

OUR CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

For organizations like **Friends**, 2023 was a tough year. Pet surrenders increased significantly and we struggled to keep up with the constant flow of animals coming into the **Burlington County Animal Shelter**. We had to think of creative ideas to save more animals in our community and help keep them out of the shelter. We started a *Shelter Diversion* team to help families keep their furry friends at home, if at all possible. We also looked at some other root causes of surrenders and saw inflation and the rising cost of dog and cat food as an issue. We are now providing pet food to a local County food pantry in the hopes that this relief will keep pets home where they belong.

On a positive note, **Friends** was gifted a building that is now serving as a cat adoption center, a holding center for ferals awaiting clinic and a place to host dog adoption events. Affectionately known as the *Hissy Hut*, this building has enabled us to help over 150 abandoned friendly cats in the five months we have been open, through adoptions, new fosters and placement in the building. We also established a partnership with Ace of Spays, a local veterinarian who is focused on reducing the number of feral community cats through TNVR (trap, neuter, vaccinate, return). This clinic has been a game changer as before we had to transport most of our feral cats to Willow Grove, PA, which was hard on our volunteers. A generous gift of \$20,000 from the *Spellbound Community Giving Corp.* will allow us to do building upgrades and open a future clinic.

Thanks to your generosity and support we are able to fund a majority of our life saving programs and pay for all advanced medical care at the County shelter. In order to reach our NOKILL goal, a commitment is needed from both our County and local town governments. As we continue to make our voices heard, your support will be crucial and much appreciated.

Again, thank you for believing in our mission and providing a voice for homeless animals. Hundreds of animals are living a better life thanks to your compassion and generosity.

Sincerely,
Ann Rapisarda, Board Chairman

ANNUAL REPORT



2023 SNAPSHOT

\$519,609

Donations

3,596

Donors

3,841

Shelter Intake for
Dogs and Cats

550

Dedicated
Volunteers



WE AIDED 502 ANIMALS

As an open intake shelter, the Burlington County Animal Shelter is required to take in any animal. Sadly, sometimes they come in with wounds or other injuries. Many of the dogs and cats that come into the shelter arrive with major medical issues often requiring extensive surgery and advanced veterinary care. **Friends** steps up to cover the costs of restoring their health and making them adoptable. Your generosity has enabled us to give shelter animals a healthier future.

In 2023, **Friends** covered medical expenses for over 500 shelter animals as well as community cats and fosters. Among them were **Bob, Sanders and Roscoe**.

Super friendly cats, orange tabby Bob and black and white Sanders, arrived at the shelter at different times, but both had the same problem: they had each suffered "tail pull" injuries that affected different tail vertebrae. These fractures likely happened as they tried to get away from something while that something (or someone) held the tail, thus separating the vertebrae and basically rendering the cat's tail limp and useless. Both cats ended up having their tails amputated. Sanders' case was more severe because his break was higher up in a position that caused more discomfort and subsequently required two surgeries to correct. Today, these boys have both recovered and found their forever homes. Sanders was doubly lucky, having been fostered and then adopted by a **Friends** volunteer.

Roscoe, a 12-year-old Pomeranian Chihuahua mix, was surrendered to the county shelter with a severe injury to his hind foot. His ankle was broken and the foot hanging by the skin. Roscoe underwent surgery to amputate his foot. The veterinarian managed to keep the leg and attached the pad from his biggest toe to the bottom. This will make it easier for this fur baby to keep on the move. Thanks to **Friends'** volunteer, Mike Drew, and a fund he established in honor of his dog Lola, this adorable pup recovered and was rescued by the *Tiny Paws Rescue*. He looks forward to a happy life with his new paw and pals.

ACTIVITIES

DETAILS

OUTCOME

Advanced Medical

Covered advanced medical costs for animals whose lives may have ended prematurely

- \$49,090 helped 60 dogs
- \$96,757 helped 442 cats

Spay/Neuter Services

Reduce the number of homeless animals

- \$93,588 fixed 1,721 animals

Adoption Fees

Promote adoption to relieve shelter crowding

- Prepaid fees for senior & special needs animals: \$11,118

Training and Enrichment

Improve the lives and adoptability of long time shelter residents

- Spent \$9,036 on dog training

NEW ENDEAVORS

A Home for the TNVR TEAM: Thanks to the generosity of a former board member and long-time donor, **Friends** now has a brick and mortar location. Affectionately known as the “Hissy Hut,” the building opened its doors in September. It serves as an adoption and TNVR recovery center as well as a site for dog and cat adoption events and community engagement opportunities. We have already helped over 150 abandoned friendly cats. Eventually, it will feature a low-cost spay/neuter clinic and wellness center.

Surrender Diversion Program: Initiated in January 2023, our Surrender Diversion initiative is dedicated to assisting county pet owners while helping decrease the number of animals brought to the county shelter. It provides the public with education and other forms of help to either keep their pets or safely rehome them. We’ve made contact with 141 owners and have kept 62% of the cats and 79% of the dogs we’ve come in contact with out of the shelter.



SPECIAL EVENTS: DOUBLE THE FUN

Hosted by MegaBites Events, the first annual **FurBaby Festival** was held in April at the Burlington County Fairgrounds. Over 2,000 animal lovers spent a warm day listening to live music, enjoying a variety of food and treats from 15+ food trucks, along with adult beverages. **Friends** netted **\$6,200** from the event.

We held our signature event, the annual **PawPrints Pet Fest & 5K**, in September at historic Smithville Park, Eastampton. It attracted over **5,000** attendees, **403** runners and walkers, **51** vendors, **8** food trucks, **4** nonprofit organizations and **47** sponsors. At the event, we welcomed our *Circle of Friends*, a group of dedicated donors. PawPrints raised nearly **\$75,000** for **Friends**. The corresponding **Big Dog 50/50** raffle pot totaled **\$120,00**, giving us a net profit of **\$41,000**, after taxes and expenses.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engaging residents of Burlington County is critical to our efforts in partnering with the county's only animal shelter and reducing the number of homeless animals in our community.

Friends hosted other events throughout the year, including **Clear the Shelter** at the end of August, our first-ever **Paw-LLoween Open House** in October, and the popular **Santa Paws** event in December that raised over \$2,400 to help homeless animals in Burlington County.

A team of **Friends** volunteers rode in the *Spellbound Century* charity bike ride on a steamy Saturday in July, while others volunteered. **Friends** also was a beneficiary of the proceeds from that annual event.

We also exhibited at various community events throughout Burlington County, raising awareness of our mission and how you can help.



YOUR CARING SAVED AND IMPROVED THEIR LIVES

In 2023, **Friends** was able to give shelter animals the hope of good health and loving homes thanks to the generosity of over **3,500** donors. Combined with fund-raising events, donations totaled **\$519,609**.

In addition:

- Our **550** dedicated volunteers donated **38,000** hours of their time, equating to over \$1.3 million, to **help cats and dogs in our community**.
- More than **112** fosters opened their homes to litters of kittens or adult cats or dogs with special needs or medical requirements.
- **Thirty-six custodians** monitored over **247** coin boxes in various locations, bringing in **\$38,418**.

THANK YOU DONORS, FOSTERS, AND VOLUNTEERS!



✉ friendsofbcas.org@gmail.com

📍 3111 Route 38, Suite 11 #238
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054

🌐 <http://www.friendsofbcas.org/>

☎ (856) 533-0464