



# COMPASSION IN ACTION



NEWSLETTER OF THE SPCA SERVING ERIE COUNTY

FALL 2023

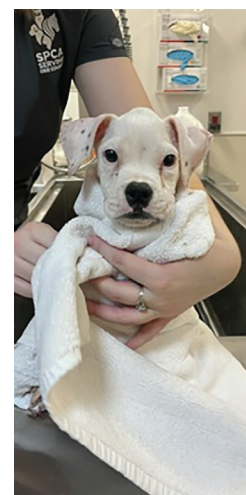
## EMBRACING THE FUTURE: UNVEILING THE SPCA'S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

The SPCA Serving Erie County has been a vital resource for our community for more than 156 years. Now embarking on a new three-year strategic plan, the SPCA's community-centered model will save the lives of tens of thousands of animals, keep owners and their pets together by providing necessary access to care and resources, introduce groundbreaking services focused on fostering a compassionate and equitable community for animals, and foster organizational stability and expansion.

Many of the components of the SPCA's strategic plan fall under the One Health concept that recognizes the interconnectedness of the health of humans, animals, and the environment. By helping people keep their pets and providing resources to support responsible pet ownership, the SPCA promotes the health and well-being of both pets and their owners.

For years, animal welfare initiatives were developed in response to the pressing issue of pet overpopulation, primarily focusing on managing the influx of animals arriving at shelters every day. However, this approach is no longer sustainable. The SPCA has consistently been at the forefront of innovation, and it continues this progressive mindset by transitioning to a community-centered sheltering model. By leveraging data and research, this model addresses and identifies the underlying causes for pets being surrendered, striving to prevent these situations and enable pets to remain in their homes. This proactive approach allows the SPCA to better meet the needs of our community's animals and people and it guarantees that the SPCA is accessible to pets who are victims of abandonment and abuse and have no alternative options available.

Keep up to date on the SPCA's progress by visiting our website, social media pages, and reading our newsletter!



### Best Practices and Innovation

Embrace and create best practices in animal welfare and become top innovators in the field. We will use our expertise to empower other animal welfare organizations while creating new revenue streams.

### Program Expansion

Allocate and expand resources toward programs that advance our mission within the community, ensuring that we have the necessary means to fulfill our vision and purpose.

STRATEGIC  
AREAS  
OF FOCUS

### Supporting Animals as a Community

Leverage community relationships and create innovative community partnerships that move the mission forward while benefiting pets and their people.

### Development and Growth

Instill a culture of accountability and resilience within the SPCA, while investing in growth and developing our team. Create a culture of acceptance and equity through DEI efforts.



## 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  
Champions Partner!



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## Mission

At the SPCA Serving Erie County, our mission is to create a more humane 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.*



## FROM PRESIDENT & CEO CAITLIN DALY

As the summer winds down and comes to an end, SPCA staff and volunteers are busy as ever caring for the babies who are still arriving every single day. From tiny meowing kittens to open-mouthed baby birds, it won't slow down around here for another couple of

weeks. Amidst all the hubbub of caring for nature's tiniest and most vulnerable creatures, we have some exciting initiatives and programs that we can't wait to tell you all about! **First, our shiny new strategic plan is debuted in this newsletter, and we have already checked some of the actions off our list as completed! We have some fun, adoption-based programs that will hopefully help more animals find their homes this fall and winter. Finally, Paws in the Park is celebrating 30 years of supporting animals in need at the SPCA!**

Our strategic plan was created through months of hard work by our staff and board of directors. The overarching theme is forward motion — how can we help our community, the animals who live here, and our people thrive and succeed? Through innovative practices and compassion in action, we hope to keep the SPCA Serving Erie County on the cutting edge both locally and nationally.

