



Humane Society/SPCA of Nelson County

NEWSLETTER



A Letter From the President

We've always had dogs in the home since the day I was born. We also got our first cat when I was 16, and more cats kept coming home with me after that. My mom, Florence, would find every excuse in the world for them not to go back with me to school or even off to my new coaching jobs around the country. Mom loved them all in the same smothering way she loves me - feeding them way too many treats, giving them a hundred different blankets, beds, and toys to make sure they were comfortable, and extolling to anyone she could about how wonderful they were.

After Mom faced the loss of her previous dog, Rusty, I knew we had to fill that hole left in our family by that precious mutt. Enter Hattie, an oopsie mutt from a backyard breeder that was being surrendered to a shelter. We have no idea what her actual breed is, but all we knew was that she was full of energy, love, and kisses. Hattie has been Mom's constant companion ever since.

Recently, Mom was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer and had a fall that required her to be hospitalized and in a rehab facility for a month and a half. Unfortunately, that meant no Hattie by her side. Mom's consistent plea throughout her stay was to be able to go home to see her dog. Once she was able to go home, Mom picked up right where she left off, often telling me stories about Hattie's adventures.

A couple of weeks after her return home, it was suggested that Mom's treatment be stopped; her body was too weak to handle it's harshness anymore. Mom was moved to hospice care where she quickly passed away with Hattie at her side.

Hattie now spends her days as my father's constant companion, probably just how Mom would have wanted it.

We love you so much, Mama. I promise we will take the best care of Hattie.

Sincerely,
Heidi Freitager, President



Florence and Hattie Freitager

SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US:

Our pets give us comfort, love, support, and someone to care for. As we celebrate 20 years of saving the dogs and cats of Nelson County, I would like you to reflect on how they, in turn, have also saved you. We will be celebrating these stories on our our next newsletter. Please email AlmostHomeAndrew@gmail.com with your story and photo. We would love feature it

HS/SPCA of Nelson County

29 Stagebridge Road
Lovingson, VA 22949

Call us: (434) 263-7722

Email us: pets@nelsonspca.org

Visit us: <https://www.nelsonspca.org/>

Almost Home Pet Adoption Center is open from 1-4pm, daily.

Board of Directors

Heidi Freitager - President
Denise Merricks, Vice President
Andrew Cotter - Secretary
Astrid Brock
Amy Eastlack
Sarah Landon
Ginger Germani
Ron Cote

A Thank You To Our Volunteers

We wanted to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank our volunteers, donors, and supporters.

Almost Home exists on the foundation of the kind and generous people who support the shelter. Over the years, you have donated your old towels, and fostered wiggly puppies. You have covered the desk, answered the phone, and served cold beverages at Fridays After Five. You have cleaned cat boxes, set feral traps, and painted murals on the kennel room walls. You have reached the public on a local radio show and walked dogs every Thursday for countless years. You have fed orphaned kittens every 2 hours, and you have helped load the cats for transport. You have managed our investments and returned pets to their families at the Spay/Neuter drop-off. You have taken in owner-surrenders, and comforted grieving pet lovers who have suffered a loss. You have sponsored kennel construction and made posters for events. You have donated items for silent auctions and passed out dollops of wet cat food in the afternoons. You've monitored the upkeep of our vans and driven animals to the emergency vet. You have provided training to dogs and volunteers alike. You have coordinated school kids and comforted our animals when their time comes. You have wielded a hammer and purchased storage sheds. You have installed our appliances, replaced lightbulbs, changed the air filters, and spread mulch in the yard. You have sponsored new fencing and well-worn building maintenance and hauled litter and food from Lovingston Farm Supply. You have administered vaccines and dispatched hair balls. You have hosted the SPCA's Holiday Party, and catered events. You have donated plants for our property and landscaping talent for our facilities and served on our Board of Directors. You have walked dogs in parades and cared for felines at Pet Supplies Plus. You have manned the Thrift Store, sorting donations and displaying merchandise, and composed animal bios for the website. You have spent countless hours caring and written generous checks. You have given wonderful, loving, safe and happy homes to the animals, as well as funded anything else we desperately need for the animals at Almost Home.

