



# Building COMPASSION with your support

A circular inset image showing a man with a beard, wearing a black t-shirt with the Faithful Friends Animal Society logo and the word 'STAFF' on it, holding a small beagle puppy. The man is looking down at the puppy with a gentle expression.

Community Impact Report  
Fiscal Year 2023

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For the past 23 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.

# A MESSAGE FROM

Jane Pierantozzi

Founder and Executive Director

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From the very beginning, we dreamt of building a modern shelter that would provide animals with a comfortable stay while waiting for adoption, and offer long-term sanctuary for those that need it. In June, we realized our dream. The Sharon Struthers Animal Adoption and Community Center is our new home, serving thousands of animals every month.

Our business model targets the core reasons for animal neglect and abandonment. We have implemented best practices and created our own programs to improve animal well being. Our safety net programs support pet owners and community cat caretakers in need by helping to feed, vaccinate and provide affordable veterinary care to vulnerable pets. Supporting people who love their pets keeps animals right where they belong — with their loving caretakers.

We continue to partner with New Castle County's Hope Center to provide residents with pet food, supplies, veterinary care, and boarding services when needed. Those facing homelessness will often not seek shelter unless they are able to bring their beloved pets along. Pets are family and they are emotional support during times of crisis. We are proud to be able to support Hope Center residents and their pets while they search for permanent housing for their families.

Our dedicated team continues to ensure the safety of animals during times of crisis. Last summer, when the U.S. Justice Department shut down Envigo RMS LLC, a Virginia dog breeder, for inhumane conditions, we joined shelters across the country and opened our doors to the dogs who needed care. We accepted 13 beagles, rescued from horrid conditions, who were slated to be sold for cruel, scientific experimentation.

Thanks to your support, our comprehensive services for animal protection have become a model over the years. Other Delaware shelters have followed our lead, and now offer lifesaving programs including adopting No Kill strategies. Many have partnered with us on pursuing critical legislative and regulatory reforms to benefit animals. We continue to see the impact of our leadership in animal welfare advocacy. In 2021, we led a Pet Food Manufacturer Annual Registration fee increase that was passed into law. The fees will increase funds to significantly boost the state's spay/neuter program. Over the next two years, the fund will continue to grow and impact all Delaware shelters by offsetting costs for spay/neuter of adoptable animals, community cats, and pets of low-income caretakers in our state.

When you visit our new shelter you will see a quote from Albert Schweitzer prominently featured in the reception area. *"Until we extend our circle of compassion to all living things, humanity will not find peace."* This has been our motivation over the years in driving reforms. We thank you, our valued supporters, for joining us on this journey. You have been a critical part of our success over the last 23 years, and will remain an important part of our future. We couldn't do it without you.



# LEADERSHIP

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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*President*

Sharon Struthers  
*Vice President*

Erin Salamone  
*Treasurer*

Rebecca Frederick  
*Secretary*

Heather Farley, MD

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Saffiya Jarvis

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Alicia Rodriguez, Esq.

Jennifer Young

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CFO, Integrity Staffing Solutions

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Jill Cantera  
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Kathy Gallagher  
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Vice President, Diamond State Management

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Jane Pierantozzi  
Executive Director

Pam Heissenbittel  
Chief Financial Officer

Shannon O'Neill  
Director of Development and Public Relations

Jeannie DiSabatino  
Director of Facilities and Human Resources

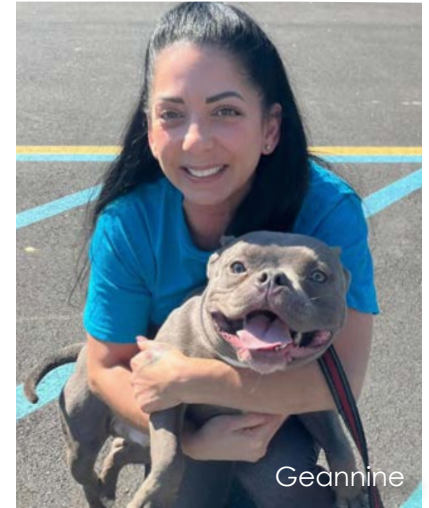
Kim Dieter  
Medical Operations Director

Dr. Karen Sweeney  
Shelter and Community Wellness Veterinarian

Geannine Checchio  
Dog Department and Customer Service Manager

Lynn Albright  
Cat Department Manager

*Lists reflect leadership 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 in Delaware. We are proud to have led major reforms which have become the building blocks for a comprehensive, humane animal welfare system in Delaware. We are simultaneously growing our no-kill shelter and support services for pet caretakers in need to keep pets with those who love them whenever possible.

