

Dane County Humane Society's

family tails

Spring 2026 • Issue 18



2025 Annual
Report Inside



Leading the Way

One Person's
Big Impact

Helping Every
Dog Thrive

CELEBRATING
25 YEARS
OF HELPING
WISCONSIN'S WILDLIFE

From the Executive Director



A compassionate society grows through people, partnerships, and everyday actions across our community.

Throughout this issue of Family Tails, you'll see compassion in action at every level—through the individual animals in our care, the families we support in our community, and our work to advance animal welfare beyond our region. Together, these efforts extend our reach beyond our walls, strengthening the future for wild and companion animals and the people who care for them.

These stories reflect what's possible when a community comes together around a shared purpose.

Thank you for being part of this compassionate community and for making this work possible, day after day. We are grateful to be on this journey with you.

With gratitude,

Pam McCloud Smith,
Executive Director

Wildlife's Most Nature-iffic Patients

Dane County Humane Society's Wildlife Center admits thousands of wild animals each year. No day is ever the same for our rehabilitators and volunteers, but some days are more unusual than others. Read below about a few of the Wildlife Center's most memorable patients from 2025!



This fledgling Broad-winged Hawk was discovered in a parking lot, looking scruffy but determined. Though standing normally and acting fairly calm in care, this youngster arrived underweight, dehydrated, and was dealing with unwanted hitchhikers—flat flies, fly eggs, and maggots. After a thorough clean-up, wound care, parasite treatment, fluids, pain control, and a careful feeding plan, this tiny raptor began to rebound! What started as a rough day in a parking lot turned into a comeback story with feathers, attitude, and second chances.



This roadside rescue came in feisty, loud, and unimpressed with the humans who helped them. The Long-eared Owl made its opinions known—clacking, striking, and filing formal complaints about every interaction. Beneath the attitude, though, this patient was underweight and dehydrated, with a few scrapes. With fluids, a feeding plan, and plenty of personal space, the owl slowly rebuilt strength and stamina. As the days passed, hops turned into strong flights, but the grumpiness stayed intact. Once recovered and flying well, this tiny powerhouse was released—still spicy!



This scrappy urban explorer had been making the rounds in the neighborhood for months, and it was clear to all the neighbors that this coyote was not well. When our weary wanderer finally got stuck inside the tennis courts at Vilas Park, an Animal Services Officer stepped in to help. On intake, our team discovered the culprit behind this coyote's rough appearance: sarcoptic mange, a parasitic skin condition. With dedicated treatment, careful stabilization, and no small amount of patience, this tenacious animal made a comeback worth celebrating.



This downtown adventure features a beaver discovered in the corner of a parking garage in Madison. This hefty adult female made her feelings clear: she did not appreciate the help. She charged the carrier door and delivered dramatic tail slaps on repeat. Aside from burrs stuck throughout her fur, the beaver appeared healthy, strong, and in good condition. After some quiet time, a proper diet, and medical evaluation, it became clear that this was simply a wandering traveler who took a wrong turn between our waterways. Once cleared by our licensed staff, this feisty engineer was released back where she belonged.



CBT staff Amy B. welcomes a transfer puppy to DCHS



CBT staff Bridget K. and Jessica M. play a game with a dog

Helping Every Dog Thrive

A Day in the Life of DCHS's Canine Behavior Team

Every dog who arrives at Dane County Humane Society brings a different story. Some are unsure and nervous in their new surroundings. Others settle in quickly, eager for attention and time in the yard with volunteers. No matter their needs, the Canine Behavior Team (CBT) is already thinking about each one of them from the moment they walk through our doors, planning how to help them feel safe, build confidence, and take the next steps toward a new home.

Each morning before the shelter starts humming, CBT Supervisor Jessica Marchant walks through the kennels, checking in on every dog. A dog who just arrived from a transfer might hang back, taking in the new sights and sounds, while a more outgoing pup might greet her with a joyful tail wag. Every morning, she's reading the room — and every dog in it.

As the rest of the team arrives, DCHS's morning rounds officially begin. Clipboards in hand, a group of medical, care, and behavioral staff gather to review notes, discuss progress, and plan next steps. These rounds aren't just administrative checkpoints. Each dog is treated as an individual and has different needs to be met. The team

considers emotional wellbeing alongside behavior: a note about a dog who skipped meals might spark a discussion about stress, while a nervous or fearful dog might be moved somewhere quieter to decompress.

Every dog has an individualized behavior plan, and CBT coordinates closely with veterinarians, caretakers, and volunteers to carry it out. Enrichment — mental and physical stimulation — is one of the team's most powerful tools. For some dogs, that means a peaceful walk through the woods; for others, a puzzle toy, a play session, or a volunteer tossing them treats until fear gives way to trust.

