



COMPASSION IN ACTION



NEWSLETTER OF THE SPCA SERVING ERIE COUNTY

SUMMER 2023

YELP FOR HELP FUND CONTINUES LEGACY OF HELPING ANIMALS THANKS TO COMMUNITY'S SUPPORT

The SPCA's Yelp for Help Fund has been helping animals for more than two decades! It funds the veterinary surgeries, therapies, and treatments for homeless pets before they can be adopted.

Yelp for Help is essential for saving animal lives, and we know this is why it's always a favorite among our supporters. Each year, the SPCA holds a Yelp for Help Matching Challenge. This year it was sponsored by friends to the animals Bill and Nancy Gacioch and National Property Management Associates. It's not too late to make a donation at YourSPCA.org/yfhchallenge23n1!

We are always so grateful and overwhelmed by this outpouring of support for the animals! Here are some recent Yelp for Help patients who are here today, thanks to our community's generosity.



Our patients: Cali and Susie, two mixed breed puppies

What occurred: Cali and Susie are sisters who came in with their two brothers after SPCA Officers were contacted by the Buffalo Police Department regarding a domestic violence case. The owner signed all the puppies over to the SPCA. The brothers of the litter were fine, but both Cali and Susie were injured. Cali had a



broken rear leg and both of Susie's rear legs and her jaw were broken.

How Yelp for Help donors helped Cali and Susie:

Cali's broken leg was mended by placing a pin in her femur. Chief Medical Officer Dr. Kean felt because of her age and size, Susie's broken bones were best being left to heal on their own. Both pups spent time together in a foster home and returned to

the SPCA for their spay surgeries. When Cali was spayed, the pin did not need to be removed because, according to Dr. Kean, "her leg healed too well," and just as Dr. Kean hoped, Susie followed in her sister's footsteps and she healed remarkably well, too!

A special thank you to the Law Office of Peter J. Todoro, Jr. for sponsoring Cali and Susie along with our Yelp for Help donors!



Our patient: Spike, a bearded dragon

What occurred: Spike's owner contacted the SPCA about her two bearded dragons. She knew something was going on when they hadn't defecated in weeks, and they had both stopped eating. The owner told us that she was unable to care for them financially and time-wise, so she

surrendered them to the SPCA. Spike was the sicker of the two, so we'll focus on him.

How Yelp for Help donors helped Spike: We sent Spike to a foster home with an experienced foster parent, but he continued to lose weight despite the foster parent's best efforts. Thinking something else was going on, Spike was sent to Specialized Care for Avian & Exotic Pets with Dr. Laura Wade. Lizards, like bearded dragons, are predisposed to periodontal disease, and sadly for Spike, he was no exception. He had significant tartar accumulation and gingivitis, and Dr. Wade performed dental surgery on the little guy.

After his dental, Spike came back to the SPCA, where he was placed into foster again so his weight could be monitored. Fortunately, this didn't take long! He was adopted shortly after he was available.

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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
for current adoption hours.

The SPCA Serving Erie County
is proud to be a Purina Shelter
Champions Partner!



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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

Here at the SPCA, we recently started the process of putting together a strategic plan. While this process is intensive and requires a lot of work, it is also extremely exciting and inspiring! As we look into the future, we must ask ourselves: what are the changing needs of our community, and how can we rise to the occasion to assist and support in the most meaningful ways?

First and foremost, the heart of our mission is to create a more humane community and to rescue, protect, and enhance the lives of animals. Nationwide, shelter and rescue groups are reporting 4% more animals entering shelters than leaving: the largest gap the industry has seen in four years. As we enter our busiest season, with babies and illnesses on the rise, we are so lucky to have such a supportive community of superheroes willing to foster, volunteer, and help. **We will always be here for the injured, abused, or abandoned animals.**

Thanks to your support of our Yelp for Help Challenge, we can help more animals than ever before through the worst days of their lives. We can help a medically or emotionally suffering animal, and we are able to watch them heal and eventually leave, headed to their new home. While that is the unwavering cornerstone of who we are, we are called to be much more and to help in new ways.

