

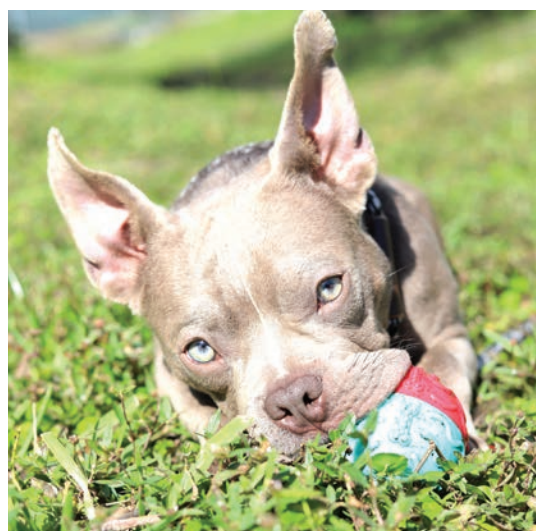
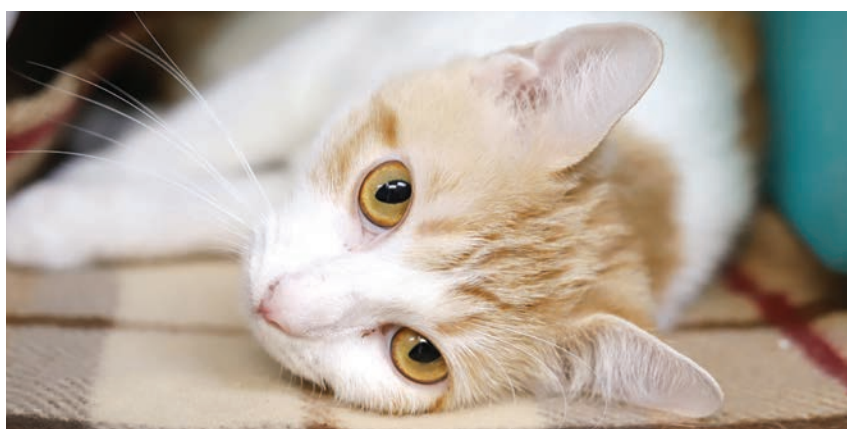


FRIENDS OF STRAYS ANIMAL SHELTER

2023 Annual Report

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2023 BY THE NUMBERS



1,832
ADOPTIONS
1,336 CATS
496 DOGS

2,962
COMMUNITY CATS
VACCINATED AND ALTERED
1,148 MEOW NOW
1,814 PINELLAS CATS ALIVE



7,326
VOLUNTEER
HOURS
233 VOLUNTEERS

947
PETS SPENT TIME IN
FOSTER HOMES
218 FOSTERS



26 TRANSFER
PARTNERS



99% LIVE
RELEASE RATE



9,307 LBS
PET FOOD PANTRY
DONATIONS



311 KITTENS HELPED
THROUGH KITTEN
HEROES

A Message from the CEO

After years of operating out of homes, picking up stray cats in the community, and getting them ready for adoption, Jean Bomonti and her friends established Friends of Strays 45 years ago as the first no kill animal shelter in St. Petersburg. They couldn't have known at the time, the impact that this organization would have on our beloved community.

From our humble beginnings, Friends of Strays has grown over the last 45 years into a powerhouse in animal welfare in St. Petersburg and Pinellas County. In the last 7 years since I've been at the helm of this wonderful organization, we almost quadrupled adoptions – from 500 adoptions the first year I started to almost 1900 in 2023. We have added new programs help community cats in our county including a return to home program for community members to trap neighborhood cats and bring them to our facility for spay/neuter and vaccinations, and MEOW Now, a well-established TNVR program that we took on in October 2022 that provides support for colonies of cats in our community. Both programs help humanely reduce community cat populations while helping these cats live healthier lives.

We have grown our foster program which helps hundreds of animals a year who need a little extra time before they're ready for adoption. We have added an intake manager to help us manage partnerships with low-resource shelters throughout the state of Florida when they are at or over capacity so we can help curb the number of animals euthanized throughout the state.