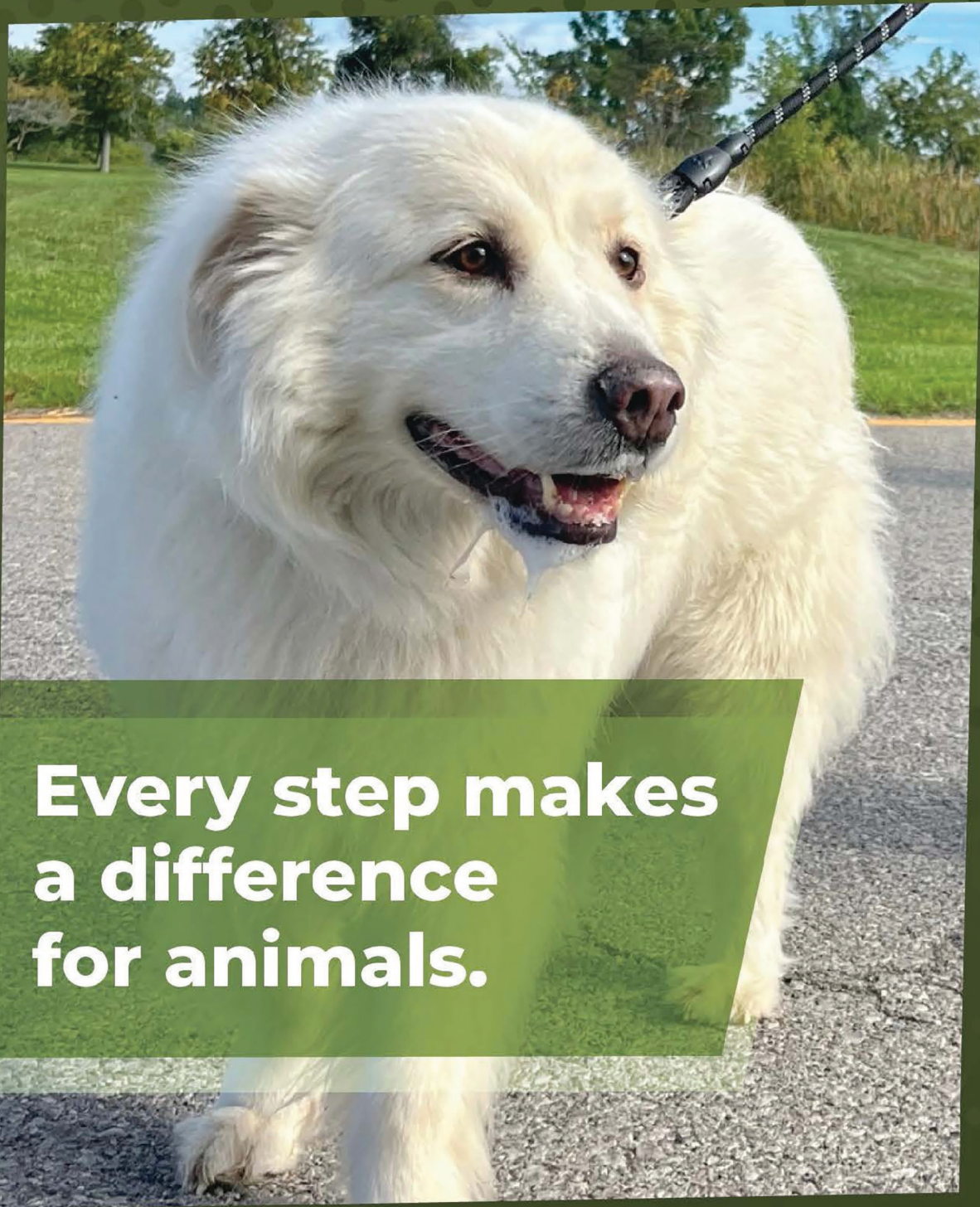
A few examples of innovation and compassion in action: Doggie Entourage and If the Fur Fits! Doggie Entourage is a program for anyone — yes, you! — looking to help a shelter dog! Studies have proven that dogs in shelters have increased levels of the stress hormone, cortisol. Studies have also proven that as little as two hours outside of the shelter environment can reduce the stress hormone back to base levels. That's why we created Doggie Entourage: a program where anyone can take a dog living at the SPCA out for an adventure. You can take the dog for a car ride, a hike, or relax at your own home or office. We provide any needed supplies, and you provide the much-needed break from a kennel. **If this program sounds like something that you might enjoy, drop by the SPCA to learn more. You can also read more about this program in this newsletter!**

If the Fur Fits is another excellent program to give shelter animals relief from a kennel environment, and it is open to all adoptable species! While Doggie Entourage is open to anyone interested in giving a dog a break, whether they want to adopt or not, this program targets those interested in adoption. If the Fur Fits offers adopters a trial period to see how the animal fits into the home. This worry-free program takes the anxiety out of a huge life decision while also giving animals a much-needed break! Whether you decide to adopt the animal or not, the program still achieves the goal of reducing animals' stress hormones, by giving them a chance to spend some time away from the shelter. It's a win-win!

