



# Annual Report



2016

## Mission Statement

**The mission of the Rockingham-Harrisonburg SPCA is to promote respect, compassion, education and advocacy resulting in a humane and sustainable environment for all animals.**

### **2016 Rockingham-Harrisonburg Board of Directors**

Dr. Darnice Pettigrew	President
Brandon Howdyshell	Vice President
Justin Bridges	Secretary
Brenda Long	Treasurer
Karen Mast	Board Member
Nina Smith, MD	Board Member
Aaron Graves	Board Member
Dr. Charles H. Henderson, III	Board Member
Butch Strawderman	Board Member

### **2016 Staff**

Anne Anderson	Executive Director
Patricia May	Director of Development/PR
Maggie Rucker	Shelter Manager
Candice Dodson	Asst. Shelter Manager
Ashley Haynes	Asst. Shelter Manager
Amber Nesselrodt	Asst. Shelter Manager
Lauren Watson	Humane Educator/Vol. Coord.
Taryn Bromser-Kloeden	Adoption Coordinator
Kimberly Sites	Receptionist
Claire Pitt	Animal Care Tech FT
Olivia Towe	Animal Care Tech FT
Heather Cook	Animal Care Tech PT
Emma Haag	Animal Care Tech PT
Mary Taylor	Animal Care Tech PT/WE
Charlotte Wylie	Animal Care Tech PT/WE
Connie Delamater	Animal Care Tech PT
Ashley Williams	Animal Care Tech PT

# Shelter Operations

The Rockingham-Harrisonburg SPCA has provided humane care for the stray and unwanted pets of residents of Rockingham County and the City of Harrisonburg since 1975. We also serve as the impoundment facility for both the localities. The R-H SPCA is the only open admission shelter serving the community. The shelter is open to the public Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. including many holidays. Extended hours on Wednesday evening from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ensure the shelter is accessible to area families and individuals.

In 2016, the Rockingham-Harrisonburg SPCA served as a temporary refuge for 2,543 stray and owner surrendered pets. The intake breakdown for the year is as follows:

	<b>On Hand 1/1/16</b>	<b>Stray</b>	<b>Seized</b>	<b>Bite Cases</b>	<b>Surrendered</b>	<b>Trans In</b>	<b>Misc.</b>
<b>Canines</b>	25	515	11	10	324	20	0
<b>Felines</b>	59	757	02	10	748	00	0
<b>Other</b>	04	06	0	0	52	00	0
<b>Total</b>	88	1278	13	20	1124	20	0

\*Misc – born in facility

The Rockingham-Harrisonburg SPCA is fortunate to have a small but dedicated staff to maximize the quality of care for our furry guests. An Executive Director, Shelter Manager, Director of Development, three Assistant Shelter Managers, Humane Educator/Volunteer Coordinator, Receptionist, Adoption Facilitator, two (2) full time Animal Care Technicians and six (6) part time Animal Care Technicians provide care seven days a week, 365 days per year. We are also very fortunate to have a dedicated Board of Directors to oversee the operations and support the mission of the SPCA.

## Rockingham-Harrisonburg SPCA Directory

Information	540 434-5270
Fax	540 432-9509
E-Mail	<a href="mailto:info@rhspca.org">info@rhspca.org</a>
Web Site	<a href="http://www.rhspca.org">www.rhspca.org</a>
City of Harrisonburg Animal Control	540 434-2317
County of Rockingham Animal Control	540 564-3800
Like us on Facebook – Rockingham-Harrisonburg SPCA!	

# **Community Services**

## **Stray Pets**

Almost daily, the R-H SPCA receives stray pets from Animal Control as well as the public and stresses the importance of all pets wearing a collar and an identification tag. Unfortunately, very few (<1%) of our incoming stray pets are wearing a collar or an identification tag upon arrival. Even less often will an incoming pet have a micro-chip. Every morning and all throughout the day, shelter personnel make every effort to match new arrivals to the lost reports received daily from the community. Because we feel it is extremely important for every pet to have identification, every pet adopted from the R-H SPCA has appropriate identification before leaving the shelter. Each and every pet placed up for adoption is micro-chipped and registered to their new guardian at the time of adoption!

