



ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ARLINGTON  
2023-2024 IMPACT REPORT

80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ARLINGTON  
1944-2024



# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the Animal Welfare League of Arlington (AWLA) celebrates 80 years of service, I am incredibly honored to have been part of an organization that has achieved such a significant milestone. As this year's impact report shows, what originally started as a small group of volunteers sheltering animals in their own homes has grown into one of the region's premier animal welfare organizations, recognized for its numerous successful programs and achievements. Yet, despite all this change, our goal has remained the same—to make a meaningful impact on the lives of animals and people. AWLA's foundation is strong, even as the world around us continues to evolve.

Over time, AWLA has remained deeply committed to meeting the growing needs of our community, and I am proud of how we've adapted to better serve both animals and people. For instance, a few years ago we expanded our mission to not only improve the lives of animals but also to assist the people who care for them. With this change, we solidified our role as Arlington's animal resource center, ensuring that all animals have access to the support they need. This commitment proved vital as we navigated the uncertainties of the pandemic and the years that followed, highlighting that our work has always been about community, compassion, and care.

Change is inevitable, and as AWLA continues to evolve, so too does my journey. As many of you know, I will be moving from the area and stepping down as the President & CEO at the end of 2024. This decision comes with mixed emotions, but I am excited to see AWLA embrace new leadership and continue to innovate and grow. I will always cherish the relationships I've built with many of you, and I am confident the mission will carry on, expanding and evolving as it always has.

Over the last 80 years, people have come and gone, but the unwavering dedication of this community has remained. It has been a pleasure to witness that commitment, from the staff and volunteers to the innumerable supporters who believe in our mission. While it is bittersweet to say goodbye, I am optimistic about AWLA's future and look forward to all that we will accomplish together in the years to come.

Thank you for being part of this journey and for the love, care, and dedication you've shown to both animals and people alike.



Sam Wolbert, AWLA President & CEO

## IT ALL STARTED WITH A *mission...*



AWLA's twelve founders



# 80 YEARS OF SAVING LIVES

1944

the Animal Welfare League of Arlington was incorporated.

1954

AWLA became the first shelter to require all adopted female pets to be spayed.

1993

AWLA establishes the Pet Partnership Program to assist pet owners in the community.

2000

A \$1.5 million shelter renovation is completed, creating the facility AWLA operates in today.

1975

AWLA opened its new building at 2650 S Arlington Mill Drive.

2008

AWLA reverses 20-year policy ban on pitbull-type dog adoptions.

2011

AWLA establishes its Trap-Neuter-Return Program.

2017

The Kitten College is established, saving 170 kittens in it's first year.

1977

AWLA is the third shelter in the US to be accredited by the Humane Society of the United States.

1983

Animal Control becomes a part of AWLA.

2019

AWLA changes its mission to include *people* and pets.

2021

The Wildlife Resource Center is created.

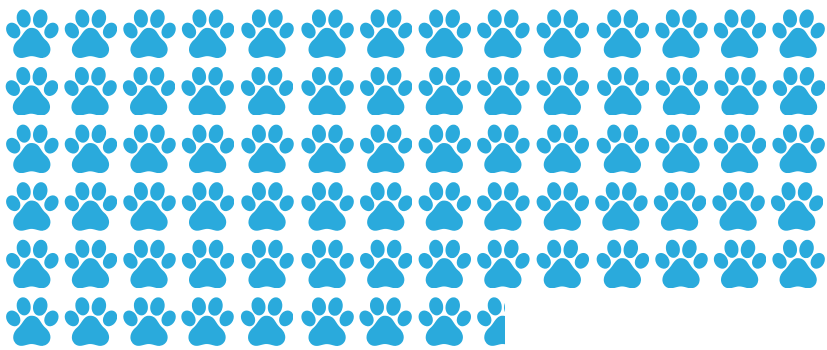


# YEAR IN REVIEW

JULY 2023 - JUNE 2024

3,939

animals in care



= 50 animals (surrenders, strays, wildlife, etc)