As a small, rural shelter, we have evolved, expanded, and continued to save adoptable pets because of you who donate your time, talents, money, homes, and lives to keep Almost Home thriving. Thank you for all you give to Almost Home.

- From the HS/SPCA of Nelson County Board of Directors

Save the Date

20th Anniversary Bash!

When: **Saturday, September 28, 2024**

Where: **Blue Toad Cidery** - 462 Winery Ln, Roseland, VA

What Time:

- **3-6pm - Free Outdoor Event** begins with a corn maze, food trucks, live music, and a chance to meet the dogs of Almost Home.
- **7-10pm - Ticketed 20-year Celebration Event** inside the cidery. Includes drinks, music, and silent and live auction.

News, Notes, and Appreciations

20 years...amazing. That deserves a party! So we will be hosting a 20th Anniversary Celebration at Blue Toad Cidery on 9/28. We really hope you can join us. As mentioned on page 1, we are collecting stories and photos from our supporters throughout the years. If you have something you would like us to share, please send it to AlmostHomeAndrew@gmail.com. We are looking for volunteers to help with the event planning and/or on the day of the event. If you are interested, please contact Ginger Germani at ggermani@oldpoint.com

The beginning of 2024 has seen a lot of work on grounds improvements at the shelter. Our dog runs, fencing and kennels are 20 years old and will be updated throughout the rest of this year with plans for ongoing maintenance. Our dedicated staff has been working with our board to improve and standardize some processes that will continue to grow our shelter and secure a bright future. We look forward to the release of our updated website later this year. We are really excited about it.

Supporters like you have made all of the positive changes around the shelter possible. Still, a couple call outs are necessary: Murray Elementary School 1st graders raised \$1200 for us. Good job! Also, the Batesminster Dog Show raised and donated \$2000 for us. Great Stuff!!!

Batesminster Dog Show presented us with a \$2,000 dollar check from the event! This amazing event will be held yearly.



Celebrating 20 Years...A Look Back At Our Roots

By Bette Grahame

As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of our Almost Home Pet Adoption Center, I would like to reflect on the journey from our humble beginnings to where we stand today.

In 1979, a small group of concerned residents joined together to convince the county supervisors that an animal shelter was badly needed in the county. Up until that time, unclaimed strays were tied to trees at a site in Shipman and shot to death. This group of ordinary people with extraordinary hearts, was committed to ending these inhumane practices. The group was officially incorporated as the Humane Society of Nelson County on June 11, 1981. In 1986 SPCA was officially added to the title.

In 1983, local veterinarian and member of the Humane Society Board, Dr. Steuart Ligon, submitted plans for an animal shelter to be located at the county landfill in Arrington. The highschool building trades class constructed the small building which consisted of four concrete runs. This became the county's animal control facility. The grand opening was held on October 21, 1984.

I moved to the county in the fall of 1985. In March of 1987, a friend invited me to go to a Humane Society meeting and we both became active members serving on the board. Before long, I was elected president, thus beginning a long journey for me and the Humane Society.

In 1991, the county contracted the HS/SPCA to manage the Animal Control Facility. The HS/SPCA began making many improvements over the next few years. A small building was brought in to serve as the office and another one as a storage area. Fencing was put in by volunteers for outside exercise yards. Local landscaper, Susan Gardner, donated her service to landscape the shelter with trees and shrubs she solicited from local nurseries. The Nelson County Home Builders Association erected a 12 by 24 building with materials paid for by the HS/SPCA to house puppies and cats. The HS/SPCA contributed 10,000 dollars for state-of-the-art modular kennels.

In June of 1996, the HS/SPCA began participating in a puppy rescue program, transporting puppies to the Northeast Animal Shelter in Salem, Massachusetts. This program continues and has expanded to dogs and cats. Local pet stores agreed to help the HS/SPCA by placing cats for adoption in their stores. As a result of all of these initiatives, adoptions went from less than 2% to 40% of shelter animals, but we were still having to humanely euthanize dogs.

