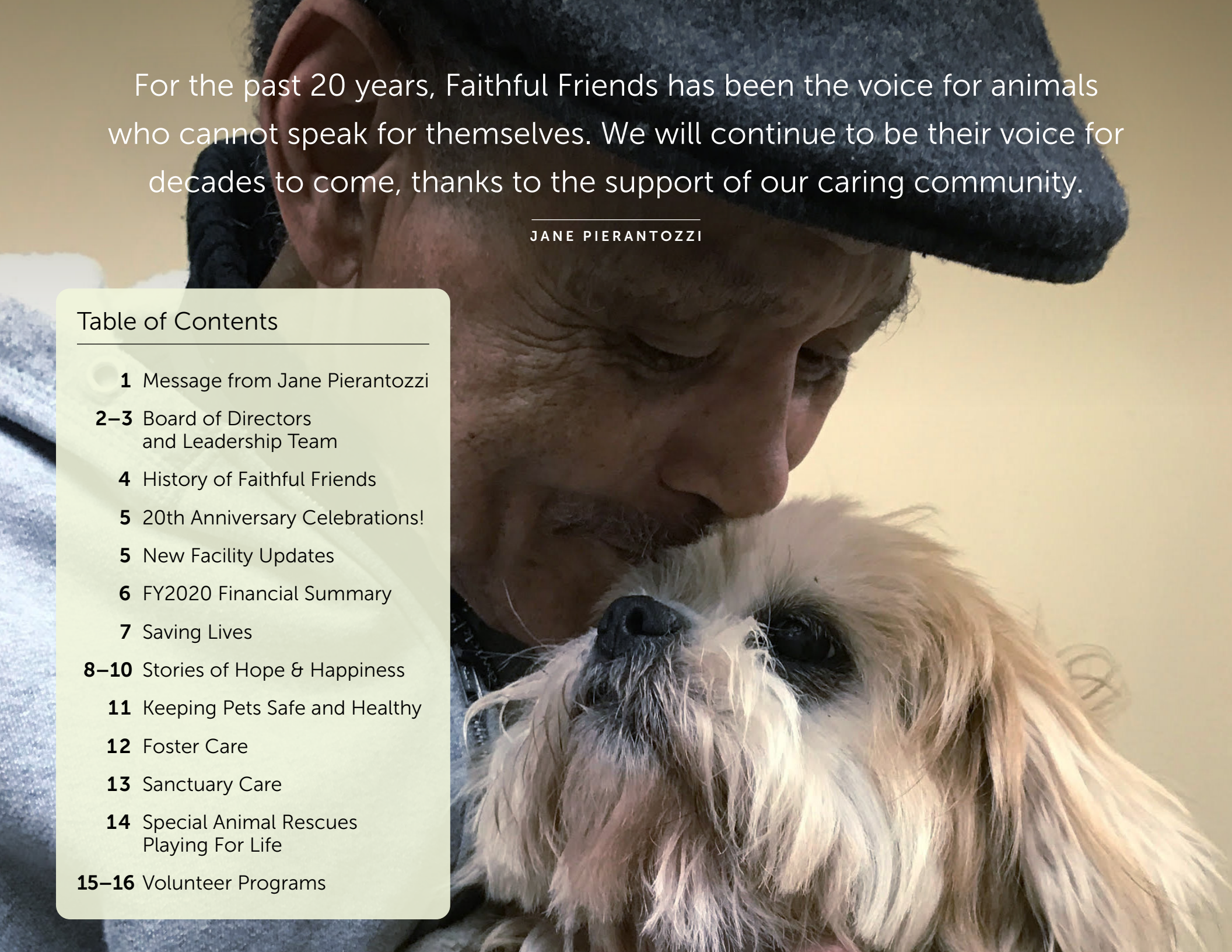


20

Years

of Compassionate Service  
to Pets and People





For the past 20 years, Faithful Friends has been the voice for animals who cannot speak for themselves. We will continue to be their voice for decades to come, thanks to the support of our caring community.

