



GUELPH
HUMANE SOCIETY



**HOPE.
CARE.
COMPASSION.**

FORREST, 48 days in GHS care, adopted June 2023.

**2023
Annual
Report**

From our Leadership...

2023 Board of Directors



and identified gaps to help inform our planning and future strategic direction.

Our team worked with our Board of Directors to map out an action plan to deliver on our new strategic plan 'Charting our Future Direction' to ensure we are well positioned to tackle emerging challenges in animal welfare, build organizational strength and deepen ties with our community members through engagement.

Over the year we increased adoptions, relaunched our volunteer program, hosted training events to support fosters, refined our children's programming and increased our outreach activities with the establishment of the GHS Pet Food Bank. All while continuing to provide compassion and care to thousands of animals in need of a second chance.

Looking forward, we have bold plans to grow our programs, extend our reach to more pets and individuals and innovate to meet the evolving needs of our community. Your continuous support has been crucial in achieving these successes, and for that, I extend my heartfelt thanks. I encourage you to delve into the impactful stories in this report. These accomplishments underscore the strength of teamwork and our values of compassion, leadership, collaboration, integrity and transparency.

2023 was an exciting year at GHS.

The achievements we have made over the past year are only possible because of the supportive and animal-loving community we are honoured to be a part of. I hope you enjoy reading about the many GHS activities shared in this report. I am extremely proud of our work and to lead such a caring and compassionate team.

Thank you to our generous donors, partners, supporters, staff and volunteers. It is because of your passion and commitment that we are able to give animals that have nowhere else to turn the hope they need, the care they require and the compassion they so richly deserve.

In 2023, we embarked on ambitious plans to engage our community and learn about your thoughts and perspectives on the role of the humane society in the Guelph and Wellington County community. We gained important insights on our strengths

The Guelph Humane Society had a wonderful year in 2023. Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to the health and welfare of our community's most vulnerable animals.

2023 was a year full of engagement and reflection as we built an exciting new strategic direction for GHS. As Chair of the Board of Directors, I am honoured to have heard the thoughtful contributions of our dedicated supporters, staff, volunteers and friends. This collaboration has strengthened my confidence that our collective efforts will make Guelph and Wellington County a more compassionate place for animals, unmatched by very few in Canada.

Our board's focus has been on creating a more sustainable future for this incredible organization, setting the GHS up for success to meet future challenges. We undertook comprehensive planning, engaged in robust discussions and made strategic decisions that prioritize the welfare of animals and the strength of our organization.

As we look ahead, the future is bright for GHS. We have laid a strong foundation that will support growth and innovation, ensuring that we can continue to provide hope, care, and compassion to animals in need.

As I wrap up my term as Chair of the Board, I want to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who has been a part of this journey. The dedication and passion of our community are truly inspiring, and it has been a privilege to serve in this role. I am proud of the work we have achieved together and excited about the possibilities that lie ahead.

Thank you for your continued support in 2023. Your contributions make a difference, and together, we are creating a better future for all animals in our community.



Meaghan Middleton
Chair, GHS Board of Directors



VISION

A compassionate world where all animals are valued and respected.

MISSION

Advancing the welfare of animals through care, education, community engagement and relationships.

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Meaghan Middleton

Vice Chair
Samantha Lawson

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Dakota Pitz
Peter Tesche

VALUES

Compassion
Leadership
Integrity & Transparency
Collaboration

Download a copy of the Guelph Humane Society's 2023 audited financial statements at bit.ly/GHSAGM23

Lisa Veit
Executive Director, GHS

Snapshot: A look at GHS in 2023

In 2023, the Guelph Humane Society cared for **3,354 animals** — a 5% year over year increase. This includes **36%** dogs and cats, **6%** small animals and farm animals and **58%** wildlife. Here's a closer look at the breakdown of the animals helped over the past year and other interesting statistics.



907

GHS facilitated **907** adoptions in 2023. A **4 per cent increase** over 2022.

