



2021 Annual Report

Friends of Strays
Animal Shelter

Table of Contents

Overview/Letter from CEO.....3

Adoptions.....4

Financial Report5

Grants6

Volunteer Report7

Pinellas Cats Alive!8

Foster Report9

Special Funds10-11

Staff and Board of Directors 12



Overview

Friends of Strays is a non-profit organization founded in 1978 in St. Petersburg, FL, dedicated to the care and adoption of homeless pets.

Mission

Our mission is to inspire compassion for all animals, provide shelter and humane care to homeless animals, and promote adoptions and responsible pet guardianship in our community.

Vision

Through our efforts, there will be a safe and loving home for every adoptable animal and humane treatment for all.

Letter from CEO

Dear Friends,

As you peruse our 2021 report I'm sure you will be amazed at the progress we have made in the last five years. Our adoption numbers have more than tripled, we expanded our medical suite to accommodate more surgeries, we have new programs and new funds that have been created to support more extensive medical needs of dogs and cats in our care, and we have grown to be a true resource for our community in so many ways.

One of our brand new programs is Pinellas Cats Alive!, a return to field program that focuses on saving the lives of feral and community cats in Pinellas County. You'll read more about this on page 8, but in our first year, we saved the lives of almost 1200 cats who would otherwise have been euthanized at our county shelter.

You may have heard some talk around town about our coming expansion. We've been keeping it under wraps for a bit, but we are just about to start renovations on a new cat



adoption center. The new Cat Box will be open later this year and we have big plans for a new dog adoption center down the road. I can't wait to share more with you as we move forward with our expansion.

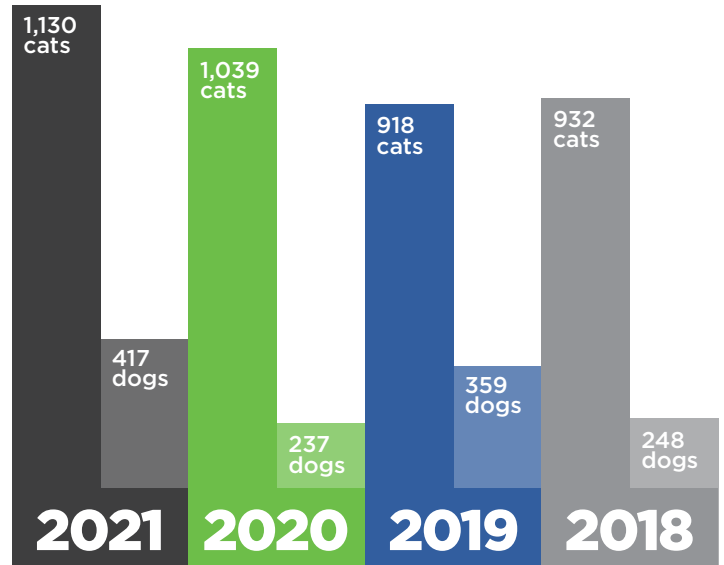
None of this would be possible without the support of friends like you. As a member of the Friends of Strays Furever Family, you have helped us reach new heights in all areas of our organization. With all of the growth in programming and facility expansion, the need for the support of our community is greater than ever. I hope that you will continue to join us in supporting the lifesaving work that we do at Friends of Strays each and every day. We are grateful for all you do to help us fulfill our mission and look forward to sharing more of our story with you as we continue to grow.

All my best,
Dara Eckart, CEO

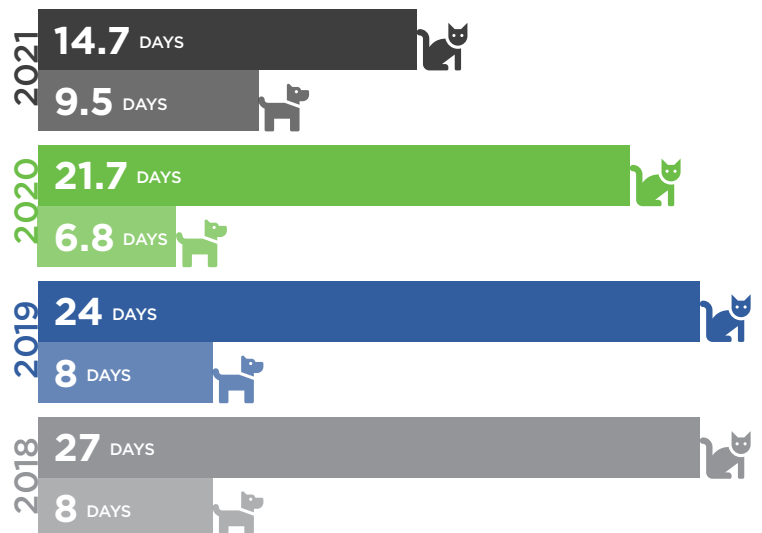


2021 Adoptions

1,547



Average Length of Stay 2018-2021



Financial Report

Revenue

Adoptions	156,284.76
Donations	1,946,123.19
Events	72,114.08
Grants	252,309.56
Medical	47,066.98
Retail	11,173.88
Lease	26,950.35
Total	\$2,512,022.80