Did you know that one-third of households reported having trouble obtaining veterinary care, mainly due to finances? In fact, a recent study showed that 66% of pets in poverty have never seen a vet. (Mithers, 2021, talkpoverty.org) We know for certain that access to affordable veterinary care, as well as access to high-quality pet food and supplies, are priorities in the Erie County region. To meet these needs, we have planned pop-up wellness clinics throughout the community, with some hosted onsite at our Lipsey Clinic. (More information will be posted on YourSPCA.org.) **These efforts connect pets and the people who love them with compassionate veterinarians in the community to ensure they have the support they need to stay healthy and happy together!**

Another key focus of our upcoming strategic plan will be to decrease conflict between humans, animals, and nature and to be good stewards of this community and this planet. Our hope is that through education and compassionate intervention, we can decrease animal suffering and thereby decrease the number of sick or injured wild animals entering our care. In peak busy season, a very common reason for wildlife intake is injury due to flying into windows. **We will provide simple, attractive tips to help home and business owners avoid such senseless injuries, thereby facilitating a safer environment for animals and leaving our space open for truly unavoidable animal intake reasons.**

If this sneak peek has you excited about what's to come, be on the lookout for our brand-new strategic plan, which will be on our website in early June. **There are incredible challenges and opportunities in our future, and I am so grateful to you for supporting us every step of the way!**

Caitlin Daly
President & CEO





Wine, Wags & BREWS!

PRESENTED BY: REGENT
Development & Construction



Tickets on sale NOW!



Wednesday, June 14, 2023
5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Buy your tickets at
YourSPCA.org/wwb23
\$45 Presale | \$55 door | \$75 VIP



**VIP TICKETS ARE
SELLING QUICKLY!
GET YOURS NOW!**

VIP tickets include...

- Early entrance to the event at 5 p.m.
- Access to the VIP tent with additional sampling opportunities.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Our Wine & Wags & Brews Social is a wine, beer, and food tasting event for people... and their dogs!

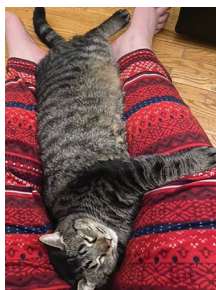
Guests will sample delicious wines, beer, and food from local wineries, breweries, and restaurants. Several pet-themed vendors and exhibitors will be on hand as well as a basket raffle and Mystery Wine Pull.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

PCI, Five Star Bank, Delaware North, Concept Construction Corporation, RKD Group, M&T Bank, Investment Analytics

YELP FOR HELP

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Our patient: Buddy, a blind five-year-old brown tabby

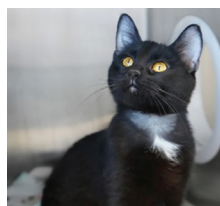
What occurred: Buddy's owner passed away, and the relative who was caring for Buddy could no longer do so. The veterinary team determined that even though Buddy was blind, it would be in his best interest to remove both of his

eyes because they were entropic, meaning his upper and lower eyelids were rolling onto his eye, causing him painful friction on the surface of his eyes.

How Yelp for Help donors helped Buddy: When Buddy was first admitted to the SPCA, he was understandably scared, and he wasn't eating. The veterinary and behavior teams did everything they could to make him feel more comfortable and secure, but it just wasn't working. They decided to see how Buddy would do in a foster home, and SPCA Adoption Counselor Lee stepped up to foster him. Once in Lee's home, he began to eat again, and his sweet personality began to show!

After Buddy was stable, he underwent eye removal surgery and returned to Lee's home to finish his

recovery. Once his sutures were removed, Lee didn't hesitate to adopt her special cat!



Our patient: Hot Tamale, a cat

What occurred: Hot Tamale came to the SPCA as a stray cat. Per intake protocol, she was vaccinated, and she experienced a terrible reaction. She became violently ill and needed

to be treated immediately. Over the next few days, she began to recover but continued to lose weight. She stopped eating and was not grooming herself.

