



# 2024

## IMPACT REPORT

40 years of making a difference



 Asheville  
Humane Society

# Dear friends,

2024 has been an unforgettable year. Early on, we adopted a strategic plan that ushered in a new chapter, enhancing our ability to fulfill our mission of building a supportive community that positively impacts pets and people. We made remarkable changes to operating procedures and programs which have been instrumental in pets moving on to new homes more quickly and spending less time in the shelter. At the same time, we responded to increased demand for dog training classes and veterinary wellness clinics by strengthening our commitment to meaningful community support. We want to ensure positive learning experiences for both people and their pets.

None of us could have anticipated the impact of Tropical Storm Helene in the fall, or the incredible resilience our community would show in its aftermath. During some of the hardest times we've ever faced, we also witnessed extraordinary acts of kindness and support—from generous donors, tireless volunteers, our Asheville Humane Society family, and so many others.

Because of your unwavering support, we were able to continue providing life-saving care when it was needed most. Whether through low- or no-cost medical services, free pet food and supplies, or reuniting lost pets with their families, we were there for our community, just as you were there for us.

The memories of Helene will stay with us—the challenges, the unity, the shared pride in our community, and the compassion extended to those in need. These moments reinforced our commitment to intentional care for both animals and the people who love them. It has been an honor to work alongside a community so full of heart to fulfill our mission.

As we look ahead, Asheville Humane Society remains committed to leading the way in the care of animals and their people. Stay tuned for exciting updates, and please continue your generous support in 2025—we couldn't do this without you.



Jen Walter

*Interim Executive Director*



Since 1984,

Asheville Humane Society has dedicated itself to ensuring every animal has the quality of life they deserve—a life worth living. Now, we go beyond our walls to help create a more humane community for pets and the people who love them.

We're more than an animal shelter, we're a lifeline. Through personalized adoptions, education opportunities, volunteering, fostering, emergency resources, and cutting-edge care innovations, we are working to go above and beyond an animal shelter. Our commitment to this mission is apparent in everything we do.

# September 2024 came to a

devastating close as Tropical Storm Helene swept through Asheville, leaving widespread impacts in its wake. From September 23 to 28, relentless rainfall caused the French Broad River to surpass century-old records set in 1916, while the Swannanoa River exceeded levels not seen since 1902. The storm triggered more than 2,000 landslides across the Southeast, and the damage to infrastructure is estimated in the billions. Communities across the region are now facing the long and challenging road to recovery.

Asheville Humane Society faced immense challenges that ultimately brought us closer—strengthening our bond with the community, with one another, and with the animals we worked tirelessly to save.

*(Sources: NOAA, USGS)*

## When the storm hit, hope took flight

Our dedicated staff worked tirelessly, even spending nights in the Adoption Center, to care for nearly 200 animals during a critical water outage as an effect of Helene. Despite the uncertainty of when water service would be restored, we spot-cleaned kennels and carefully conserved resources.

In a remarkable team effort, everyone came together to care for the animals and load them into crates, vans, cars, and eventually onto the tarmac at the Asheville Airport. On September 30, **Bissell Pet Foundation** arrived with thousands of pounds of supplies, and after unloading, we

carefully transferred the animals onto planes. We waved goodbye as they flew to Forsyth Humane Society in Winston-Salem. There were high fives, moments of laughter, and tears—more than we'd like to admit—but most importantly, the animals were safe.

In partnership with Bissell, we completed two additional transfers to help our animals find their forever homes: one on October 11 to Forsyth and another on December 12 to Arlington, Virginia. In total, AHS transferred 98 cats, 66 dogs, and five “pocket pets” to partner shelters that were unaffected by Helene.