598 cats, **145** dogs, **66** guinea pigs, **30** rabbits, **27** rats and **40** other small animals (budgies, cockatiel, chinchilla, hamsters, hedgehog, lovebird, mice, snake, turtle), **9** farm animals (chickens, ducks, peacock, pheasants, turkey).

38 cats adopted into our Working Cat Adoption Program, a 100% increase over 2022.



In 2023, GHS saw a **31% increase** in stray dogs (226) coming into care compared to 2022 (172). The rise in stray intakes combined with the decrease in reclaim rates has resulted in capacity challenges, a trend seen in shelters across Canada.

In June, GHS had a large intake of **50** kittens that came into care. All of the kittens required foster care and many required preventative veterinary care and spay and neuter surgeries. All 50 found their Happy Tails in June and July 2023.



Our return-to-owner (RTO) rates:

17% of stray cats were reunited with their families (vs. 27% in 2022 & 25% in 2021).

76% of stray dogs were reunited with their families (vs. 86% in 2022 & 88% in 2021).

Did you know that all cats, dogs and rabbits in our care in need of spay or neuter surgery receive one prior to adoption from the GHS? Many thanks to the CanFel Foundation for providing \$10,000 in funding to support our Spay/Neuter Program for cats.



GHS Farm Animal & Rural Services

The Guelph Humane Society Farm Animal & Rural Services, supported by Grand River Agricultural Society (GRAS), saw

24 farm animals

enter into care in 2023, including chickens, ducks, pheasants, a turkey, a pig and four sheep.

GRAS continued their investment into the welfare of lost, orphaned and abandoned farm animals in Guelph and Wellington County. In 2023, the roof of GHS's outdoor farm housing space was finally completed thanks to a gift from GRAS.



HOPE, 19 days in GHS care, adopted October 2023.

it was a wildYEAR

2023 was another record-breaking year for wildlife. Over the course of the year the GHS team provided triage care, fluids and pain medication for **1929 animals.**

Rabbits, squirrels and raccoons were the most helped hurt, lost or orphaned mammals, with rabbits being the highest at 331 coming into care. Robins (134) and Canada Geese were the most helped birds. 33 turtles, including snapping and painted, were transferred into care. Most turtles suffered injuries after being struck by vehicles, mainly during egg laying season. Thank you to our amazing volunteer wildlife drivers and to our wildlife rehabilitation centre partners. Together, we are improving the welfare of wildlife in our community.



In June, we received a call about four sheep (above) that were found running at-large near Belwood Lake. Our team was able to safely capture the sheep and find a foster farm in the area until we were able to locate the owners.

In October, Hope the Turkey literally fell off a turkey truck. Luckily she did not sustain any serious injuries and is now living her best life on a hobby farm.

In May, a kind resident stopped on the side of the road to rescue a fawn that was born on the side of the road after its mother had been killed in a collision with a car. The fawn was brought to GHS where it was stabilized and received fluids before being transported by our volunteer wildlife drivers to a rehabilitation centre for recovery.

Humane Education

Educating the next generation of animal caregivers

The Guelph Humane Society's GHS Kids Programs run throughout the year, including Winter, Spring and Fall Junior Humane Club, March Break Camp, Summer Critter Camp, Birthday Parties, Holiday Critter Camp and club visits.

Camps and humane clubs offer animal-loving children in grades one to six opportunities to learn about the key role animals play in our community.

The curriculum included proper animal care and responsible pet ownership, animal behaviour and socialization, how to interact with wildlife, an introduction to insects and the importance of our pollinator friend, the bee!

356

of Guelph and Wellington County children that took part in GHS Kids camps and Junior Humane Club

Highlights include: **720** total # of hours of GHS Kids programs, delivered over 168 sessions through camp, birthday parties and Junior Humane Club

35 total # of species GHS Kids learn about across all programs

Thanks to the support of Sleeman Breweries, GHS launched an education series of LIVE WEBINARS and social media posts in 2023 to increase understanding of pet behaviour and strengthen the human-animal bond.

GUACAMOLE, 438 days in GHS care, adopted September 2023.