JANE PIERANTOZZI

## Table of Contents

- 1** Message from Jane Pierantozzi
- 2–3** Board of Directors  
and Leadership Team
- 4** History of Faithful Friends
- 5** 20th Anniversary Celebrations!
- 5** New Facility Updates
- 6** FY2020 Financial Summary
- 7** Saving Lives
- 8–10** Stories of Hope & Happiness
  - 11** Keeping Pets Safe and Healthy
  - 12** Foster Care
  - 13** Sanctuary Care
  - 14** Special Animal Rescues  
Playing For Life
- 15–16** Volunteer Programs



## 20 Years of Saving Our Faithful Friends

Since our inception in 2000, we've built a kinder community for hundreds of thousands of pets and people. For the past 20 years, Faithful Friends has been the voice for animals who cannot speak for themselves. We will continue to be their voice for decades to come, thanks to the support of our caring community. Without you, we could not have changed the face of animal welfare in our state.

I am so very proud of our many supporters, volunteers, and staff for your dedication and selflessness. I'm eternally grateful for all you have done and continue to do, even during a global pandemic.

I would like to share a few highlights of what we've accomplished, together, for our Faithful Friends. I invite you to discover more of our achievements in the following pages of our Annual Report.



### Reaching a Major Milestone!

Every day for the past two decades, we've been reminded how much animals need us to keep them safe, and give them the best chance to live happy, healthy lives. And every day, we dedicate our time and resources to ensuring animals get the protection and care they deserve. 2020 has also been a very special year for Faithful Friends as we celebrated our 20th Anniversary — a time to reflect on how far we've come, and how much more we will achieve. We're most proud of our work to reform Delaware's animal welfare system through policy changes and efforts that resulted in a robust safety net of services. For more info on our anniversary celebration, *see page 5*.

### Supporting our Community During COVID-19 Pandemic

Thanks to your support, we were able to successfully work through the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our leadership team managed the changes required to continue providing essential services safely, including animal sheltering, adoptions and foster care, sanctuary care, and a drive-up free pet food bank. Although our low-cost veterinary care program closed temporarily to ensure we could provide the safest possible service, we reopened with curbside services in June.

### On Track to Realizing Our New Facility

We began the year by taking another step closer to achieving our goal of a new Adoption and Community Resource Center at 165 Airport Road in New Castle. **Thanks to a very generous in-kind gift from A-Del Construction, our land has been cleared and prepared, and is now build-ready!** The easy-to-access 27-acre site deeded to Faithful Friends from the State of Delaware will be used to create a new facility for the animals we care for — providing the space needed for a comfortable shelter, dog training, and sanctuary care; and a more welcoming space for staff, volunteers, and visitors. The move from our cramped industrial building on Germay Drive to a new state-of-the-art campus is long overdue, and is now within reach. *See page 5 for more info.*

On behalf of the thousands of cats and dogs who have benefited from our care, I want to thank the donors, volunteers, and staff who have made our lifesaving work possible during the past 20 years. Your love and support mean the world to us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Pierantozzi".



## Board Leadership

### HONORED FOUNDERS

**Ellice McDonald, Jr.**

**Bill Farrow**

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Robert Wasserbach, CPA, Esq.**