In 2016 the R-H SPCA received and provided care for 1278 stray pets; 515 stray dogs, 757 stray cats and 6 'other' stray animals. Throughout the year, staff successfully reunited 308 stray pets with their owners; 275 canine, 32 felines and 1 'other' pet found their way back home with the assistance of R-H SPCA.

## **Adoption Program**

The Rockingham-Harrisonburg SPCA strives daily to place orphaned animals into responsible, permanent homes. In 2016, a total of 882 pets were adopted or transferred to reputable pet rescue organizations. Specifically, 364 dogs, 464 cats and 54 "other" companion pets found a home to call their own. These positive results were only achieved with the help of many volunteers, supporters and fellow animal welfare organizations. As soon as a pet is made available for adoption, a picture and short bio of each pet is posted immediately onto our website! In addition, a R-H SPCA staff member posts pictures of each pet onto popular pet adoption sites such as PetFinder.com, Facebook and AdoptaPet.com. R-H SPCA staff, Board Members and volunteer foster care providers opened their homes and hearts to pets in need of extra TLC before being placed into the adoption program.

## **Adoption Facilitator Program**

The overall goal of the Adoption Facilitator for the Rockingham-Harrisonburg Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is to facilitate the responsible adoption/transfer of adoptable animals and to ensure the humane treatment of all animals in the organization's care. Several different strategies including rescue group partnerships, behavioral assessments, foster care, and local outreach were utilized in 2016 in order to achieve these goals as well as to advance the R-H SPCA's overall mission of respect, education, and compassion. In 2016 these strategies were expanded upon and revised in multiple ways to reflect the continuing needs of the R-H SPCA and the community we serve.

By the end of 2016, 304 animals had been transferred to 24 different limited admission rescue groups and/or animal shelters. The R-H SPCA also had more than 65 different rescue groups "on-board," i.e., they had passed the rescue group screening process. This process (which consists of the requirements outlined in table 1), is in place to ensure that all of the shelter's rescue partners are legitimate organizations where the animals will be well cared for and appropriately released. Many of these groups are "breed specific" such as Siamese Cat Rescue or Australian Cattle Dog Rescue Association, but some take in a variety of breeds/mixed breeds and species, such as Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation. We added several new rescue groups to our list of approved partners this year. This included a new feline transport program with the ASPCA, a few all-breed dog rescues, and several breed specific rescues.

Of the 304 animals transferred, 197 were felines, 98 canines, and 9 rabbits.

The R-H SPCA will continue its partnerships with rescue groups and limited admission shelters. We will also continue to create new partnerships so that as many animals in need can be transferred to reputable groups as possible. This is an especially important program for canines displaying behaviors in the shelter that might interfere with their ability to thrive and be adopted (such as kennel stress or resource guarding) and cats, which enter the shelter in far greater numbers than can be adopted. It is also vital for the successful placement of animals with special medical needs. The transfer program acts as sort of safety net for such individuals, and efforts will be made to continue and expand upon this important aspect of the R-H SPCA's mission.

Another important element of facilitating adoptions and transfers is the R-H SPCA's foster care program. Animals regularly come into the shelter that for various reasons would be better served by being housed in a foster home than the traditional kennel environment. Some of these reasons include being too young to go up for adoption or being very shy/under-socialized. IN 2016, 28 dogs and 44 cats benefited from our foster program. Thanks to the dedication and compassion of these volunteers, the shelter was able to place animals that may not otherwise have been candidates for adoption or transfer prior to foster placement.

In an effort to streamline the foster care program, a Google Group was created for foster care providers. Helpful information and calls for fosters were announced using this group.

We held 29 offsite adoption events in 2016 which included several new event venues. The R-H SPCA devotes time and resources to showcases for several important reasons. Such events provide valuable exposure both for individual animals seeking homes and for the organization as a whole. They also lead to donations of supplies and money, volunteer recruitment, and of course, adoptions. By attending local events, the R-H SPCA also strengthens its community ties and encourages future support from individuals, businesses, and other organizations.

