



# COMPASSION IN ACTION



NEWSLETTER OF THE SPCA SERVING ERIE COUNTY

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

## WELCOME TO THE SPCA, CAITLIN DALY!

The SPCA Serving Erie County is pleased to have Caitlin M. Daly as the organization's new President/CEO!

After she received her bachelor's degree in psychology from Longwood University in Virginia, Cait began her career in the animal welfare world. "I've loved animals as far back as I can remember, so it was a natural fit for me." Cait has worked in virtually every facet of an animal shelter — from animal care, to training, to working in the foster care and adoption departments! She served as the executive director at the Fredericksburg SPCA in Virginia and most recently as the chief operating officer at the Humane Society of Greater Rochester, Lollypop Farm.

"The pandemic hit three months after I started, so I had to navigate a lot of change right away. Despite that, we accomplished so many wonderful things! During my time there, we reached a 93% save rate (up from 85.8% when I started in late 2019), transitioned to a managed admissions/community resources model, and started a program to treat pets in emergency medical situations at a subsidized fee so that the pets can stay with their loving owners."

Cait is a Certified Animal Welfare Administrator through the Association for Animal Welfare Advancement and is Fear Free-certified by Fear Free®, a transformative animal welfare initiative founded in 2016 to provide unparalleled education on animals' emotional well-being and enrichment, and on the reduction of fear, anxiety, and stress in pets.

**"It is my honor and a great achievement to join the SPCA Serving Erie County team. I look forward to leading with kindness, compassion, and encouragement. I will jump in with full enthusiasm to ensure the best possible community for animals and the people who love them. We are going to do amazing things together!"**



Cait shares her life with her partner Tyler Mulligan, Jena, a 14-year-old German Shepherd mix; Poe, a five-year-old Puggle mix (pictured with Daly at top); Noah, a five-year-old Chihuahua; and Bella, an eight-year-old Siberian Forest Cat. All are adopted from shelters or rescues, and she is sure to point out that Tyler is not from a shelter!

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**"I've loved animals as far back as I can remember, so it was a natural fit for me."**

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## FIND US

716-875-7360  
YourSPCA.org  
facebook.com/SPCAErieCounty  
Twitter: @YourSPCA  
Instagram: @eriecountyspca

## HOURS AND LOCATIONS

300 Harlem Road,  
West Seneca, NY 14224

Please visit [YourSPCA.org](http://YourSPCA.org)  
for current adoption hours.

The SPCA Serving Erie County  
is proud to be a Purina Shelter  
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## Mission

At the SPCA Serving Erie County, our mission is to create a more human community through: education, rescuing, protecting, and enhancing the lives of animals, and nurturing the bond between animals and people.

*The SPCA Serving Erie County is not affiliated financially in any way with any other animal agency — including the Niagara County SPCA, the ASPCA, or any other humane society or animal welfare group. Our protocols, policies, and procedures are unique to this organization, a completely independent humane society that does not receive any city, county, state, or federal tax dollars. The important programs and services of the SPCA Serving Erie County are possible only due to the caring people and organizations that support us.*

# COULDN'T BE PROUDER!

BY JULIE DESMOND SCHECHTER, BOARD CHAIRPERSON



Happy New Year! 2021 was another challenging year for the SPCA Serving Erie County, but we came through it with flying colors. I couldn't be prouder of our incredible staff, who handled the constant changes thrown at them relating to COVID procedures, staffing shortages and the resignation of our CEO, like champions. Thank you to all of them!

I'm hoping for a brighter 2022 as we welcome Cait Daly, our new President/CEO. Cait brings an enormous amount of knowledge, experience, ideas, and enthusiasm with her to our organization. I can't wait to see where she takes us on this next step of our journey.

*Julie D. Schechter*

Julie Desmond Schechter  
Board Chairperson

# WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT SETS A RECORD!

BY BARBARA HANEY, DIRECTOR OF THE WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT



*Dr. Cross and Dr. Slote  
in action*

The Wildlife Department hit numerous milestones in 2021. More animals came through our doors than ever before, and the number of unique species that we saw was at an all-time high — 161 unique species were admitted to our hospital!

