

PETS COME FIRST ANNUAL REPORT 2025



PETS COME FIRST
2451 GENERAL
POTTER HIGHWAY
CENTRE HALL PA
16828

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



2025 has been a busy and productive year at Pets Come First, marked by growth, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to the animals and people we serve.

Thanks to the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supporters, Pets Come First helped 298 dogs, 248 cats, and 20 small animals—including rabbits and guinea pigs—find loving homes this year. Each adoption represents not just an animal placed, but a life changed and a family made whole.

Beyond adoptions, our impact extended deep into the community. We spearheaded the spay and neuter of hundreds of dogs and cats, helping to prevent unwanted litters and improve long-term animal welfare. We also provided hundreds of spay/neuter vouchers, reducing financial barriers for pet owners, and continued to support families in need through our Pet Pantry, distributing food and essential animal care supplies to ensure pets could remain safely in their homes.

This year also brought growth in leadership. The Board of Directors welcomed four new members, strengthening our collective expertise and energy, and we are actively seeking additional members to help guide Pets Come First into its next chapter. We also hired our first full-time Director of Development.

There is much important work ahead—from expanding programs to strengthening our financial sustainability—and we are excited about the path forward. None of this would be possible without the generosity of our donors, the tireless efforts of our staff and volunteers, and the compassion of everyone who believes that animals deserve care, dignity, and a second chance.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, **thank you** for being part of the Pets Come First community. Together, we are building a stronger future for animals and the people who love them.

MISSION

A photograph of two rabbits in a wire cage. The rabbit in the foreground is grey and brown, looking towards the left. The rabbit behind it is white with orange and grey patches, also looking left. They are in a cage with wire bars, and some hay is visible at the bottom.

Our Mission

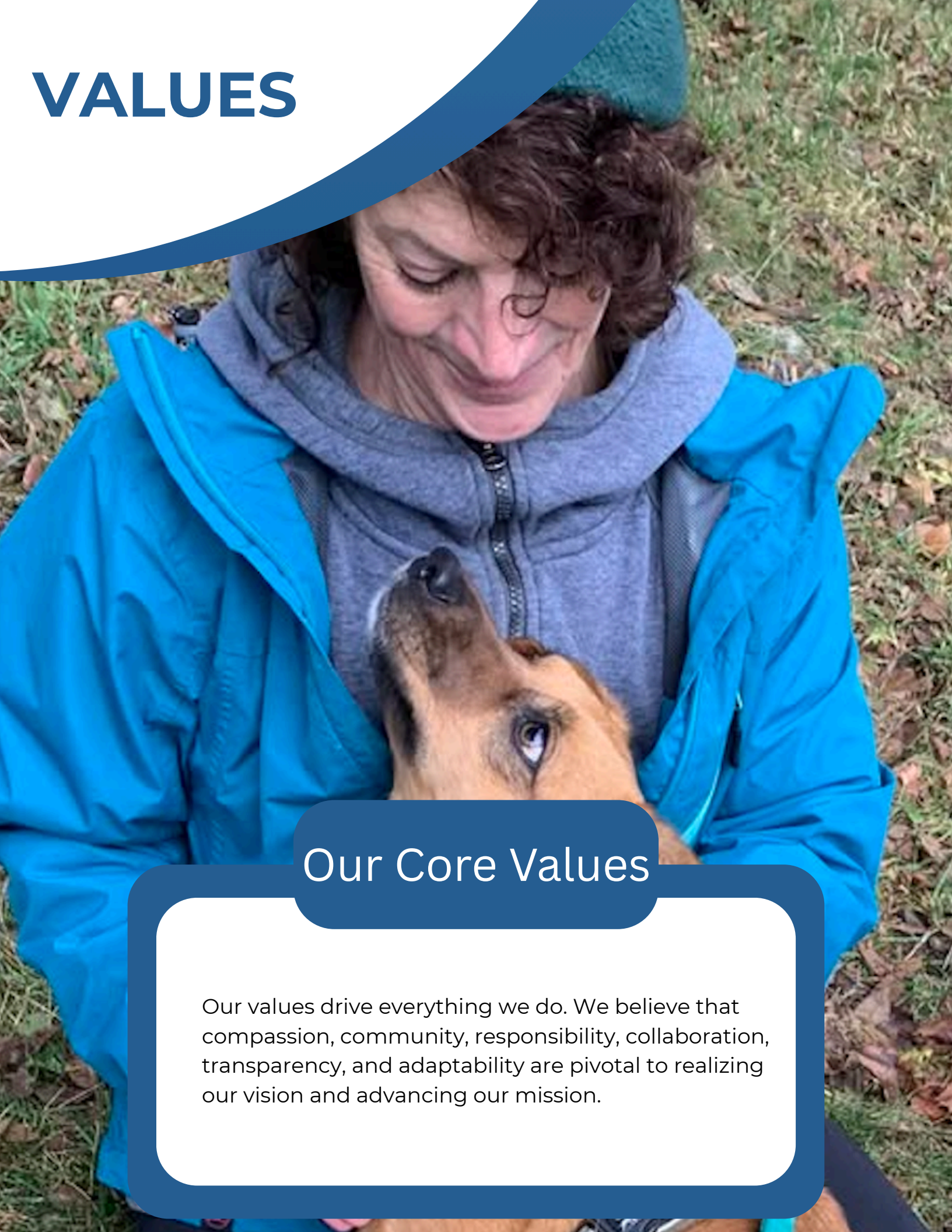
Pets Come First is dedicated to giving animals a second chance through safe shelter, compassionate care, and responsible rehoming. We focus on helping animals in need—especially those who are abandoned, surrendered, or at risk—and work closely with volunteers, local partners, and community members to ensure every animal receives quality care and a fair opportunity for a better life.