— Jane Pierantozzi, Executive Director



### 2000–2003

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

### 2006

Faithful Friends leads the creation of Delaware’s first spay/neuter legislation that is 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 pet food and supply bank in Delaware and guides other organizations to implement similar programs to better serve our community together.

### 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 the stray hold to include cats, and publicly post animal outcomes.

### 2011–2013

Faithful Friends requests that Delaware’s animal welfare services be consolidated and moved under a supportive state agency, leading Delaware to solve animal welfare issues. The state legislature appoints a task force to review, and in 2013, the Office of Animal Welfare is created.

### 2014–2017

Faithful Friends expands its low-cost, quality veterinary services for the community to include basic sick care, wellness care, and special procedures. In 2017, completes renovation to a clinic space, further expanding affordable services to pet owners, and providing alternatives to relinquishing pets to shelters or euthanasia.

### 2018

Capital Campaign begins with the goal to construct an Adoption and Community Center on Airport Road in New Castle.

### 2021

Faithful Friends leads the creation and passage of a phased fee increase on annual registration fees for pet food manufacturers selling pet food in Delaware, adding significant funds to the state’s spay/neuter fund to serve more pet owners and cat colony caretakers across our state.

### 2023

Faithful Friends opens a new Animal Adoption and Community Center in New Castle.

# GRAND OPENING: Sharon Struthers Animal Adoption and Community Center

Our new, purpose-built facility has become a reality with the opening of the Sharon Struthers Animal Adoption and Community Center. Located at 165 Airport Road in New Castle, Delaware, the center replaces our previous facility on Germay Drive in Wilmington. The new 17,500 square-foot facility sits on 27 acres, gifted to us by the State of Delaware.

“When we started Faithful Friends, publicly funded shelters in Delaware had a 90 percent kill rate. Today, thanks to our leadership in policy reforms, Delaware is one of just three no-kill states in the country, saving hundreds of thousands of animals from certain death,” said Jane Pierantozzi, founder and Executive Director of Faithful Friends. “We have entered the next chapter for Faithful Friends. Thanks to our dedicated donors, our headquarters now reflects the proud work our organization accomplishes every day. Our new facility will help us continue to be a community safety net — the voice for animals and a support system for pet owners in crisis.”

Along with sheltering and providing medical care for homeless pets, the new facility continues to offer community veterinary care, pet food bank, and dog training with certified dog trainers on staff. We also continue to operate the Pet Life Line, which connects pet owners and caretakers with resources statewide.



# GRAND OPENING:

## Sharon Struthers Animal Adoption and Community Center

We provide shelter and care for approximately 55 dogs, 225 cats and kittens, and 10 small pets in the new center. In addition, our foster care volunteer network helps to care for another 200 animals.

Set on 27 acres, the serene background is a massive improvement from our previous shelter. Facilities include outdoor play yards for dogs to exercise, work with our trainers, interact with each other in playgroups, and meet potential adopters. There are wooded trails for staff and volunteers to walk dogs or take a short break outside.

The shelter pets now have larger, more comfortable housing. Dogs' living spaces include larger kennels and "condos" with indoor/outdoor living areas. Our barn cats now enjoy a beautiful living space and a large "catio" where they can bask in the sun and fresh air. The building features indoor/outdoor spaces for most of the adoptable cats and dogs to enjoy the benefits of fresh air and natural light. The medical department, now located in the same building as the shelter, serves both shelter pets and the public with a surgery room, exam rooms, and a lab/pharmacy.

The Sharon Struthers Animal Adoption and Community Center honors Sharon Struthers, our current board Vice President, philanthropist, and long-time supporter of Faithful Friends. The Struthers family has supported Faithful Friends since 2012 as volunteers and donors, and provided a generous lead gift to make our new center a reality. We are grateful to them for their generous support, and appreciate every donor who made this next chapter possible.