Our biggest news is that we are expanding our facilities. This year, our new cat adoption center, the Cat Box, will be open to the public. This is a state-of-the-art cat shelter with 5 rooms for adult cats, 2 kitten rooms,

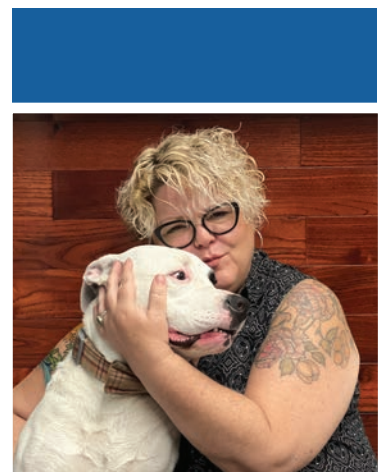
and 2 almost home rooms that provide a safe and comfortable environment for cats that need a little extra attention. The Cat Box also has a community events room that can host small events like volunteer orientation, foster training, and birthday parties for kids. Our administrative team has just moved into the new building and we're all excited for the day when adoptable cats join us later this year.

We are also working on a new dog adoption center, named the Milky Bone Dog House thanks to the support of Jeanne and Kevin Milky and the Milky Family Foundation. This building will more than triple the space that we currently have for dogs and will include private rooms for large dogs, or co-housed dogs, an indoor meet and greet room, and three beautiful dog yards to provide much needed outside space for dogs to play and get lots of exercise while they're here with us.

I am so grateful to Jean Bomonti and her friends who put their heart and soul into building Friends of Strays 45 years ago. Their tireless work and commitment to the no kill movement put us on a path to become a major force for good in animal welfare in St. Petersburg and Pinellas County.

Stick with us as we continue to grow. We can't continue our lifesaving work without the support of good friends like you.

Sincerely,
Dara Eckart,
CEO



Dara Eckart
CEO



FRIENDS OF STRAYS ANIMAL SHELTER



1978 Established as a grassroots volunteer-based rescue group for stray cats in St. Petersburg.



1989 Brick and mortar shelter opens, making it the first no-kill shelter in St. Petersburg.



1995 Volunteer led thrift store opens on US 19 and Gandy Blvd.



2019 Veterinarian is hired full time and low-cost medical services are extended to local rescues.



2018 Free vaccine clinics and a pet food pantry are opened to the public.



2000 Shelter purchases kennels and begins accepting and adopting dogs.



2020 Foster program expansion and a full time manager position is funded by the Milky Family Foundation.



2021 Pinellas Cats Alive! program launches from a partnership with Pinellas County to divert outdoor cats from euthanasia.



2022 MEOW Now! joins Friends of Strays as a TNVR program working with colony caregivers.

2026 (projected)
The Schwartz Family Adoption Campus, which includes the Milky Bone Dog House, Cat Box, and medical facility, will prepare us for the next 45 years!



2023 Construction begins on the new Cat Box, launching our expansion!



Financial Report



Revenue by Source

Source	Total
Adoptions	\$166,384
Donations (Cash/Card)	\$1,127,135
Events	\$137,873
Grants	\$171,843
Medical	\$29,847
Retail	\$10,715
Lease	\$32,588
Total	\$1,676,385



Expenses by Source

Source	Total
General Operating	\$142,959
Events	\$77,539
Fundraising	\$10,206
Insurance	\$83,086
Medical	\$268,945
Payroll	\$1,347,722
Retail	\$10,135
Shelter	\$171,173
Utilities	\$47,119
Renovation Professional Services	\$25,339
Total	\$2,184,223

The 2023 budget year was supplemented by reserves.

Fundraising Highlights

Friends of Strays is an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, reliant on the generosity of our community of animal lovers and supporters of our mission. We are incredibly grateful to each and every supporter who gives their time, talent, and treasure to help us care for homeless dogs and cats in our community.

Grants

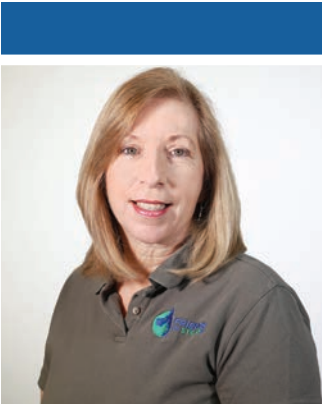


We are so grateful to have received the following support from Petco Love in 2023:

Vaccine Campaign Grant – To fund vaccines for community cats. In addition, Petco Love donates \$3 along with every vaccine.

Animal Welfare Organization Grant – In support of Friends of Strays Furever Family Capital Expansion project, funding the construction of our new, dedicated cat shelter.

Fundraising



Karen Van De Putte
Development
Director



Pet Guardianship Program: Word is spreading and cat and dog owners are enrolling their pets in this wonderful program, providing them with peace of mind that, should they become permanently unable to care for their pets through death or disability, their beloved pets will be cared for in loving homes by Friends of Strays foster volunteers for as long as it takes until a permanent home is found for them.