Every exercise, game, and quiet moment helps build each dog's confidence. Sometimes, that investment pays off in a life-changing moment, like when a dog who once trembled at the back of a kennel finally steps forward to greet a hand, ready for connection.

Beyond the kennels, CBT's collaborative spirit stretches across DCHS. Team members teach handling classes for staff and volunteers, organize outings and foster placements, and follow up after adoption for some dogs

Helping Every Dog Thrive continues on page 2

2025 Annual Report

Canine Behavior

85% of dogs at DCHS received additional support and enrichment

77 dogs at DCHS were enrolled in our Behavior Modification program

512 follow-up surveys were sent to adopters of dogs with special behavioral needs

162 dogs at DCHS were taken by staff and volunteers on Outings & Overnights

206 dogs were enrolled in DCHS's public training classes

to ensure their continued success. They even flag specific dogs who might shine as Pet of the Week stars on TV or who would benefit from a day decompressing with a staff member in an office away from the kennels. They also keep learning themselves, engaging in ongoing education and mentoring to stay current on best practices. Each team member brings unique experience and knowledge, but they share one purpose: to help every dog thrive.

By late afternoon, with kennels tidy and dogs settled, the shelter grows calm again. That calm isn't luck — it's the product of hundreds of thoughtful decisions made each day to support emotional safety and trust. Tomorrow, the routine will begin again: morning rounds, walks, evaluations, volunteer coordination, outreach, and note-taking. Within that steady rhythm, every moment matters, and every interaction builds toward one goal: helping each dog find their confidence — and their home.

The Canine Behavior Team doesn't just train dogs. They build bridges between behavior and hope, one wagging tail at a time. 🐾

*Written by Lauren Vanderlinden,
Donor Engagement Coordinator*

Staff & Volunteer Training

68 class spots filled across a variety of DCHS Dog Handling classes, including

9 Skill Building classes

2 Defensive Handling classes

4 Reactivity Series classes

Feline Behavior

6 volunteers conducted **324** Cat

Pawsitive training sessions with **102** cats,

totaling **3,717** training minutes!



CBT staff Erin K. helps feed two neonate foster puppies

Tarzan's Second Chance

When a community member finally caught a large stray dog that had been running loose in their neighborhood for two weeks, they brought him straight to DCHS.

Tarzan was immediately, unmistakably friendly: big, lovable, and bursting with energy, but completely overwhelmed. He was jumpy and mouthy, very difficult to handle, and overly excited by just about everything—and he was big, over 70 pounds. For staff trying to take him outside for potty breaks, his size and unpredictability posed a real challenge. Inside, he'd plant his feet and refuse to move, then panic at the kennel door when it was time for his handler to leave.

This is exactly the kind of dog the Canine Behavior Team exists for.



They quickly got to work, placing him in a quiet double kennel, limiting his handlers so he could build trust, and starting him on a predictable routine supported by stress medication. When those early steps weren't enough, they went even further; they wrote a detailed handling plan, coached staff on every step, and scheduled enrichment activities

— long hikes through our internal Outings & Overnights program, rotating food puzzles,

and more — beyond those all DCHS dogs receive every day to channel his energy productively.

The results were remarkable.

About a month into his stay, a volunteer in DCHS's Behavior Modification program took Tarzan in as a foster, giving him the chance to live in a home, play with other dogs, practice calm behaviors, and just be loved. That consistent care revealed who Tarzan truly was: a goofy, affectionate companion who was ready for adoption.



Tarzan's story is a perfect example of what the Canine Behavior Team does every day. They don't just manage behavior — they build the conditions for a dog to show the world who they really are. For Tarzan, that meant medication, structure, consistency, enrichment, a volunteer who believed in him, and a foster who gave him space to bloom. Every piece mattered. Every person played a role.

And in the end, Tarzan found his new home and is now enjoying a second chance with a loving family. 🐾

Written by Bridget Hladky-Krage, Canine Behavior Assistant

2025 Annual Report

Reunions

739 lost pets were reunited with their

families at DCHS, including

484 dogs, **242** cats, and
13 other species

Foster

160 foster families gave temporary homes

and loving care to **600** animals, including

399 cats, **142** dogs, and **59**
other species



Maddie's Shelter Medicine intern Dr. Joseph V. unloads a transfer dog

Leading the Way

How DCHS is Shaping the Future of Animal Welfare

For more than a century, Dane County Humane Society (DCHS) has been a trusted resource for animals and the people who care about them. Today, its role extends far beyond the walls of its Madison shelter. Through innovative programs, strategic partnerships, and a deep commitment to collaboration, DCHS has become a leader in animal welfare across Wisconsin and around the country. At the heart of this leadership is a simple but powerful idea: when organizations work together, everyone benefits, especially the animals.