*President*

**Sharon Struthers**

*Vice President*

**Erin Salamone**

*Treasurer*

**Rebecca Frederick**

*Secretary*

**Cheryl Bradley**

**Jeffrey M. Bross, P.E., LEED AP, FACEC**

**Jonathan Choa, Esq.**

### BOARD OF ADVISORS

**Sean Baval-Montgomery**

*CFO, Integrity Staffing Solutions*

**Patricia Blevins**

*Former State Senator, Animal Welfare Leader*

**Jill Cantera**

*President, Bellevue Contractors, LLC*

**Kathy Gallagher**

*Owner, Michael Gallagher Jewelers*

**Jane Gibson**

*Philanthropist*

**Donna Kinzel**

*Executive, Ursuline Academy*

**Faith Maloney**

*Best Friends Animal Society*

**David McBride**

*Former State Senator*

**Craig Prettyman**

*Chief of Technology, University of Delaware*

**Laurissa Schutt**

*Executive Director, First State Educate*

**Robin Starr**

*No Kill SPCA, Richmond, VA*

**Nathan Winograd, Esq.**

*No Kill Advocacy Center*

**Connie Wittig**

*Diamond State Management*



Laurissa Schutt,  
Executive Director, First State Educate





Jeannie DiSabatino  
Facilities and HR Director, Faithful Friends

## Staff Leadership Team\*

**Jane Pierantozzi**

*Executive Director*

**Pam Heissenbuttel**

*Business Manager*

**Jeannie DiSabatino**

*Facilities and Human Resources Director*

**Shannon O'Neill**

*Development and PR Director*

**Bruce Barry**

*Director, Animal Welfare Operations*

**Dr. Gia Croce**

*Medical Director*

**Dr. Karen Sweeney**

*Community Clinic Veterinarian*

**Kacey Jones**

*Community Clinic Practice Manager*

**Geannine Checchio**

*Dog Department Manager and Customer Service Manager*

**Lynn Albright**

*Cat Department Manager*

*\*At time of publication*



## OUR JOURNEY TO

# Make Delaware a No-Kill State

Faithful Friends was formed by a group of concerned citizens who believed there was a more humane way, than mass euthanasia, to solve pet overpopulation and homelessness of animals in Delaware. Over the years, the number of animals we have saved has soared, and the demand for our services continues to grow.

We are proud to have led reforms in animal welfare that have become the building blocks for a comprehensive, humane animal welfare system in Delaware.

—Jane Pierantozzi  
Executive Director



### **2000**

Group of citizens led by Jane Pierantozzi exposes the 90% kill rate in publicly funded shelters; starts the volunteer Pet Life Line to provide alternative animal welfare resources to the public.

### **2001 – 2003**

Faithful Friends incorporates and opens a No-Kill shelter in Delaware.

### **2006**

Faithful Friends leads the creation of Delaware's first spay/neuter legislation signed into law, and becomes a national model for animal welfare; public spay/neuter fund is created to help pet owners on public assistance; and shelters are required to spay/neuter pets prior to adoption.

### **2008**

Faithful Friends opens the first free food and supply bank in Delaware, and encourages other local shelters to do the same.

### **2010**

Faithful Friends leads the creation of Delaware's Animal Shelter Standards Law, a national model for animal welfare. Shelters are now required to provide basic medical care to animals; extend a 72-hour stray hold to include cats; perform lifesaving steps before euthanasia; and publicly post animal outcomes, ending the secrecy of mass killing.

### **2011**

Faithful Friends requests that Delaware's animal welfare services be consolidated and moved under a supportive state agency. The state legislature appoints a task force to review.

### **2013**

The Office of Animal Welfare is created and operated under the Department of Health and Human Services.

### **2014**

Faithful Friends expands their community veterinary services to two days a week to include basic sick care, wellness care, and special procedures, which provides pet owners with affordable alternatives to giving pets up to a shelter or euthanasia.

### **2017**

Faithful Friends renovates the building next door and expands community veterinary services to six days a week, serving over 5,000 pets a year.

### **2018**

Quiet phase of Capital Campaign kicks off for new Adoption and Community Resource Center to be constructed at 165 Airport Road in New Castle.

### **2019 – 2020**

Quiet phase of Capital Campaign continues.





**W**e celebrated from Friday, June 26th through Sunday, June 28th. The festivities were held virtually. Thanks to the generosity of our Platinum Paw Leadership Sponsors — Walt Copper and Judy Baldwin; the Sherr Family; and the Struthers Family Foundation — our team put together a special weekend highlighting memorable rescue stories, sponsor-a-pet opportunities, featured videos with key supporters, a virtual tour of the shelter, and an exciting online auction! It was an eventful and emotional celebration that recognized our supporters, volunteers, and staff — and the many accomplishments our organization has achieved over the past two decades.

Featured videos included interviews with our leadership team and some very important people in our organization's history, including Former State Senator Patricia Blevins; reporter Robin Brown; Michael Mountain, founder of Best Friends Animal Society; and U.S. Senator Christopher Coons.

# On Track to Realizing Our New Facility!

We began the year by taking another step closer to achieving our goal of a new Adoption and Community Resource Center at 165 Airport Road in New Castle. Thanks to a very generous in-kind gift from A-Del Construction, our land has been cleared and prepared, and is now build-ready! The easy-to-access 27-acre site deeded to Faithful Friends from the State of Delaware will be used to create a new facility for the animals we care for — providing the space needed for a comfortable shelter, dog training, and sanctuary care; and a more welcoming space for staff, volunteers, and visitors.