2023 Wags & Whiskers Gala: On Oct. 7, we partied 80's style at The Coliseum in downtown St Pete, raising vital funding to support Friends of Strays' programs. Retro décor, retro candy, and even a vote for Prom Royalty!



Erin McGrath
Development
Manager



Giving Tuesday 2023: was a wonderful success! With the help of a Matching Gift Challenge and the generosity of our community, we raised over \$25,000 for our 'No Dog Left Behind' Fund, which provides funding for emergency medical needs for dogs, as well as behavioral training and support, to help every dog in our care find a permanent, loving home.

Intake & Adoptions Program



Krista Loveless
Intake &
Adoptions
Manager

Adoption Counselors



Olivia Gasparoni



Juniper Irizarry



Kim Newsome

1,832

ADOPTIONS

2023: 1,832

2022: 1,713

2021: 1,547

2020: 1,276

Adoptions



2023: 1,336 cats



2023: 496 dogs

Average length of stay



2023: 24 days



2023: 12.8 days

How did these pets come into our care?

Shelter Transfers

931 - cats

394 - dogs



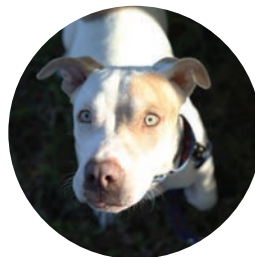
Owner Surrenders

215 - cats

33 - dogs



Why are adoption numbers and intake numbers different? While pets come into the shelter through shelter transfers or owner surrenders, they can leave through a few different avenues besides adoption, such as a rescue transfer. Also, there is overlap of pets not adopted in 2022 as well as pets not adopted by the end of 2023.



By partnering with low-resourced and overcapacity shelters throughout Florida, we are able to save animals who may have otherwise been euthanized. In 2023, we worked with 26 different organizations, totaling 1,325 cats and dogs who were at risk at their original shelter.



Lorelai, now Laurie

My dear cat Thunder, who was with me for 10 years, passed away. I went to FOS to find a new friend. I was lucky to find Laurie (then named Lorelai). Her foster dad had stopped by to play with her. It was so helpful that he told me all about her and showed me pictures of her and her three kittens. I looked at a few other cats and then made the decision to take her home.

She loves to play with the little coiled toy that was also her favorite with her foster family. She learned to play fetch with it. Laurie is a smart and playful cat that is enjoying her new home.

- Paul



Sasha

My name is Taylor and my boyfriend Jeremy and I adopted Sasha, the sweetest 10 year old pup, from you guys back in February 2023. He truly has changed our lives for the better.

He is the snuggliest, cuddliest, goofiest doggie and we love him to pieces. We encourage everyone out there to consider adopting a senior dog or cat because it is so rewarding and they deserve a loving home as well!! Thank you FOS for connecting us with Sasha!

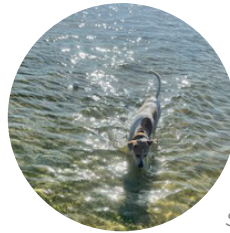
- Taylor & Jeremy



Kasper, now Blaze

I adopted Blaze (previously known as Kasper) back in May of 2023. When I first took Blaze home she was so shy but after a little time and love she's let her personality shine! Her days now consist of playing with all of her favorite toys and plenty of snuggles sessions (she's recently become a lap cat now). After being with me for 7 months now, I wanted to thank Friends of Strays again for rescuing her and allowing me bring her into my life.

- Madison



Gidget

She is so sweet, cuddly, and full of energy! She loves spending time outside and we have started to bring her on some runs (maybe she will help improve my pace, haha!). She also LOVES the beach! (So do we, so it's perfect!) We found a good trainer to work with to help us give her some structure and help her be social. We are really excited to see her settle in and realize that she's really home.

She's amazing and we love her so much already! We feel so grateful to have found her.

- Resie, Nate, and Gidget the Great



Wilber

Wilber is a sweet and gallant gentleman who still has that unique stare. But he's learning to balance that serious look with sleepy eyes when he feels calm and comfortable. He enjoys the top level of his cat condo, his laser toys and chasing cat lures. Life is good - his most difficult decision daily is whether he wants alone time or wants to cuddle on the couch.

On behalf of Wilber and myself, thank you for all the wonderful work you do!!

- Betty



Ann, now Airplane

We love her so freaking much and she is the best girl in the world, and she wouldn't be ours without y'all. We were so impressed with the care and love for the animals y'all displayed throughout the adoption process and are so grateful that y'all matched us to our little lady.

Since the fur on her head is white and very short you can see the pink showing through, so I like to call her Shrimp. Some other nicknames include Plane, The Lady, Mama, Pretty, Airpod, Airport, and Stinky. Sometimes Stinkeroni and Cheese if she's really being a mess.