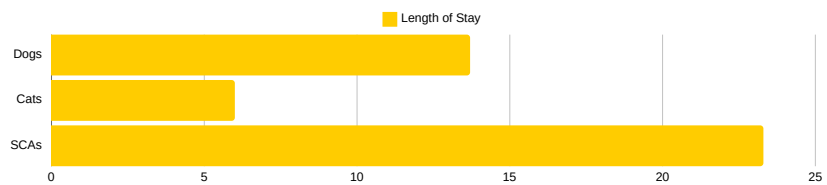
1,854

animals adopted



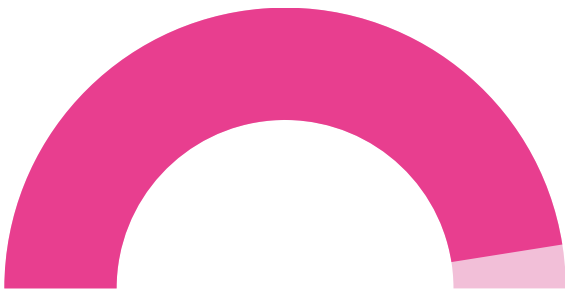
14 DAYS

was the average length of stay for animals in our care



95%

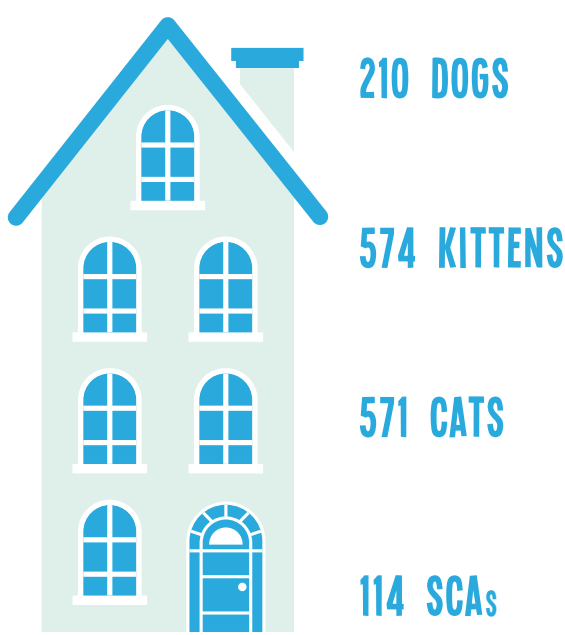
positive outcome percentage\*



*\*the percentage of animals that leave the shelter alive through adoption, return to owner, or transfer to another rescue organization*

1,469

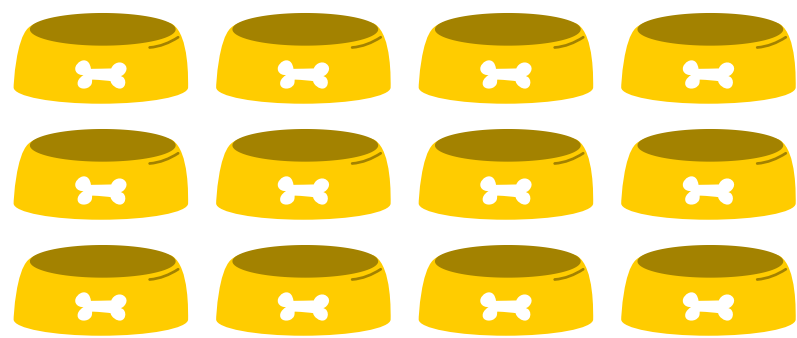
animals placed into foster homes



# THANKS TO YOU, WE HAVE A LOT TO BE *proud* OF THIS YEAR...

183,120

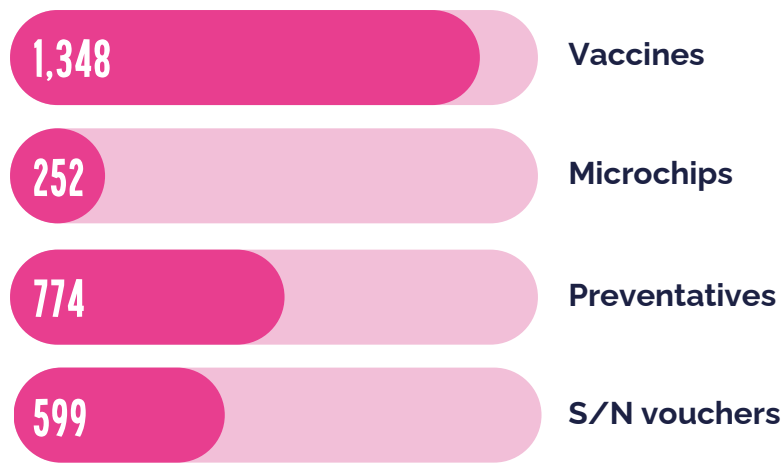
meals provided to pets in the community



15,260 meals provided per month: 4,203 meals for dogs, 11,057 meals for cats

729

pets provided with low-cost or free services at AWLA's Low-Cost and Community Care Clinics



Local veterinarians and LVTs donated 84 hours of time to AWLA's public clinics.

1,036 WILD ANIMALS CAME INTO OUR WILDLIFE RESOURCE CENTER

where they were triaged before being transported to local licensed wildlife rehabilitators

57% OF STRAY PETS WERE RETURNED TO THEIR OWNERS IN THE FIELD

meaning these pets never had to enter the shelter

VOLUNTEERS LOGGED 10,886 HOURS, EQUALING \$346,145

*according to Independent Sector and the Do Good Institute*

165 ANIMALS RECEIVED SPECIALIZED BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

from our CPDT-certified Behavior & Training team



IT ALL STARTED WITH A  
*mission...*

For more than 80 years,  
the Animal Welfare  
League of Arlington has  
served the Arlington  
community with animal  
sheltering and control  
services to help pet  
owners keep their animals  
*healthy, happy, and home.*





# A LEGACY OF LOVE

## 80 Years of Volunteerism

In 1944, AWLA was born out of a desire to protect animals in need. What began as a small group of 12 dedicated volunteers has grown into a thriving organization supported by hundreds of volunteers. Their unwavering dedication has been key to AWLA's evolution into the vital force for animal welfare that it is today.