In 2021 we added another veterinarian. Along with Dr. Karen Slote, we added Dr. Jill Cross to our team. Dr. Cross is a retired small animal veterinarian who started volunteering in the Wildlife Department about six years ago. She would tell you that she did not know much about wildlife medicine, but over time she learned from Dr. Slote and our wildlife staff and volunteers about the many unique species that we see. Together with Dr. Slote, they have performed numerous surgeries. Dr. Cross has also taken a role in sharing information with the fourth-year Lincoln Memorial University (LMU) veterinary students and the numerous interns from local colleges who spend hours and hours in our department. Many LMU students are choosing this placement for the unique opportunity to work in a wildlife hospital with veterinarians who specialize in this innovative animal medicine niche.



WILDLIFE  
DEPARTMENT

Animal intake:

**3,826**

Number of species:

**161**

Phone calls:

**8,450**



# SUNDANCE CHARMED HIS WAY TO HIS NEW FAMILY!

BY KRISSI MIRANDA, ADOPTIONS SUPERVISOR

When people think about adopting animals from the SPCA, dogs and cats come to mind. What some don't know is that there are other types of great animals up for adoption! One such animal was Sundance, a 40-year-old Blue and Gold Macaw. Sundance quickly became a shelter favorite not only because he wasn't a cat or a dog, but his fun and quirky personality, dashing good looks, and bird antics were irresistible!

Sundance came to us in less than perfect health and condition, but that didn't make him any less lovable. In fact, his featherless body endeared him even more to everyone who met him.

After several months in our care and several trips to an avian veterinarian, Sundance was ready to start his journey to find his new home. Finding a new home for animals like Sundance is different than finding homes for cats and dogs because birds, especially large birds, benefit from a home with an adopter who knows the species and the care they need. So, the hunt was on. Our Behavior & Research team assessed his behavioral needs while our medical team made sure he was gaining weight. It didn't take long for the adoption inquiries to start rolling in. After several meet-and-greets with potential adopters, a new family was selected. It was love at first sight for Sundance and his new family. Shortly after the match was made, Sundance was on the road to his new life.

**Many of us were sad to see him go, but we know that falling in love with the animals we care for is just part of the job. Our end goal is always to see them on to their new adventure, even though it is bittersweet.**



  
**ADOPTIONS**

Total adoptions:  
**4,423**

Dogs: 1,064; Cats: 2,635;  
Other animals: 626;  
Farm animals: 98

# BEHAVIOR & RESEARCH IS MOVIN' AND GROOVIN'!

BY MIRANDA WORKMAN, PHD, FORMER DIRECTOR OF BEHAVIOR & RESEARCH



## BEHAVIOR AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

**4,100:** Total animal assessments done in 2021.

From behavior assessments, to training and behavior modification, and finally to adoption matching, the SPCA's Behavior Team has had a busy and rewarding year! We added two general Behavior Assistants to the department to help support the behavioral welfare of the thousands of animals we care for each year at our main facility on Harlem Road, in foster care, and offsite adoption locations. In 2021 the team of four staff members completed over 1,100 dog behavior assessments, 2,450

cat behavior assessments, and 550 small animal/exotic behavior assessments. In support of adoption matching efforts, the behavior team completed over 110 meet and greets with adoptable animals and potential adopters, including resident dogs for many of them. We also completed nearly 1,000 adoption consults to help ensure the best matches possible between our adoptable animals and our community who comes to the SPCA to find their new family member.

# INCREASING OUR IMPACT DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

BY CHRISTINE DAVIS, DIRECTOR OF HUMANE EDUCATION AND KATHERINE GILLETTE-COCKERILL, HUMANE EDUCATOR

Pivot, pivot, pivot! Like with so many things, pivot became the name of the game during the COVID-19 crisis. You do it so much you start to wonder how many more times you will have to pivot or compromise. Let's face it, starting over is hard, and so is reinventing and reimagining constantly, so why do it? We did it because we can, and we know that our audience will benefit from it! It is also what makes us unique! Our success can be largely attributed to our long-term partnerships with Buffalo Public Schools, Girl Scouts of WNY, and several other community-based organizations. The employees know us and love our in-person programs so much that they were willing to give our virtual programs a try and give us honest feedback.