Thank you for what you do and for bringing Plane into our lives!

- Lizzy

Community Cat Programs

MEOW Now!

MEOW Now works directly with caregivers to get entire colonies of cats altered and vaccinated. This was the first full year of MEOW Now! becoming part of Friends of Strays! The program is hitting its stride with lots of demand for colony TNVR (Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return).



Corinna Powers
MEOW Now
Program Manager



1,148

Cats received
TNVR services



436

Appointments
with caregivers

2,962

Community Cats

altered, eartipped, vaccinated and returned



Mary Vretas
MEOW Now
Coordinator



1,814

Cats received
RTF services



15

Cats reunited
with owners from
microchip

Pinellas Cats Alive!

Pinellas Cats Alive celebrated 2 years as a program of Friends of Strays and continues to grow every year. This free community return-to-field (RTF) program is designed to help people get that friendly neighborhood stray altered and vaccinated to help humanely reduce the free-roaming cat population in our neighborhoods.



Betsy VanderVoort
Pinellas Cats Alive
Program Manager



Foster Program



218
Foster
Homes



159
Dogs



788
Cats



Kelly Kraemer
Foster Manager



Medical Program

Our medical program had another milestone year with 5,039 spay/neuter surgeries! These surgeries include both our adoptable pets as well as animals going through our other programs, Pinellas Cats Alive, MEOW Now, and Kitten Heroes.

Spay/neuter is of course only one component of the life-saving work our medical team performs. Dr. Emerson left her position to pursue a new opportunity in December 2023. We welcomed Dr. Erik Pindar at the start of 2024!



Kitten Heroes



311 kitten participants

Young kittens are very delicate and susceptible. Because of that, many shelters try to keep tiny kittens out of the shelter until they are older and more resilient. Our Kitten Heroes program helps divert kittens from the shelter by encouraging kitten-finders to keep the kittens and find new homes for them through their own social networks.

In 2023, this program helped more than 300 kittens stay out of the shelter!

Volunteer Program



Tiffany Cornelius
Engagement
Manager



233
Volunteers



7,326
hours



9,037 lbs pet
food donated to
local pantries



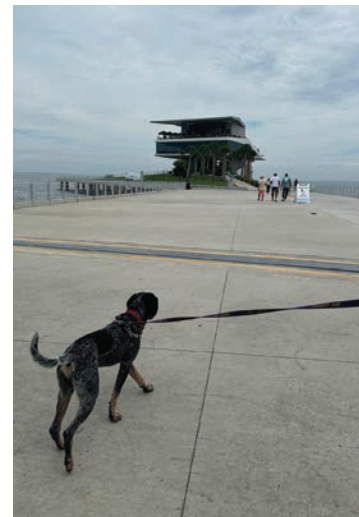
2.5 years
in time
donated



Doggy Day Out

Our Doggy Day Out program is a popular opportunity for our community to help eligible dogs get a little break from the shelter, and to see what their personalities are like outside the shelter environment!

Pictured here: Korra, Mallory, and Bandit.



Happy Cats



Jax Barrett
Team Lead

Happy Cats is a program to help our shy or stressed cats feel more secure and learn to trust people. It is lead by Jax, Animal Care & Enrichment Specialist, and includes a group of specially-trained volunteers. They do amazing work! Sometimes, cats find their feline best friend

at our shelter. We had a few Happy Cats meet at the shelter and find homes together.

Swayze & Sir

Swayze came to Friends of Strays through our Pinellas Cats Alive program. Because he had a broken thigh, he was kept to surgery and spent 8 weeks resting in foster. He returned to the shelter but spent most of his time hiding in his kennel. Sir came to the shelter from another organization. His playful personality piqued Swayze's interest and helped him come out of his shell. With Sir's help, Swayze gained more confidence around people. They were adopted together!



Master Splinter & Suki

Master Splinter was abandoned at our door, and Suki was on the euthanasia list at another shelter. Here, both were sweet and affectionate but reluctant to interact with people they didn't know. We let these two shy kitties meet, and they really hit it off together and gained so much confidence from each other. They were adopted together, and their adopter let us know they are thriving in their home!



Lizzie McGuire & Phantom

The cutest lovebirds at the shelter! These two cats both came to us from other shelters. Phantom was an older, battle-worn guy with a gruff personality. Lizzie was a sweet young thing. Alone, they preferred to hide in their cages. But Lizzie started hanging out in Phantom's kennel, and the two would snuggle and wrestle. We were so happy they were adopted together!