The spark that ignited the formation of AWLA came from a heartbreaking incident witnessed by Mrs. Pearl Twyne, an Arlington resident who later became the organization's president and sole cruelty investigator. Mrs. Twyne encountered a terrified stray dog near her home, but was unable to catch it. When she called the local dog catcher for assistance, she was horrified to see him grab the dog by the scruff and throw it into the trunk of his car. This act of cruelty struck a chord in Pearl, and she realized that something had to change. Determined to make a difference, she joined forces with like-minded individuals to create AWLA—a compassionate response to a pressing need for animal welfare in the community.

Before AWLA's founding, the "pound" in Arlington was a grim place for animals, lacking the care and compassion they deserved. The newly formed AWLA was entirely volunteer-run, with no physical building to call home. Instead, animals were cared for by volunteers and local veterinarians, who stepped up to provide shelter and medical attention in the absence of formal facilities.

Eighty years later, AWLA has grown into a beacon of hope for countless animals and their families. With a dedicated volunteer base of over 300 individuals, each contributing their unique skills and shared passion for animal welfare, we now offer a broad range of services to meet the diverse needs of our animal population. Our volunteers help by walking dogs, socializing cats, transporting injured wildlife to rehabilitation centers, ensuring our kennels remain clean and safe for every animal in our care, among many other things.

Ingrid, a dedicated volunteer who has been with AWLA for over 30 years, recently reflected on her experiences. "When I started in the early 90s, things were very different. We didn't have behaviorists, (cont'd)

IMPACT

Meet *Ingrid*  
and AWLA alum Anthony

YOUR SUPPORT AND THE  
DEDICATION OF VOLUNTEERS  
LIKE INGRID, WHO CONTRIBUTE  
BOTH TIME AND HEART, MAKE  
AWLA'S WORK POSSIBLE.



Photo: Erinn Shirley





*Volunteer Cynthia and Scampy, 1963*



*A dog wash fundraiser*



*Pet-Assisted Therapy volunteers*



*Cat room volunteer*

a foster program, or even a vet on staff.

The focus was mainly on housing the animals and finding them homes as quickly as possible," she recalls. Ingrid appreciates how far AWLA has come in prioritizing the needs of the animals and the community. "Now, we have so much emphasis on understanding and meeting each animal's needs, thanks to the evaluations and training programs we have in place."

Ingrid has witnessed the impact of the foster program and specialized care firsthand. "Fostering wasn't even part of the conversation when I first started, but now it's a game-changer for so many dogs who might struggle in the shelter environment," she says.

The impact of our volunteers is immeasurable. They are the heart of AWLA, ensuring that each animal receives the care and attention they deserve. Whether it's through fostering, educating the community, or simply providing companionship to animals waiting for new homes, our volunteers embody the spirit of love and compassion that drives our mission forward. Ingrid notes, "I find it so fulfilling just to know that I made a dog's day better by taking them for a walk or spending some time with them. It might seem like a small thing, but to that dog, it's everything."

As we celebrate 80 years of service, we honor

the legacy of those early volunteers who laid the groundwork for a brighter future for animals in Arlington.

Their vision and dedication has been carried forward by generations of volunteers like Ingrid, who continue to make a difference every day. ***The story of AWLA is a testament to the power of community and the profound impact that volunteers have on the lives of animals and their humans.***



*Ingrid and a fellow volunteer, 2000s*



*Volunteers at a Community Care Clinic*



**10,886** hours logged by AWLA volunteers

**15,943** miles driven by volunteer wildlife drivers

**1,867** hours spent cleaning kennels

**\$346,145** value of volunteer hours contributed\*

\*according to Independent Sector and the Do Good Institute.



IMPACT

## Meet Tess, Jeff, and *Lily Pickles*

YOUR GENEROSITY

HELPED LILY FIND HER

PERFECT FAMILY



Photo: Andrea Castanon/Bowie Shoots

# OPENING HEARTS & HOMES

## *AWLA's Adoption Transformation*

At the heart of AWLA is a commitment to compassion, community, and continuous improvement. Over the last 80 years, our adoption practices have evolved dramatically to reflect our mission of giving every animal the best possible chance at finding a loving home. From overcoming outdated breed restrictions to expanding life-saving medical programs, AWLA's journey tells a story of progress, innovation, and the belief that every animal deserves a second chance.

One of the most heartwarming examples of this evolution is Lily, a joyful dog who captured the hearts of her adopters, Tess and Jeff. Lily originally came to AWLA as a stray, suffering from severe dermatitis and allergies that required intensive medical care. Thanks to the dedication of our Animal Care and Veterinary Teams, and the support of our generous donors, we were able to provide Lily with the treatment she needed. Tess and Jeff shared, "Lily came into our lives when we needed her most. Her sheer joy is infectious, and adopting her has been one of the best decisions we've ever made. It's incredible to see how far she's come, and it's a reminder of what's possible when a shelter commits to treating each animal as an individual."