It seemed like every time we attempted to do an in-person program, the COVID-19 numbers in our area would increase, and we either had to postpone the program or switch it to being virtual. The feedback we received regarding our virtual programs continued to be positive, and the demand continued to grow. Some days we were doing as many as eight virtual programs. Saturday mornings, we would do several back-to-back programs for the Community Schools Saturday Academies.

In the spring, we hired a part-time staff member Maeve Higgins and tentatively prepared for an in-person summer camp. Small camp groups allowed us to do more exciting hands-on and materials-intensive activities, especially in our very popular veterinary science camps. Campers learned to draw blood from realistic models, practiced sutures on bananas, and raced to find and repair bowel obstructions in model intestines. By running camps four days each week, we were able to host a middle school career development program through the Police Athletic League and continue virtual reading opportunities for summer camps. We also started visiting some summer programs for in-person Paw Protectors and other activities as the summer progressed.

The fall brought a return to in-school programming and Girl and Cub Scout patch tours and workshops. We also returned to in-person Saturday Academies and have experienced more demand for these programs than we can accommodate. We have hosted several middle and high school groups for career-focused programming, internships, and tours. This is a demographic we did not previously serve prior to the pandemic. We still have limited capacity and do most programs after hours to reduce exposure.



HUMANE EDUCATION

Humane Education participants:

Camps:

**124**

Scouts:

**160**

Tale for Two:

**145**

“Be like water, be shapeless, formless, easily adaptive, learn to follow or crash; be like water.” These words from Bruce Lee describe how we see our Humane Education department. We are like water: we have learned to adapt, grow, and change through this crisis, and it has paid off. Our team and programs look different today than they did a year ago, but we continue to engage the community in our mission in new and innovative ways.

## ARE YOU FELINE DOGGONE LUCKY?

Take a chance in our Annual Raffle presented by Hodgson Russ, LLP.

**First prize:** \$2,500

**Second prize:** \$1,000

**Third prize:** \$500

**1 ticket: \$10 | 3 tickets: \$25**

Purchase your tickets on YourSPCA.org or call Caitlin at 716-875-7360 ext. 230.

Raffle sales will take place from February 1 to March 18. Winners will be announced on a live Facebook video on March 18!





# MORTIMER'S STORY

## AS TOLD TO BETHANY KLOC, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Imagine being a tiny 8-ounce, defenseless kitten living outside, when all of a sudden, you unexpectedly find yourself inside the mouth of a big dog! Yup, that was me!

Fortunately, a man saw what was going on and took me out of the dog's mouth and placed me on a piece of cardboard. He called the SPCA to tell them that I needed help. I was cold and covered in mud and debris, and all I could do was huddle down and close my eyes, but I couldn't find any relief.

### It wasn't too much later when I was rescued by my SPCA angels!

Officer Lindsey Wood warmed me up on the ride to the SPCA while Officer William Heine drove. Once I was at the SPCA, Officer Wood put me into a warm little cube — an incubator! After a few hours in there, I began to feel much better and I could stand up! Officer Wood gave me a warm bottle of formula. I stayed overnight with Officer Wood and her family and the next day I was given to my foster mom, Bethany who also works at the SPCA.

My foster mom named me Mortimer and I quickly became everyone's favorite little guy. Bethany and her family (humans, cats, and dogs!) gave me all the

love and all the formula that any little orphaned kitten could ask for. I came to work every day with Bethany and I loved getting to know everyone — especially Carol the volunteer!

When I was two months old, I was neutered (it's not as bad as I thought it would be!) and I was adopted by Bethany's friends Katie and Chaz. I'm living the good life now in West Falls with my adoring people, my friends Seven (she's a cat) and Dash (he's a dog who likes cats)! My family is wonderful and I couldn't have envisioned a better life!