Happy Cats Volunteers

Jax has a team of dedicated and trained volunteers who work with cats in the program. Thank you so much to the following volunteers for making a huge difference in Happy Cat lives!

Nicole Bifano
Jeanne Davis
Marian Decklever
Mark Diorio
Vivian Gizowski
Ashley Lay
Chris Muringer
Cheryl O'Donnell
Jacqueline Ott
Gail Stanfield
Charles Thorton
Karen White

Happy Dogs



Lauren Gargiulo
Team Lead

We are fortunate in that most of our dogs have a short stay at the shelter and tend to get adopted quickly. But sometimes, we get in pups who need some extra time and training to find their perfect fit.

Happy Dogs is a program for the dogs in our care who have had a longer

than average stay at Friends of Strays or who need work on behavioral training. Happy Dogs is designed to help dogs thrive in the shelter environment, especially those that may need some extra attention or some structured engagement to work on learning basic behavior skills.

Lauren, a member of our awesome Animal Care & Enrichment team, is the Happy Dogs Lead! Here are a few stand-out Happy Dogs from 2023!



Gidget

Gidget was surrendered to the shelter when her owner could no longer care for her.

She was a high-energy girl with some fear-based reactivity to strangers, but

was loving and goofy with people she knew. Our team worked with her to redirect her energy into training, teaching basic manners and commands, and teaching her positive associations with new people. Gidget remained in our care for a little over a month. She was adopted by an amazing couple who has continued to build on her foundation and sought a trainer for further guidance after adopting. She is now living her best life – and even gets to go to the beach!

"She's amazing and we love her so much already! We feel so grateful to have found her." – Resie & Nate



Trixie

Trixie came to us in late 2022 from a municipal shelter and stayed with us for a little under 2 months. She was a high-energy girl who had not received much if any training

in her life. After weeks at the shelter, she showed signs of decline, becoming more reactive and more high-strung. Using our No Dog Left Behind fund, we were able to send her to The Dog Wizard for a month-long board-and-train program, which helped her in leaps and bounds harness that energy and focus it into training. When she came back our staff continued to build on her training and she was adopted in early 2023!



Treasure

Treasure came to us from a municipal shelter with her two puppies. She also had an injury to her knee which required corrective surgery. She was

sweet and snuggly with people she knew, but was reactive toward some unfamiliar people and did not enjoy other dogs. Our team worked with her to focus on commands and ignoring triggering things, while giving her lots of extra enrichment since her mobility was limited by her surgery recovery. She was adopted by a loving family who has expanded her name to "Precious Treasure," and she's being treated like a princess. When they took her to the vet, the vet said that she was very well taken care of in our facility. One of the vet techs said she would've adopted her in a heartbeat. They said she's just precious, which inspired her full name!

"There isn't a person in this house who doesn't absolutely love her." – Marcia

Staff

Leadership

Dara Eckart, CEO
Dr. Erik Pindar, DVM Medical Director
Mari Salls, Shelter Director
Karen Van De Putte, Development Director

Administrative

Tiffany Cornelius, Engagement Manager
Erin McGrath, Development Manager
Sandra Oliva, Office Manager
Jessica Salmond, Communications & Marketing Manager

Programs

Krista Loveless, Intake & Adoptions Manager
Olivia Gasparoni, Adoption Counselor
Juniper Irizarry, Adoption Counselor
Kimberly Newsome, Adoption Counselor
Kelly Kraemer, Foster Manager
Corinna Powers, MEOW Now Manager
Mary Vretas, MEOW Now Coordinator
Betsy VanderVoort, Pinellas Cats Alive! Manager

Medical

Jessica McCarrick, Medical Manager
Joel Cooper, Veterinary Technician
Kristen Henderson, Veterinary Technician
Ally Todd, Veterinary Technician
Kaylyn Trumbull, Veterinary Technician
Emily Smith, Surgery Technician

Animal Care & Enrichment Team

Jax Barrett, ACE Specialist & Happy Cats Lead
Lauren Gargiulo, ACE Specialist & Happy Dogs Lead
Anna Randolph, ACE Specialist
Angel Scovish, ACE Specialist
Mia Shields, ACE Specialist

Board of Directors

Mo Eppley, Chair
Alison Barlow, Secretary
Directors:
Eve Epstein
Arin Greenwood
Benjamin J. Kirby
Rosa Lopez
Michael McKenny
Sarah Penner
Barry Rubin
Cathy Unruh



Friends of Strays is a non-profit organization founded in 1978 in St. Pete, 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.



Friends of Strays Animal Shelter
2911 47th Ave. N
St. Petersburg, FL 33714