The move from our cramped industrial building on Germay Drive to a new modern center in a pastoral setting is long overdue, and is now within reach. Our new headquarters has a variety of needed upgrades including:

- Spacious, bright areas for animal residents waiting for loving homes
- Group living and quieter space for animals with special needs
- Ample space inside and outside for our visitors and volunteers to interact with animals
- Safe walking trails and spacious play areas

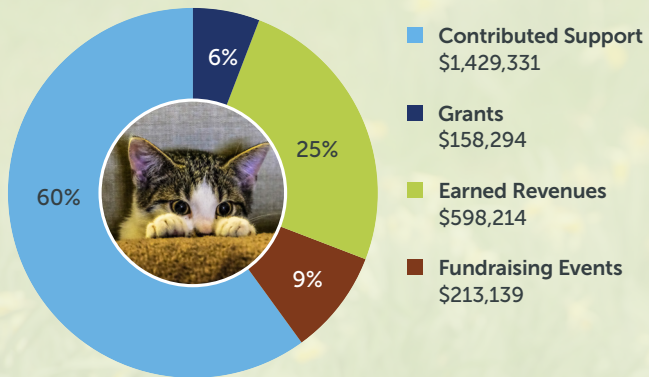
**For more information about our new facility or to help us reach our funding goal, contact Jane Pierantozzi, Executive Director, at (302) 427-8514 x106 or [jane@faithfulfriends.us](mailto:jane@faithfulfriends.us).**



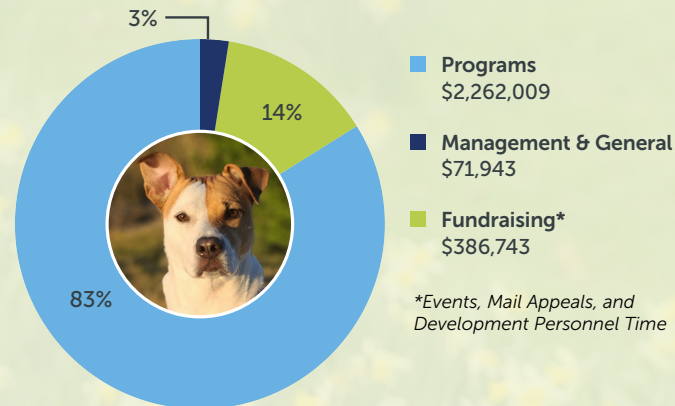


## FISCAL YEAR 2020 FINANCIAL SUMMARY (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)

### 2020 REVENUE \$2.4M



### 2020 EXPENSES \$2.7M



### Program Services include:

- Sheltering and Adoption
- Community Veterinary Care
- Food and Supply Bank
- Pet Therapy Programs
- Pet Life Line
- Sanctuary-Lifetime Care
- Advocacy

*An independent audit is conducted each year and is available upon request.*





#### AT-A-GLANCE

**17,000**  
PETS SERVED

**24,000**  
PEOPLE HELPED

## Saving Lives

**W**e saved lives through a comprehensive adoption program, foster care network, and rescue partnerships. Exemplary shelter care was provided to **1,342** homeless cats and dogs, with **1,205** adopted to loving homes. **586** animals were in shelter and foster care at year's end.

On any given day, we care for **more than 500** animals, with **23%** of our budget allocated to direct medical care.

We provide lifetime care to approximately **229** cats and dogs, also known as sanctuary care, and enrichment for these pets who are least likely to be adopted.

We prevented pet homelessness through low-cost spay/neuter surgeries and free pet food bank services that supported **6,630** cats and dogs. These include animals in shelter care, owned pets, and community free-roaming pets.





# Stories of HOPE & HAPPINESS

## Compassionate Care

It was a typical day at the shelter, when a woman entered with a stray dog that she found while out on a walk with her own pet. The little guy, who the staff later named Boris, looked severely neglected — his fur was matted and flea-infested. He was emaciated, could hardly walk, and his nails were severely overgrown which affected his paws. It was the worst case of neglect some staff had ever seen.

Our veterinary technicians and dog department gave Boris the royal treatment — once he was comfortable, he received a haircut and a soothing bath; then flea treatment and a pedicure. He received IV fluids and vitamins, as well as treatment for an eye infection, and pain medication for his paws.