# Helene

## BY THE NUMBERS



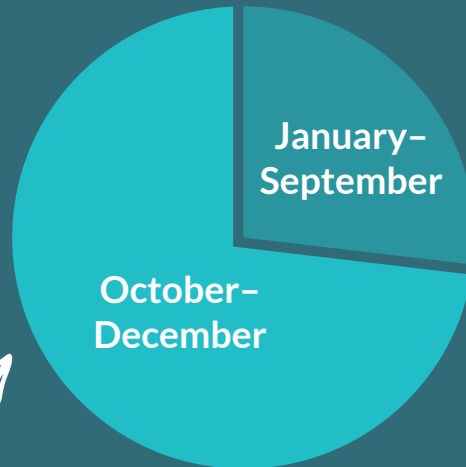
**169**

animals transported to partner shelters

**120,889**

pounds of pet food distributed

(73% of our total for all of 2024!)



**7,882**

monetary donations toward Helene relief efforts





Since Helene hit, Asheville Humane staff and volunteers have distributed over 100,000 pounds of pet food to families in need. To put that into perspective, that's double what we typically distribute in a year...in just two months.

But what does that look like on a human level? Stories. A lot of stories. Stories of people going above and beyond to support their community.

Here's a few from just one of our distribution centers:

“ Someone came in to pick up food to send up a (literal) cliff to her brother's house. A mudslide had eroded the land around his home within mere inches of his front porch. Because getting out was nearly impossible, they were sending care in.

“ An incredibly kind woman came in and said she was hoping to help a family with special needs children. Caring for both the kids and the animals was tough during the storm, so she was helping carry some of the weight. She gave me the best hug I've ever had.

“ One woman had lost everything in the flood—her entire house was gone and her barn had washed away. She was hoping to get emergency supplies for her two large dogs. We loaded her up with food, crates, beds, treats, everything we had. She asked about the plant on the desk. I told her it was plastic because I can't keep anything alive. She said she didn't care. She has lost all of her plants. She missed them. What the heck. We threw that in too.

# 165,568

pounds of pet food distributed to the community



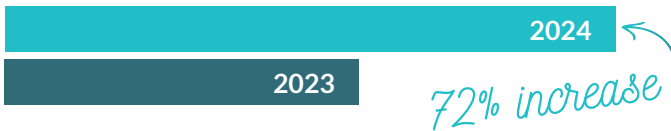
# 14,863

animals in the community received supportive services



# 1,834

lives saved or improved through veterinary assistance vouchers



# 6,696

calls received on our community helpline



## Bringing Chunk home

Earlier this year, Chunk found her forever home, but she escaped shortly after. Her adopters notified us, and we immediately launched a search. Though we initially came back empty-handed, our resolve didn't waver.

The breakthrough came when a neighbor spotted Chunk. Moved by her story, the neighbor left her garage open, adding a heater and warm blankets to lure Chunk to safety. Over several nights, she stayed up late, even until 2 a.m., patiently coaxing Chunk inside. Finally, with help from our Community Sheltering and Behavior Teams, Chunk was safe again.

After some time to recover, Chunk began a new chapter. With help from Pilots to the Rescue and the Bissell Pet Foundation, she flew to Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation in the DC area. There, she was adopted by a loving family who adores her as much as we do—and that's saying a lot!



**1,653**  
ANIMALS ADOPTED







# Puppy paws step in to heal

Prior to Helene, Caroline came to work flanked by her senior hound dog Toby. In the midst of the hurricane, Toby became sick, and Caroline drove for hours across state lines trying to find emergency care for her sweet dog. After hours of searching, Toby passed.

Losing something you love that deeply is unbearable—especially a soul dog. And while nothing replaces that piece of your heart quite the same, the universe has a funny way of sending the right amount of love, in the right package, at the right time.

It did.

Enter Little Duckie. His little fluffer ears bounced as he trotted through the offices and he quickly became attached to Caroline. Caroline felt ready to find a new companion and agreed to foster the sweet pup, hoping that he might be the right fit.

He was.

Little Duckie is now “Theo” and has officially become the newest (and cutest) member of our team. The joy he brings Caroline feels like a nod from Toby. Theo just wants to make Caroline smile again. That’s his job. He does it well.