Strengthening Wisconsin's Animal Welfare Network

DCHS's leadership begins close to home. Throughout Wisconsin, animal shelters face challenges such as limited access to veterinary care, staffing shortages, rising costs, and increasing demand for services. Rather than competing for limited resources, DCHS serves as a partner and support system.

One of the strongest examples is DCHS's Shelter Support Program, led by Dr. Sophia Chao. Through this program, Sophia travels to partner shelters and rescues around

the state, providing essential veterinary care that many organizations struggle to access. These services help alleviate Wisconsin's veterinary shortage while providing lower-cost care that shelters might not otherwise find, all without adding strain to local clinics.

Sophia says, "One of the most rewarding parts of working with our partners is seeing the enthusiasm and drive they have to help their own animals, their local organizations, and their community. I love that we are able to support our partners in getting their animals ready for adoption faster, and by transferring their extensive medical/surgical patients into our care to free up their resources so they can help more animals. I think this program is important because it provides reliable access to affordable care for our partners, especially for our more rural ones."

DCHS has also pioneered innovative approaches to shelter medicine. With guidance from experts at UW Madison's School of Veterinary Medicine, DCHS established the world's first dedicated on-site ringworm treatment facility in a shelter setting, Maddie's Felines in Treatment (F.I.T.) Center, nearly 25 years ago. Thanks to this unique expertise and infrastructure, DCHS offers treatment services to

shelters unable to care for cats with ringworm, improving outcomes for animals well beyond Dane County.

Partnerships also fuel DCHS's statewide impact. Through its long-standing collaboration with Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies (WFHS), DCHS helps define sheltering standards, encourage collaboration, and support shelters of all sizes. DCHS Executive Director Pam McCloud Smith, who has served on the WFHS board since 2004 and as WFHS President since 2012, has helped guide the organization to new heights. DCHS Executive Assistant Caroline Wadington also contributes as WFHS's Operations Coordinator, helping coordinate membership, communications, and annual educational events. These events allow professionals across the state to network and learn from nationally recognized experts.

Working with WFHS makes it easier for shelters across Wisconsin to connect with DCHS when seeking assistance, training, animal transfers, or new program resources. The partnership breaks down communication barriers and gives shelters direct access to one another. It also helps organizations unite around shared goals, from advocating for stronger animal welfare legislation to coordinating responses to large cruelty cases to expanding veterinary care in rural regions. Every community is different, but all share the mission of helping animals and people.

A National Model for Humane Response

DCHS's leadership also extends beyond Wisconsin state lines. Nationally, the organization has become a trusted partner in animal transfer programs and disaster preparedness, especially in regions facing chronic overpopulation or sudden crises.

Leading the Way continues on page 6



Dr. Sophia C. and Celeste A. prepare a cat for surgery at a local Shelter Support Program partner

2025 Annual Report

Intake

4,633 companion animals admitted

1,007 of those animals were transferred from partner shelters in need

Adoptions

3,299 animals were adopted, including

1,810 cats, **1,160** dogs, and

329 other species

Length of Stay

12 days is the average length of time animals stayed at DCHS until they were adopted or reunited with their families

On average, cats waited

16 days until adoption and **7** days until reunion with their families

On average, dogs waited

11 days until adoption and **4** days until reunion with their families

Save Rate

91% save rate for all companion animals

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Animal Medical Services

12,294 medical exams completed

3,496 spay/neuter surgeries performed on

2,419 cats, **1,036** dogs, **40** rabbits, and **1** guinea pig

322 dental surgeries completed on **236** cats and **86** dogs

163 other surgeries performed, including amputations and mass and eye removals

36 UW veterinary students attended ambulatory rotations at DCHS to learn about shelter medicine and management

Shelter Support Program

17 shelters and rescues partnered with DCHS through our Shelter Support Program, through which we performed

350 exams, **2,477** spay/neuter surgeries, **78** dentals, and **52** other surgical and sedated procedures

7,064 miles driven by DCHS veterinary staff



Erin L., Senior Wildlife Veterinary Technician and UW Wildlife Medicine Program Coordinator, speaks about wildlife rehabilitation to veterinary students from UW-Madison

Leading the Way continued

DCHS regularly accepts scheduled transfers from southern states where shelters are overwhelmed. These carefully planned transfers relieve pressure on overcrowded facilities while giving animals a better chance at adoption.

Sarah Byerley, DCHS's Director of Animal Operations, explains, "The communities our transfer dogs come from have high populations of dogs and overcrowded shelters that rely on partnerships like ours to increase their lifesaving capacity. Some of our partners act as a hub for other smaller shelters too, helping expand our reach to smaller communities with fewer resources available for creating transfer programs of their own."

During natural disasters, this approach becomes even more vital. By transferring animals out of shelters threatened or hit by natural disasters like hurricanes and flooding, DCHS creates space for emergency response, lost-pet reunification, and community safety efforts. This proactive strategy supports both immediate crisis response and long-term recovery. Through this work, DCHS demonstrates that leadership in animal welfare means supporting communities wherever help is needed.