Lily's story is emblematic of a broader shift in our approach to adoptions. For decades, pitbull-type dogs faced severe stigma in Arlington and nationwide, leading AWLA to impose a 20-year ban on adopting out the breed. This policy ended in 2008, marking a significant change in our understanding of dog behavior and our commitment to giving all breeds an equal chance at finding a home.

Over the years, AWLA has adapted its policies to make adoptions more inclusive and supportive. In 2017, we established an open adoptions policy inspired by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), which removed barriers like home checks and vet references, making it easier for people to welcome a new pet into their lives. And in 2019, we removed breed labels from our dogs, recognizing that breed identification is often inaccurate and can lead to unfair biases against certain breeds. This change was a crucial step in promoting equality and understanding among adopters, focusing on a dog's behavior and personality rather than its perceived breed.

Our history also reflects a significant change in the number of animals we care for. In 1953, AWLA took in 13,269 animals—a number that has dramatically decreased to around 4,000 animals each year. This reduction is largely due to improved spay/neuter programs, better education on pet ownership, and the transformation of Arlington into a more suburban community. In 2024 alone, 1,854 animals found new





*Lily when she arrived at AWLA...*

homes through our shelter, a far cry from the 984 adoptions in 1958.

AWLA's foster program, which began in 2003 primarily for cats and kittens, expanded to include dogs in 2017. This program has been a game-changer. It allows us to place animals in temporary homes where they are less stressed, and opens space in the shelter to help more animals. An added benefit is a clearer understanding of each pet's personality and needs.

Beyond changes in adoption practices, AWLA's commitment to holistic and compassionate care has grown significantly. Since 2020, every staff member is Fear Free certified, equipping us with the tools to reduce stress for the animals, from intake to adoption. In 2022, our behavior team achieved CPDT certification, enhancing our ability to address each animal's unique behavioral needs and improve their chances of a successful adoption.

Financial support for adopters has also become a cornerstone of our mission. In 2016, a generous bequest allowed us to establish the Jean Fund, which provides post-adoption financial support for

animals with medical and behavioral needs. This fund ensures that adopters can focus on giving their new pets a loving home, knowing that help is available if their furry friend requires extra care.

Tess highlighted this commitment to compassion for both animals and their humans: "If you believe in dog justice, you should believe in people justice and social justice. Shelters aren't just about rescuing animals—they're about helping people too. Sometimes life circumstances force people to make the tough decision to give up their pet, and having a shelter that supports both the animals and their former families makes all the difference. It's about creating a community where everyone gets the compassion they need."

Our approach to medical care has evolved alongside our policies. We now adopt out cats with FeLV (feline leukemia virus) and have updated our policies for FIV+ cats to align with the latest standards, ensuring that these cats also have the opportunity to find loving homes.



*...and in a foster home during treatment*

It's thanks to the unwavering support of our community that we can provide these life-saving services and go above and beyond to meet the needs of every animal in our care.

Lily's transformation from a stray with severe medical issues to a joyful, beloved companion symbolizes how far AWLA has come. As Jeff noted, "Our experience with Lily just reinforced our belief in the power of adoption. It's not just about finding homes for animals; it's about creating a

community that supports both pets and people, building a better future for all."

As we celebrate 80 years of service, we look back with pride on how far we've come and forward with excitement about what lies ahead. ***Our journey has been one of learning, growth, and an unwavering belief that every animal, like Lily, deserves a chance to shine.***

# 2024 MILESTONES



1,854

animals adopted



728

animals transferred into our care



1,469

animals placed into foster care



1,190

surgeries performed on animals in our care



165

animals received behavior treatment



14

days was the average length of stay for animals in our care

## TAILS FROM THE PAST

1958

A white goat was rescued after being attacked by dogs. In her new home she slept in her own bed and starred in the Arlington Tel-A-Tale Players' production of 'Heidi'.

1962

A coatimundi was left tied to the shelter's front door. After investigating, we discovered its owner had kept it as a pet, and we placed it in a setting where it could receive appropriate care.

1964

AWLA rescued two African lions from a farm in Loudoun County and transported them to the National Zoo in DC.



*A photo of the coatimundi from AWLA's 1962 Annual Report*



**LOKI** - "This sweet and sassy boy had quickly won over our hearts from the moment we met him. Since being with us, he has grown into his name so much! He loves to sunbathe, chase birds and his brother Simon around and cause complete chaos. He is truly our child. He loves to watch us play video games and chase after things on the screen and watch football with Dad."



**COOKIE** - "She is now happy and thriving in her new home. It's been wonderful watching her bloom into her personality. She is playful, energetic, smart and happy anywhere her people are. In just a few days of having her she was already a part of the family. She is a true family dog. We are so grateful she came into our lives. She also loves playing with her feline cousins. We love our Cookie Bear!"