## INVESTIGATIONS/RESCUE

Officers responded to **1,452** cruelty calls and **1,194** rescue calls. This resulted in **1,526** domestic animals brought to the SPCA by officers.

# TINY KITTENS IN GREAT NEED FIND HELP AT THE SPCA

## BY AMY JAWORSKI, DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS



The summer season in Western New York brings abundant sunshine, beautiful temperatures, and kittens. So. Many. Kittens.

Summer is a very difficult, busy, and stressful time of year for shelters, and the SPCA Serving Erie County is no different. Too many animals needing admission, and not enough cages to house them is the reality that we're faced with annually.

However, regardless of space, the SPCA will not turn away a sick or injured cat. These animals in need are accepted into the shelter for evaluation, and treatment by our infirmary staff.

The phone call in late September from a good Samaritan who had located a litter of five young kittens was an all too familiar one. The caller stated that the kittens appeared to be sick and in need of care. An appointment for surrender was made by our Admissions team.

Upon admission to the shelter, it was clear that these kittens desperately needed help. All the kittens had severe conjunctivitis along with other eye issues that required immediate medical attention. The kittens were fully evaluated, placed on a variety of medications, and eventually placed into a foster home, where they remain as of the time of this writing. Time will tell if the medication completely heals these kittens, or if more extensive, surgical intervention is needed. **Either way, we'll be here to help them through their rough start to life, and to help ensure they're placed with amazing families who think these guys are as awesome as we do.**



## ADMISSIONS

Dogs: **2,250**

Cats: **4,391**

Other animals: **909**

Farm animals: **137**



## “HE CHOSE US”

BY GINA LATTUCA, CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Every year thousands of animals call the SPCA Serving Erie County home, at least for a short period of time. While we work to provide them with all the love, attention, and care that can be provided in a shelter environment, it’s not exactly the same as the love, attention, and care provided in a home. That’s where foster parents come in.

Hundreds of animals are surrendered to the SPCA annually that cannot be placed directly on the adoptions floor. Some are injured, some are ill, others are too young or scared. Others? Well, there simply isn’t room for them, especially during the summer months.

Foster care volunteers are there to provide homes for these animals, giving them any special care and attention they may need until it’s time for them to be placed for adoption.



So many SPCA programs and services can be called lifesaving, but our Foster Care program and its volunteers are directly responsible for saving the lives of hundreds of animals annually.

Foster care parents aren’t only making a difference in the lives of the animals they love; they’re also making a difference in the lives of the people who ultimately adopt their foster pets. Foster parents, of course, have the first chance to permanently adopt their foster pets. If they choose not to adopt, special adoption preference is given to their family members and friends who may have also fallen in love with the animals while being fostered. This is exactly what happened to Anthony and Brittany Principale of East Amherst, NY, earlier this year!

A childhood friend of Brittany’s, Kayla of Kenmore, NY, was the loving foster parent of a tiny, 4-month-old German Shepherd/Terrier mix named Cooper (and Cooper’s sister) when Brittany found out about the pup. The female puppy was already

spoken for, but Cooper was returning to the SPCA in a matter of days...we thought!


“We set up a meet-and-greet and fell in love with the sweet puppy instantly!” says Anthony of cute Cooper, now named Gus! “We realized during the meet and greet that the puppy needed us in his life just as much as we needed him in ours.” Brittany added, “He quickly chose us, laying in Anthony’s lap, giving us kisses and showing us his silly and unique personality. After learning about Gus’ [tough] start in life, we knew we needed to give him the love and home he deserved!”

Brittany and Anthony officially adopted Gus on October 6, 2021, and the love affair started immediately. “Gus has taught us responsibility, patience, and selflessness: early-morning ‘potty training,’ learning to sit and stay, putting him first,” the newly-married couple shared. “He makes us laugh and picks us up when we’re down, almost like he knows what we need when we need it. We’ve become more active, going on walks and playing catch in the backyard. He’s our companion for movie nights on the couch, car rides, and outdoor events. He’s also taught us to enjoy the little things- the view, a good friend, our favorite snacks, things that make us happy!”