In order to increase awareness of homeless pets and ways to help them, the R-H SPCA partners with media outlets including local television and radio stations as well as a local newspaper. Pet of the week spots appear on 98 Rock, KCY Country, and Mix 93.1 that spotlight an individual adoptable pet. An advertisement, sponsored by local businesses Harrisonburg Towing and Storage Inc. and PermaTreat Pest Control, also appears in the Daily News Record newspaper each week that features a picture and brief biography of a pet looking for a home. One to two times a month a dog or cat is also featured on WHSV TV3's news at noon.

In 2016, we also continued to promote the animals in the community through Kline May Realty. Each month, Kline May Realty features an adoptable cat and dog on their "Kline May Corner" television spot. In order to encourage the adoption of these pets (who are often animals that have been at the shelter for some time), a special low adoption fee is advertised as well. This new feature has been quite successful, as none of the animal featured in 2016 are still in need of a home. Besides Kline May Corner, the R-HSPCA has also continued working with Farmers and Merchants' bank. Each month, an adoptable pet is featured in their newsletter.

All of these appearances often result in the featured animal being adopted, or at the very least, they remind members of the community that the shelter has many pets looking for homes so that they will keep us in mind when they are ready to adopt. The feedback from the community and media partners has been overwhelmingly positive. Moreover, these programs maintain connections with individuals working in local media, which facilitates the promotion of special events and needs as well the pets themselves.

Another important aspect of placing animals responsibly is assessing them so that an appropriate decision can be made. In 2016, we continued using a version of the Assess-a-Pet temperament test for the dogs in the R-H SPCA's care. According to a 2012 peer-reviewed study, this assessment tool was found to provide both more specificity and sensitivity to aggression than the previously utilized "SAFER." (Bennet, Lister, Weng, Walker, & Luescher, 2012). This assessment tests for sociability, resource guarding, and dog aggression in order to determine which options are available for the individual dog. This allows the Adoption Facilitator and Canine Manager to make informed decisions on questions like: Should this dog be in a home with children? Should he/she be around other dogs? And can this dog be safely put up for adoption at all? It is also a very important element of transferring dogs to limited admission rescue organizations, as it gives the organizations as much information as possible on which to base their decision to accept an animal or not.

In 2016, several different strategies were used to facilitate appropriate adoptions and transfers of animals in the R-HSPCA's care. These strategies included the promotion of pets via local media, placement in foster homes, and offsite adoption events. Over the course of 2016, these programs were modified and expanded in appropriate ways in order to advance the R-H SPCA's overall mission of respect, education, and compassion.

### Tables and Figures

Table 1: *Rescue Group Requirements*

Proof of 501c3 and incorporation	Copy of adoption guidelines and policies
Copy of adoption screening policies and forms	Copy of adoption contract
Foster home inspection forms	Copy of recent state vet report. If based outside of Virginia, then obtain last year's intake, adoption, carry over and euthanasia numbers (and remind the group that if they are pulling from Virginia they should be submitting a report to the state vet).
References from two vets working with group	References from two shelters working with group
Foster care providers in area (if applicable)	A signed statement from group that states 'no employees, foster home, volunteers or members of the group has ever been convicted of animal cruelty' on letterhead

## **Colleague Assistance**

As evidenced previously, the Rockingham-Harrisonburg SPCA receives assistance for many of our pets from our colleagues in the animal welfare community. From time to time, however, our colleagues need our assistance when they incur an extraordinary intake of animals from large scale cruelty/hoarding/dog fighting situations. In 2016, the Rockingham-Harrisonburg SPCA provided assistance to two (2) of our fellow animal welfare organizations providing care and adoption opportunities for ten (10) pets throughout the year.

## **Community Assistance**

Staff and volunteers respond to a wide variety of questions relating to basic pet needs, behavior and care daily. Special recognition and appreciation is once again given to Karen Mast for her outstanding assistance to numerous pet guardians in our community. Karen has assisted SPCA staff, countless potential adopters, and individual SPCA pets in resolving behavior concerns. Her knowledge of animal behavior and her willingness to offer assistance has kept many pets from coming into our facility and/or kept them from being returned once adopted.