How Yelp for Help donors helped Hot Tamale: Blood tests were run, and she was found to be anemic. She was provided IV fluids along with other medications. Hot Tamale was still not getting better, so she was given a medication that is used to treat blood parasites and other unusual infections in cats. Hot Tamale responded to the treatment and, within a few days, was eating again and gaining weight! She was deemed healthy enough to receive her next vaccine dose and to be spayed. Necessary precautions were taken, and she handled the second vaccine perfectly. After only a couple days on the adoption floor, Hot Tamale was adopted!

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: BILL AND NANCY GACIOCH

To know Nancy Gacioch is to love her. Always radiating kindness and always with a smile on her face, Nancy positively beams when you hand her a puppy!

Her incredibly optimistic outlook on life and her special heart are no doubt reasons why she's been married to her husband, William (Bill), for 60 years. "We initially met at a party and then we went on a date. When I got home from our first date, I asked my mom, 'How do you like your new son-in-law?'" Even though they hadn't gotten married that night, Nancy's intuition was spot-on!

For the first six years of their marriage, Bill and Nancy didn't have pets, but that quickly changed when they moved to Eden. They adopted a yellow Labrador retriever named Tandy. "Tandy was a great dog and we've had dogs ever since. We've even had some horses!"

Currently, the Gaciochs live with Butter, a yellow Labrador retriever and Bella, a Maltese. "Butter couldn't pass the seeing-eye dog test, and he's just the sweetest dog. And Bill just fawns over Bella. She's his baby, and he spoils her!"

Bill and Nancy have been SPCA supporters for more than 34 years. "I love animals and when I got involved, I realized that the SPCA does the right job. Everything they do is good and right for the animals."

The Gaciochs have helped the SPCA in numerous ways, including helping individual animals, sponsoring the Humane Education office suite at the SPCA, and Nancy has been a sponsor of the SPCA's Vets & Pets adoption special in honor of her uncle who served in World War II. Recently, the Gaciochs and their company, National Property Management Associates, sponsored the Yelp for Help Challenge.

The Gaciochs have three children, David, Michael, and Katherine. Bill and Nancy have inspired their family through their love of animals and dedication to the community, so much so that their son David is an SPCA board member! They also have 13 grandchildren, and last year their first great-grandchild was born!

The SPCA is so appreciative of Bill and Nancy and the Gacioch family's compassionate support!



Nancy and Bill Gacioch

OPERATION PAWS (PROVIDING ADEQUATE WATER & SHELTER)

Anyone who's lived in Western New York knows all too well the extremely cold weather that we live through each winter and the hot, humid weather we encounter each summer. During each of these opposite seasons, SPCA Officers receive calls to perform welfare checks on animals — mostly dogs — who are left outside.

Once at the scene, officers find that they most often end up educating owners about the NYS law that requires adequate shelter and access to food and water. Most of the people don't intentionally break the law, but they lack the resources needed to be able to provide appropriate shelter and food, and water for their pets. In a proactive effort to enhance the lives of dogs in need within our community, the SPCA launched a program that connects at-risk dogs with appropriate shelter called Operation PAWS (Providing Adequate Water & Shelter).

Depending on what is needed and what is available, dog owners are given free doghouses and appropriate dishes to provide access to fresh water and food, as well as proper dog care education.

SPCA Director of Human-Animal Support Services Tyler Robertson is in charge of the project. **"This is**

something that's been a long time coming, and we were happy that we were able to roll out this initiative last spring."

"Because there is a need for dog houses most especially, we joined forces with the Erie County Sheriff's Office. At their Erie County Correctional Facility, incarcerated men have been building the dog houses for us. The men are eager to build and supply our program and have made numerous suggestions along the way. The plan is for them to design two different sizes to accommodate different breeds, and they are aiming to build 10 houses in 2023."

"We're excited to help our community's animals by giving them what they need to live a healthy, long life!"

SPCA Officers are always in need of dog houses (used is fine!) and food/water bowls. If you would like to donate either, please send an email to Tyler at troberson@yoursPCA.org. If you would like to help Operation PAWS with a financial gift, please visit YourSPCA.org/donatenow. Please include in the comments that you would like your donation to go towards Operation PAWS.