Building the Next Generation of Animal Welfare Leaders

DCHS invests deeply in education and workforce development, which are critical at a time when the nation faces a shortage of veterinarians and credentialed veterinary technicians. Through a strong partnership with the University of Wisconsin's School of Veterinary Medicine, DCHS provides training opportunities ranging from fellowship camps to clinical rotations and seminars.

DCHS also partners with the University of Wisconsin Shelter Medicine Program to host Maddie's Shelter Medicine Internship, a one-year program for newly graduated veterinarians each year. The internship provides extensive experience in clinical shelter medicine, surgery, and broader shelter concepts, preparing veterinarians for a career in the evolving field.

Beyond domestic animal care, DCHS's Wildlife Center fosters the next generation of wildlife rehabilitators. Programs like the Werndli Wildlife Apprenticeship offer hands-on training and help participants obtain a basic Wisconsin wildlife rehabilitation license within a year. These opportunities build practical skills and confidence that graduates take with them into careers nationwide.

In addition, DCHS staff share their expertise through national presentations and professional contributions. Team members regularly speak at continuing education conferences hosted by organizations like Humane World for Animals and the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association. Notably, DCHS Lead Shelter Veterinarian Dr. Uri Donnett recently served as a co-author of the Association of Shelter Veterinarians' Guidelines for Standards of Care, a foundational document for shelters across the country.

Leading with Collaboration, Innovation, and Vision

What sets DCHS apart is not any single program, but a culture of collaboration, innovation, and forward-thinking leadership. Whether supporting a rural Wisconsin shelter, helping in a national crisis, or mentoring the next generation of professionals, DCHS always looks beyond immediate challenges toward long-term solutions.

As community needs evolve and new challenges emerge, from workforce shortages to natural disasters, DCHS is helping lead the way. By sharing expertise, building partnerships, and investing in people as much as in animals, DCHS is not only addressing today's needs but actively shaping a more humane future. 🐾

*Written by Lauren Vanderlinden,
Donor Engagement Coordinator*

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F.I.T. Center

157 cats with dermatophyte (ringworm) were treated and cured in Maddie's Felines in Treatment (F.I.T.) Center at DCHS

138 of those cats were from **16** different outside organizations

29 days was the average length of stay for F.I.T. Center cats until they were cured

29 volunteers spent **2,375** hours caring for cats in the Maddie's F.I.T. Center



Wildlife Operations Supervisor Paige P. gives a tour of the Wildlife Center to volunteers from the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin



Wildlife Center staff Jacob M. and Kaylie G. examine a Canada Goose

Celebrating 25 Years of Helping Wisconsin's Wildlife

Dane County Humane Society's (DCHS's) Wildlife Center opened its doors in 2002, admitting only 107 animals for treatment. What began as a small program has grown into a vital community resource that now helps more than 3,000 wild animals each year. Staff also guide over 7,000 callers, host hands-on learning experiences for all ages, and mentor the next generation of conservation and animal care professionals. More than 100 volunteers and interns contribute over 22,000 hours annually, working alongside staff to rehabilitate the thousands of sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals that come through our doors. After nearly 25 years of service in southern Wisconsin, DCHS's Wildlife Center reached a remarkable milestone last year: over 50,000 wild animals have been admitted for rehabilitation since the program began.

Wildlife rehabilitation is more than just medical care—it's a promise to protect the health, resilience, and diversity of the natural world around us. It requires licensed rehabilitators to have specialized knowledge, experience, and state and federal permits, expertise that DCHS's Wildlife Center brings to our community every single day. When a wild animal is found hurt or struggling, our trained rehabilitators offer advice over the phone, and in many

cases, admit them for evaluation, giving these animals a second chance by providing skilled treatment and a safe place to recover. Our hope is that they eventually return to their natural homes as healthy members of their species.

For many wild animals, that second chance simply wouldn't exist without people who care about their well-being. Injured, sick, or orphaned wildlife rarely survive on their own, and without intervention they face prolonged suffering or death. Thanks to attentive neighbors who call DCHS's Wildlife Center, and especially to supporters who fund these rehabilitation services, our team provides triage, pain management, support, and treatment in a safe, quiet environment. The program gives community members a trusted place to turn when they encounter a wild animal in need, and helps people learn to live responsibly alongside wildlife who share our backyards, parks, and neighborhoods.

Animals of all ages arrive at the Wildlife Center in every imaginable condition, often in crisis and suffering from dehydration, starvation, disease, or traumatic injuries. Many of these problems are caused by everyday human activities and human-made environments, like being

trapped in a building, vehicle collisions, window strikes, getting tangled in garbage, exposure to toxins, or habitat loss and destruction. By rehabilitating these animals, DCHS's Wildlife Center acts as a counterbalance for the impacts our busy world has on local wildlife.