When asked how their lives changed since Gus has been in it, Brittany and Anthony told us, “Gus has taught us that love is unconditional. No matter how long we’ve been away, he’s at the door greeting us with a wagging tail. No matter what mood we’re in, he’s right there next to us giving kisses. No matter how we look or are dressed, he’s happy to be with us. Gus brought love into our lives that made us feel whole!”

**Kayla, Brittany, and Anthony all have played a part in filling Gus’ short life with love and affection, and in return, Gus has changed each of their lives for the better.**

The same thing happens for hundreds of animals each year, their foster parents, and those who ultimately adopt them through the SPCA’s Foster Care program.



**FOSTER CARE**

Total number of animals who spent time in foster care:	Foster homes:
<b>919</b>	<b>705</b>
	NEW foster homes:
	<b>100</b>



# SPCA PACK LEADERS

The SPCA Serving Erie County is fortunate to have the support of thousands of compassionate, caring donors...individuals and organizations who believe in our mission and recognize the SPCA as a valuable community asset. Their gifts sustain our day-to-day efforts on behalf of animals and work to ensure our future success. The SPCA Serving Erie County is grateful to all our supporters for generous contributions in 2021.

*This list includes our Pack Leaders – those donors who gave gifts of \$1,000+ between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021.*

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Charitable Giving Program  
Nestle Purina  
PetCare Company  
Northtown Subaru  
Paychex

### WINNER'S CIRCLE

#### \$9,999 - \$5,000

Austin Air Systems  
Comstar Technologies  
Dave & Adam's Card World

Northtown Automotive  
Companies  
Riveter Design  
Sunrise Medical Group  
Target  
Tops Friendly Markets

### TOP DOG

#### \$4,999 - \$2,500

APICS - Buffalo Chapter  
ASPCA  
Dunn Tire  
Hodgson Russ LLP  
Personal Computers Inc.  
WNY Elvis Appreciation  
Society Inc.

### COOL CAT

#### \$2,499 - \$1,000

Avanti USA Ltd  
Christ the King School  
Courier Capital Corporation  
Curbell  
Elmo's Restaurant  
GEICO  
Grosso Door & Hardware  
HSBC Bank  
Independent Health  
Investment Analytics, Inc.  
Larry & Janine's Plumbing  
& Repairs, Inc.  
Lumsden & McCormick, LLP  
Med-Center, Inc  
Mighty Taco, Inc.  
Mister Christmas  
Mosquito Hunters of Buffalo  
National Fuel  
Phillips Lytle LLP  
Rich Products Corporation  
RKD Group  
The Ideal You Weight Loss  
Center, LLC  
Troopers for Troops

## FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS

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The Baird Foundation  
Barbara T. Meech and  
Robert B. Meech Fund\*  
Bell Bequest\*  
Belovsky Family Foundation  
Bill and Jackie Gurney Family  
Foundation, Inc.  
The Cameron and Jane  
Baird Foundation  
Carlos & Elizabeth  
Heath Foundation  
Charlotte Albright Fund\*  
Children's Foundation of  
Erie County  
Cynthia Olson Charitable Trust  
Dedrick Family Foundation\*  
Donald A. Pause Fund\*  
Eastman Foundation  
The Edward H. Butler  
Foundation  
The Emma Barnsley  
Foundation, c/o Wells Fargo  
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Whiting Foundation  
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Pasquale Kite Charitable Fund\*  
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Margaret Bieri Herr  
Memorial Fund\*  
Marjorie and John Buyers  
Foundation, Inc.

Mulroy Family Foundation  
Normandy Fund\*  
O'Loughlin Charitable Fund\*  
The Penn Schoellkopf Fund, Inc.  
Petco Foundation  
The Carol J. Adragna  
Family Foundation  
The Kenneth A. Scott  
Charitable Trust,  
a KeyBank Trust  
The Robert A. and  
Ruth E. Allen Memorial  
Fund II\*  
The Russo Family Charitable  
Foundation Inc.  
The Ruth Gutekunst  
Charitable Trust  
Sofia Families Fund  
The Sullivan Family  
Foundation  
The Vera B. Arrison  
Foundation  
The Walter E. Schmid Family  
Foundation Charitable Trust  
The Weiss Family Fund\*  
William J.C. & Louise  
Grupp Memorial\*  
\*at the Community Foundation  
for Greater Buffalo

**In loving  
remembrance of  
those donors who  
left a legacy gift to  
the SPCA during the  
year 2021:**

Peter W. Bridgford  
Kathleen D. Baldwin  
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# JACK MCFARLAND MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF DOGS!

