, injured, or [under-socialized] animal to a happier potential pet is so rewarding.”

— Kelly N.

“My favorite part of fostering has been watching the dogs gradually come out of their shells as they begin to relax and realize that they are safe.”

— Heather C.

“Junie Balloonie came home with me on a Friday and had ten gorgeous puppies on Monday. I was heartbroken to say ‘goodbye’ to Junie after her puppies had all found homes of their own. I consoled myself knowing that if she stayed, I wouldn’t be able to take in more fosters like her that needed a soft place to land. Junie quickly found an incredible furever family and by the end of the year, my family and I had welcomed 37 fosters into our home.”

— Erin J.

Junie Balloonie



COMPASSIONATE JOURNEYS

Every animal entering the Fairfax County Animal Shelter begins a unique journey. Despite varied paths, our steadfast dedication to each pet's welfare is guided by a unified commitment to their well-being.



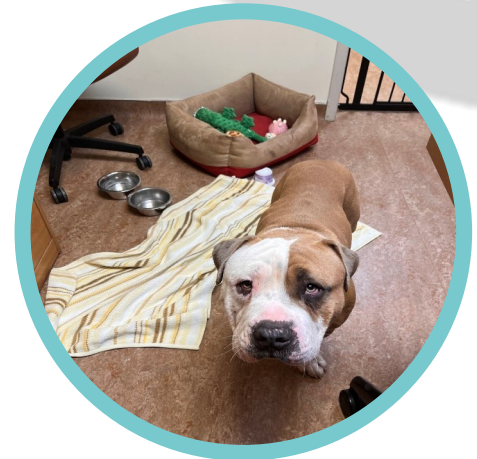
Winchester's journey began in challenging circumstances. Found roaming the streets, he arrived at our shelter with the inability to use his back legs. A collaborative effort of dedicated individuals transformed his recovery into a joyful experience —culminating in a heartwarming adoption.

Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter



Office Foster

Fortunately, Winchester simply required time and rest for a full recovery. He found comfort in our Director's office, receiving the extra care needed to facilitate his healing process.



Arriving at the Shelter

Winchester was found as a stray by Animal Protection Police. Upon discovery of his hind legs' impairment, they transported him to Pender Veterinary Centre for treatment.

Pender Veterinary Centre





Foster Homes

Puppaccino!

While in our care, Winchester was not only spoiled with lots of love, but also with sweet treats from his favorite coffee shop!



I'll drive him there!



Aquatic Paws

Thanks to the generous support of Aquatic Paws (and our team of volunteers who transported him to the appointments), Winchester underwent therapeutic water exercises to improve his mobility in his rear legs. Winchester's hydrotherapy sessions were instrumental in his ability to walk again.



Home, sweet home!

Winchester, now Chester, was adopted by a wonderful family where he shares a home with two other dogs and a cat.



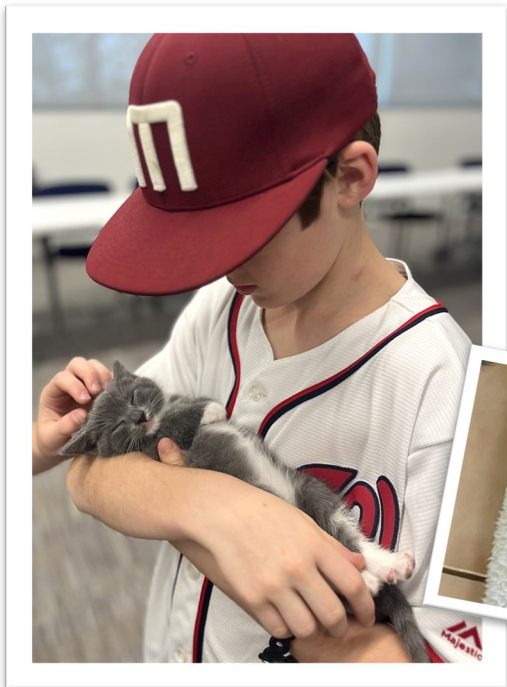
At the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, every animal's unique journey is shaped by our dedicated community—staff, volunteers, fosters—all forging a path of compassion for the animal's well-being.

HAPPY TAILS

Adoption Stories
& Updates

HAMERON DIAZ

"Hameron Diaz, the hamster, is amazingly sweet and fitting in nicely at home. Avik (age 10), our son, asked for just such a new pet for Christmas and given his excellent track record of taking care of his fish, helping us with Linguine, the dog (also from the Fairfax County Animal Shelter), and Trinity, the cat (Humane Rescue Alliance), we were happy to provide. He calls her 'Hammer.'"