Adoption Kennels



Cat Lifesaving Wing



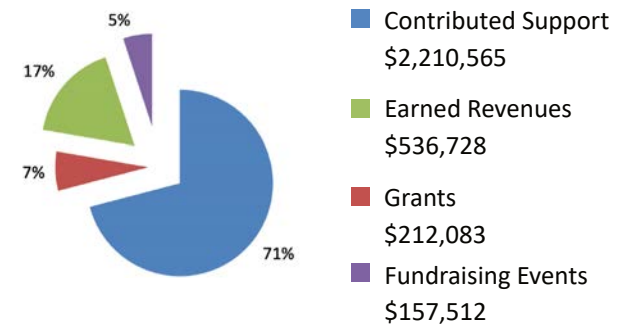
Surgery Room

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

## Fiscal Year 2023

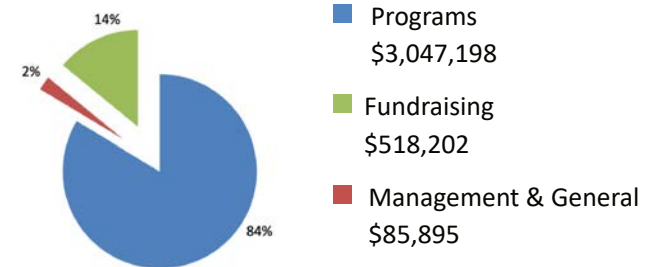
Amber

### 2023 REVENUE: \$3.1M\*



\*Excludes donor-restricted funds  
Includes first endowment gift

### 2023 EXPENSES: \$3.7M\*\*



\*\*Includes one-time/extraordinary expenses associated with move to new facility

#### **Program Services include:**

- ◇ Sheltering and Adoption
- ◇ Community Veterinary Care
- ◇ Food and Supply Bank
- ◇ Pet Therapy Programs
- ◇ Pet Life Line
- ◇ Sanctuary (Long-term / Lifetime Care)
- ◇ Advocacy





Harold



Nicole and Bitsy

## AT A GLANCE

18,000

PETS SERVED

24,000

PEOPLE SERVED

## SAVING LIVES

At the core of our mission is protecting the lives of animals. Our philosophy that drives our mission, and the methods for achieving it, is the belief that many animals have no need to come into a shelter if their caretakers can instead receive the support they need to keep their pets fed and well cared for right in their own loving homes. The numbers of animals rescued tells only part of our story. The rest of the story is the human element.

We prevent pet homelessness on a large scale through compassionate, free and low-cost services. Last fiscal year, Faithful Friends spayed and neutered 1,412 pets; and by providing free pet food to 4,370 people, we helped feed 9,207 pets and community colony cats that did not have to be housed in our shelter!

Inside the shelter, we provided exemplary care for 1,781 homeless cats and dogs. Of those, 1,323 were adopted into loving homes. We care for more than 350 animals at any given time, with 17 percent of our budget allocated to direct medical care. For some animals, due to behavioral or medical challenges, a longer stay is necessary. We provided long-term and lifetime care and enrichment to 195 cats and dogs.

# STORIES OF HOPE & HAPPINESS

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In August, the owners of Tea, a 3-year-old pot-bellied pig, reached out to us for help. They were in crisis and could no longer provide care for Tea, who had lived indoors with them most of her life. Tea was very social and loved being around people, but for the past year she had been living outdoors. We were confident we had the resources to help, so we stepped up to find Tea a new home. When our team arrived to get Tea, they found out the owners had a 9-year-old dog, Ice, who was also living outdoors.

The family shared that they also needed to find the senior dog a home. Our team transported both Ice and Tea back to the shelter where the duo settled in quickly to their new quarters, surrounded by people who gave them lots of love, attention, and treats.

Faithful Friends converted our sensory yard to accommodate Tea. With straw, mud, and toys, this cute girl spent happy days at the shelter while in our care. She bonded with our staff, got to spend time with her buddy Ice, and was inquisitive about other animals.

Tea has since been moved to a loving forever home, located on a beautiful farm with a yard that she shares with other animals. Ice has been adopted by a loving family.