In 1998, following the death of longtime animal control officer Joe McFadden, Sherry Blanchett



Left - Right Pat Alterneder, Anne Wood, Tedi Wright, Carolyn Lafon, Raychel Shepler, Bette Grahame, Peyton Coyner

was hired as the new Animal Control Officer and she convinced the county supervisors that there was a dangerous level of rabies in the county and the shelter should be closed to the public. The county terminated its contract with the HS/SPCA and closed the facility to the public. The HS/SPCA was permitted to take 30 dogs, 10 puppies and several cats and these were placed in foster homes and taken out for adoption to stores and community events by HS/SPCA volunteers. Many unwanted cats and kittens were also taken in from the public and cared for and transported.

In 2000, Bo and Nancy Newell of Mountain Area Realty purchased two acres of land at the intersection of Route 29 North and Stagebridge Road, as a gift for the site of the HS/SPCA's no-kill shelter. Lots of fundraising followed:

- 7 Animal House Balls
- Golf Tournament at Wintergreen
- Polo Match at Rita Mae Brown's farm
- Room Sponsorship
- Individual contributions

On April 17, 2003, former Nelson County resident, Lindsey Karl of Karl-Cannon Architecture Works donated her services to design the new HS/SPCA no-kill facility. Al Stacey of Gaia Homes was hired as General Contractor and donated his profits back to HS/SPCA. Another critical piece of the puzzle fell into place when Bo Newell, Peyton Coyner, and Mike Sherwood all past HS/SPCA board members, loaned the HS/SPCA money for the construction. Further generosity was provided by Jim Klemic's company Axel Demolition who donated the bricks for the building. Better Living in Charlottesville donated the cabinets for the shelter, and the Monroe Institute donated a sound system and hemi-sync CDs for the dog rooms. (Cont. next page)

(cont from page 2.) Meg Smith donated her time and labor to construct outside dog runs utilizing the T- Kennels removed from the former animal control facility. Betsy Greenleaf donated her services to design landscaping with trees and shrubs she and her family and friends planted. Area artists donated their time and talent to paint murals in the dog rooms making it look like the dogs were in homes, to send the message that dogs belong in a home with a family and not on a chain in the backyard. This heartfelt concept matched perfectly with the name Almost Home Pet Adoption Center, which was suggested by Rhon Schlick, the HS/SPCA's first webmaster.

Finally, on April 24, 2004, Almost Home Pet Adoption Center had its grand opening. Initially operated by volunteers for the first two years, and with the support of our generous donors, were able to hire dedicated staff. Since that time, working with Nelson County Animal Control, all non-vicious dogs have been turned over to Almost Home Pet Adoption Center. In 2013, cooperative efforts between the HS/SPCA and Nelson County Animal Control have made Nelson County a no-kill county, resulting in saving over 22,500 animals.



The complete HS/SPCA of Nelson County Board in 2004 who oversaw the opening of Almost Home Pet Adoption Center



Kaylee is a tiny little kitten who needs a home. She loves a bit of pampering and is just the cutest.



Heidi is a sweet gentle girl. She is great with humans, dogs and cats! She even walks gently on leash! All she needs is someone to cuddle.



Francine is shy, gentle, and good with dogs and people. Her slight build and calm demeanor will make her an easy addition to any home

Thank You to Deena and a Welcome to Heidi, Our New HS/SCPA President

Following in the footsteps of the inimitable, amazing Bette Grahame, who had the vision and sheer determination to create Almost Home, Deena Hamsch had the unenviable challenge of leading our shelter when Bette retired. Like many great leaders, she didn't seek the job, the job sought her. It is impossible for us to recount just how much time and effort Deena has put towards our shelter as we transitioned from a volunteer based organization to one with full-time staff, operating procedures, and a thousand other bureaucratic tasks needed to make sure that our staff and volunteers can keep their focus on the animals. It wasn't easy, but she got us through it and those of us on the board can't thank her enough.