Behind the scenes, the Wildlife Center team provides advanced diagnostics and medical care with the support of sponsoring wildlife veterinarians. Bloodwork, x-rays, vision exams, parasite checks, and disease testing help to understand each patient's health concerns and needs. When young animals are orphaned, rehabilitators may carefully re-nest them when their parents are still present or place them with wild-foster parents if they are not. Or they provide specialized care onsite until the youngsters grow big, strong, and independent. Most animals recover within a few days or weeks, while others require a longer recovery of months of healthy diet, medicine, monitoring, and continued enrichment to prepare them for release. Each success story supports a more robust Wisconsin.

The goal is always to return patients to the wild. Animals are expertly cared for with as little human interaction as possible to preserve their natural behaviors and healthy

fear of people as much as we can. Our team follows a strict code of ethics that prioritizes welfare and respects the wildness of each animal.

As a nonprofit organization, DCHS receives no local, state, or federal funding for this work. Every moment of care, from food and medicine to facilities, equipment, and staffing, is made possible by donors. There is never a fee to bring in a wild animal, making community support essential for sustaining and expanding services. Each gift directly strengthens the Wildlife Center's ability to care for more patients and offers the best possible outcomes for the 150+ species we treat every year.

The Wildlife Center operates with a small team of dedicated rehabilitators, apprentices, a part-time wildlife educator, seasonal staff, interns, and volunteers. The team also collaborates with community partners like the University of Wisconsin Veterinary Care's Zoological Medicine & Special Species Health Services. Volunteers and interns are an essential part of the work—preparing diets, feeding animals, cleaning habitats, providing enrichment, organizing supplies, and supporting public outreach.

Helping Wisconsin's Wildlife continues on page 10

2025 Patient Highlights

This adult Killdeer was found outside ABC Supply Stadium in Beloit, grounded with a drooping wing. The finder made the drive all the way from Beloit to Madison to get it proper care. On intake, our team found a closed scapula fracture, a head tilt, disorientation, and low weight that suggested this bird had been running on fumes, likely after a window strike of some kind. The bigger challenge? Killdeer are notoriously high-strung rehabilitation patients, so our team kept things calm, quiet, and careful while treating them for pain and inflammation. Luckily, this particular Killdeer decided to be the exception to every rule — eating beautifully, settling in, and making a recovery that surprised everyone. When the time came, we returned this little overachiever right back to Beloit, where the story started.



Meet Opie — a well-loved opossum with a whole human family in his corner. Opie came to us from a local property where finder Randy and his crew had been rolling out the welcome mat for neighborhood wildlife: food, water, and cozy winter shelter included. Despite their best efforts, Opie arrived with frostbite on his tail and ear tips, a painful reminder that opossums are pushing their luck this far north, right at the edge of their natural range. Those bare tails and thinly-furred ears don't exactly love Madison in the winter. In fact, two of Opie's neighbor opossums made the same trip in for the same reason. After supportive care and monitoring, our team got Opie back on his feet! The best part? His whole family was there for the release, including Randy's daughter, who had spent the winter watching him from her window.

2025 Annual Report Wildlife Center

3,158 wild animals from **34** counties were admitted after being found sick, injured, or orphaned

154

unique species were admitted to the Wildlife Center, including

81 avian, **52** mammal, and **21** reptile/amphibian

7,609

phone calls were received and answered by the Wildlife Center reception team



Wildlife Center staff perform a final exam on a bobkitten prior to its release

Helping Wisconsin's Wildlife continued

Their compassion and commitment uphold DCHS's larger mission: helping people help animals.

For many, being part of this work is a joyful way to connect with nature, learn about the wild animals who live among us, and offer them a second chance when they need it most. As the Wildlife Center celebrates 25 years of rehabilitation, its impact is clear: thousands of animals given new beginnings and a community better equipped to care for the wildlife that makes Wisconsin such a special place to live. 🐾

Written by Jackie Edmunds, Wildlife Program Manager



2002
The Wildlife Center was founded.



2011
We hired our first seasonal staff member!



2016
We remodeled our building and hired our first veterinary technician.




2019
Our first Werndli Apprentice was added to the team.



2025
We held our biggest ever Help Me Heal fundraiser for a pair of orphaned bobkittens and built our Roger Werndli Solar Flight Pen.

Summer Camps
Available Each Week
Monday-Friday



CAMP WILDSIDE

Activities:

- Wildlife Arts & Crafts
- Bird & Plant ID
- Study Skeletons
- Play Games
- Nature Walks
- And more!

Camp WildSide offers environmental education for youth ages 12-15 where participants can:

- interact with the natural world
- complete service projects
- have fun with other nature lovers!