Throughout the year, Karen offered several classes and workshops for members of our community. Each year millions of healthy, loving pets are surrendered to shelters because of behavior issues. Many of these pets are surrendered because their previous caregivers were uninformed or unequipped to deal with simple training and behavior problems. Most of the problems can be effectively resolved with just a little time, patience and knowledge! Thanks to Karen, many pet guardians had the opportunity to learn how to effectively address their pet's behavior issues during the six-week long workshops and now live in peace and harmony with their better behaved companions!

Our Emergency Quatering program was designed to offer emergency quatering for pets from individuals experiencing a catastrophic event such as domestic violence, homelessness, emergency hospitalization, house fire, etc. In 2016, the R-H SPCA provided emergency quatering for eight (8) animals.

## **Rockingham-Harrisonburg CART (Community Animal Response Team)**

The purpose of the Rockingham-Harrisonburg CART is to provide prevention, preparedness, response and recovery for disaster emergencies affecting animals. The team meets monthly to continue to prepare for emergencies. In 2016 team members took part in table top drills, several mock disaster drills and equipment inventory exercises.

## **Volunteer Program**

For 2016, off-site orientations have been suspended due to a lack of participation and time constraints for implementing further training for volunteers oriented off-site. However, changes implemented for animal handling demonstrations and Levels added for working with cats have continued to ensure quality care. As a result, orientations tend to run about 1 hour and 45 minutes instead of just 1 hour and 30 minutes, but so far volunteers have generally reported feeling more confident as they begin their work in terms of information and understanding their role.

As seen below, 2016 had higher rates of retention even if fewer volunteers attended an orientation as compared to 2015 and they still averaged about the same number of hours donated per active volunteer. While we can quantify the numbers of volunteers and the hours they donate, it's difficult to quantify the quality of their work. Based on personal observations, reports from teammates, and anecdotes

from the volunteers themselves, we can say that the animals are enjoying training, exercise, and love in ways that are highly conducive to relieving stress and increasing adoptability.

**Volunteers by the Numbers:**

**2015**

Orientations	Attendees	Volunteered After Orientation	Total Active Volunteers	Total Donated Hours
38	656	283	442	5054:22
Avg. ~3/month	~55/month	~7/orientation	159 from before	~11:26/volunteer
10 in October	~17/orientation	43.1% retention	36% retention	

**2016**

Orientations	Attendees	Volunteered After Orientation	Total Active Volunteers	Total Donated Hours
32	344	169	391	4004:00
Avg. ~2.67	~29/month	~5/orientation	222 from before	~10:14/volunteer
5 in Sept	~11/orientation	49.1% retention	56.8% retention	

**Most Active Volunteers Overall**

1.) Joe Cochran (441:00)	12.) Joan Hart & Courtney Dornton (31:25 each)
2.) Gary Summers (397:30)	13.) Collen Calhoo (28:43)
3.) Carol James (100:00)	14.) Hailey Hershey (28:42)
4.) Linda Recco (94:09)	15.) Amanda Ibezim (27:55)
5.) Boel Bennet (73:45)	16.) Kate Whitemire (24:30)
6.) Devin Schumann (59:30)	17.) Soolim Jeong (23:29)
7.) Laura Khalil (54:21)	18.) Justin Fitzsimmons (23:38)
8.) Yancy Dobson (47:38)	19.) Amy Nuccitelli (22:48)
9.) Jill Rhodes (40:50)	20.) Melissa Mills (22:33)
10.) Jana Landes (33:33)	
11.) Leslie Cochran (32:55)	

**Most Active Community Groups**

- 1.) Pleasant View 259:13
- 2.) Alpha Phi Omega 71:30
- 3.) Summit House 42:40
- 4.) Crossroads Counseling 7:10
- 5.) Shenandoah Academy 4:30



While 2015 saw a lot of interest in the Day-of-Service programs, we utilized this opportunity more strategically for 2016. Groups assisted with the dismantling of the old shelter building, helped pull weeds from the front flower beds, and assisted with one-day adoption and fundraising events.