In addition to the medical treatment, Boris received lots of TLC from our staff and continued to get close attention at a staff member's home, where he made a full recovery. Boris was adopted to a loving home in May 2020.



*He was emaciated, could hardly walk, and his nails were severely overgrown which affected his paws. It was the worst case of neglect some staff had ever seen.*



*We assured her we would give the cats, Soso and Suzie, the best possible care and would find them a forever home.*

## Safety Net for Two

Faithful Friends received a message from a woman, desperate to find a new, loving home for her mother's two cats. Her mother had passed away from COVID-19. The woman had attempted to introduce her mother's cats to her own cats in hopes she could provide them with a home, but the introductions had not gone well.

Distraught, she reached out to Faithful Friends. We learned that she promised her mother she would care for the loving pair. We assured her we would give the cats, Soso and Suzie, the best possible care and would find them a forever home. The playful, affectionate duo did not stay at the shelter long. Just two weeks later, a woman arrived looking to adopt a bonded pair of cats. Soso and Suzie were the right match for her!

They are now enjoying their days snuggled on the couch, watching birds out the window, and getting lots of love and attention. The woman who placed them with us was brought to tears when we updated her on the adoption, and was thankful we helped fulfill her mother's dying wish.





*Bradley was likely abandoned near the colony at the university and was doing his best to survive outdoors. It was recommended Bradley enjoy an indoor life — and we agreed!*

## Cat Colony Success

A kind group of people who care for the cat colony at Wilmington University maintain a daily feeding schedule, and provide cat shelters in the winter months to keep the cats warm. The cat colony used to include eight cats, but now only has two, due to the group's efforts to ensure the cats in the colony are spayed/neutered and to find the friendly cats forever homes.

When the group noticed a new cat had joined the colony, they humanely trapped him to get him the care needed. After catching him, they saw he was in very poor health. They named him Bradley and feared his condition could be life-threatening.

Bradley was seen by our partners at Longwood Veterinary Center (LVC) who were able to quickly assess Bradley's condition. Despite his appearance, Bradley's diagnosis was scabies, a treatable condition! He also had a fractured leg that had already healed. LVC also told us that Bradley was not a feral cat and, once he was comfortable, they were easily able to examine him.

Bradley was likely abandoned near the colony at the university and was doing his best to survive outdoors. It was recommended Bradley enjoy an indoor life — and we agreed! He was moved to a long-term foster home with a dedicated shelter volunteer who gave him time to adjust during his recovery and continues to give him lots of love. Bradley is doing well and looks fantastic!



# Stories of HOPE & HAPPINESS

## Gigi's Journey

Gigi's original owners surrendered him to Faithful Friends because he was not getting along with other dogs in their home. Unfortunately, in order to deal with the situation, the owners kept Gigi isolated in a basement — for about a year — with little socialization or outside time. It was a heartbreaking situation.

When Gigi arrived at the shelter, he was petrified. Gigi would growl and bark at just about everything. Understanding what he had been through over the past year, it was clear to our staff that spending time outside, and meeting new people, were very overwhelming. We were prepared to give Gigi the time he needed to heal.



*The owners kept Gigi isolated in a basement — for about a year — with little socialization or outside time. It was a heartbreaking situation.*

Considering the circumstances, our staff first focused on making sure Gigi was comfortable. He stayed in one of our private dog apartments at the shelter and received lots of one-on-one attention from our team. He began to trust those around him and got used to the regular walk schedule. Then, our trainers began using various training techniques and enrichment tools. With proper care, exercise, and socialization, Gigi did great! He was adopted to a loving home where he continues to thrive.

## Abandoned at the Park

We received a call from a community member who saw someone stop their car at a local park and abandon a litter of kittens inside a box. The caller stated that one kitten had jumped out and scurried away! The witness acted quickly and was able to secure the box with three other kittens inside, then called Faithful Friends for help. We reached out to a volunteer in the area who immediately went to the park to assist. As the volunteer approached the area, a downpour began, but she remained on the phone with the caller.