**How do we make all these amazing things happen? Well, you! When you participate in our programs, send a monetary donation, volunteer your time, or attend an event, YOU are helping us provide a better life for the animals in Erie County.** Our 30th Paws in the Park is happening on Sept 23, 2023, and we hope to see you there! You will enjoy a scenic walk in Beaver Island State Park on Grand Island followed by a festival-type atmosphere filled with presentations and vendors. Bring the whole family, some friends or come alone! However you choose to enjoy the event, please know that your support will help us save lives!

Caitlin Daly, President & CEO





**Every step makes  
a difference  
for animals.**



**30 YEARS AND STILL  
WALKING STRONG**

09.23.23 | BEAVER ISLAND STATE PARK  
LEARN MORE AT [YOURSPCA.ORG](https://yourspca.org)

TO BENEFIT



Presented by Keller Technology Corporation  
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# MARY ALLOY: A CHERISHED FRIEND OF THE SPCA REMEMBERED

BY: SPCA ANNUAL GIVING MANAGER PHILLIP WEISS

**“I’ve heard it said that people come into our lives for a reason. Bringing something we must learn. And we are led to those who help us most to grow if we let them and we help them in return. Well, I don’t know if I believe that’s true, but I know I’m who I am today because I knew you.”**

**- Lyrics from *Wicked*, written by Stephen Schwartz**

These lyrics truly encapsulate what it was like to know our dear friend Mary Alloy. Mary passed away in May and she reminded everyone she knew how to be selfless and to be passionate about life. She showed us how to not give up and to share your love with not only those closest to you, but also with the entire community.

Just Pizza on Niagara Falls Boulevard, formerly owned by Mary and now under the ownership of the Alloy family, has been a steadfast supporter of the SPCA since the early 2000s. I first met Mary at our 2016 Radiothon with her face barely seen through the stacks of food in

her hands. As I was thanking her for the food, she said, “there is more coming!” After noticing it was more than the order we placed, I asked her what the total cost was. She simply replied, “Nothing, just keep helping these sweet animals.”

She never felt like she was giving enough and would always politely decline any form of payment or acknowledgement. She did, however, never pass up the opportunity to enjoy a smooch from or a cuddle session with one of the many animals her donations were helping to save. Those expressions of gratitude were the most gratifying acknowledgments she could receive, she often confided in me.

As much as I know Mary would tell me it is not necessary, I want to say, THANK YOU, MARY! Your love and genuine personality will never be matched, and I am sure you inspired enough of us to at least try. To Mary’s family, thank you for sharing Mary with us. Thank you for allowing us to be part of her life and allowing her to be part of ours.



*Mary always led with her heart*



*Caleb, Gwen, and David Huck*

## NEW WILDLIFE ENCLOSURES GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY THE HUCK FAMILY!

BY: SPCA WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR BARBARA HANEY

Wildlife rehabilitation requires adaptability and innovation, especially when it comes to our outdoor enclosures. When we moved to the new shelter six years ago,

there were a number of enclosures that we chose not to build in an effort to save money. As a result of this decision, one enclosure, our waterfowl enclosure, was brought piece-by-piece to the new shelter from the old shelter and reassembled on-site. It was in desperate need of replacement and that’s where Gwen and David Huck came in.

Gwen has been a friend of the Wildlife Department for many years. She was a volunteer and has always had a special place in her heart for the sweet Virginia Opossum. The Hucks heard of our need for a waterfowl enclosure and Gwen was aware of our need for an

additional small mammal enclosure to help with her beloved opossums. The Hucks, through their company, Regent Companies, and its supervising team, Dave Denk and Eric Zimpfer, built us two beautiful new enclosures. One enclosure is for waterfowl and the other is for small mammals like the opossum.

The generosity of the Hucks seems to have no bounds and makes it possible for us to help hundreds of animals. Thank you so much!



# DOGGIE ENTOURAGE: A WIN-WIN FOR DOGS AND HUMANS ALIKE!



The SPCA recently introduced an exciting new initiative called Doggie Entourage, that allows dogs to venture out of the shelter for a few hours or an entire day! This program has been received with immense enthusiasm from both the dogs and the human participants involved.