**MAX** - "Max quickly proved himself to be a smart little guy and excelled at litterbox training. He loves attention, especially his evening head massages, and has learned that guests almost always mean extra treats. When not napping or laying around listening to TV, Max can often be found running around the house or bouncing on the furniture."



**TITO** - "He has brought immense joy and love to my life. We've since moved to Boston, where he's enjoying more space and a ton of kisses (and joining the Celtics fan base). Adopting Tito has truly changed my life for the better and inspired me to start a career in animal care. I now work for the MSPCA in Boston!"



**ROCKET** - "Rocket runs the house, even though he's amongst four cats. He gets in bed with us and demands pets and treats. He is the softest little guy you'll ever pet and we can't imagine a bunny-free life now that we have him. It took a while for him to grow into his full self, but we learned he thrives as an only bunny and he's so happy in our current living situation. We love you Rocket Bun!"



**BOOMER** - "When the first dog I met was Boomer, it was simply impossible to say no. We knew he was a keeper! Boomer's greatest joys are lounging around the house while waiting for something to bark at, hiking, and rolling in the dirt (I sometimes wish rolling in the dirt wasn't a favorite, but what can you do?)."



**LILLIAN** - "We couldn't be more obsessed. She's been the sweetest addition to our home and she's getting more comfortable every day. We've even seen her chase after toys, which is something we didn't expect to see from a 15 year old. Safe to say, we're completely in love and obsessed and feel like she's the most perfect cat ever."



**GRACIE** - We "foster failed" on our little blind Gracie. She lets us know when it is bedtime and has to sleep tucked up against us. Best little heater for cold nights. We love this little spoiled girl. When we have foster kittens, she is a wonderful playmate to them."



# A COMMITMENT TO COMPASSION

## *The Evolution of AWLA's Animal Control Department*

Since its inception, AWLA's Animal Control department has undergone significant transformations. From its humble beginnings with just a donated ambulance and a single humane investigator, AWLA's Animal Control team has grown into a robust, community-based program with six officers, multiple awards, and a long-standing reputation for compassion and care.

In 1983, Animal Control officially became part of AWLA, transferring from the County police department. This shift marked an important change: animal welfare officers and shelter staff could now collaborate seamlessly, ensuring that every animal received the same high standard of care. Today, our officers handle a diverse array of cases—from injured wildlife and off-leash dogs, to lost pets and cases of cruelty and neglect. But their focus is always on helping the community rather than policing it. "We want to provide resources and help people keep their pets. That's always been the goal," says Anna, the Animal Control Programs Coordinator, who has worked at AWLA since 1997.

One of the most notable changes over the years has been Animal Control's shift toward community-based work. Instead of simply enforcing laws, AWLA's officers actively build relationships with pet owners and wildlife caregivers. "Our goal is to keep pets and people together. Over the years, we've gained more access to resources that help us do that, like our Pet Pantry, the TNR program, and fostering options," Anna adds. "We aren't here to just issue tickets - we want to help people navigate the challenges of pet ownership." From installing air conditioning units to fixing fences, the officers often step in to provide assistance that extends far beyond animal welfare. "We're here to support the whole community," says Spencer, Sergeant of Animal Control. "If that means buying groceries or fixing a gate to help a pet stay safe, we'll do it."

Every officer keeps Community Care Kits in their vehicles, which contain essentials like toothbrushes, socks, snacks, and more. These kits are available to any local residents who may need a little extra help during interactions with Animal Control. "We don't just want to resolve the situation at hand, we want to help people in a meaningful way," Anna adds. "Sometimes that means stepping outside of traditional animal control duties to make a real difference."

IMPACT

Meet *Anna*

and AWLA alum Drummer



YOUR SUPPORT RESCUES

ANIMALS THROUGHOUT

THE COUNTY

Photo: Chelsea Jones





Chief Smith with a juvenile raccoon, 90s.



Chief Smith & a staff member with a python, 80s.



Anna during her early days as an officer.



Chief Toussaint with lost dog, Autumn



Officer Lennon on duty



Officer Votroubek & a fox kit.

The Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program is a standout example of AWLA's commitment to humane solutions for the community. Before TNR, AWLA was inundated with unsocial, free-roaming cats that often ended up euthanized due to a lack of options. Today, the program, which provides free spay/neuter services, has drastically reduced the number of community cats in Arlington. "We've seen an 82% decrease in euthanasia since we started TNR in 2011," Anna explains. "It's a humane, effective solution to managing the community cat population. Plus, we've built trust with caregivers who now reach out to us for help and advice. What started with suspicion has turned into real partnerships."

One success story involves a colony that once numbered over 60 cats but has since dwindled to just six well-cared-for cats, thanks to TNR and the community's involvement. "These cats are loved by the neighborhood. It's heartwarming to see people come together to care for them," says Anna.

AWLA's commitment to wildlife has also grown significantly. In 2021, the shelter established the Wildlife Resource Center, which provides wildlife education, outreach, and emergency field response for wildlife, as well as ensuring that our network of skilled rehabilitation partners have the life-saving supplies they need, subsidies for the skilled training they require, and a corps of available drivers to transport wildlife where it needs to go. This ensures that rehabbers remain available, committed, and have what they need to fulfill their vital role in wildlife conservation.