Learn more at
giveshelter.org/wildside

2025 Annual Report

Media Highlights

39,000+ Pawprints newsletter subscribers

7,000+ A Word from the Wild Side newsletter subscribers

750+ Humane Education newsletter subscribers

69,500+ Facebook followers across three pages

15,300+ Instagram followers across two pages


1,075+ LinkedIn followers

4.7 million+ website views

453 Pet feature segments on NBC15, News 3 Now, WKOW27, 105.5 Triple M, 94.9 WOLX, 92.7 WMDX, Isthmus On Tap, Madison Minutes (now City Cast Madison), Ian's Pizza, Hometown News, Rubin's Furniture, and ULLA Eyewear

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Michele and Harley hold paws in the yard

One Person's Big Impact

How DCHS Empowers Our Community Through Pets For Life

For nearly ten years, Dane County Humane Society's Pets for Life (PFL) program has helped ensure that pets and their families in our community have access to the care and supplies they need.

When residents in one Madison neighborhood faced major challenges in accessing pet care and supplies, PFL worked closely with Michele, a community member who has been going out of her way for her neighbors for years. Each month, Michele calls the PFL team with updates on what her neighbors need. Staff gather supplies based on her insights, preparing them for pickup. Michele then heads to DCHS and loads her car with pet food, cat litter, and more to distribute to her neighbors. Through this partnership, five pet families in the area are able to keep their animals healthy and comfortable thanks to the ongoing collaboration between Michele and PFL.

Earlier this year, Michele turned to PFL for help when her mastiff, Harley, got sick.

Michele has had Harley since he was a puppy and has helped him grow into the strong, healthy, 135-pound dog

that he is today. Harley has puppy dog eyes, a friendly disposition, and above all else, is loyal to Michele. If Michele isn't at work, it's likely that Harley is by her side. In their neighborhood, Harley has many dog friends, and knows the difference between people who live in the area and a stranger who he can bark at to alert Michele.

Last summer, Harley started vomiting, having loose stool, and stopped eating and drinking. Michele turned to the PFL team for help. Together with DCHS's veterinary staff, she worked to get answers and the care Harley needed.

Over the next few weeks, Michele brought Harley into DCHS's Animal Medical Services multiple times for exams, medications, bloodwork, and anything else that PFL could provide at no cost. At home, Michele was doing all she could by making Harley boiled chicken and rice meals and giving him hydrating watermelon and strawberry popsicles. Even with all of this, Harley barely nibbled on anything he was offered and only ate when hand fed by Michele. Harley was losing weight, and with every appointment, he was less and less active.

Pets for Life

119 new clients with **245** pets received assistance and resources. In total, clients' pets received

75 spay/neuter surgeries,

540 vaccinations,

1,337 medications and services, and

3,871 supplies (like food, litter, beds, collars, harnesses, leashes, treats, pet carriers, toys, bowls, and more!)

Everyone in the front office at DCHS knew Harley well and was rooting for him each time he and Michele came in for appointments. Even though a final diagnosis could not be determined, with guidance from DCHS veterinarians, the right combination of medications, and Michele's devoted care at home, Harley's condition finally began to improve. Soon, Harley was back to his active, cheerful self—proof of what's possible when the community and DCHS work together to care for pets in need.

Today, Michele is happily back to connecting with PFL monthly for her neighborhood's supplies. She keeps the PFL team filled in on Harley's adventures, causing toddler-level trouble in an extra-large dog body.

Michele's story reflects what the PFL program is all about: building relationships, removing barriers to care, and working alongside community members to help pets stay healthy with the families who love them. 🐾

*Written by Gwen Lincoln Callahan,
Pets for Life Outreach Supervisor*



Harley smiles for the camera at DCHS

Community Dog Day

181 dogs served at our CDD event

175 vaccines and **56** microchips administered

600 supplies distributed

Community Cat Day

56 cats served at our CCD event

99 vaccines and **56** microchips administered

55 veterinary exams performed



Adult Camp Pawprint participants craft and learn about our classroom animals

Lifelong Learning at DCHS

Education and community connection have always been at the heart of Dane County Humane Society’s (DCHS’s) mission. Through hands-on learning experiences, DCHS invites people of all ages to better understand animals, shelters, and the environment we share. In 2025, our education department took an exciting step forward by welcoming adults into the camp experience for the very first time.

Adult Camp Pawprint, launched in May of 2025, offers adults ages 18 and older a fun, engaging way to reconnect with learning, creativity, and animals. Modeled after the beloved Camp Pawprint for kids, Adult Camp Pawprint provides themed monthly sessions that combine animal interactions, small-group activities, shelter tours, and creative projects. From crafting graham cracker birdhouses to interacting with over a dozen Ball Pythons, each evening is designed to be educational, fun, and relaxing. Adult Camp Pawprint creates a welcoming space for animal lovers to learn more about our shelter operations, deepen their connection to animals, and build a community with others who share a passion for animals.