# STORIES OF HOPE & HAPPINESS

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In August after the U.S. Department of Justice shut down Envigo RMS LLC for deplorable conditions, thousands of beagles from the laboratory animal breeder suddenly needed homes. The Humane Society of the United States took responsibility for the placement of 4,000 dogs and puppies. HSUS reached out to Faithful Friends Animal Society, along with many other trusted rescue partners, for help.

We opened our doors to 13 beagles from the Cumberland, Virginia breeding facility. Dedicated volunteers transported the dogs to our shelter. When they arrived, the dogs ran out of their cages to explore the yard, play, and become familiar with our staff and volunteers.

The dogs were examined by our veterinarian, spayed/neutered, and microchipped before they were made available for adoption and foster. The dogs had lived only in wire cages, never feeling grass under their paws, sun on their fur, or a loving human touch. We were prepared to invest a significant amount in behavioral resources, and that plan began with bonding exercises with our training team.

We believe experimenting on sentient beings is cruel. They can give and receive love. Animals feel fear, pain, and joy. Each one of these beagles was innocent and deserved love, protection, and care. We hope these rescue efforts alert policymakers to put an end to this practice of experimenting on living beings.

Within a few weeks all 13 beagles were adopted. They are now living in their forever homes, with the love and compassion they deserve.



# STORIES OF HOPE & HAPPINESS

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Our cattery supervisor was doing her evening rounds in early December when she received a message about a mother cat and kittens that were dumped in a park in Wilmington. Without hesitation, she jumped into action. It was starting to get dark outside and she knew the kittens were likely on their own in a heavily wooded area. With freezing temperatures projected that evening, a quick response was needed to save this feline family.

Our staff member went to the area, and was just about to give up her search when she found the kittens in a blue storage tote. The mother cat was severely emaciated and the kittens needed medical attention as well. She loaded them safely into a carrier and brought them back to our shelter where our veterinarian gave them a complete medical examination.

The mother cat “Eclair,” and her little ones — Strudel, Beignet, Croissant, and Macaroon — were treated for coccidia (an intestinal tract infection). The staff member who saved their lives provided them with a loving foster home. Eclair had given everything she had to her babies to help them survive as long as they did outside in the cold, but ultimately she succumbed to her condition. The babies thrived. After a few weeks in foster care, the kittens were quickly adopted by loving families.



# STORIES OF HOPE & HAPPINESS

In August, a member of our staff and a dedicated volunteer drove to Morristown, New Jersey to meet an aircraft that had just flown in from Louisiana with 140 vulnerable pets on board. These pets included asymptomatic heartworm-positive shelter dogs, homeless cats, and harder-to-place larger dogs. The pets were at risk of being euthanized at the shelters where they were prior to this lifesaving journey.

Greater Good Charities, NBCUniversal, Hill's Pet Nutrition, St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center, Faithful Friends, and other local shelters worked together to save these animals. The airlift was part of Greater Good Charities' Good Flights program and was funded by Hill's Pet Nutrition and The Animal Rescue Site as part of NBC's Clear the Shelters. In addition to helping fund the flight mission, Hill's Pet Nutrition donated more than 6,000 pounds of food to support pets at the participating sending and receiving shelters. That day, we welcomed nine new pups into our shelter. They got the care they needed, and then quickly got adopted!

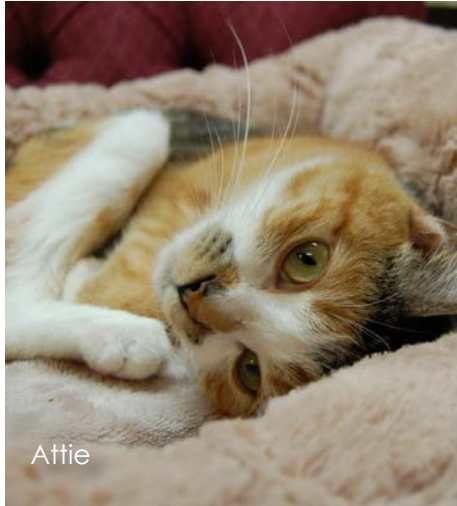


Nina and her two dogs, Suki (14) and Maggie May (8), arrived at the New Castle County Hope Center in November 2022 after Nina's apartment was condemned due to a black mold problem. The Hope Center is a homeless shelter with dedicated rooms for owners with pets. Nina is a disabled United States Air Force veteran and both of her dogs are Certified Emotional Support Pets.