VISION

Our Vision

We envision a community where every animal has a safe, loving home. By working collaboratively with shelters, foster networks, veterinarians, and animal welfare organizations, we aim to reduce animal neglect and homelessness across Central Pennsylvania while strengthening the systems that support long-term animal well-being.

VALUES



Our Core Values

Our values drive everything we do. We believe that compassion, community, responsibility, collaboration, transparency, and adaptability are pivotal to realizing our vision and advancing our mission.



Compassion

We treat every animal with care, patience, and respect, recognizing the unique needs and experiences each one brings with them.



Community

We believe animal welfare is a shared responsibility and rely on the dedication of volunteers, supporters, and partners to help animals and the families who love them.



Responsibility

We promote spay and neuter services, preventative care, and responsible pet ownership as essential tools for improving animal welfare.



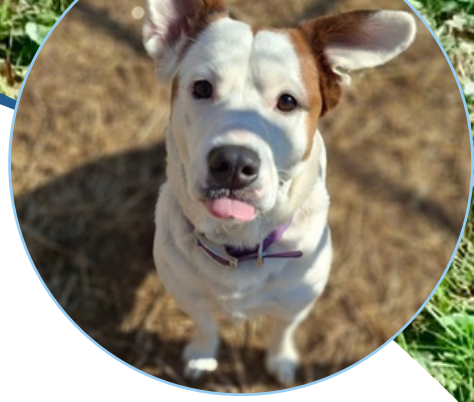
Collaboration

We work alongside other rescues, veterinarians, and local agencies to extend our reach and help more animals in need.



Transparency

We are committed to using resources responsibly and being accountable to our donors, partners, and the broader community.



The year *in numbers*

298

Dogs Adopted

248

Cats Adopted

8

Rabbits Adopted

12

Guinea Pigs
Adopted

310

Dog Intakes

257

Cat Intakes

1124

Animals
Spayed/Neutered

1161

SN Vouchers Sold

239

TNR

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Adopted out 298 dogs, 248 cats, and 20 other animals.
- Spayed/neutered 1124 animals.
- Took in 310 dogs, 257 cats.
- Expanded the Board of Directors.
- Hired our first full time Director of Development.
- Worked with Smeal College of Business to develop our first strategic plan.
- Created our first online volunteer portal to capture volunteer hours and communicate more effectively.
- Updated operating procedures.
- Volunteers attended training in emergency animal care.
- Increased our collaboration with volunteers from Penn State's Project Paws student club.
- Joined the Happy Valley Adventure Bureau.
- Established a partnership with Volunteer Centre County.
- Developed our first integrated fundraising database using Salesforce.
- Set up our first grant management dashboard.
- Attended multiple seminars on improving shelter operations, adoption experience improvement, and animal welfare through Maddie's Fund and the UC Davis School of Veterinary Science Learniverse, the ASPCA, and Shelter Animals Count.
- Continued our monthly articles in the Lewistown Sentinel.
- Met with staff from Centre Foundation who provided guidance on strategic planning and finance.