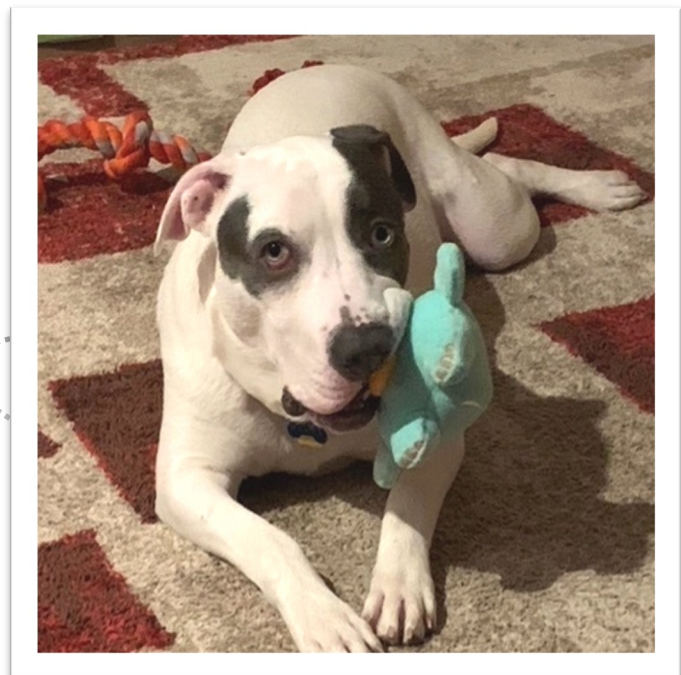
MERRY & PIPPEN

Merry and Pippen's adoption story began at our Cops and Kittens event at Police Headquarters! A family, with two young boys, instantly fell in love with Merry. As he peacefully slept in one of the boy's arms (far left), the connection was undeniable. When they met Pippin (inset), it became clear they could not separate the two, and it just made sense for the family with two boys!

JULIET

"[Juliet] is such a good girl and quickly made us realize she is the perfect pup for our family. We walked around PetSmart the afternoon we got her, and observed her being friendly and welcoming to everyone she met (two- and four-legged friends alike) and were so happy that she was exactly the kind of dog we wanted.

Yesterday, I came home from work/gym to find the kids playing with her in the front yard - I was so happy I almost cried! She is the dog our daughter has been wanting and waiting for for years!"



WINSTON

"Just wanted to write with an update on Buddy the puppy - now known as Winston! He has settled in so well and has quickly made himself at home. Our children all love him and argue over who gets to snuggle with him first every morning. Winston is doing very good at going potty outside and has slept through the night with no complaints. We feel very lucky to have found him!"



DALLAS

Dallas' new parents were driving by our shelter when they saw our sign for the Empty the Shelters adoption event. They shared with our team that they recently lost their 18-year-old dog, and the gentleman mentioned that his wife had hand-fed their beloved dog for the last two months of his life.

The couple walked through our adoption rooms and were about to leave when one of our Customer Care staff asked if they had fallen in love with anyone. They said they were looking for a smaller dog. As luck would have it, Dallas had just become available for adoption. They met him and the connection was instant!



JOAN

"We wanted to send an update to you all and let you know that Joan has settled in great! Her new name is Ginger. She gets along great with her sister Hazel and loves to play and snuggle. I have attached a few photos of her in her forever home. Thank you for being so great with the adoption process!"



WE GET BY WITH A LOT OF HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter (Friends) is the 501 (c) (3) nonprofit fundraising partner of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. With the support of many pet-loving donors and volunteers, Friends funds important needs beyond what the shelter's budget can provide. Here is what 2023 looked like for Friends, thanks to your support:

58 pets provided with dental care to improve overall health, reduce pain and help set up pets and their adopters for success totaling **\$58,155**

46 pets provided with medical treatment, including emergency life-saving medical care totaling **\$79,777**

1,895 dogs and puppies, 1,640 cats and kittens and 182 rabbits received parasite prevention, totaling **\$83,682**

Adopters of 851 dogs and 1,312 cats provided with supplies that included leashes for dogs and collars with personalized tags, totaling **\$25,156**

30 pets highlighted on Friends' social media as part of the Friends Spotlight Program

\$8,579 for enrichment items, shelter support and training, etc.

480 community cats were spayed/neutered, vaccinated, ear-tipped and examined as part of the shelter's TNR program with **\$36,848** from Friends



Evelyn Grieve, President of Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter with Eddie, the Friends' mascot.



TOBY

Toby (seen here celebrating Easter) arrived at the shelter as a stray with a badly broken back leg. Thanks to Friends' funding, he underwent successful surgical repair, enabling him to regain his health and enjoy his life to the fullest. While recuperating, Toby's foster caregiver grew deeply attached and ultimately decided to adopt him. His new family describes him as a playful pup who charms everyone he meets. Toby has made a remarkable recovery from his surgery and even had the plate in his leg removed. His family expresses immense gratitude for the support provided by the Friends community, which has allowed Toby to become an integral part of their lives.

PICASSA

Picassa, a sweet kitty, found herself at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter as a stray. Dealing with medical issues with her ears, Friends stepped in to fund a double ear amputation. Despite losing her ears (akin to another famous artist), she still receives affectionate words from her new family. Adopted by an experienced cat caretaker capable of meeting her medical requirements, Picassa's new owner notes her transition from initial apprehension to becoming a loving cat who relishes her time in the outdoor catio. With heartfelt appreciation for the support from the Friends community, this little artist is savoring every moment of her new life.