Through our partnership with the Hope Center, we provide pet owners with pet food and supplies to help them care for their pets, pet wellness exams and vaccines, other medical care for pets with special needs, and case management to support pet parents with veterinary appointments and other needs.

With assistance from staff at the Hope Center, Nina was able to secure permanent housing and she moved into a pet-friendly condo. Our client support manager at the Hope Center spoke with Nina a few months later when she reported she loved her new place. The family of three is settled in.

# PROVIDING SHELTER & SANCTUARY



On average we care for 350 pets every day. In addition to over 200 pets at our shelter, we have cats and kittens available for adoption at offsite pet store partner locations, and more than 100 pets in foster homes supported and loved by their volunteer foster families at any given time.

While pets are in foster care we provide food and supplies that are needed, as well as ongoing medical care. Of the 1,781 pets we cared for this year, 1,323 were adopted to loving homes.

Whether due to age, behavior, disability, and/or illness, some cats and dogs may be harder to place in forever homes. For them, there are several sanctuary care options. Long-term and lifetime care was provided to 195 cats and dogs this year. The care is provided either onsite or through supported foster families.

Dogs who have developed challenging behaviors, oftentimes a result of neglect or abuse, may require more time to heal, rehabilitation, and/or more extensive training. We provide sanctuary care to these dogs. They may live in one of our six dog condos and are paired with Volunteer Ambassadors (dedicated, trained volunteers) whenever possible. We also work with sanctuary partners and experienced foster homes to care for the dogs long term. We also provide behavioral assessments, medical treatment for stress/anxiety, positive-based behavioral training, and enrichment to keep them mentally engaged and emotionally fit.

## AT A GLANCE

**1,781**

Pets received exemplary care

**1,323**

Pets were adopted into loving homes

**350**

Pets on average were cared for every day

**195**

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

## AT A GLANCE

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**726**

Pets received care in over 200 loving foster homes

**26**

Cats were housed in our Feral Cat Sanctuary

**94**

Cats were safely rehomed through the Barn Cat Program



## EXTENDING LIFESAVING CAPACITY

When our shelter is at full occupancy, or when animals can't thrive in a shelter environment, we turn to volunteers to extend our lifesaving capacity. Our Foster Care Program's network of over 200 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. We provide medical care and food, while foster families provide a safe place full of love, companionship, and exercise.

Delaware continues to face challenges with the number of abandoned and homeless cats, which has created a crisis in our state. "Kitten season" is a term used to describe the time of year when kittens are found and thousands are brought to shelters for refuge. Due to the milder winters, this season continues to expand. To survive, many orphaned kittens need bottle feeding. Having dedicated foster parents is critical to our lifesaving efforts.

## BARN CAT PROGRAM

Our Cat Sanctuary can house up to 50 displaced feral cats in spacious indoor and outdoor accommodations with cubbies and comfortable bedding. Cats have exterior access to the enclosed catio as desired. We provided care to 26 feral cats in our onsite barn this year. If a sanctuary cat socializes with humans, they are transitioned into our adoption program. Social cats in long-term and sanctuary care may also be placed in one of our cat cottages at the shelter or in a long-term specialized foster home.

We also utilize our Cat Sanctuary space to temporarily hold colony feral cats who are being threatened or harmed before rehoming them to another safe location where they will be cared for and loved. Through our Barn Cat Program, we ensure feral cats in outdoor colonies who are at risk get the medical care needed. Once a new home is found, our experienced cat department team members work with their new caretakers to ensure their health and safety by monitoring them over four weeks as they get acclimated to their new home. This year, we safely rehomed 94 cats through this program.

**14**

## DOG TRAINING TRIUMPH

Judi and Mike worked with Zach, one of our certified dog trainers, to help with their young, energetic dog Mindy. They needed help with basic obedience training. After six sessions, and lots of practice in between, they were pleased that Mindy learned how to sit and walk into her crate on command. Mindy also walks much better on a leash and is on her way to learning other basic commands.