Save the Date 
PAWS  **in the** **PARK** 

September 23, 2023
Beaver Island State Park
More info on YourSPCA.org 

CRUELTY SPOTLIGHT

It's not a secret. Volumes of research point to the link between cruelty to animals and violence towards people. It's no stretch, then, to recognize the reality of this fact: when SPCA Serving Erie County representatives work tirelessly to end animal cruelty, an impact is made on reducing overall violence in the community.



The SPCA's efforts towards ending violence in Erie County are indisputably paramount, especially now, as the organization works to transform the model of animal sheltering, care, and protection, with community members playing a larger role than ever before. **We all have a vested interest in making Erie County kinder, more compassionate, and less violent.**

This transformation puts an even brighter spotlight on the SPCA's animal cruelty investigations. As with all law enforcement investigations, it's nearly impossible to share with the public details as an investigation is taking place (which could negatively impact the investigation) or even after an investigation has taken place (which could negatively impact *future* investigations). Because we are not constantly sharing information on animal cruelty investigations, the fact that our officers are engaging in this work every day to help abused animals and keep our community safe can be forgotten.

Hundreds of animals are rescued annually by SPCA officers as a result of cruelty investigations, and speaking with the officers emphasizes the importance of the work being done. Visions of nighttime raids, doors being kicked in, and on-the-scene chaos compete with the reality of emotions experienced by cruelty officers when abused animals in appalling conditions are finally found ... animals who can be saved by the SPCA, and especially animals who are past the point of being saved.

SPCA Officer Lindsey Wood described one extensive animal cruelty investigation that took place in February of this year, an investigation that involved not only SPCA Serving Erie County officers but members of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the Buffalo Police Department (BPD).

"On February 3, the SPCA received a call from Homeland Security Investigations," Wood explained. "That morning, officers had executed a warrant for narcotics at a Marion St. residence, and while they were there, they saw three dogs improperly cared for, malnourished, with scarring." As HSI officers arrested five people at the property, SPCA officers worked to

obtain their own search warrant, allowing them to enter the property to check on the dogs.

By the time SPCA Officers Wood, Paul LeShay, and Jennifer Maleskis arrived that afternoon, only one dog was on location. "The poor dog was in an old closet in the basement," said Wood. "She was tethered to an old desk with a rusty, chain-link lead, only a foot or two long. There was no food, no water, and she was emaciated, dehydrated, and covered with scars. Completely neglected." The two other dogs seen earlier were nowhere to be found.

The investigation that ensued turned up information that the two dogs not located on February 3 had been removed; there was a possibility that the dogs were residing at a May St. property, the home of a Marion St. family member. SPCA officers acquired enough evidence to obtain another search warrant, and on the evening of February 8, as approximately 12 HSI and BPD officers surrounded the house, Officers Wood and Maleskis, together with SPCA Officer William Heine and SPCA Agent Nicole Abrams, executed the warrant.

Six new dogs were found at the May St. property. "Two of the dogs were found outside in a garage-like structure, tethered to makeshift dog houses," described Wood. "Another was left in a very small crate; one was chained on a two-foot lead in a hallway space that looked to be approximately three feet. Two additional dogs were located in the basement area, short-chained to old workbenches."

Also found at the scene? Two loaded handguns. The subject was arrested by BPD officers on firearms charges, and the dogs were rescued and transported to the SPCA Serving Erie County infirmary.

Officer Wood, an 18-year veteran of the SPCA, has been involved in countless animal cruelty investigations and rescues. Seven dogs rescued from brutal, violent settings in the course of just six days should offer some peace of mind. But not for Officer Wood.

"I couldn't get those two dogs still missing from Marion St. out of my head," Wood shared. "I knew they needed help. I knew I had to find them."

It was this drive that led Wood to continue the investigation.

After a close review of footage from the warrant executions, information came to light that the two missing dogs may be found not in another home ... not in a closet or basement or other clandestine location ... but they may have been hidden in plain sight. They may have been brought to a public location, a location as public as the City of Buffalo Animal Shelter (CBAS).