# Love at first sight

Abu was found and brought to us by an incredible family concerned about his severely damaged eyes. Thanks to their quick action, Abu was able to receive lifesaving care from our medical and foster teams. His finders took him in as their foster, supporting him until he was large enough for medical intervention.

Despite all the care we could provide, Abu's condition eventually required emergency surgery to remove both eyes. His newfound foster family provided care throughout the entire process, helping him to recover and find his forever home.

A little over a week later, Abu's family returned him to get neutered, and like we always do, we scheduled a pickup for the day after surgery.

Then Helene hit. In an effort to protect and care for our animals—we entrusted many of them to the BISSELL Pet Foundation and their network of shelters, sending 100 cats, dogs, and pocket pets across the country to safety. While we only sent animals who were not already spoken for, with no service or internet it was difficult to communicate with our foster and adoptive families.

Abu's family knew he would be safe, but were worried they had lost him. Unable to get in contact with the shelter, they planned to search across the state to find Abu.

Enter the frontlines Asheville Humane team. Our lead adoptions counselor connected with the family as soon as she found their messages and scheduled an emergency adoption. The family arrived to bring Abu home for good.



# Fostering **LOVE**

Fostering plays a vital role in our mission by providing animals with a home environment where they can heal, grow, and build confidence, giving countless animals a fresh start in life.

**642** animals fostered

**263** foster families

## From shoebox to shoe-in: how Timberland found his forever home

After the hurricane, three 3-week-old kittens were left on our doorstep in a shoebox. They needed intensive care, including bottle feeding, warmth, and medication. Once stabilized, they went into foster care with Laurie, an experienced foster mom who had already cared for 76 kittens. She lovingly nurtured Ugg, Serra, and Timberland.

During this time, Laurie faced her own heartbreak. Flower, a cherished foster fail and source of comfort, passed away after a terminal illness,

leaving Laurie grieving deeply. Timberland seemed to sense her pain and stayed by her side, purring and cuddling while his siblings played.

When the time came to return the kittens for adoption, Laurie realized she couldn't part with Timberland. "I can't do this," she said. "It's not the right thing to do." So she didn't.

Today, Ugg and Serra have loving homes, and Timberland remains with Laurie, a loyal companion who belongs by her side.





spotlight on



# Medical

**1,633**

life-saving surgeries  
performed



**2,142**

pets seen in our  
wellness clinics



# The gift of a *second chance*



One of our medical fosters has cared for 43 puppies suffering from parvo in just 4 years. To put that in perspective, parvovirus is a horrible, highly contagious and often deadly disease. Pups with parvo require immense amounts of care including syringe feeding, administering fluids, injectable and oral medications multiple times a day, and...well, a lot of clean up. Some puppies take upwards of 6 weeks to recover. And this foster cared for puppy after puppy, saving life after life—completely unassuming, fully compassionate.

When asked, “What is it like watching these puppies?” she replied, “Watching them go from barely being able to lift their head to becoming a puppy again...it’s amazing.” To which a nearby

medical assistant chimed in, “When they start ripping up their toys it’s the best. Destruction is a good sign.” The foster laughed.

She has cared for these animals with unbelievable kindness; it’s apparent in the way she talks about them. She can tell you about all of them, their quirks, their unique stories. She’s never kept one, but she’s cared for each as if she already had.

With such an incredible story, you must wonder: does she ever look back and feel proud of herself and what she’s done for these puppies?

She summed it all up by responding, “No...I’m proud of *them*.”



spotlight on

# Behavior

This year, we improved training by implementing a new scheduling platform, increasing classes to 12 per week, and adding Sunday and Tuesday sessions. We provided essential community support through behavior consultations, helping reduce shelter relinquishments.