Judi and Mike plan to continue practicing with Mindy until she has mastered all the basics. They were extremely pleased with Zach's service and noticed Mindy was attentive and happy whenever her trainer was around. They also appreciated that Zach made each session both practical and fun!



## A VOICE FOR ALL ANIMALS

There are many types of pets and we love them all. All animals deserve to live a life free from abuse and neglect. In August, Faithful Friends had the occasion to rescue a two-year-old pot-bellied pig. A good samaritan found the pig roaming near a busy road. They acted quickly to get the pig to safety at our shelter, but she was not claimed by her owner. We named her Bonita, meaning "beautiful," and she was placed up for adoption.

We were able to outfit one of our dog condos into a temporary space for Bonita, where she had indoor and outdoor access. The Cook family, who had previously adopted Bitsy the pig, met Bonita and decided to adopt her too! With her new family, Bonita will enjoy life on the family farm, helping adults with developmental disabilities.

Although our efforts historically have focused on traditional companion animals, we occasionally get asked to help farm animals too. We have found loving homes for chickens, pigs, and goats! Each time, we are grateful to help those who cannot speak for themselves.





# ANSWERING THE CALL

In July, a call came into our Pet Life Line, a resource hotline managed by dedicated volunteers to assist pet owners and caretakers in crisis. The call was from the Aston Township Police Department who was reaching out for help for a ten-year-old dog who had been abandoned. They had made sure the dog was safe and received medical care. They also arranged temporary boarding, but they could not find a shelter or rescue group to take the dog.

The Pet Life Line volunteer worked with our dog department manager who arranged to have the dog evaluated at our shelter. Bandit was a good, old dog who just wanted to be with people. He had some medical issues that we could manage in a loving foster home, and that is where he lived his best life for the rest of his life.

Whether it is a call about needing veterinary care, finding a lost pet, or urgent pet resources during a crisis, our Pet Life Line and customer service representatives are always ready to help. We counsel over 11,500 individuals each year through calls, emails, and visits we receive. Our safety net of services for pets and pet owners makes stepping in to help in crisis situations possible.

## AT A GLANCE

**11,500**

Pet owners and caretakers counseled

**200**

Hours of service by Pet Life Line volunteers





## AT A GLANCE

**9,207**

Pets received pet food through our Free Pet Food Bank (serving 4,370 pet owners and caretakers)

**2,166**

Pets received veterinary care through low-cost services

**1,412**

Pets were spayed and neutered

## KEEPING PETS SAFE & HEALTHY

As we work to find loving homes for the animals at our shelter, we understand that many pets in our community already have loving homes, and sometimes families need support to stay together. We have developed safety net programs to keep pets out of shelters and where they belong: in homes with people who love them. Safety net programs include our Pet Life Line, Free Pet Food and Supply Bank, and our low-cost Community Veterinary Program.

Since 2008, we have operated a Free Pet Food and Supply Bank that supports pet owners in crisis or on a limited income, as well as those who need support to care for free-roaming community cats. The program is supported by donations from individuals, retail partners, and funding from local foundations. Our Pet Food Bank operates out of our shelter and four offsite locations to help reach more pets in need, including **Bellevue Community Center (Edgemoor Gardens); Child, Inc. (Sparrow Run); The Warehouse (Wilmington); and New Castle County Hope Center.** Our Pet Food Delivery Program is offered monthly to make obtaining food more accessible to pet owners without transportation. We also have a partnership with Meals on Wheels to deliver pet food to pet owners in Wilmington.

We offer quality, low-cost veterinary services to our community, which helps families provide their pets with the care they need, and keeps community cats healthy in managed colonies. In addition, vaccine clinics are held twice a month throughout the year providing lifesaving vaccines, microchips, and flea/tick and heartworm preventative to keep pets healthy. Our goal is to prevent pet relinquishment to shelters due to medical needs and avoid unnecessary euthanasia.

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Heart of Faithful Friends

## AT A GLANCE

**322**

Active Volunteers

**15+**

Volunteer Roles (at our shelter and in the community)

**55**

Community Partners

**15,683**

Volunteer Service Hours



18



Ariel

**Faithful***friends*  
ANIMAL SOCIETY

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