Adult Camp Pawprint builds on the strong foundation of DCHS’s long-standing education programs, especially Camp Pawprint. Camp Pawprint offers children ages 7–12 animal-focused learning, games, and service projects during summer break, winter break, spring break, and day camps. Beyond camps, DCHS hosts birthday parties that blend celebration with learning, field trips and tours that bring students and adults behind the scenes at the shelter, and classroom and community presentations tailored to a wide range of ages. Additionally, Scout Workshops and Service Days provide opportunities for hands-on involvement and learning, reinforcing humane values through direct experience.

These are just a few of the programs that help shape compassionate, informed community members. Educating children about shelters, animals, and the environment helps foster empathy, responsibility, and respect for all living beings. When young people learn how shelters operate, why animals end up there, and how humans impact the natural world, they are empowered to make kinder, more thoughtful choices throughout their lives. By extending education to adults, DCHS reinforces the idea that learning and compassion don’t stop at childhood. Together, these programs help create a community that understands the importance of humane care, environmental stewardship, and lifelong advocacy for animals of all kinds. 🐾

Written by Emilee Csom, Humane Educator - Camp Focus

2025 Annual Report Humane Education

2,352 adults and children participated in

11 Camp Pawprint weeks **40** shelter field trips, presentations, and tours

9 Day Camps

3 Adult Camp Pawprints **11** Service Days

53 birthday parties

20 scout workshops **295** Paws & Pages reading sessions

8 After Dark events



Thrift Store team members Andrea M. (left), Jayce S. (middle), and Andrea D. (right) hard at work

What Sets DCHS Thrift Stores Apart?

You might choose to thrift because of all the typical benefits of supporting second-hand stores, like great prices and the environmental benefits of reducing waste. However, you can also expect a few extra perks when you decide to shop DCHS Thrift Stores!

For starters, we are pet people! We love seeing newly-adopted pets come through the doors and will often recognize shelter alumni when they visit. We are thrilled to support our community through all stages of pet parenthood, and we really do want to see your pet photos. At our donation door, staff are also full of compassion when someone has lost their beloved pet and wants their supplies to benefit another animal. A genuine love for animals is something our team and our shoppers all have in common.

That love for animals is also what drives our mission. Proceeds generated through sales at our stores and any additional monetary donations made at the register stays in our community — and it truly makes a difference.

Our shelter is a private non-profit, and we are not a government agency nor a branch of a national animal welfare organization. That means most of our funding comes directly from community members like you, including the funds raised when you shop or donate at our thrift stores. Every dollar goes right back into the care of the animals in our shelter and Wildlife Center and supports keeping pets with their current families. When you pick up a bargain at one of our stores, you're also helping a dog get the surgery they need, giving a cat a cozy place to recover, or providing expert wildlife rehabilitation. At DCHS Thrift Stores, you can shop knowing that your purchase is making a real, tangible impact right here in your local community.

Our stores are also run by a very diverse group of people. We take great pride in our vast LGBTQ+ workforce, and our volunteer teams are made up of diverse age groups as well. We allow volunteers as young as 10 years old to join our team with a parent

2025  Annual Report

Volunteers

1,256
volunteers throughout DCHS
contributed

111,714
hours of service

DCHS Thrift continues on page 16

Independent Events

\$150,939 was donated to DCHS through

225 independent fundraisers by

120 local businesses, **65** adults, and

40 children

Major Events

418 supporters attended Toto's Gala, which

raised **\$223,711**

182 supporters attended Bark & Wine, which

raised **\$133,087**

Join DCHS at an
Upcoming Event!

**Bark
& Wine**

September 26, 2026



*Toto's
Gala*

April 2, 2027



giveshelter.org/events

DCHS Thrift continued

or guardian, and we are a popular place to volunteer for high schoolers, college students, and retirees alike. Many of our volunteers have been with us since our opening day — over 7 years ago! They stick with us because of our commitment to a compassionate, inclusive, and fun atmosphere. As our program grows, we use the feedback of our volunteers to determine next steps, and we continue to prioritize their experience in our decisions.

Whether you're looking for gently used (and thoroughly cleaned) pet beds, clothes, and toys, or special finds like clothing for humans of all ages, housewares, furniture, and more, you've come to the right place. DCHS Thrift Stores are a truly special place to shop, and we hope to see you come through our doors someday soon — don't forget to bring your furry friend, too! 🐾

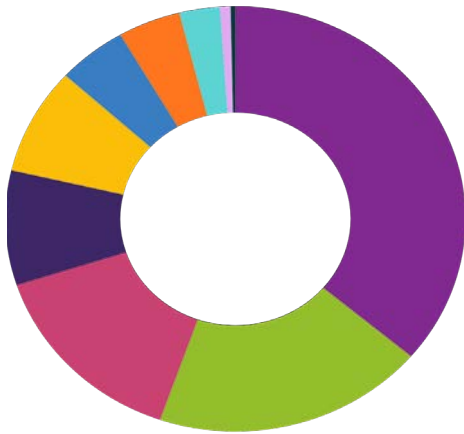
Written by Shelbi Bernard, Thrift Store Manager

Our Thrift Store expenses exceeded revenue in 2025 due to the recent opening of our second location. The new store has been rapidly gaining support and visibility within the community, and we're encouraged by its growing momentum. From January-March in 2025 to the same period in 2026, we have already seen a 17% increase in revenue generated by our East location!