Most of these groups were here to interact with animals, and while that's understandable, their lack of experience combined with the narrow time constraints of their availability could create a stressful situation for animals and staff. As we look to 2017, we hope to channel these offers of service into less stressful events for everyone, or perhaps make them exclusively non-animal and refer these offers to people in charge of grounds-keeping.

As an aside, we would love the opportunity to implement a pollinator garden near the beehives with native and non-invasive, non-toxic plants. We have the Bradford pear and honeysuckle bushes already in place on the grounds which our bees enjoy; however, they do not bloom for the entire summer. Planning and executing such a garden would be an excellent use of our community's enthusiasm

## Humane Education

With our Day-of-Service program more limited for 2016, we saw invitations and interest ebb and flow with the constraints of the school year. Spring (after SoL's) tends to be the most attractive time for field trips and visits.

Our beehive(s) are up and going, with a winter-hardy hybrid stock that seems to be thriving in our so far mild winter. As the weather warms, we will better be able to tell the status of the hive, but sightings on warm days along with food consumption suggests that they are doing well. As they continue to thrive, we will be able to incorporate them better into the Humane Ed program to broaden the understanding of "humane" and living within an ecosystem (which is part of several different grade level's SoL's).

### ***Humane Education by the Numbers:***

<b>Programs</b>	<b>Participants &amp; Students</b>	<b>Adults &amp; Chaperones</b>	<b>Days of Service</b>
39	938	172	9 events, 70 participants
~3.25/month	~78/month	~14/month	~36 hours (x number of participants)= ~2520:00

### ***Kids Club & Pet Pals***

By splitting Kids Club by age groups, we were able to eliminate the 2015 waiting list and accommodate everyone who was still interested. We are now able to accommodate 20 children during the Kids Club year, split 10 & 10 by age group. The change has been well received. Pet Pals, the 6-9 year olds, meets first. Kids Club (10-12) meets later.

Lesson plans and activities have included reading animal behavior and describing what an uncomfortable animal looks like so children will be able to identify pets that aren't kid-savvy. Kids have helped with our adoption events by making Angel Tree ornaments with donation requests (also reinforcing pets' basic needs).

## ***Media Utilization***

Our main objective of utilizing media in 2016 has been the update to our website to make it more user-friendly, better organized, and easily accessed via mobile device. Our use of the Weebly site-builder tool should be easily sustainable for future employees to learn with its drag-and-drop usability and it's easy for us already here to update readily to advertise adoption events and fundraisers, update our success stories, and address anything worth mentioning on such a wide-reaching platform. Weebly comes with its own isometrics so we can track website traffic and see our most popular pages (which continue to be our lists of adoptable animals).

Part of our new website is a "Did You Know?" weblog to address common questions we receive here at the RHSPCA in a more article-style format. As time allows, we would like to research and write some short articles for this platform. One of the advantages of this platform is that each article will have its own permalink, so should we need to reference it on social media or wish to share the information some other way, we have a direct link to it. Our new Frequently Asked Questions page is styled the same way, and questions online can be referred directly to our answers that are already publically available should we need to reference them.

We were also invited to JMU for a MAD Talk, in the vein of TED Talks, to discuss animal welfare issues and specifically the role of euthanasia. This opportunity was well-attended, and the students arrived with open minds. Often we find when working in Humane Education that the question of euthanasia is the "elephant in the room," and no one quite knows how to ask about it. We also find that what they think they know and the actual reality are far from concurrent. Having the opportunity to discuss this sad reality of animal welfare in relative objectivity with the young minds over at our local university was one step to diminish this lack of understanding. Perhaps we can find ways to further address this lack of understanding in 2017. mini horses for the club members.