Key accomplishments included:

- Developing a Fearful Dog protocol
- Updating behavioral resources
- Launching in-person staff training
- Two Behavioral Assistants earning CPDT certification

**65**

training classes  
offered

**500**

dogs and  
owners enrolled  
in classes

**186**

shelter dogs  
behaviorally  
transformed



Transforming behavior with

# confidence & trust

Very few people know about our behavior team. Their combined experience and skillful compassion is simply awe-inspiring. They are responsible for behavior assessment, treatment plans, socialization, and a myriad of other tasks designed to setting our animals up for successful adoptions and happy lives.

Nacho came into our care from a difficult situation. She was extremely fearful of humans, and would require *lots* of coaxing to leave her kennel. Due to the extent of her distrust of people, the behavior team determined she would wait for transport until she was more confident and comfortable around humans.

Our behavior team dedicated themselves to helping Nacho. They could be found in the campus yards every day, working on building Nacho's confidence. Their careful, informed, and intentional approach to trust building paid off, and in just two weeks, Nacho was deemed eligible for the third transport.

Caring for our animals extends far beyond providing food, water, and shelter. We believe caring for animals means helping them thrive in their future homes. It means ensuring that animals have the confidence to live the lives they deserve and find happiness in places they formerly didn't have access to.





spotlight on



# Volunteer

## 1,119

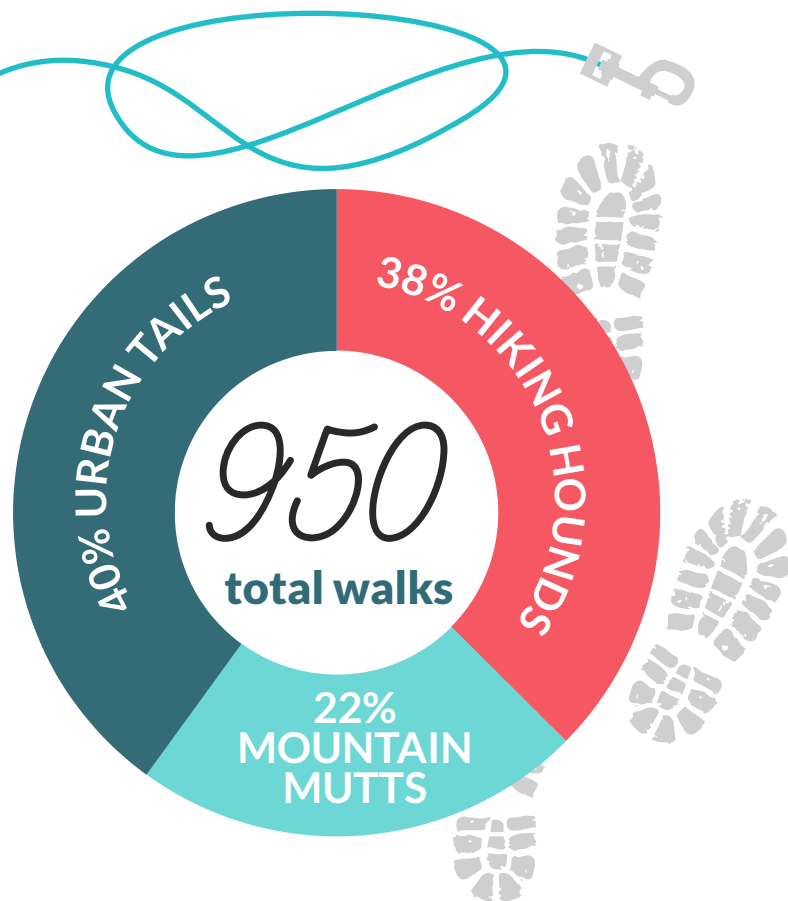
volunteers or  
volunteer groups

## 13,363

hours of volunteer  
time logged

## Taking a *hike*

Asheville Humane Society offers three unique volunteer opportunities for dog lovers to get active and make a difference. **Hiking Hounds** is a Sunday morning group hike where volunteers and dogs explore moderate trails, covering 3–6 miles over about 3 hours. For a more flexible outing, **Urban Tails** allows volunteers to take a single dog off campus for a personalized adventure—whether it’s a walk, run, hike, or relaxing visit to a park, brewery, or even your home. On Wednesday mornings, **Mountain Mutts** offers an easy-to-moderate 2–4 mile group hike, taking about 3 hours and giving dogs a chance to explore the great outdoors.