There are many reasons this program has been such a hit. Prospective adopters, for instance, often want to understand a dog's behavior outside the shelter environment before finalizing their decision. Additionally, people who are unable to adopt may simply wish to spend quality time with an SPCA dog, providing the dog with a temporary break from the SPCA and a chance to engage in activities that aren't available at the shelter.

The dogs reap numerous benefits from the time spent outside the shelter! While the SPCA staff and volunteers work diligently to ensure a comfortable environment for them while they're with us, we recognize that nothing can match the authentic real-world experiences they encounter during their out-of-the-shelter adventures. Being outside of the shelter also gives them the opportunity to interact with individuals who might never have set foot in the SPCA to consider adopting a dog.

Upon their return to the shelter, many of the dogs exhibit a noticeable increase in happiness compared with before they were taken out. It's truly heartwarming to witness the positive impact these outings have on their overall well-being!

Virtually all the dogs available for adoption are eligible to go out on Doggie Entourage dates! To see who's available for an outing, drop by the SPCA and speak with an adoptions counselor. After that, the sky's the limit for where you go together on your adventure! **You can take the dogs to parks, patios, dog-friendly establishments, or even bring them to your own home!**

Terri and Matt initially discovered the program through a radio segment. Terri says, "Matt and I have taken five dogs on adventures. Each time we take them on a hike where they get quite a workout, as well as a lot of attention from us. We visited Mill Road Park, Bond Lake, and Emery Park. All the dogs loved it. After that we take them to Route 16 for ice cream. We even took Herschel to Hamburg Brewery where he was very well behaved!"

Even if adoption is not on your mind, you may encounter someone during your outing who develops an instant affection for the dog you've taken out.



*Herschel's Doggie Entourage included time at Hamburg Brewery!*

Terri said, "We tell anyone who may be interested in adopting or participating in the program all about the dogs! Matt's parents adopted the second dog we took out, Edna!"

Terri shares, "We love the idea of getting a dog out of their kennel if only for a day. The feeling of doing something so worthwhile is priceless. We look forward to many more of these adventures!"

**Due to the success of the program, Mindy Ussrey, the SPCA's Director of Adoptions and Behavior, wants to broaden the program's horizons by arranging entourages at suitable businesses, festivals, and various events. If you'd like more information, please reach out to Mindy via email at [MindyU@yourspca.org](mailto:MindyU@yourspca.org)!**

If you're interested in joining in on the fun, visit [YourSPCA.org/entourage](https://YourSPCA.org/entourage)!



# FAREWELL TO SPCA PAWS FOR LOVE COORDINATOR **DEBBIE BRAUN**

BY: SPCA CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER  
GINA LATTUCA



Debbie Braun

In May of this year, we were saddened to announce that we lost our beautiful Paws for Love Coordinator, Debbie Braun.

Debbie's passing May 13 was not completely unexpected — she'd been battling an illness for quite

some time — but the rapidity of her decline WAS unexpected. The family — we all — believed there was more time left with this kind and loving soul.

Debbie came on board as Paws for Love Coordinator in 2006 and grew the program beyond any expectations. What started as a few volunteers visiting a few nursing homes turned into hundreds of volunteers visiting hundreds of locations, and not just medical sites.

Debbie warmly welcomed each volunteer team into the program, forming a personal relationship with each and every one of them. She established long-standing relationships with not just nursing homes and hospitals (at one time the only types of locations visited) but, little by little, identified the need for this healing program at other types of locations ... and went on to fill that need. Colleges and all grade levels of schools. Libraries. Rehab centers. Funeral parlors and memorial services. The Family Justice Center, helping victims of domestic violence. In fact, because of Debbie, in 2013 the Buffalo Niagara International Airport became one of only nine airports in the entire country with dogs on hand to lower stress levels; LA may have been the first airport boasting such a program, but within mere months, Buffalo's was the largest program in the nation.

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**For seventeen years I watched Debbie work. I listened to her ideas, her concerns, her sacrifices, her initiative, and what consistently came through in every exchange was her passion for and dedication to the program, to the animals, to the people.**

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Debbie represented the SPCA so effectively that it didn't take long for me to consult her first with every interview request, story request, every question. Regardless of whether she was on vacation, spending time with her beloved family, or not feeling well, she responded. EVERY TIME. There wasn't a moment that doubt crept into my mind regarding Debbie's ability to bring the SPCA to even higher places through Paws for Love, and she did all that and more. Paws for Love was a full-time job for Debbie, and she took immense pride and comfort in the commitment that her work, along with her volunteers, brought to others.