Now we introduce Heidi Freitag, the organization's 3rd President in 20 years. Heidi started out bringing home stray cats in high school, and has been committed to animal welfare ever since. She started fostering, and got involved with Almost home back in 2012. She formally joined the HS/SPCA of Nelson County Board of Directors in 2017, and has since also served as Vice President. In her spare time, Heidi coaches Varsity Softball and runs her own business, and loves spending time with her large family of cats and dogs. We are so grateful to have her at the helm.

Gifts Received in 2023-2024

We are so thankful for all the support we receive from this community. We work hard to get every detail right in the Donors, Memorials and Honoraria listings, but we know that mistakes are almost inevitable. We apologize for the errors, and hope you will let us know so we don't repeat them.

Gifts in Memoriam

All the cats I adopted from Almost Home, by Judy Meincke
All the Pets we have lost, by Sandra & John Des Fausses
Anita Stein , by Lewis Stein
Ann Marie Kaminski, by Nancy Holland
Apples, by Kate Arnold
Art Grahame, by Ellen R. English, Lewis Stein
Arthur Spalding, by Joan Spalding
Bandit, by Theresa Singleton
Becky Hibbard, by Sara Harris
Benji, Jack, Kaiser, Bill, Max Smokey, Katie, by William Stevenson III
Bessie, by Spanky VanKan
Bruno, by Linda Phillips
Brutus & Micky, by Sayoko Macdougall
Buddy, by Ellen Mansfield
Captola, by Theresa Singleton
Carmel Goodwin Sr., by Carole Saunders, Sarah Burnett
Carol Janus & Rebecca 'Becky' Roberts, by Betty Wren
Cecil Micklem, by George & Terri Olcott
Chance, by Janelle Weaver
Charles McGatha & my Gracie, by Shirley McGatha
Cheerful, by Niki Skaggs
Chloe, by Stephen Seymour
Clay, by Andy & Joyce Brown
Crimson, by Beverly & Bill Faulkenberry
Denise Whitman, by Lynette Latham
Dinky, by Burt & Ginny Poole
Divot, by Cynthia Patterson & Nancy Church
Edith Burns, by Janie Stevens Mawyer Memorials
Elizabeth Morgan, by Andrew & Liz Carter, Christian Lewis
Emma & Dixie, by Cindy Bryant
Eve, by Janice Walker
Foxy, by Larry Sheridan
Freddy, by Tom & Lyn Olson, John Shifflett Olson
G. David Baer, by Lia Poorvu
Gabby & Pixie, by Nancy McMoneagle
George K. Visich, by Rosemarie Lanard
Gerald L. McManis, by Jerrie Stewart
Ginger, by Kathryn Croll
Grover J. Stearns, by Marilyn Riley
Helga Zetocha, by Rhonda Glass
Henry, by Mary Walker
Henry T. Ashley, by Gloria Ashley
Hunter B. Price, by Emily J. Payne
Ivan, Lela & Jim Stevens & J. Carmel Goodwin, by Judy & Mike Smithers
J.D. & Chloe, by Della Yannuzzi
James Douglas Kidd, by Sheri Kebbel
Janie Stevens Mawyer, by Lori Hanger, Wells Sheffield Funeral Home
John H. Burnette, by Toni Burnette
John Ralston & Lilah, by Carolyn E. Peters
Joker, by Sayoko MacDougall
Joyce Brown, by Gayla Mills
Kay Jones, by Vinnie Valentino
Kipper, adopted as Pharoah in 2012, by Laura Pyle