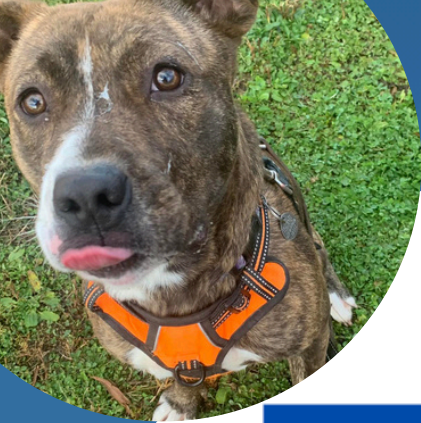


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This year has been a busy one in terms of events and community collaborations. From fundraisers to donations drives, our staff and community have stepped up and given their all to help us in 2025.

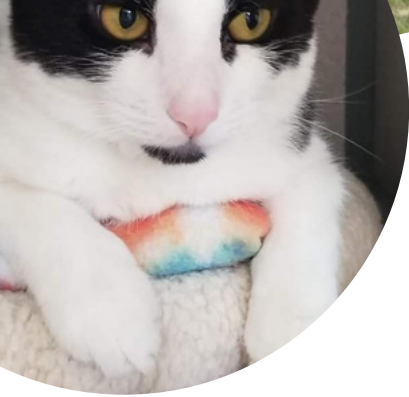
Here are some highlights from this year:





EVENTS & OUTREACH

Month	Event
January	Penns Valley High School Junior and Varsity Wrestling Benefit Spaghetti dinner benefit at the Boalsburg Fire Company
March	Hidden Screams Lewistown held a fundraiser with Curse of the Leprechaun
April	Spring Bingo Mountain View Country Club Easter Candy Sale Centre Foundation Centre Gives Seminar April
July	Yoga with the Pups at PYP Studio
August	Booth at Grange Fair
September	PCF Skytop Mountain Golf Club Tournament
October	Aaronsburg Dutch Fall Festival October 2025 Way Fruit Farm Everything Pumpkin Festival
November	Holiday Wine Sale Kayte's k-9s Thanksgiving dinner
December	Giving Tuesday Tait Farm Selected as local charity for Subaru Share the Love Event The Bryn Home Genius Exteriors Shelter Donation Drive Pictures with Santa Paws Centre Hall Fires Company Bingo Donations



LOOKING AHEAD: WHAT WILL 2026 BRING?

As we look to the year ahead, Pets Come First is focused on meeting today's challenges while building a more sustainable future for the animals and community we serve.

Like many shelters across the country, we are navigating a changing landscape that requires thoughtful planning, adaptability, and continued community support.

Pets Come First anticipates continued challenges, including longer lengths of stay, fewer adoptions, and rising operational costs. To address these trends, we are developing a comprehensive fundraising strategy, pursuing new grant opportunities, and planning facility improvements that support animal well-being and long-term sustainability.

We are planning our first capital campaign to begin long needed improvements to the facility and enhance animal care in winter of 2026. Our fundraising efforts are key to our future stability, the well being of our animals, and our ability to grow our contribution to the greater shelter community in the region.

In addition to fundraising, we are developing our first strategic plan. With the help of students from Smeal College of Business, we have been undertaking a strategic planning process that includes financial planning, needs assessment, and policy direction. Our goal is to create a more progressive and responsive organization that can continue to grow into the future.

Our social media will also be seeing a refresh. We will be working with students from the Penn State College of Communication to streamline our social media and create a communications strategy. We will also be launching our new website which will be more integrated and responsive.

Finally, we will be expanding our board of directors. There is so much work ahead, and our new members will help us achieve our goals.



LENGTH OF STAY & ADOPTION TRENDS

1

Over the past year, we have seen an increase in average length of stay for animals in our care, along with lower overall adoption numbers. This reflects broader trends affecting shelters nationwide. Longer stays place additional demands on staff, volunteers, and resources, and they underscore the importance of targeted adoption outreach, foster expansion, and community engagement efforts in the year ahead.

RISING COSTS OF CARE

At the same time, the cost of operating the shelter continues to rise. Veterinary care, medical supplies, food, utilities, and facility maintenance have all increased significantly. While we remain committed to providing high-quality care to every animal, these rising costs require us to be more strategic and intentional in how we plan, fundraise, and allocate resources.

2

FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT

Our facility plays a critical role in animal health, safety, and adoptability. As we look ahead, we are assessing needed facility improvements to enhance animal well-being, improve operational efficiency, and create a better experience for adopters, volunteers, and staff. These improvements may include upgrades to animal housing areas, medical and intake spaces, and infrastructure systems that support long-term sustainability.

3

STRENGTHENING OUR FUNDRAISING STRATEGY

To address these challenges, we will prioritize the development of a comprehensive fundraising strategy in the coming year. This includes launching targeted fundraising campaigns to support facility improvements, expanding donor engagement efforts, and submitting grant applications to help offset rising operational costs.