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TWO SPCA EMPLOYEES BECOME NYS PEACE OFFICERS

The SPCA has two more NYS Peace Officers helping to protect Erie County's animals! **Congratulations to SPCA Officers M. Homsj and L. Webb from our Cruelty Investigations Department for graduating from peace officer training! We are so proud of these incredible women!**



SHELTER GUARDIANS

Shelter Guardians are monthly donors who are so incredibly important to the work we do at the SPCA. These amazing people designate an amount that is automatically donated to the shelter each month. Their monthly, steady donations are the resources we depend on to give compassionate care to thousands of animals each year. Whether you can give \$5 or \$50 each month, it truly makes a difference!

There are many benefits:

- Provides a safe, secure way to donate every month.
- Choose the monthly amount that best suits you.
- You can cancel or change your donation at any time.
- Provides the domestic and wild animals at the SPCA with the care they need.
- 10% off every purchase at the SPCA's Petique.
- 10% off on every PawsWay purchase.
- Receive fewer mailings while still being informed about special shelter news and updates.

Are you interested in becoming a Shelter Guardian? Enroll online at YourSPCA.org/shelterguardians or call Colleen at (716) 875-7360 ext. 227.



LEAVE A LEGACY OF COMPASSION

Let your love of animals become your legacy and help sustain the operations of the SPCA for years to come by including the SPCA in your estate plans. A bequest is one of the easiest and most impactful ways to support the SPCA's mission. Legacy giving options include:

- Wills
- Trusts
- Charitable gift annuities
- Life insurance policies
- Real estate and personal property
- Retirement benefits

For more information, visit YourSPCA.org/donate/planned-giving, or contact Jennifer Gurz, Chief Development Officer, at (716) 875-7360 ext. 219 or jenniferg@yourspca.org.

ADOPTION PHOTOS



Hamlin was adopted by Lynn and they live in Getzville!



Pancake was adopted by Mary and now lives in Cowlesville!



The Courtney-Main family adopted Shelly the tortoise!



The Robb family from Lockport adopted two little rats named Grumpy and Sneazy!



Kali from Buffalo adopted Riley!



Katherine from Buffalo adopted Frannie!

We thank Buffalo Bills GM Manager Brandon Beane and his wife Hayley for sponsoring these Bills Muttfia adoptions! Every time the Bills score a home touchdown, the Beanes pay an adoption fee for an adoptable animal, and they graciously extended their generosity to include playoff games! **During the last season, they sponsored 39 adoptions!**



Rizzo the rat was adopted by Amanda from Angola!



Clarabell (l) and Skipper (r) went together to their new Boston, NY farm with past adopters Anna and Jay!



Guinea pigs Amour and Smooches were adopted by John and his family!



The Bolden Family of Buffalo adopted Kai Dennis!

CRUELTY SPOTLIGHT

Continued from page 6



On February 13, Officers Wood and Maleskis headed to the CBAS and found two dogs there that fit the description of the dogs HSI officers originally found on February 3. The dogs,

like the dog rescued from the location, were also in poor condition, emaciated, and severely neglected. HSI officers confirmed that the two dogs were, in fact, the dogs they saw on Marion St.

At the time of this writing, all dogs were in the care of the SPCA Serving Erie County, and charges against the owners are pending, although the owners have already been incarcerated on the narcotics and firearms charges.

“Being able to help nine dogs, dogs who may have suffered painful, barbaric deaths otherwise, is a major achievement for the SPCA Serving Erie County,” says Wood. “In addition to helping the dogs, two illegally loaded handguns were removed from the street ... it’s rewarding. We’re able to assist these poor dogs and help to make the community a little safer.”

Wood commends the HSI and BPD officers who assisted SPCA officers in the investigations, calling it a true picture of organizations coming together to help animals and people. “These are the tasks we can’t talk about every day. We can’t talk to friends or family, and we can’t talk to people in the community as we engage in these rescues and these investigations. It does become difficult when dealing with the emotional pieces of these situations, but we knew what we signed up for. This is what we work to accomplish. Outcomes like this are what make our daily sacrifices all worthwhile.”

The reality of the emotions experienced by officers engaged in animal cruelty investigations is a stark contrast to what some may imagine when they picture the scenes of such rescues. While the details usually cannot be publicly discussed, and while the emotions are typically kept private, they are all part of the SPCA Serving Erie County’s role in the community, part of making Erie County a true humane society.