BY KELLY DESCHAMPS, DIRECTOR  
OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES



When you think about the SPCA, the first thing that comes to mind is usually animals. But did you know that there are nearly 1,000 volunteers dedicated to caring for and enriching the lives of the animals who come to our organization?

One of these incredible volunteers is Jack McFarland. Jack has been a volunteer for the SPCA for well over a decade. You can find him in the dog kennels working with our adoptable dogs, but he has also fostered, transported animals, and worked with puppy mill dogs too.

Jack began volunteering for the SPCA as a foster parent after losing two dogs in six months. He and his wife fostered for about five years before Jack retired and began volunteering at the SPCA with our adoptable dogs at the shelter. "Walking the dogs gives me much-needed exercise, and being with the dogs brightens my days, and I think it helps them realize that humans can show them love and kindness."

For Jack, volunteering isn't just about helping dogs in need, but it's also about the friends and family that he has found at the SPCA. "As with everyone, the pandemic was difficult due to being isolated. Living alone meant it was me and my three dogs, no family. And to me, the people and dogs at the shelter have become family, and I missed them very much. Being able to volunteer again has brought my life a little more back to 'normal,' and it gives me an opportunity to get the exercise that I need."

If you would like to join Jack on our volunteer team, please visit our website at [YourSPCA.org/volunteer](https://YourSPCA.org/volunteer) for available volunteer positions.



## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers:

**873**

Hours:

**37,297**

Volunteer hours  
on the farm:

**906**

# VETERINARY SERVICES DEPARTMENT HELPED THOUSANDS OF ANIMALS IN 2021

BY MELANIE  
RUSHFORTH, VICE  
PRESIDENT OF  
VETERINARY SERVICES



## VETERINARY DEPARTMENT

*Services provided to  
shelter pets*

Spays: **3,574**      Neuters: **1,433**

Yelp for Help  
patients: **1,880**      Other  
surgeries: **555**

The Veterinary Services Department went through several changes over the course of 2021 in response to the growing needs of the community. While COVID did not drastically increase the number of animals surrendered to the shelter, many veterinarians and pet owners were forced to cancel wellness visits during state and federal government shutdowns due to the pandemic. Elective surgeries for humans were also postponed during this time to preserve PPE and keep people safe from the potential exposure to this infection. This, in turn, has resulted in an industry-wide crunch.

Many veterinary hospitals, including the Lipsey Clinic and the Shelter Infirmary are operating with fewer team members. Emergency clinics appear to be having an especially difficult time remaining fully staffed as they are inundated with a continuous stream of patients — both urgent and non-urgent cases.

COVID-19 has created a challenging 20-plus months for our department, and we are still navigating tangible changes it triggered. During the pandemic's earliest months, veterinary practices throughout the country operated as essential businesses, seeing only urgent cases. This created a substantial backlog in wellness visits. As restrictions loosened, patients started returning for routine examinations and preventive care. Meanwhile, clients were spending more time at home with their pets, which gave them the opportunity to spot health issues more readily and to think about veterinary care more generally.

The Veterinary Team at the SPCA Serving Erie County consists of the Wildlife Department, Foster Care, the Shelter Infirmary, and the Lipsey Clinic. We continue to be a host site for fourth-year Lincoln Memorial University veterinary students as they familiarize themselves with the inner workings of shelter medicine. We know that this experience will strengthen the industry as a whole and create strong ambassadors for the role of humane societies and shelters throughout the veterinary medical community. **We are looking forward to the positive impact we hope to have on the animals in the community in 2022.**