As the rain slowed, the volunteer scanned the area and saw the kitten. The little one was soaking wet from the rain, but the volunteer was able to secure the kitten in a pet carrier. When she got back to the car, she texted a photo to the caller only to find out it was NOT the same color as the kitten they saw hopping out of the box. Two kittens must have escaped!

With one of the kittens now safe, the volunteer continued the search. She approached a playground area and found the second kitten. She brought them both to Faithful Friends. The two kittens, Juniper and Elm, received medical checks and were very healthy. They, along with the other three, received lots of love from staff and volunteers at the shelter, and were soon adopted by loving families.



#### AT-A-GLANCE

# 11,129

Pet caretakers counseled

# 4,206

Pet caretakers received free pet food

# 5,097

Pets received free food

# 3,500

Pets received affordable veterinary care, such as surgeries, wellness visits, and vaccines



## Keeping Pets Safe and Healthy

We supported local pet owners in need by providing guidance and counseling to more than **11,000** community members through our **Pet Life Line**. The goal is to help keep pets with the people who love them, or find alternative placements to keep them safe. The life line is operated by volunteers who dedicated **208 hours of service**.

We helped **4,206** people receive free pet food for **5,097** animals from our **Free Food and Supply Bank**. The Program served pet owners in financial crisis or on a limited income, as well as those who needed support to care for free-roaming feral cats. Our pet food bank is supported by donations from individuals and local businesses.

We provided **quality, low-cost veterinary services** to our community, which allows families to keep their pets, and enables community cats to stay healthy in colonies. Our goal is to avoid pets entering shelters because of medical needs, unnecessary euthanasia, and medical neglect due to financial constraints.





# Foster Care for Animals

When our shelter is at full occupancy, or when animals can't thrive in a shelter environment, we turn to volunteers and foster parents to extend our lifesaving capacity.

Our Foster Care Program's network of **127** foster parents assists very young pets such as kittens and puppies, moms and their babies, and adults and seniors with special medical or behavioral needs.

The youngest and oldest animals are most vulnerable to illnesses common in shelters. Our largest population served by foster parents is kittens. Delaware continues to face challenges with the number of abandoned and homeless, which has created a cat crisis in our state.

Kitten season is the time of year when kittens are found and thousands are brought to shelters for refuge.

For a chance to survive, some orphaned kittens need bottle feeding.

Kitten season has been lasting longer than past years. Kitten season started in late April of 2019 and continued through 2020. The hardest months for high volumes are June through October.

Faithful Friends provides medical care and food, while foster families provide a safe place, full of love, companionship, and exercise.

## AT-A-GLANCE

127

Foster Parents

243

Cats and kittens in short- and long-term foster care

48

Dogs in short- and long-term foster care





# Sanctuary for Community Cats and Dogs

Long-term and lifetime care was provided to **229** hard-to-adopt cats and dogs. The care is provided either onsite or through supported foster families.

Our **Feral Cat Sanctuary** houses up to **60** displaced feral cats in a small barn. It features a pet door leading to a fenced 40' x 40' outdoor space, with vertical areas for cats to climb and sun themselves. The barn is insulated, heated and cooled. Oftentimes, a sanctuary cat socializes with humans and they are transitioned into our adoption program.

Because of age, behavior, incurable disease, disability and/or terminal illness, some cats and dogs are not adopted, and therefore are placed in one of

several sanctuary care options. Cats may be placed in one of our cat group living rooms in the shelter, or in a long-term specialized foster home.

Some dogs, because of neglect or abuse, have developed challenging behaviors and require rehabilitation. Faithful Friends promises sanctuary care to these dogs. They're offered priority for a limited number of **dog apartments**, and paired with Volunteer Ambassadors when possible.

We also provide behavioral assessments and medical treatment as warranted for stress/anxiety, positive-based behavioral training, and training and activities to keep them mentally engaged and emotionally fit.



## AT-A-GLANCE

229

Hard-to-adopt dogs and cats  
received long-term and  
lifetime care

40

Cats housed in Feral Cat  
Sanctuary

88

Cats in group living  
in shelter

4

Dogs in shelter

97

Cats and dogs in long-term  
foster homes



# Our Special Animal Rescues

*Until he extends his circle of compassion to include all living beings, man will not, himself, find peace.*

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

Humanitarian, Philosopher, Physician, and  
Recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize



This year we were fortunate to be able to give other types of animals their forever homes. **A rooster, a guinea pig, three chickens, a pot belly pig, and a goat** all found their way to our shelter. Some were abandoned and left to fend for themselves in horrid conditions. Others were surrendered by families who could no longer care for them. Thankfully, each is living a wonderful life with their new families.