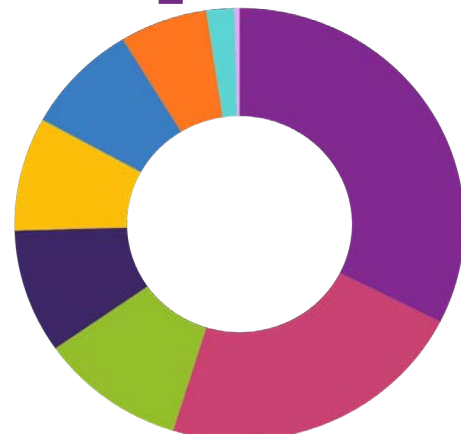
Thrift Store volunteer DJ welcomes visitors to Thrift West

Revenue



Individual Donations	\$4,535,449	36.2%
Bequests	\$2,403,685	19.2%
Thrift Stores	\$1,840,528	14.7%
Program Services & Fees	\$1,090,594	8.7%
Charitable Trusts	\$1,016,849	8.1%
Municipal Contract	\$611,981	4.9%
Investments & Misc. Income	\$552,731	4.4%
Major Events	\$356,798	2.8%
Donated Materials & Services (Shelter Use)	\$93,730	0.7%
Adoption Merchandise Sales	\$41,678	0.3%
Total	\$12,544,023	

Expenses



Companion Animal Services	\$2,749,386	32.4%
Thrift Stores	\$1,893,495	22.3%
Development	\$889,574	10.5%
Wildlife Rehabilitation	\$785,987	9.3%
Adoption & Reception	\$718,794	8.5%
Management & General	\$703,189	8.3%
Education & Outreach	\$534,008	6.3%
Volunteer Program	\$171,374	2.0%
Adoption Merchandise	\$29,317	0.4%
Total	\$8,475,124	

DCHS's most recent financial statements and 990 can be found on our website at giveshelter.org/reports

In 2025, two legacy donors to DCHS left planned gifts valued at **\$22,869,591**. These gifts are held in external charitable trusts, where the principals remain protected. Each year, the funds' trustees will give an annual distribution to support our work, helping ensure long-term stability for the animals and people who rely on us. These legacy gifts help strengthen our future, while the day-to-day care of animals continues to depend on the ongoing generosity of our community.

Community-focused.
Donor-funded.
Mission-driven.

Dane County Humane Society is a local, independent 501(c)(3) non-profit and is not a government agency or part of a national animal welfare organization. We receive the majority of our funding from the generosity of people in our community — *people like you*.

DCCHS is rated by Charity Navigator as a four-star charity, their highest rating. This means you can **give with confidence** knowing we have been independently evaluated as being accountable and effective with our finances.



2025 Board of Directors

Maggie Premo <i>President</i>	Dan Aiman
Beth Jacobsen <i>Vice President</i>	Bryan Althouse
Amy Manthey <i>Treasurer</i>	Amy Johnson
Cathy Holmes <i>Secretary</i>	Jim Madden
	Laura Murray
	Linn Roth
	James Steinbach
	Joe Zitzelsberger

Dane County Humane Society

is a donor-supported, private non-profit. We are not a government agency or part of a national animal welfare organization. We receive the majority of our funding from the generosity of people in our community — *people like you.*

Join one of our Giving Societies today — or all three!



**DANE COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY
CONSTANT COMPANIONS**

Be a Hero to Animals in Need

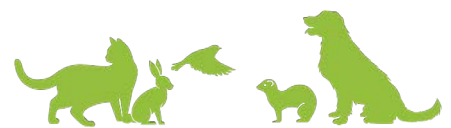
Join devoted supporters giving monthly to sustain the lifesaving work of DCHS, and be a hero to animals in need: giveshelter.org/cc



**DANE COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY
DIRECTORS' COUNCIL**

Make a Tremendous Impact

Give \$1,000+ per year and enjoy unique experiences with DCHS all year long: giveshelter.org/dc



**DANE COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY
LEGACY SOCIETY**

Support for Generations

Include DCHS in your legacy plans and ensure a humane future for generations to come: giveshelter.org/lc