Larry Tyler, by J.D. Ho
Laurie Monroe, by Maria Whitehead
Lilah, by Betty Bourne
Luke Skywalker, by Elizabeth Dunkle
Mac, Butchie & Sophie, by Anne Krieger
Macy & Baxter Lorenz, by Lish Lorenz
Manina, by Mariana Trejos
Margaret B. Forsyth, by David C.W. Roach
Mariah "Molly" Carter Rogers, by Karen D'Alessandro
Mary Floyd Anderson, by Rita Johnson
Melby, by Eunice Paulett
Merle & Autumn, by Jaye Davis
Michael Collins , by Lori Stansal
Missy, Mr. Gray, Oh Sea, Sandy, by Edwin & Dale Reynolds
Mollie, Shadow, Misty, Janice, Sparky, Thomas, Heidi, Max & Pepper, by George & Rita Nicklas
Molly & Maggie, by Mariann Smith
Mosbey, by Margaret Nunnery
Nadia, by Lyn & Thomas Olson
Nancy Armacost & Herb Stanley, by Barbara Brownley
Nelly, by Jane McGann
Nelson, by Helen Driver, Vivki & Rob Martin Driver
Nicholas & Naomi, by Nancy Dorman
Nokie, Hobbit, Beezle amd Stella, by Jim & Molly Crowell
Oliver, by Carolyn Marckel, Blake Shaw Marckel
Orphan Annie & Huggles, by Nancy Loth
Patricia Callahan, by Wanda Ballowe
Patty, by Elizabeth & David Ferrall
Paul H Shelton, by Don & Pauline Kendall
Paultette Leeper's beloved Lab, Blinker., by David C. W. Roach
Peanut, by Meghan Marino
Phoebe Kritzer, by Nancy Kritzer
Pip, by Johanna L. Gittemeier
Porter & Jasmine, by Teresa Quinn
Portia, our sweet kitty, by Ann & Ray Ashton
Prince, by Denise Whitman
Red & Trevor, by Carol Faust
Rucker, by Kathleen Wood
Sammy Dog, by Linda Wilkes
Samson, by Mary Cumbie
Sandy, by Elizabeth Pritchard
Sandy Carrell, by Bette Grahame, Sayoko Macdougall Grahame
Sasha Pfaltz, by Susan Pfaltz
Saul Heller & Linda Ellison, by Sharon Bloom
Sawyer, by Maryann Dupes
Sherri & Cosmo, by Sue Waterman
Shirley Dean Wieringo, by Tillie Hunter, Nancy Roakes Hunter
Skippy, by Kay Pfaltz
Smudge, by Neal Grandy
Stinky dog & Tommy Cat, by Susan Davis
Toby, Mollie, Ginger, & Tiger, by Ronald & Patricia Turnbull
Victor Cabas Jr., by Mallory Webb
Winnie, by Donald Glasser
Winnie & Lucy, by Delia Laux

Gifts Received in 2023-2024

Gifts in Honorarium

Jack the Cat & Peewee, by Carol Baer
All of the cats we've shared in our lives, by Scott & Marilyn Duncan
All Stray Animals, by Sandra A. Des Fosses
All the dedicated volunteers at Almost Home, by Terri & George Olcott, Harriett Schultz
All the Sailer Canines, by Anna Sailer
Andy & Chanda Zemon, by Gloria Ashley
Barbara Fiske, by Emily Nelson-White, Philippa Proulx
Batesville Methodist Church, by Elizabeth Layman
Bette Grahame, by Alan & Susan Elise Morton, Maya Proulx, Dr. Debbit Stein, Lewis Hunter, Robert Carrell, Heywood & Judith Greenberg
Beyla & Enu, by Neal Grandy
Bruce Tyler, by Ellen R English
Brutus & Micky, by Sayoko Macdougall
Caroline R. Pattie, DVM, CVA, by Barbara Porter
Chase, Rocky, Rodney & Barbara, by Michael Ellison
Cindy Palmer, by Lois Horne
Cora Pennell, for her invaluable foster care work, by Joann Luczak
Cricky Cat, by Sara Sherrard
Dana Henderson, by Louise Tayloe, Nancy Tilman Tayloe
David & Manuela, by Jessie Birdseye
Delilah & Cricket, by John & Margie Newell
Denise Simmons & Larry Johnson, by Melissa Simmons
Dixie & Nina Trott
Dr. Carol Janus, by Alan Diamond
Dr. Jennifer Magill in her treatment of shelter animals, by Joan & Len Wolowiec
Ed & Flower VanKan, by Phebe Vick, Susan & Richard Watts, Ed & Ginger Fink
Eveready, by Linda Fink
Gemini Wire Fox Terriers, by Carol Smith
George & Terri Olcott, by Marion VanVorst
Geri Darco, by Barbara Betus
Gio, Champ, Brodie & Dolly, by Dr. L.E. Cooper
Helen Cannon, by Kathy Weaver
HoneyBee & Karie, by Cathy Parrish