Duke's Fund

The Guelph Humane Society provides care to thousands of animals each year, many requiring costly medical treatments. Duke's Fund provides funds to pay for specialized veterinary care for GHS shelter animals in need. This care is made possible entirely through donations to the fund.

Polly

Thanks to you, two-year old Polly is now living a life free of pain. Polly arrived at the Guelph Humane Society (GHS) with a painful limp. To make matters worse she was fighting an infection in her leg, causing complications with her injuries. Without specialized veterinary surgery Polly's injury would have worsened, developing into severe arthritis over time making it extremely uncomfortable and painful to walk. No dog should have to live their life in constant pain and suffering.

Your compassion and generosity to support Duke's Fund gave Polly the second chance she deserved. After her surgery and 111 days in care at GHS and in her foster home, Polly was adopted and is now living free from pain, because of YOU! Her new family says "Polly has not stopped wagging her tail since we brought her home and has settled in like she has spent her entire life here with us. We are feeling very lucky to have such a sweet girl."



SPUD, 72 days in GHS care, adopted August 2023.

POLLY, adopted July 2023.

Thanks to YOU, in 2023, \$53,161 in donations to Duke's Fund saved 26 animal's lives.

Thanks to you Spud has a new lease on life

Spud is an adorable kitten that got the help he needed because of your support. This sweet boy was found alone, lying in the gravel beside the road. Luckily, he was brought to the Guelph Humane Society by a kind stranger.

At just four-weeks old he was tired, hungry, and dehydrated. He had discharge coming from his nose and eyes that was so severe, he couldn't see or smell. The veterinarian on his case diagnosed him with an Upper Respiratory Infection (URI).

Unfortunately, Spud did not respond to his treatment. The infection spread to both of his eyes. Spud's infection advanced quickly, causing him great pain. The only way to give him relief was to remove both of his eyes. Donations to Duke's fund

relieved Spud from his suffering.

Spud recovered from his surgery in foster care. With slow introductions he became comfortable with other cats and dogs in the home. He learned to rely on his other senses to find and play with his favourite toy and his foster even taught him the word 'touch' before petting him to ensure he would not be startled by human touch. Thanks to our supporters, Spud received the care he needed. He was adopted in August and is now living his Happy Tail with his new family.

hope

Wallace & Gromit

Wallace and Gromit arrived at GHS dirty, matted and abandoned. It was clear they hadn't been cared for in a very long time. Thanks to you, we were able to turn their lives around and transform their physical condition, relieving them from the pain of their knots and unkempt fur. On top of this Wallace had been suffering in silence from a blockage in his intestines. Only because of supporters like you, Wallace's condition was diagnosed in time to save his life and we could give him the hope he needed! They are both living their best lives with their new families in their new homes.



WALLACE & GROMIT after receiving transformational care (top), WALLACE in the condition he arrived at GHS (bottom).

care

Buttercup

This sweet senior arrived at GHS in great pain. Scared and afraid of everyone around her, she needed immediate emergency surgery to relieve her suffering. Thanks to you, at 10-years-old, Buttercup got a new lease on life. We were able to give her the life-saving care she needed and remove the 24 bladder stones that were the source of her pain and discomfort. After 179 days of waiting, we were able to match her with her purr-fect new family.



compassion

Jujube & Jelly Bean

Jujube and Jelly Bean, two four-week old orphaned kittens, arrived on a cold day in early November. We didn't know if we would be able to save them. Jelly Bean was suffering from hypothermia, she was in critical condition and had to be hospitalized in an incubator. Thanks to you we were here to give these little ones the care and compassion they needed. They lived in foster care together and both were able to find their new families and happy tails just in time for the holidays!



Thank you to our volunteers!

Thanks to our amazing volunteers who dedicate their time, talents, passion and energy to helping vulnerable animals in our community. Your support is invaluable to GHS and we would not be able to deliver on our vision of creating a compassionate world for animals without your help and dedication!



Celebrating our HEROES: Volunteers improving animal welfare all year long!