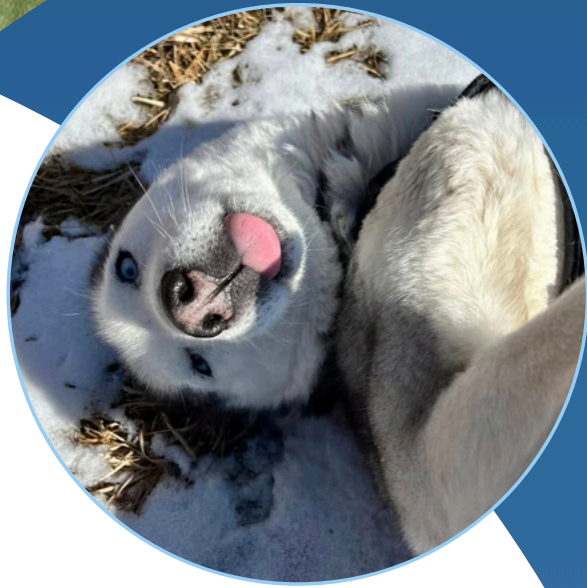
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MOVING FORWARD

Strengthening our development efforts will allow us to invest in our facility, support our staff and volunteers, and continue providing compassionate care to animals in need. The year ahead will require focus, collaboration, and continued generosity from our community. With a clear strategy, strong partnerships, and a shared commitment to our mission, Pets Come First is prepared to meet these challenges head-on and build a stronger, more resilient future for the animals who depend on us.



STORIES THAT TOUCHED OUR HEARTS



Beautiful Husky Abby, who came to us as a shy, frightened girl after a life living outside, found her forever home. After just a short time with us her true personality started to show-- including her sassy, tongue-out side! Abby found a forever home with an amazing family.



Mavis was found as a 1 month old kitten crying near an ice cream stand after her mother and siblings were hit by a car. She came to the shelter in July and we all fell in love with her. She was adopted in October.



Katina was given to us in April after her previous owner died. As an FIV positive cat she was a bit harder to adopt. But then a lovely family decided she was the cat for them and she was adopted in November!



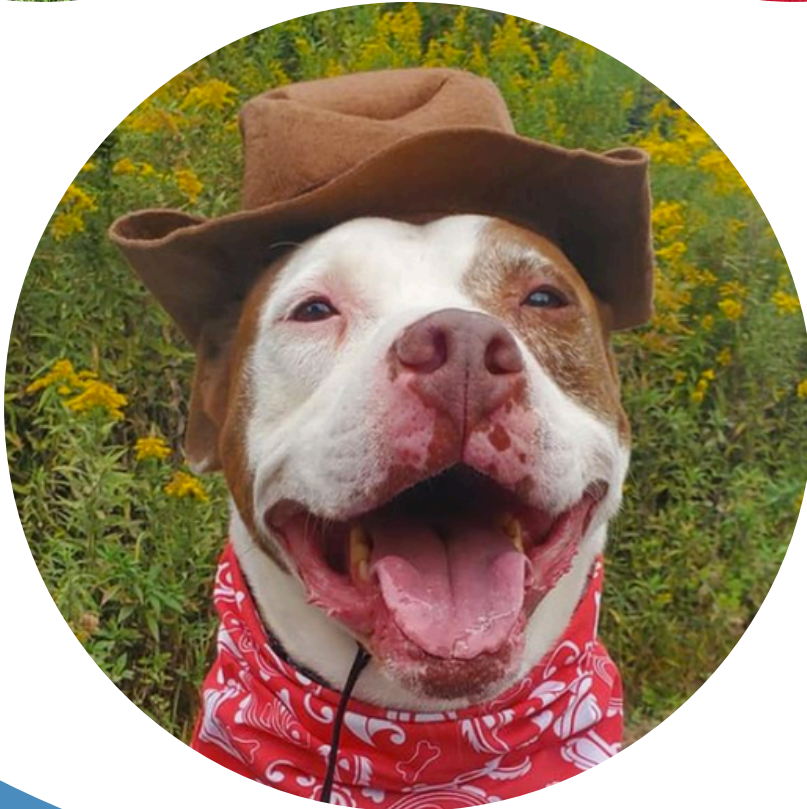
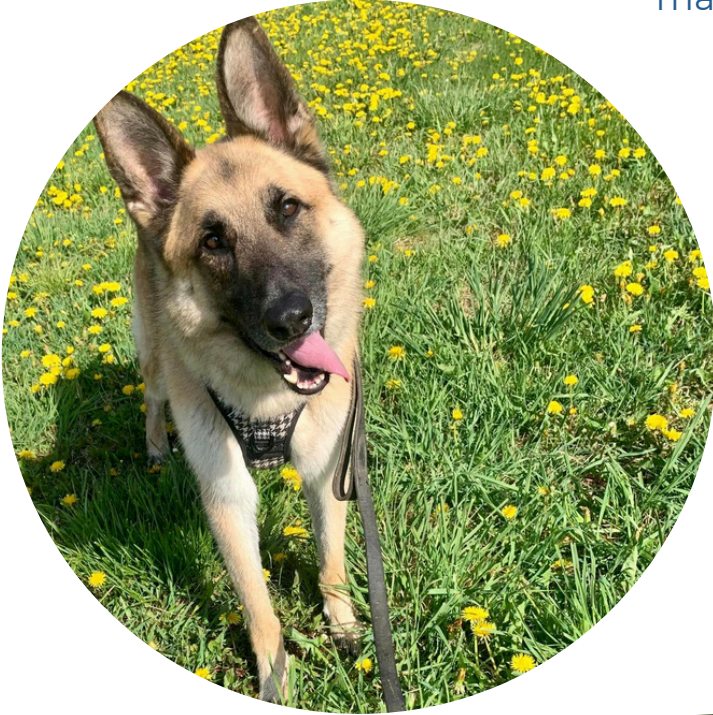
Our handsome boy Buddy finally found his best friend for life this year. This wonderful boy was with us for over two years!