Expenses

General	145,831.53
Events	3,930.78
Fundraising	87,152.22
Insurance	28,329.50
Medical	234,443.08
Payroll	867,322.97
Retail	7,163.11
Shelter	101,449.26
Staff Development	9350.19
Utilities	37,189.69
Total	\$1,522,162.33



Grants

Friends of Strays is an independent local charity, which does not receive funding from any government entity or national parent company. Any grants we receive are to help fund or start a specific program or initiative. We are grateful to all the grant partners who helped us achieve our mission.

In 2021, Friends of Strays received grant funding in excess of \$250,000 from the following organizations:



Best Friends – to fund the implementation of our new Pinellas Cats Alive! program.



The Milkey Family Foundation – to fund our foster and volunteer management positions.



Petco Love Foundation – to fund free vaccine clinics to the public and to help fund equipment for our medical expansion.



Bissell Pet Foundation – to offset costs for rescue group spay/neuter surgeries and provide pet food to struggling families with pets.

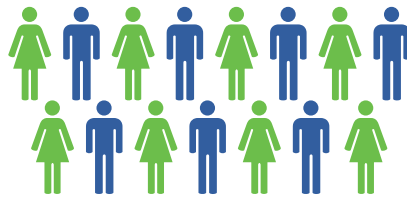


Community Foundation of Tampa Bay – to provide spay/neuter surgeries for free-roaming/community cats.



Petfinder – to purchase supplies for our Doggie Day Out program.

Volunteer Report



Friends of Strays benefited from the services of **216 volunteers** in 2021, tallying a total of **5,593.35 hours** of work. That's **233 days** worth of round-the-clock work.