"I remember when I first started, there wasn't the same level of urgency with wildlife cases," Anna recalls, "but now, it's one of the most fulfilling parts of our work. We have two licensed wildlife rehabilitators on staff, and the whole team is passionate about ensuring that wild animals get the care they need." Whether it's hydrating a bat or responding to bear sightings, the Animal

Control team's dedication to wildlife has made Arlington a model for humane urban wildlife management.

In addition to daily responsibilities, AWLA's Animal Control team plays a crucial role in emergency response through the County Animal Response Team (CART). Established after Hurricane Katrina with funds from FEMA, this program ensures that in the event of a natural disaster or emergency, residents won't have to leave their pets behind. CART can quickly set up temporary pet-friendly shelters at designated locations, ensuring that families and their animals are safe and cared for during crises. "We know how much people love their pets, and during emergencies, it's important that they don't have to choose between their safety and their animals," Anna explains. "CART allows us to be prepared for anything."

In recent years, AWLA's Animal Control team has earned recognition for their compassion, dedication, and service to the community. In 2020, the team was awarded The Outstanding Agency Award for exceptional performance within their department and community. Animal Control Chief Jennifer Toussaint has also been recognized for her leadership. In 2017, she was named the Dr. Kent Roberts Animal Control Officer of the Year at the Virginia Animal Control Association (VACA) conference; in 2022, she received the Outstanding Individual Service Award for her work during the COVID-19 pandemic; and in 2023, she was named National Animal Care and Control Leader of the Year. These awards underscore AWLA's progressive, humane approach to animal welfare and its impact on both animals and people.

As AWLA's Animal Control team continues to evolve, their mission remains clear: to support both animals and people in the Arlington community. Whether through TNR, wildlife rescue, or compassionate care in difficult situations, AWLA is committed to building trust and creating solutions that benefit everyone

involved.

"We show up. We care," says Spencer, Sergeant of Animal Control. **"Our goal is always to find a resolution that works for both the animals and the people. That's what sets us apart."**



**3,966**  
individual cases  
responded to by officers

**2,003**

of those cases were  
wildlife-related



**28**  
wildlife center and rehab  
partners

**57%**

of lost pets were  
reunited with owners  
without shelter intake



**167**  
neglect/cruelty cases



A woman with dark hair, glasses, and multiple tattoos is sitting on a paved path in a park. She is wearing a white tank top and dark pants. Two dogs are sitting in front of her: a black and white dog on the left and a brown and white dog on the right. The background shows trees and a path.

IMPACT

Meet Emerita,  
*Maya & Hachi*

# A COMMUNITY OF CARE

*Helping Pets and People  
Thrive Together*

In 2019, AWLA made a groundbreaking change to its mission, shifting from a purely animal-focused approach to one that recognizes the deep connection between animals and people. Our new mission—"to improve the lives of animals and people by providing resources, care, and protection"—embraces the OneHealth model, which acknowledges that the health and well-being of animals is intrinsically linked to that of humans.

This shift wasn't just about adding people into the equation; it was about recognizing that pets are family members, and their well-being directly affects the emotional and mental health of their owners. It's a reality we face every day: life can bring unexpected challenges, and we believe that shouldn't mean losing the opportunity to have the love and companionship of a pet. As our community services expand, we're meeting people where they are—ensuring they have the resources needed to keep their pets, even when financial or other circumstances arise.

Emerita, a pet owner who has received support from AWLA, shared how much these services mean to her. "I first found Maya on Facebook—someone was giving her away for free because they were moving and couldn't take her. From the moment I saw her, I knew she was mine. She was scared at first, always hiding under the bed, but with time and the help of the shelter, she's grown so much. Now, she's more confident and barks alongside Hachi. Hachi came to me in a different way—he was abandoned, and I couldn't leave him behind. He was just a baby when I took him in, and now he's grown into such a fun, energetic part of my life."

Emerita's story highlights the support that pets provide, especially during difficult times. "Having both of them has been a huge emotional support for me. Maya is calm and a great listener, while Hachi is always full of energy and keeps me on my toes. I used to feel really empty after my previous dogs passed away, but now, with Maya and Hachi, I feel whole again. Their presence helps me through difficult times, especially when I struggle with depression and anxiety. When I'm feeling low, they are there to comfort me, and they've truly brought happiness back into my life."

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS  
KEEP EMERITA AND HER  
FAMILY TOGETHER

Photo: Erinn Shirley



This philosophy of meeting pet owners where they are and supporting them in their journey is not new to AWLA. While the 2019 mission change formalized our commitment to people, it was built on a long history of community support. In fact, as far back as 1962, AWLA was incorporating “Humane Education” into its programs, and by 1964, the League was hosting lectures on animal welfare throughout the Washington area.

