



# COMPASSION IN ACTION



NEWSLETTER OF THE SPCA SERVING ERIE COUNTY

FALL 2025

## DOG AND CAT HOARDING

Since the beginning of this year, the SPCA Serving Erie County has been grappling with an increasing number of animal hoarding cases. While each of these truly heartbreaking situations brings unique challenges, the most significant impact has been the considerable strain on our resources. Through these rescues, we've brought 122 at-risk animals into our care, emphasizing how essential our services are and how much we rely on our community's unwavering kindness.

**The SPCA has spent \$100,382 on these three cases alone.** This staggering figure covers the immediate rescue efforts, extensive veterinary care, specialized grooming, and the ongoing rehabilitation these animals so desperately needed. We can only undertake these vital rescues and provide this level of comprehensive care because of the incredible generosity of our donors. Without your support, these animals would continue to suffer in unimaginable conditions. **Here's a closer look at the significant cases we've tackled this year:**



### FEBRUARY: HAMBURG

Our Investigations team worked in bitterly cold temperatures to save 32 puppies and dogs from unsanitary living conditions. They were relinquished to the SPCA, where they received assessments, veterinary care, and much-needed socialization enrichment before being placed for adoption. The owner was charged with animal cruelty.

**Total cost: \$18,980**

### APRIL: WILLIAMSVILLE

SPCA officers rescued 22 neglected Shih Tzu/Poodle mixes from a Williamsville home. Many of these small dogs were in shocking condition, covered in urine and feces with severely matted coats, prompting our team to begin grooming and perform health assessments for their substantial needs immediately.

The owner relinquished the dogs, except for one, to the SPCA. He was charged with animal cruelty.

**Total cost: \$35,089**



### MAY: HAMBURG

SPCA officers rescued 61 cats and kittens and three dogs from a home. The animals were covered in feces and urine, suffering from severe matting, flea infestations, and malnourishment.

The three owners relinquished the animals to the SPCA, and charges of animal cruelty were filed against the owners.

**Total cost: \$46,313**

"These hoarding cases are just heartbreaking, and they're incredibly challenging," says Chief Investigations Officer Lindsey Wood. "The scope of these cases is larger than anything I've seen in the past 20 years. But they also really show why what we do here at the SPCA is so important. Honestly, without the incredible generosity of our donors, these animals would just keep suffering in conditions you can barely imagine."

While the financial toll of these large-scale rescues is substantial, we know the true cost of not stepping in, for everyone involved, is far, far greater.

**If you're struggling to care for animals or know someone who is, please don't hesitate to reach out. Call the SPCA's Investigations Department at (716) 875-7360, ext. 214. We're here to help, and reaching out early can make such a difference for everyone involved.**



## FIND US

716-875-7360

YourSPCA.org

facebook.com/SPCAErieCounty

X: @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 CAIT DALY

Hello friends,

As summer draws to a close and the air starts to shift, we're taking a moment to reflect on the season — and what a season it's been. This year has been filled with challenges, triumphs, and countless reminders of the incredible power of compassion.

One of the most significant challenges we've faced this year has been responding to a heartbreaking increase in animal hoarding cases. Our team has stepped into truly difficult situations — rescuing dogs, cats, and kittens from homes where they'd lived in neglect and squalor. In total, we've admitted more than 100 animals into our care through these rescues. The cost of this work is staggering, covering everything from urgent medical care and rehabilitation to behavioral support. And yet, these animals are now safe, loved, and beginning again — because of you.

As we head into fall, we're looking forward to Paws in the Park, one of our favorite ways to celebrate the community we've built together. Whether you're walking with us, cheering from the sidelines, or supporting from afar, we're so grateful to have you by our side.

**Here's to resilience, healing, and the lifesaving work we'll continue to do — together.**



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH THE PAWSITIVE CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

At the SPCA, we're always looking for innovative ways to strengthen the bond between people and animals, and our Pawsitive Connection Program truly embodies this spirit! The program brings together individuals of all abilities with our homeless pets waiting for homes and educational animals, creating a mutually beneficial environment where everyone thrives.

Christine Davis, the SPCA's Director of Community Education, says, "We really wanted

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# MARY ELIZABETH LORD LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBER

## SPOTLIGHT: SARAH AND JONATHAN MUGEL

"My grandfather greatly encouraged his grandchildren to give back to others who may not be as fortunate as we were," Sarah shared.

Sarah has embraced a charitable culture, giving in both her personal and professional life, starting with her career at National Fuel in 1993. Her deep love for animals and the SPCA's mission made for a natural connection. Over the past two decades, Sarah and her colleagues at National Fuel have contributed nearly \$450,000 through corporate and employee donations.

In addition to her financial support, Sarah serves as a dedicated board member, lending her time and expertise to help guide the SPCA's strategic direction. Her commitment ensures the organization continues to strengthen the bond between people and animals throughout our community.

"We chose to include the SPCA in our estate plans because the challenges the organization addresses are deeply important to us," Sarah explained. "We were also impressed by the current leadership's thoughtful approach and their commitment to a strong future. After learning more about the SPCA's operations, we felt confident that our gift could make a meaningful and lasting impact."

Sarah and her husband, Jonathan, have shared life adventures with many dogs over the course of their thirty-year marriage. Their current furry friend is a Labrador named Aurora Borealis or AB for short.

**If you are inspired to leave a legacy gift, please contact Monique Watts, Donor Relations Manager, at [moniquew@yoursPCA.org](mailto:moniquew@yoursPCA.org) or by calling (716) 875-7360, ext. 242.**

Founded in 1867 by Mary Elizabeth Lord, the SPCA Serving Erie County was only the second organization in the nation dedicated to animal welfare. The Mary Elizabeth Lord Legacy Society honors her enduring vision of a compassionate community where animals are treated with kindness and respect.

Creating a legacy is a powerful way to ensure your values live on. Through thoughtful planning, your legacy can continue to make a lasting impact, providing life-changing opportunities for animals in need for generations to come.



Sarah Mugel with her dog AB.

**We are continually inspired by the heartfelt stories of our legacy donors. We hope you find inspiration in the spotlight above.**

## PAWSITIVE CONNECTIONS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

to find a way to help people with developmental and intellectual disabilities connect and get involved in something meaningful. And that's how the Pawsitive Connection Program got started! People with developmental and intellectual disabilities often hit roadblocks when it comes to being part of social circles, learning new things, and just getting involved in their community. So, our program offers something special!"

At its core, Pawsitive Connection offers adults and teens with developmental and intellectual disabilities unique opportunities to engage with animals through hands-on tasks. Christine says, "We are so incredibly proud to work with participants from The Arc Erie County. And for years, we've welcomed high school students from Aspire and the Williamsville

School District. Our participants help out with all sorts of daily tasks like helping with laundry, washing dishes, sorting donations, and even making toys for our animals! These students learn about caring for our small and exotic animals and assist our Community Education team with daily cleaning and feeding jobs."

We're incredibly grateful for the dedication of our participants and partners who make the Pawsitive Connection Program such a resounding success. It's a beautiful reminder of the incredible things that can happen when hearts and paws connect!



PAWS  
in the  
PARK

SPCA  
SERVING  
ERIE COUNTY

*Saving Animals With Every Step*

Saturday, Sept. 27  
at Knox Farm State Park



More information on [YourSPCA.org](http://YourSPCA.org)

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