## Playing for Life Program

Faithful Friends has established a Playing for Life Program, which gives dogs the opportunity to participate in organized play supervised by trained staff. The program gives the dogs in our shelter a chance to express themselves in a safe, caring environment such as playgroups.

Playgroups provide an outlet for dogs to burn off excess physical energy and socialize with other dogs. They counteract the stressors of shelter life. Exercise often helps dogs become more relaxed while in their kennels meeting potential adopters.

Our core behavior team is trained in the Dogs Playing for Life (DPFL) national model for group play programs for shelter dogs, rooted in the notion that a dog's natural instinct is to PLAY. As you can see by the looks on these pups' faces, they LOVE playtime!





# BIG hearts

are not required,  
but our volunteers  
have them!



Faithful Friends relies on the generosity of our volunteers seven days a week. We have flexible volunteer schedules to accommodate students, families, professionals and retirees. There are volunteer opportunities available at our shelter as well as at offsite adoption centers, homes, and Pet Therapy Programs throughout the state. **Without the support of 500 volunteers working both at the shelter and in the community, selfishly giving of their time, talents, and resources, Faithful Friends could not achieve its lifesaving goals.**

By providing foster care for animals young and old, or by joining the Ambassador program to become an advocate for a special shelter dog, volunteers

open their hearts and homes to some of the most vulnerable pets at our shelter. They help us provide the physical, social, emotional, and psychological support animals need to eventually find their forever families, or to live out the remainder of their lives with love and dignity.

Volunteers also play a key role in helping us support the community through our free pet food bank and low-cost veterinary services. Our Pet Life Line, a counseling and resource hotline operated entirely by dedicated volunteers, continues to provide support to our customer service team. We assist over 11,000 pet caretakers in crisis annually.



# Pet Therapy Programs for People

Human-animal interactions provide a multitude of benefits to people of all ages in a variety of facility and program settings. Studies show that animals can improve the physical and mental health of individuals whose lives they touch.

Launched in 2003, we have three types of Pet Therapy Programs that use companion animals to show love, teach empathy, build self-esteem and communication skills; and demonstrate acceptance, socialization, responsibility, and commitment. Faithful Friends' adoptable animals also participate in our Pet Therapy Programs thanks to dedicated volunteers who are paired with appropriate adoptable pets.

- *We match caring volunteers who are happy to share their well-trained, loving dogs and cats with people in need through community partnerships to provide therapeutic visits.*
- *Program for Education and Training (PET) offers groups or individuals with special needs opportunities to learn laundry, dishes, and basic animal care skills, followed by therapeutic time with the animals as an incentive to participate and learn.*
- *Literacy Education Assistance Pups (LEAP) in Sussex County offers literacy mentoring with dogs in schools and libraries to children struggling to read.*

Due to health and safety precautions related to COVID-19 that affected visitor and volunteer access to many of our pet therapy partner facilities, we discontinued traditional Pet Therapy Program visits in March 2020. We continue to find innovative ways to connect with our program partners, including virtual pet visits, shelter educational sessions, and video messages that bring the benefits of companion animals to the people we serve.

Despite the challenges faced this year, we reached over 4,200 people, including at-risk youth; people with special needs; adults in day programs; and children, adults and the elderly in group homes, and hospitals and hospice facilities.

## BY THE NUMBERS

500

Volunteers  
(Shelter and Outreach Support)

20+

Volunteer Roles –  
help at the shelter, at home,  
or in the community

200

Pet Therapy Volunteers

2,866

Pet Therapy Hours of Service

59

Program Partners  
throughout the state

***A full list of current  
Pet Therapy partners can  
be found on our website.***



# THANK YOU to all of our dedicated Volunteers!





Faithful Friends Animal Society  
12 Germay Drive  
Wilmington, DE 19804  
(302) 427-8514

[www.faithfulfriends.us](http://www.faithfulfriends.us)

FY 2020  
ANNUAL REPORT