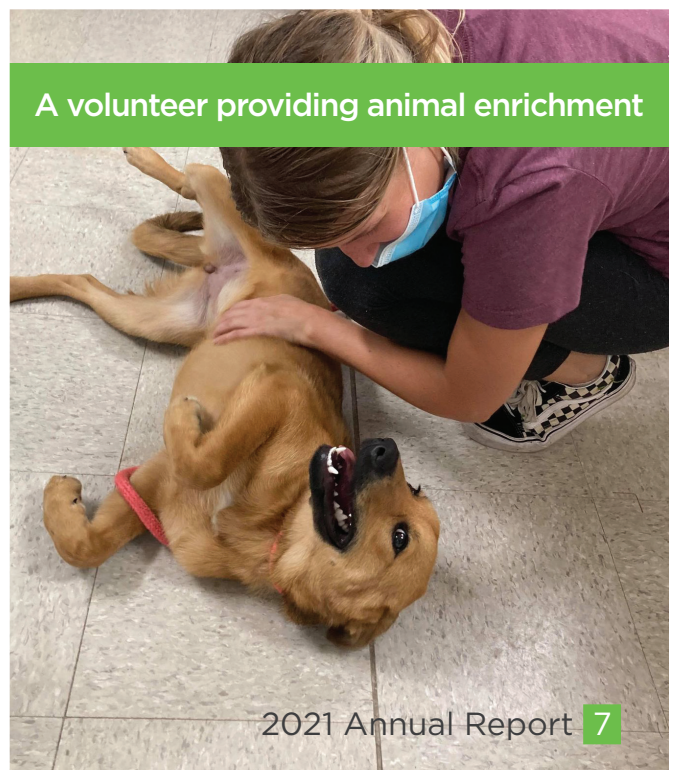
Volunteer Appreciation Lunch



Volunteers from Trident Transportation



Volunteers from Berkshire Hathaway Home Services

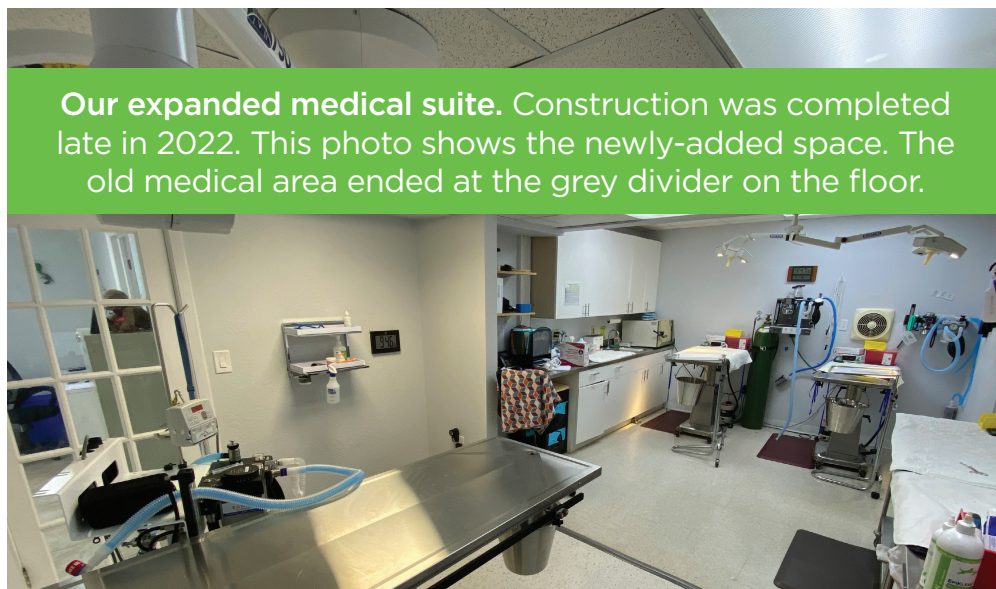


A volunteer providing animal enrichment

Medical Expansion & Pinellas Cats Alive!



Program Manager Claire Wray



We experienced huge success in 2021 with Pinellas Cats Alive!, a new Return to Field (RTF) program providing spay/neuter services to community cats to humanely control cat populations in the years to come.

Funded by a \$250,000 grant from Best Friends Animal Society, this program will produce lasting benefits in Pinellas County by reducing the free-roaming cat population throughout the county. This program also provided a major boost to Pinellas County Animal Services (PCAS), giving them a new resource to deal with community cats that were previously being euthanized there. By transferring the cats to us for RTF services, PCAS made huge improvements to their live outcome percentage and saved taxpayer money that was then diverted to other programs in need within the county shelter.

In 2021, we welcomed 1,188 community cats through our doors – cats that were trapped by community members just like you. Our medical team provided these cats with spay/neuter surgery, vaccinations, de-worming, and flea and tick prevention. A total of 1,094 cats were returned to the outdoor homes where they were initially found. These cats were healthy, indicating that they had a stable food source and were thriving.

Fortunately, 43 cats proved to be friendly enough that they were kept at the shelter and adopted

to loving families. We were also thrilled to reunite nine previously owned, lost cats with their families thanks to their microchip information. In all, 1,179 cats received positive, live outcomes for a save rate of 99.3%, an astonishing figure considering the condition of the average community cat and the variety of medical complications our team addressed.

In fact, the Pinellas Cats Alive! program was so successful, we knocked down a wall and expanded our medical suite to increase our capacity to help and keep up with demand. With the addition of a third surgical table, we can now be more efficient and increase the number of lives we save going forward. The expanded medical suite helped us reach a huge milestone in December as our medical team completed its 4,000th surgery of the year, a new Friends of Strays record.

Consider that the average cat will produce 12 kittens per year and can breed for 12-15 years - how many of those 1,188 cats would go on to reproduce and how many of their offspring would go on to reproduce? It's amazing how many kittens we've already humanely prevented from overwhelming Friends of Strays and other local shelters in the years to come.

Foster Report

488 animals spent at least one night in foster care in '21



401 cats



87 dogs



A total of 115 homes fostered an animal in 2021.



Foster Manager Kelly Kraemer



Foster programs are crucial for lifesaving and our brand-new foster program funded by the Milky Family Foundation had a successful year in 2021. Nearly 500 animals spent at least one night in foster care last year.

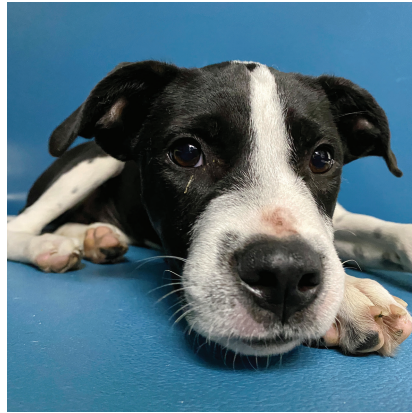
In the first year of the program, new Foster manuals have been developed as a resource for our foster families. These manuals provide foster caregivers with an understanding of program basics, what to expect, their roles and their responsibilities, and other pertinent information. We also run a private Facebook group for our foster parents that enables Friends of Strays to learn more about animals in our care. It provides our community of foster parents with a support group so they can share stories and ideas with each other and helps us better communicate to potential adopters about the animals' personalities, special needs, etc. so that we can help find them the right family to adopt.