THE BOYS

We wanted to take a moment and think about our favorite boys.

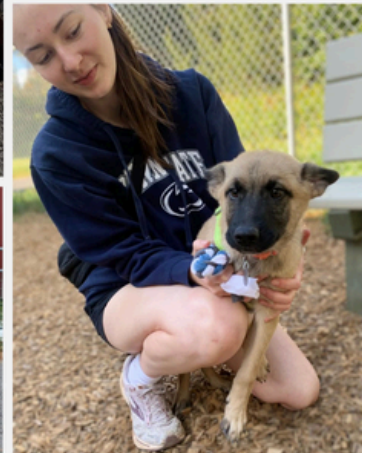
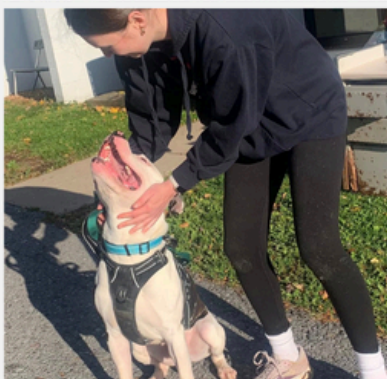
Creed, Scout, and Elvis, who were with PCF for many years, crossed the rainbow bridge in the last year. We all truly loved them and our hearts are broken that they were never adopted.

The PCF community watched these three boys and all of their shenanigans with as much joy as we did! We will miss them in so many ways.



VOLUNTEERS

We want to recognize our amazing volunteers from 2025. They walk our dogs, clean our kennels and litter boxes, foster puppies and kittens, support our events, transport animals, and more. Each year they devote thousands of hours to our shelter. We could not do what we do without them. If you would like to join the ranks of our dedicated volunteers, fill out an application on our website!



STAFF

Our staff are the heart of Pets Come First. They are so busy, it is hard to find a picture of them! Day in and day out, they show up with compassion, patience, and determination to care for every animal who comes through our doors. The work is not easy—it involves long hours, heavy lifting, cleaning, feeding, medicating, and comforting animals who may be frightened, sick, or recovering from difficult situations. Yet our team approaches each day with kindness and professionalism, always focused on giving every pet the best chance at a happy, healthy future.

We are incredibly grateful for their dedication. Their roles require not only physical stamina but also deep emotional strength, as they celebrate adoptions and happy endings while also facing moments of loss and uncertainty. Through it all, they remain committed to our mission and to the animals who depend on them. Our staff truly make Pets Come First a place of hope, healing, and second chances, and we could not do this work without them. Luckily, while they are working, someone is always available to keep their chairs warm. Thank you to our staff for all your work in 2025.





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elena Gairloch, President

Shannon Cover, Vice President

Deb Zimmerman, Treasurer

Maurie Kelly, Secretary

Sue Bryan

Peter Manbeck

Dana Naughton

Management

Deb Warner, Shelter Manager

Holley Cyone, Director of Development



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THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING PETS COME FIRST!