# Asheville Humane Thrift Store



**\$692,680**

total sales in 2024

**\$22,680**

in donations made at register



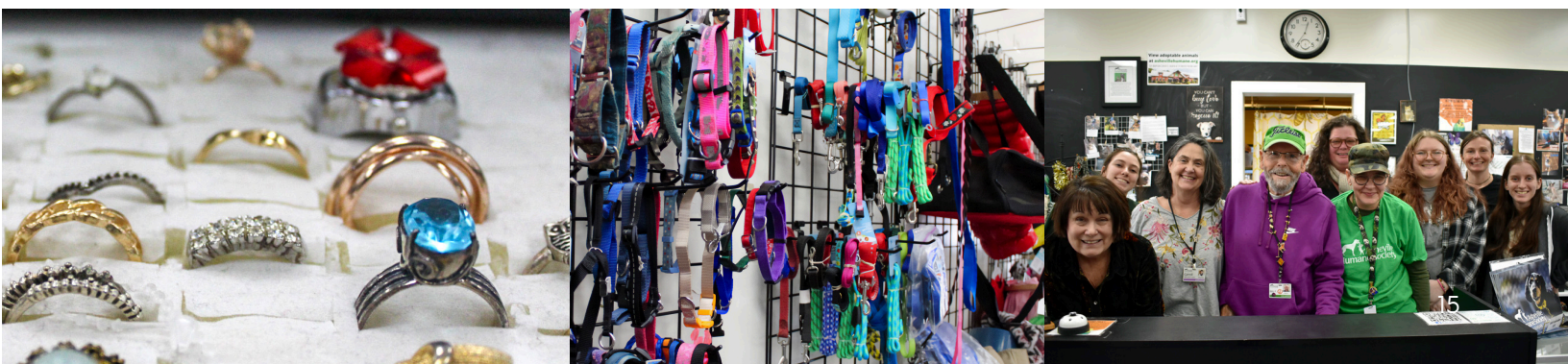
To the untrained eye, the Asheville Humane Thrift Store is a small shop full of unique finds and treasures. But a little digging gave us a much clearer picture. It's a community beyond all else.

After Helene, the Thrift Store became a refuge. Community members came in droves, dropping off donations they thought could help someone in need—filling bins of free resources for the community. An Army Reserves team stopped by to help sort through and distribute donations. One man, who drove a water supply truck and was stationed in the parking lot, would come in just to see friendly faces, have meaningful conversation, and get warm. He slept in his truck well beyond Thanksgiving. The Thrift Store was family.

As things started to open up, the regulars poured in with their furry companions. They swapped stories and brainstormed how to best serve the displaced animals of WNC. One regular described wandering through the shelves, surrounded by familiar, friendly faces as “therapeutic.”

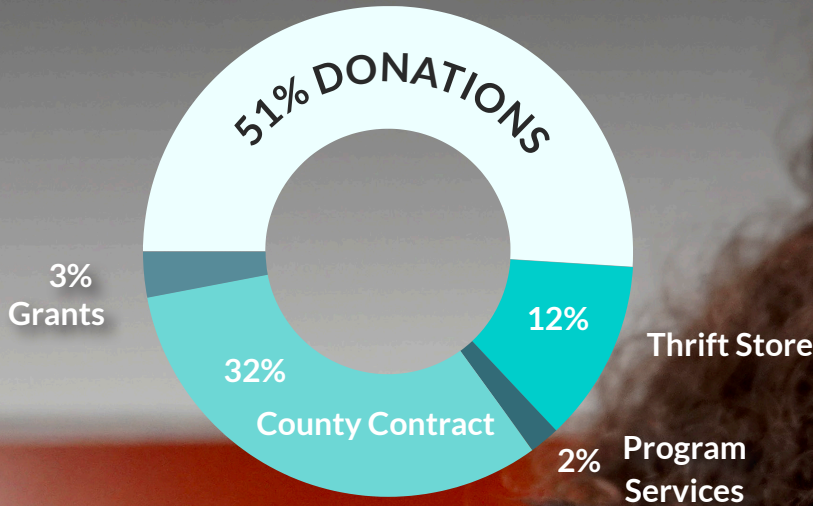
The beautiful thing is that none of these characteristics are unique to hurricane response. The staff and volunteers have always fostered a community atmosphere with an emphasis on two missions—to support the animals and the people that love them, and to be a resource to the wider community.