We have developed a policy for medical care that makes it easy and efficient for foster families to get veterinary care for their foster pet. One of the largest assets to our shelter and foster program is having medical staff available seven days a week. This gives fosters the comfort of having established medical resources available if needed, especially for routine vaccinations and spay and neuter surgeries.

Our foster families are provided with all of the supplies they will need to ensure successful engagements. Although many foster parents are willing to supply their own resources, having the ability to provide families with the necessary items lowers the barrier to entry for potential foster families and allows us to welcome in more people who want to help support an animal in need.

Foster recruitment appears to be one of the more difficult challenges to face with implementing a foster program. Studies show that engagement is one of the best tools for any shelter to retain fosters. Having an evolving and revolving foster roster is a great key for success. "Foster fails" (when the foster family adopts the animal they're fostering) are common but our foster program needs to continue adding to the foster list when families become unavailable. Our goal in 2022 is to expand our recruitment efforts so that we can have a strong slate of fosters available to help meet the needs of our animals.

Special Funds



No Dog Left Behind

Two years ago, Barbara Stakk and her partner Robert Palsha chose Friends of Strays to start the No Dog Left Behind Fund. Barbara wanted to help dogs who needed a second chance, particularly those with special needs such as behavioral modification. So many dogs are surrendered to shelters because of their behavior and yet, the reason for many behavioral problems is a lack of training or neglect.

At many shelters, dogs with behavioral issues, even minor ones, can end up slated for euthanasia. Dogs who already suffer from these issues tend to deteriorate very quickly in a shelter environment, thus reducing their chances of getting adopted. Eventually, they run out of time. Thanks to our No Dog Left Behind (NDLB) Fund, that doesn't have to be the case.

In 2021, the Fund helped save the lives of 32 dogs that may have been at risk for euthanasia at other shelters. Friends of Strays is not the biggest shelter in Pinellas County; however, when we can save that one animal who needs a second chance, we are here for them. We'll pull a dog from a local shelter that is slated for euthanasia if we believe we can save him or her. Artie, pictured above on the right, is just one of the dogs the Fund helped save.

Through the NDLB Fund, we brought in a professional dog behaviorist to help us with training and we partnered with an organization called "Dogs Playing for Life" that works with dogs who need dedicated attention; we also purchased toys, training tools and larger kennels to help dogs have more space and stay engaged while at the shelter. We are so grateful to Barbara for establishing this much needed fund, and we honor the memory of her life partner Robert Palsha who passed away in December of 2021.

Prima and Ziti Special Care Fund

Two years ago, Joan Hutchinson and Joe Beaulieu started the Prima and Ziti Special Care Fund to provide veterinary care for animals with more than average needs. Since then, the fund has helped to save the lives of more than 50 animals who might otherwise not be with us today.

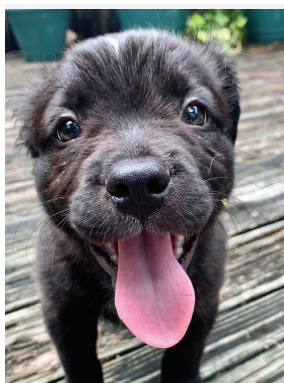
Shelters and rescues throughout Pinellas County are not always equipped or don't have the resources to go above and beyond providing for the basic needs of a sick or injured shelter animal. We are fortunate to have an in-house veterinarian in Dr. Emerson, but even she can't always properly diagnose or resolve an animal's condition without the help of veterinary specialists or advanced diagnostic equipment.

Baby was one of the fortunate beneficiaries of the Fund in 2021. She was brought to Friends of Strays by a Good Samaritan. While her mother was able to nurse her kittens, Baby, the smallest of the litter, was not eating and was starting to lose weight at alarming speed.

Baby became lethargic, had bad breath and developed a fever. Upon inspecting her mouth, Dr. Emerson found that Baby's jaw was swollen and her teeth had severe periodontal disease, which is uncommon in young kittens.

Because of her tender age, Dr. Emerson sent Baby to a dental specialist where she had major surgery to remove all of her baby and pre-molar teeth. It took many weeks of care and observation at the shelter for Baby to recuperate and it was touch and go with whether she would survive. Thanks to the Prima and Ziti Fund, Baby and so many other animals are now thriving at home with their new families.





Staff

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Dara Eckart

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Medical Director
Katie Emerson

Director of Advancement
Jaye Toler

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Rylee Mercer

Office Manager
Sandra Oliva

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Claire Wray

Foster Manager
Kelly Kraemer

Communications Manager
Mike Manganello

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Veterinary Staff
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Yesenia Mendez
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