Under Debbie's leadership, Paws for Love is now one of the most important programs in our community. Thousands upon thousands of people's lives have been touched by Paws for Love through our incredible volunteers and through the efforts of Debbie. Her loss will be felt not only by family and friends, not only by the SPCA, but by an entire community that did not even know how hard Debbie was working behind the scenes.

To those organizations and business that have encouraged Paws for Love visits, and to volunteers past and present who have participated in this program, we thank you for recognizing the importance of the bond between animals and people, and for believing in an animal's ability to provide moments or hours of solace to those in any type of emotional need. **This bond is what Debbie believed in with her whole heart and soul, and which she dedicated much of her life. This belief is the motivation behind ensuring Debbie's legacy, the SPCA Paws for Love program, lives on.**



Debbie Braun with her husband, Bob

# WHAT'S GOING ON IN OUR NECK OF THE WOODS ...



## Dog Vaccination Clinic

The SPCA held a dog vaccination clinic on May 9 at the Broadway Market. More than 300 dogs were vaccinated thanks to Petco Love's donation of vaccines!



## Peregrine Rehab

The SPCA's Wildlife Department took care of the Statler Peregrine falcon fledglings. After gaining weight and finishing learning how to fly, they were released within a week of being admitted to the SPCA.

## Wine, Wags & Brews

The SPCA's 2023 Wine, Wags & Brews was a resounding success! The abundance of smiles from both humans and their canine companions in these photos says it all! Thank you to all the restaurants, wineries, breweries, and vendors who participated and a special thank you to everyone who came! Together, we raised more than \$53,000 for the SPCA!



# ADOPTION PHOTOS



Joe from Depew adopted Sybil Sadie!



Naia from Buffalo adopted Blitz!



Sarah from Orchard Park recently adopted Mr. Peabody the peacock!



White Cloud found a new home with Madeline!

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT: SPCA VOLUNTEER TERRY BUCKLEY'S MEANINGFUL DONATION TO THE SPCA'S INFIRMARY



Terry Buckley

It's no surprise that retired CPA Terry Buckley is an ardent supporter of the SPCA. Despite residing in a townhouse that prohibited pets, Terry and her husband adopted a cat named Blarney after some friends passed away. "All was well until somebody blew us in for the violation. So, what did we do? Did we get rid of the cat? Nope, we bought a house so we could keep him. One of the best pet decisions we ever made."

Terry, her late mother-in-law, and her late husband have long been dedicated supporters of the SPCA, and they even have two bricks in the SPCA's PawsWay. All their pets have been rescues, reflecting their commitment to providing a loving home to animals in need.

In August 2022, Terry began volunteering at the SPCA's Infirmary, selecting the position after noticing it had been vacant for over a year on the SPCA's website. Despite initial concerns about her qualifications, "they (SPCA employees) taught me everything I needed to know. I always thought about volunteering after I retired, but finally pursued it last year. I'm so glad I did."

Working in the infirmary, Terry enjoys ample opportunities to interact with and care for animals before and after surgery. She finds great joy in comforting them as they wake up from anesthesia, relishing those tender moments of connection.

Terry admits being tempted to adopt some of the adorable kittens she encounters but refrains from doing so to maintain harmony with her eleven-year-old, one-eyed cat Snead. **"He runs the house, as you would expect. I'm often tempted to stick one of the little kittens I see into my pocket and walk out with it, but don't want to upset Snead. And I have always tried to adopt an older cat that nobody else seems to want."**

While volunteering in the infirmary, Terry identified equipment that was lacking but essential for the veterinary and wildlife staffs. Collaborating with the veterinary staff, they compiled a comprehensive list of items needed to enhance animal care, including incubators, an X-ray machine for wildlife, and more. Rather than wait to leave a gift in her estate, Terry made the choice to contribute the funds now, ensuring that she could personally witness the impact of her donation.

When asked for advice regarding SPCA donors, Terry suggests spending time witnessing the behind-the-scenes work of the organization. **"You'll find some aspects of it that tugs your heart and if you can make a donation for a specific area, I think you'll feel very rewarded. If that's not possible, don't forget that every little bit helps. If you can't donate funds, consider volunteering or donating food, used towels and bedding, etc. It's all appreciated."**