Jasmine, by Gail Peterson
Jean Gillet, by Susan Hodous
Jon Mikalson, by Mary Mikelson
Kate & Adam Neff, by Anne Buckwalter
Kay Pfaltz, by Laura Scherman
Larry Tyler, by Diana Tyler
Leroy the Cat, by Little Hat Creek Farm LLC
Linda Williams, by Heath Williams
Mani Aguilar & David Pascual, by Victoria Quick
Margaret Haney, by Susan Hodous
Mark & Tami Radecke, by Mark & Tami Radecke
Mocha, by William Ouzts
Molly & Harley, by Jan Coffey
Molly & Maggie, by William Perkins
Mrs. Leny de Ronda, by Digna Gantt
Nancy H Wood, by Stephanie Schultz
Patricia Phillip's 70th Birthday, by Linda Phillips
Paws for a Cause, by Mary Ann Macpherson
Payton & Carol Coyner, by Robert & Carol Keane, Heywood & Judith Greenberg, Jenna Konizer
Rascal, by Deborah Harkrader
Rel, Millie & Duke, by June Pritchett
Rocky & Dungannon Farm, by Beverly Schell
Rocky's 8th Birthday, by James K. & Sayoko MacDougall
Sadie, by Catherine Truslov
Sammie, Quimby, & Rudi, by Mike & Cheryl Capps
Sandy Carrell, by Robert Carrell
Sayoko MacDougal, by Mary Jo Doig, Barbera Fiske, Robert Carrell
Shirley Wierengo, by Patricia Young
Sid, by Peter G. & Jo-Anne P. Tempest
Stacy & Collin Bright, by Carol Anne Bright
Tedi Wright, by Alice Tor
Theresa Singleton, by Chris Singleton
Tigy, Rex, & Heidi, by Ingrid Brock
Tippy & Rocky, by Sayoko MacDougall
Vanta, by Joseph Stirt M.D.
Zimnia & Virginia, by Paul & Lynn Ford

Your Donations help us care for Dogs and Cats like:



Jaxson, who is a great hiking buddy. He's great in the car, good on the leash, and a total cuddle bug once you are back home.



Candy, a fun playful kitty. She is looking for a calm and quiet home. She would be ecstatic if you took her snuggle bud, Jagger, too.



Felix, who is an all-around great dog. He's good with dogs and people. He has gentle nature, is responsive, and trainable.... handsome too!

...they can't thank you enough!



Humane Society/SPCA of Nelson County
29 Stagebridge Road Lovingston, VA
22949

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage Paid
Charlottesville, VA
Permit No. 232

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- September 28 - Twenty Year Anniversary Fundraiser at Blue Toad Cidery
- July 20th - Nelson Community Health Fair at Blue Ridge Medical Center Saturday,
- July 6th - Fourth of July Celebration at Wintergreen Resort
- August 31- Cabin Jam at Wintergreen Resort
- October 19 - Oktoberfest at Wintergreen Resort

COME CELEBRATE WITH US!

On **Saturday, September 28, 2024**, Almost Home/Nelson County SPCA will host its **20th Anniversary Bash at Blue Toad Cidery**. There will be a free family portion of the day from 3-6pm with a corn maze, food trucks, live music outside and an opportunity to meet some of the wonderful animals we have for adoption at the shelter. **The ticketed event will begin at 7pm** inside the Cidery and include food, drinks, live music, and a silent and live auction. Ginger Germani, a member of our Board of Directors, is currently organizing the event and is looking for volunteers to help with planning and sponsorships. We are looking for volunteers to help on the event planning committee and/or on the day of the event. If you are interested, please contact Ginger Germani at ggermani@oldpoint.com

Humane Society / SPCA of Nelson County operates the no-kill Almost Home Pet Adoption Center, where stray and surrendered companion animals are cared for until they are adopted to their forever homes, and provides low-cost spay/neuter services to the community.