In 2023, GHS undertook its **largest recruitment of volunteers**, onboarding **100 new volunteers** to support the delivery of animal care. Our amazing volunteers reported a total of **4,664 hours** of donated time to support vulnerable animals in our community. As we reflect on this past year, our entire team is deeply moved by the dedication and compassion of our volunteers. Your unwavering support and generous donation of time and talents have been the lifeblood of our mission. Every hour spent walking dogs, comforting cats, assisting with adoptions, transporting wildlife or companion animals, supporting leadership as a member of the Board of Directors and volunteering at our events or in the delivery of our kids programs has made a tangible difference. Because of your commitment, we have been able to rescue, rehabilitate and find loving homes for countless animals. Your efforts not only transform the lives of the animals in our care but also inspire hope, care and compassion within our community.



Scan the QR code to hear from volunteers on why they choose to donate their time & talents to GHS

GHS launches pet food bank to help keep pets and people TOGETHER

It's an unfortunate reality that the cost of food for a pet can sometimes mean the difference between keeping a pet or giving it up for rehoming. That is why the Guelph Humane Society (GHS) sought out funding in 2022 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ontario Government for a pet food bank pilot project—funding that allowed GHS to fully launch the program in 2023.

Over the past few years, the increase in cost-of-living has resulted in a higher level of food insecurity, increases in housing shortages and other factors that can make life, including pet ownership, difficult to manage.

According to the Guelph Community Foundation's 2023 Vital Signs Report, 15 per cent of residents in the City of Guelph and 10 per cent of residents in Wellington County couldn't afford to buy food for themselves. With 60 percent of Canadians owning pets (CAHI, 2022) that is approximately 19,000 residents unable to provide essential food to their pets.

"I receive several phone calls a week from residents who are struggling," says Katherine Leonard, Manager, Community Programs and Outreach. Recently, a woman called and shared that her mother goes without food for herself so she can feed her dog. These conversations underscore the need in our community."

GHS is creating pathways to more accessible food to help keep more pets and people together and ensure that everyone has equitable access to the benefits of having a pet in their life and the human-animal bond. Previously, surrender was the only option for pet owners living with these challenges.

In 2023, GHS established

HAMISH, 46 days in GHS care, adopted October 2023.

three key partnerships with community organizations — Wyndham House, Chalmers Food Banks and Sanguen Health Centre Mobile Community Health Van to serve as the distribution points for the food.

"Allowing us to meet people where they are at," adds Leonard.

MarCam and Greater Good Charities made large scale donations of dog and cat food to launch the project and GHS is seeking other suppliers of pet food and cat litter to keep up with demand.

Other GHS Cares programs include offering low-cost microchip clinics, emergency pet boarding for crisis situations like fires or hospital stays, and the Pets in Transition program, which provides off-site foster boarding for pets of women seeking shelter from domestic violence or for people seeking treatment for mental health or addiction.

The food bank is an extension of that work.

The Pet Food Bank is currently supported by donations made to GHS. In 2023, GHS provided food to approximately 300 pets each month — that's 7,200 meals over the course of the year. "The demand is high and continues to grow," says Leonard. "We are grateful to donors for their support to make such a meaningful impact for our community."



GHS Cares: A year in review

GHS Cares programs support vulnerable people in our community by keeping more people and pets together. Our programs aim to **reduce financial and other barriers to pet ownership, increase access to essential services and care and protect equitable access to the beneficial human-animal bond.**

In 2023, programs included: **Emergency Boarding** (complementary boarding for pets during times of crisis - eviction, hospitalization, incarceration); **Pets in Transition** (foster care for pets of women fleeing domestic violence or individuals hospitalized for mental health/addictions); **Senior Support** (foster care for hospitalized seniors) and **Happy Pets** (no/low-cost behavioural support and low-cost microchip services), as well as the launch of the **GHS Pet Food Bank.**

2,712

of days of no-cost boarding and care to program animals. In 2023 GHS saw a **157 per cent increase in demand** for GHS Cares programs.

GHS provided **2,712** days of boarding to **117** pets, including those who accessed services through **Pets in Transition (2,197** days for **38** pets with an average stay of **58** days) and **Emergency Boarding (515** days for **79** pets with an average stay of **6.5** days) **156** # of pets microchipped at GHS low-cost clinics

2023 GHS Cares programs were made possible through the support of our generous donors Sleeman Breweries and Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ontario Government.