CHISPA

Chispa, a delightful bunny, arrived at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter with a broken leg. Thanks to Friends' funding she received the necessary amputation and she refused to let it hinder her spirit. Shortly after surgery Chispa bounced back to full health on her three legs, captivating all the caretakers with her lively hops around the shelter. It didn't take long for a family to fall head over heels for Chispa, and she was promptly welcomed into her new home. Now, she spends her days with her loving family, which includes a bunny sibling.



Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter

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HUMANE HEROES

The Fairfax County Animal Shelter extends heartfelt appreciation to the following individuals for their unwavering commitment to the welfare of shelter pets and animals within the community. These exceptional individuals have devoted a considerable amount of their time to enhance the lives of animals in our community, earning them the well-deserved title of Humane Heroes.



MICHAEL R. FREY

Former Fairfax County Supervisor Michael R. Frey's name graces the Fairfax County Animal Shelter's facility located on West Ox Road. It's a testament to his profound commitment to animal welfare.

Frey's compassion extended beyond politics; he championed animal rights during his tenure, shaping crucial policies for the protection and well-being of animals in Fairfax County. His efforts also led to

“Animals have been a passion for me my entire life,” says Frey.

ongoing improvements at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, making a tangible difference in the health and welfare of shelter residents.

Beyond public service, Frey has adopted countless pets who were in need of specialized care and

currently serves on the board for the Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter.

Today, the Fairfax County Animal Shelter stands as a living legacy to Frey's commitment, offering hope and care to animals in need.

Frey's enduring impact as a Humane Hero continues to inspire a community to embrace compassion and advocate for the well-being of our furry companions.



DR. KELLEY CORCORAN

Dr. Kelley Corcoran, founder of Vet Vision, is a compassionate force in veterinary care, sharing her expertise in veterinary ophthalmology with rescue pets.

Serving as a liaison between shelter medicine and the Northern Virginia Medical Association for over a decade, Dr. Corcoran has created a collaboration for the betterment of the community.

Dr. Corcoran has generously donated her time to help numerous shelter pets in need of her specialized services, significantly improving their lives by providing them with much-needed comfort and relief. Her journey as a Humane Hero is marked by unwavering dedication, leaving a lasting legacy of care and kindness for the animals she has helped.



Kiana the kitten (left) was one of those pets! Kiana arrived at our shelter with serious eye injuries. Thanks to Dr. Corcoran and the amazing team at Vet Vision, Kiana received the critical eye care she needed and was adopted into a wonderful home. She is one of many success stories thanks to Dr. Corcoran from VetVision.



fairfax county animal shelter

"In the tapestry of recognition, each thread represents a moment of dedication, a stitch of excellence. Together, they weave the story of one's impact on the world."

— Unknown



GINA LYNCH

With a commitment spanning over 40 years, Gina Lynch is a true champion for animal welfare.

Her journey began as a volunteer at the Feline Foundation of Greater Washington and later led her to become the President of the Homeless Animals Rescue Team. She founded the Northern Virginia Coalition for Animals, where she played a pivotal role in community outreach efforts and adoptions with Friends of Homeless Animals.

Throughout her tenure, Lynch has spearheaded crucial legislative initiatives, ensuring the protection and rights of animals in our community.

Ever humble, Lynch says, "I'm part of a really good group of people who do really good things for animals."

Her profound commitment to the cause is evident in her extensive voluntary service and advocacy, which includes serving on the Chair of the Animal Services Advisory Committee and

volunteering with the Humane Society of Fairfax County. Lynch's influence resonates throughout the community, inspiring others to prioritize and champion the well-being of animals and for that reason we consider her a true Humane Hero.

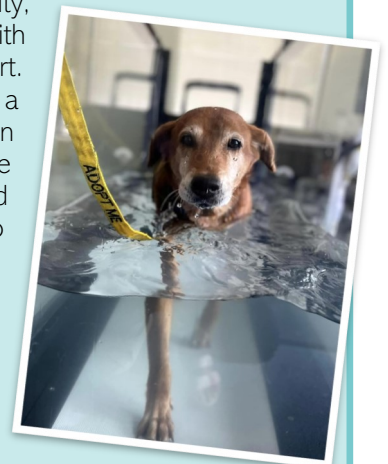


LISA CASTANEDA, AQUATIC PAWS

Few shelters can boast the incredible opportunity of providing aquatic therapy to their shelter dogs, but at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, we're proud to stand out, thanks to the generosity of Lisa Castaneda, co-owner and founder of Aquatic Paws. Lisa has selflessly donated the services of Aquatic Paws, her state-of-the-art facility specializing in aquatic training and exercise for pets, to numerous shelter dogs. This initiative not only offers dog a break from the shelter, but also introduces a unique form of physical exercise.

At 9 years old, Georgia (right) had weekly sessions at Aquatic Paws to help with her mobility. Hydrotherapy helped revitalize her mobility, allowing her to move with greater ease and comfort. She was adopted into a loving home back in October, where she continues to thrive and enjoy her golden years to the fullest!

We express our profound gratitude to Lisa and Aquatic Paws, considering her a Humane Hero in our community.





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