Over the decades, AWLA has continually expanded its services to meet the evolving needs of both pets and their owners. Our first low-cost spay/neuter program began in 1978, providing critical support to prevent overpopulation. Three years later, a Pet Assisted Therapy program was established, with volunteers bringing shelter pets to nursing homes and hospitals to provide comfort to those in need. Youth outreach began with the creation of Kids & Critters Camp in 1982, and today, we host more than 1,500 children each year through tours, camps, clubs, and more.

A particularly powerful chapter in AWLA's history began in the early 1990s, when the shelter partnered with the Northern Virginia AIDS Project to help patients care for their pets during hospitalizations. Many of these individuals were facing terminal illness, and AWLA's support ensured that pets were cared for, allowing people to maintain that special bond for as long as possible. This partnership reflected our deep belief that pets are family, and they should remain with their loved ones whenever possible.

As Emerita expressed, AWLA's services are often a lifeline for pet owners. "The services from the shelter—everything from vaccinations to spay and neuter [vouchers], and even just being there to answer my questions—have been so helpful. Without that support, it would have been much harder for me to care for [Maya and Hachi]. Financially, it's been a struggle, but knowing the shelter is there has been a huge relief. These two are my babies; they're my everything, and I always feel supported by the shelter to give them the care they deserve."

Building on earlier initiatives, AWLA established the Pet Partnership Program (now the Housing Emergency Lifeline for Pets or HELP program) in 1993, which helps pet owners who are temporarily unable to care for their pets. In FY24, 65% of pets that came into our care through the HELP program were reunited with their families. Programs like this—and our Pet Pantry—are designed to ensure that pet owners don't have to make the impossible choice between caring for themselves or their pets. This fiscal year, our pantry services provided 183,120 meals to pets across Arlington County, ensuring they remained in loving homes rather than surrendered due to financial hardship. The Ross-Roberts Veterinary Assistance Fund, established in 2002, has also shifted to focus on grants rather than loans, giving pet owners the support they need without the burden of repayment. In FY24 alone, \$37,064

was granted to 71 pets in need of critical medical care.

While AWLA's community programs have grown and evolved, our philosophy remains the same: pets and people are family, and we're here to support both. "Pets are a huge part of people's lives, especially when they're struggling," Emerita reflected. "I don't know what I would do without Maya and Hachi. They've made me feel less alone and given me a reason to smile every day."

AWLA knows that pet ownership transcends economic and cultural boundaries. **No matter where you live in the county, we are committed to providing care, resources, and protection so that pets and the people who love them may stay together, and thrive.**

183,120

meals provided to pets in the community

1,348

vaccines given at low-cost or free clinics

65%

of pets in the HELP program were reunited with their owners

599

low-cost or free spay/neuter vouchers distributed to pet owners

\$37,064

granted to pet owners through the Ross-Roberts Veterinary Assistance Fund

1,569

children reached through Youth Program activities

AWLA's Pet Resource Center is proud to partner with:

- Arlington Food Assistance Center
  - AHC Resident Services Inc
  - Capital Area Food Bank
  - Arlington Co Dept of Human Services
  - Arlington Co Dept of Public Health
- Carlin Springs Elementary School
  - Our Lady Queen of Peace Church
  - Clarendon Animal Care
  - Friendship Animal Hospital
  - Arlington Animal Hospital
  - Ballston Animal Hospital
  - Pender Fairfax
- Animal Wellness Center
  - Caring Hands Animal Hospital Clarendon & Alexandria
  - VCA Southpaws
  - Shirlington Animal Hospital



A Pet-Assisted Therapy client with Wilson, AWLA's mascot



A client attending a Low-Cost Clinic with her puppy

Messages from our clients:

- “As a military family, this helps a lot.”

“Very thankful for your services. Puts my mind at ease about the health of my cat. Bless you.”

“When y'all came out this past summer, it meant the world and everything to me and my Tiggah.”

“I love the services. It is hard for me to get out of the house to a vet, so this truly helped me.”

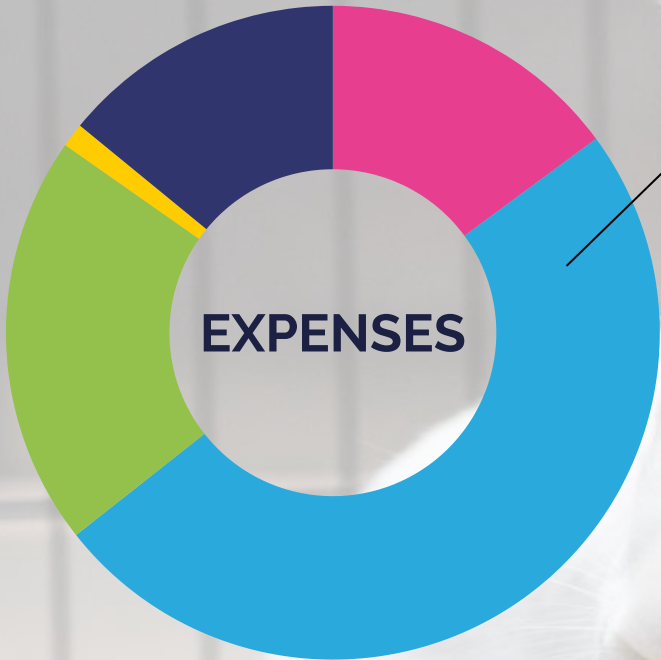
“I was able to make sure my cat remains healthy.”



# FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

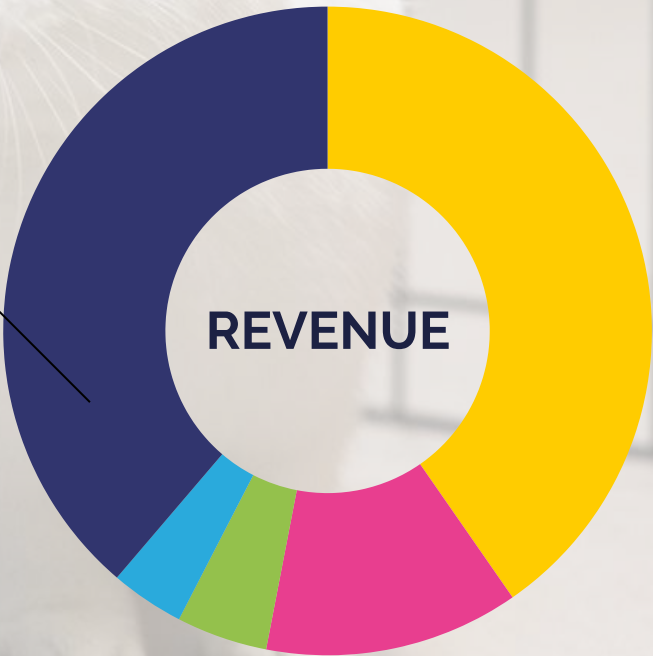
FY24 Revenue: \$3,842,601\*  
FY24 Operating Expenses: \$4,640,664\*

AWLA IS AN INVESTMENT  
IN YOUR COMMUNITY



49.5%	SHELTER OPERATIONS	(\$2,296,402)
20.4%	COMMUNITY OUTREACH /PROGRAMS	(\$944,454)
14.9%	ANIMAL CONTROL	(\$691,197)
14%	FUNDRAISING	(\$653,349)
1.2%	MANAGEMENT/ GENERAL	(\$55,262)

40.3%	ARLINGTON COUNTY CONTRACT	(\$1,550,113)
38.7%	CONTRIBUTIONS	(\$1,488,929)
12.7%	PROGRAMS	(\$487,850)
4.5%	EVENTS	(\$174,398)
3.6%	WORKPLACE GIVING/ CFC	(\$141,310)



# HOW YOU CAN HELP

Monthly Giving

Legacy Giving

Become A Sponsor

Workplace Giving & CFC

Employer Matching Gifts

Gifts of Stock

Animal Friendly License Plate

Donate Your Car

## TWO LIFE-SAVING GRANTS RECEIVED IN FY24

In 2024, **Maddie's Fund** awarded AWLA a **\$10,000 grant for general operating expenses**. This grant enabled the shelter to meet unanticipated needs as they arose, like rushing a dog in anaphylactic shock to an emergency vet, seeking specialized care for small companion animals, or buying more food and supplies to care for the big dogs that are lingering in shelters across the country, including at AWLA.

In 2024 AWLA was also fortunate to be awarded a **RACE to Rebuilding Trust and Community grant from Arlington County in the amount of \$185,000**. With this grant AWLA is able to continue to operate its Pet Resource Center and Community Care Clinics, and explore other ways to foster awareness and provide the community with direct access to AWLA's pet support programs and services.

\*These are unaudited numbers. The full audited financial report and list of donors can be found at [www.awla.org/about/financials/](http://www.awla.org/about/financials/) after December 31st, 2024. A copy of the latest financial report and registration filed by the Animal Welfare League of Arlington may be obtained by contacting the State Division of Consumer Affairs, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23219. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State.







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Thank You To Our Sponsors:



**Clarendon  
Animal Care**  
*Gentle, Caring, Awesome*



**URGENT ANIMAL CARE  
OF ARLINGTON**



The Barrett-Feeley Fund



## AWLA FY24 Impact Report

**Editor/Designer:** Chelsea Jones

**President/CEO:** Sam Wolbert

**Board Officers:** Tim Denning (Board Chair), Alyssa Williamson (Vice Chair), Nikki Hoffpaur (Secretary), Olga Pamfilova (Treasurer), Shannon Bailey, Brian Drzewiecki, Dr Kayleen Gloor, DVM, MS, Kristanne Littlefield, Candice Lopez, Rich McKinless, Jim Wilmot, Trevor Woodbury

## AWLA Hours

### Animal Services & Adoption:

Mon, Wed, Thur, Fri: Noon - 7pm Tues: CLOSED, Sat & Sun: Noon - 4pm  
Animal Control officers are available for animal-related emergencies 24/7 at  
(703) 931-9241.