A night to remember: GHS Happy Tails Gala'23

In November 2023, the Guelph Humane Society's (GHS) **Mardi Paw Masquerade Happy Tails Gala**, proudly presented by **Speedy Auto Service Guelph**, raised more than **\$135,000 net** in much needed funding to support critical veterinary care, shelter, food and life's necessities for homeless and neglected animals in Guelph and Wellington County.

Animal lovers, donors, supporters and staff spoke to a sold-out crowd of **300 guests**, celebrating the heart of GHS 'From Hope to Home'. "We are humbled by the support we received through this event," says Lisa Veit, Executive Director, GHS. "The results of an evening like this truly demonstrate the impact we can make when the passion of our team is combined with the generosity of our supporters."



ROSIE, 22 days in GHS care, adopted April 2023.

Scan the QR code to watch our gala video: **ROSIE'S STORY**



Rosie's Story

Rosie's journey is a fitting example of the work, the passion and the care that happens at GHS. Her rescue was certainly a team effort involving almost every GHS staff member in some way.

It was early one morning in April that we received a dispatch call saying that a white dog was seen on Hanlon Creek Blvd. and had almost been hit by several cars. That dispatch was the start of a two-day journey to save the dog who we now know as Rosie.

We don't know Rosie's story before she arrived at our door. We just know that she was a stray dog spotted roaming near GHS and she was very hungry and absolutely terrified. Perhaps she was dropped off, perhaps she found her way here. No one came looking for her.

For two days, our efforts to rescue Rosie were unsuccessful. She was extremely fearful and would run away when anyone approached and had many more near misses with cars. We became more and more concerned that we weren't going to be able to help her in time. But then on the end of the second day, with a stroke of luck combined with the skills of our Animal Services team, we managed to lure her into our gated area at the rear of our facility and rescue her. She was exhausted, soaking wet from the thunderstorms throughout the day. We gave her food and a comfortable bed with warm blankets. Finally she was able to relax.

By the next day, the timid dog that had spent two days avoiding us was already starting to trust us. We fitted her with a harness, gave her lots of treats, and spoiled her with attention. And the transformation of Rosie was happening right before our eyes...When Rosie was adopted by her new family, the entire GHS team said goodbye to her, and there wasn't a dry eye in the house. Because to see an animal that appears to have never known kindness or compassion flourish... How lucky are we to be a part of making these miracles happen every day, and YOU are such an important part of that journey as well.

Thanks to your generosity and passion for animals we are here to help those that cannot help themselves and give them the hope, care and compassion they so desperately need.

Guelph's largest dog walk

Last spring, GHS launched the first annual **Happy Trails Walk-a-thon**, proudly presented by **Wellington Laboratories**. It was the first large-scale fundraising event to take place at our new location on Hanlon Creek Blvd. Community members raised more than **\$31,000** and local businesses provided **\$36,000 in sponsorship** to support our community's most vulnerable animals.

The fun-filled event brought **217 walkers and 80 dogs** out to walk the trails around GHS. "We are absolutely thrilled with the tremendous response. The funds raised will enable us to provide vital care and support to vulnerable animals," says Lisa Veit, Executive Director, GHS. "Together, we are making a profound difference in the lives of animals in need."

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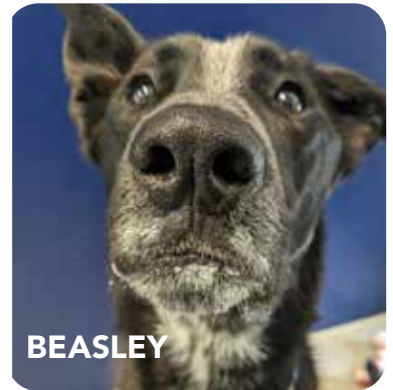


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Thank you for making **Guelph & Wellington County** a more compassionate community for animals!



Your support
makes **Happy**
Tails possible.



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