So when you come in looking for gems, remember that the best ones are people.

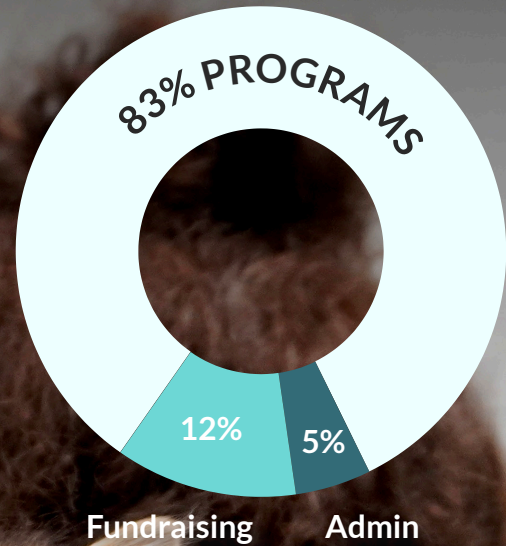


# We make every dollar *count.*

How are we funded?



Where does my donation go?



Charity Navigator



FOUR-STAR

We prioritize efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency, so that every dollar donated makes a meaningful difference for the animals in our community.

Asheville Humane has earned the highest rating from Charity Navigator, America's premier charity evaluator.

# Financial and Gift in Kind Partners

Animal Charities of America

Arcadia Beverage Co

ASPCA

Bandwidth

Banfield Foundation

Bissell Pet Foundation

Buncombe County

Chewy.com

Country Club of NC Foundation

CT Charitable Foundation

Dave & Cheryl Duffield  
Foundation

Dogs & Cats Stranded on the  
Streets

Dynamic Pet Palace

Foundation for the Carolinas

Frankie's Friends

Fresh Market

Fruehauf Foundation

German Shepherd Dog Rescue

Glass Foundation

Greater Good Charities, Inc.

Grey Muzzle Organization

Hill's Science Diet

Huntington Ingalls Industries

Investors Management Corp

J.D. Abrams Foundation

Joyful Blessings Foundation

K9 Kennel Boss

Katzen International

Kimco Realty

Korndrop Family Foundation

Laura J. Niles Foundation

Licking River Kennel Club

Lucky Heart Fund

Maddie's Fund

MuttNation Foundation, Inc.

New Belgium Brewing Company

On Shore Foundation

Paws Across America

Pedigree Foundation

Petco Love Foundation

Petland Charities

PetSmart Charities, Inc.

Powin

Rescue Ranch

Sabri Foundation

San Diego Dog Sports Club

Summerlee Foundation

The Grace And Cliff Hare  
Foundation

Tito's Handmade Vodka

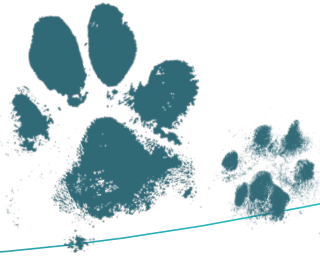
Tony Stewart Foundation

United Activists For Animal  
Rights

Unity Presbyterian Church

VCA Charities

Walnut Cove Members  
Association



[ashevillehumane.org](http://ashevillehumane.org)