## ***Outreach and Information Availability***

	<u>Followers 12/31/15</u>	<u>Dec 31, 2016</u>	<u>Net Growth in Reach</u>
Facebook	6,428	8,017	1,589
Tumblr	99	132	33
Twitter	229	335	106
Instagram	377	802	425
Pinterest	37	51	14
YouTube	N/A	8 subscribers   1,159 views	8   1,159
Google+	N/A	505	505
			<b>2,680</b>

## Special Events

The Rockingham-Harrisonburg SPCA is most fortunate to have a very committed team of volunteers to assist with numerous special events in our community. These events increase awareness and also enable us to raise vitally needed funds for our organization. Our goals are to provide pet guardians an opportunity to gather in an enjoyable environment to share their enthusiasm for their companion pets and to establish a public forum for the R-H SPCA to promote animal welfare issues in our community.

The R-H SPCA distributes humane education literature at many of the events and as often as feasible introduces shelter pets available for adoption to participants.

### Highlights of our 2016 Fundraising/Adoption Events

North Shore Animal League Kitten Bowl 2016  
Paws Under the Stars\*  
2016 Fundfest Concert Series\*  
Summer Jam 2016\*  
Jeep Jam  
Animal Palooza\*  
Housden Photography - Paws for a Cause Event\*  
Ten Thousand Villages Community Shopping Day\*  
Harrisonburg Parks & Recreation Dog Swim\*  
K-9's for Warriors  
Passion for Compassion Adoption Event  
Harrisonburg Animal Clinic's Grand Opening  
My Furry Valentine Event- Steven Toyota  
SVBA Home and Garden Show  
Rocking R Ace Hardware Monthly Pet Showcases  
Paws for a Cause 5K Run\*  
Valley 4<sup>th</sup>  
Paws for Patriots  
Sunnyside Retirement Community Summer Festival  
Green Valley Book Fair Pet Showcase  
Home for the Holidays  
Farmers and Merchants Bank Pet Showcase  
Rosetta Stone Pet Showcase  
Sprint Pet Showcase and Adoption Event

\*denotes a fundraising event

**Many thanks to the extraordinary volunteers who make all of these events possible.**

### Special Tail Wags and Purrs To:

Chris Housden of Housden Photography Studio and Gallery for once again conducting a "Paws for a Cause" pet portrait event to benefit the R-H SPCA. Chris's efforts resulted in a very nice donation to help our homeless, furry friends. In addition, he donated his time and talents to photograph all of the pets available for adoption

throughout the year as well as doing a very special 'Passion for Compassion' photography session for our Facebook page highlighting each staff member's 'favorite' pet available for adoption. Chris's dedication is truly an inspiration.

Special acknowledgement and thanks to Janice Keller, Willa Good and June Smith for remembering the Rockingham-Harrisonburg in their estate planning. Their most generous bequests will truly touch the lives of many.

Special thanks also to our 2016 extraordinary grant funders The Community Foundation, Plecker Family Fund, Hildred Neff Memorial Fund, the ASPCA, the Tides Foundation and the Petco Foundation.

Our incredible and most generous donors and supporters. You keep the doors open to those in need.

## **Finance & Development**

The Rockingham-Harrisonburg SPCA receives an annual appropriation from the City of Harrisonburg and the County of Rockingham for providing impoundment services. The remainder of our funding is derived from donations, bequests and successful fundraising events. We do not receive funding or financial support from national organizations. It is only through the generosity of our supporters that we can provide these services to our community.

## **Shelter Evaluation**

Thanks to the generosity of the City of Harrisonburg and the County of Rockingham, the R-H SPCA had the opportunity to undergo a shelter assessment by Karel Minor and Damon March from the Animal Welfare Management Services, LLC. We were most pleased to participate in the assessment and sincerely appreciate the opportunity. We are always open to suggestion and ways to improve animal services in our community as well as the pets we serve.

The evaluation highlighted some of our strengths as well as noting we were a "highly functional organization, the animals were well cared for, the staff compassionate and caring". We were most pleased with the results and observation. In addition we received feedback regarding some areas for improvement. Some of the suggestions made in the evaluation were already in progress prior to receiving the feedback such as demolition of the old building, updating our website, signage on the building as well as moving to electronic newsletter vs. paper. Suggestions such as streamlining the adoption process, partnering with additional rescue organizations as well as enhancements to the behavior assessments were reviewed and updated as new opportunities and information became available. We would like to thank the City and the County for funding this report and giving us this extraordinary opportunity.