Animal Welfare League of Alexandria
Annual Report

2019
One Paw at a Time
It’s been another record-breaking year at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA), measured in animals sheltered, families found and lives changed. I’m honored to serve as the new Executive Director for a team of passionate animal welfare advocates who strive every day to meet our community’s mandate of making Alexandria a better and safer place for animals...and their human companions.

In 2019, we focused our efforts on finding homes for animals but also helping beloved pets stay with their families. Through programs like our Community Pet Care Fairs to provide vaccines, supplies and guidance to pet owners in underserved communities and Animeals to assist housebound seniors and their pets, we worked to avoid crises that may lead to the surrender of a pet. We continue to offer Spay and Neuter Vouchers for low-income residents, and our Behavior Hotline is available to animal owners with questions or concerns about their pet, regardless of whether they were adopted from the AWLA or not. In January, our in-house Pet Pantry saw record traffic as we reminded pet owners affected by the government furlough that we’re a resource for pet food and supplies when budgets are tight. And we worked with Alexandria’s youngest residents to provide Humane Education through programs like summer camp, scout tours and birthday parties, helping to instill a love of animal welfare and compassion for animals from an early age.

But we couldn’t have done it without YOU. Volunteers and fosters, donors and adopters, you are the team that makes these achievements possible. 2019 was a busy year, but we also think it was a successful one, and we’re just getting started! So follow our journey to see what’s next. We have big plans, and we’re going to keep pushing forward to help animals — and the humans who love them — thrive across our community. If we did all this in 2019, imagine what we can do in the coming year...with your support!

By the Numbers

1,381 adoptions
489 animals fostered
2,371 calls answered by Animal Services
226 animals treated for major medical concerns
Adopting
Did you know that every year, thousands of animals come through the doors of the AWLA, and for most of them, that’s the first step in a journey that will lead them to find their new families?

Volunteering
Did you know volunteers take on a wide variety of integral shelter duties, from walking dogs and socializing with cats to administrative assistance, laundry and even helping at events in the community?

Fostering
Did you know foster caregivers take in animals with special medical or behavioral needs, as well as assisting when the shelter is at capacity or even when an animal just needs a vacation from the shelter environment?

Donating
Did you know that the animals at the AWLA receive veterinary care, behavioral support, foster attention and so much more because of monetary and in-kind donations of goods, services and time from the community?

In 2019, **75,000 visitors** came to the AWLA in hopes of finding their new family members.

In 2019, volunteers donated **25,800 hours** of their time, the equivalent of nearly 12 full-time staff members.

In 2019, nearly **500 animals** spent time in foster care, allowing the AWLA to care for even more animals in need!

In 2019, **more than half** of the AWLA’s funding came from donations from the community.
A Year of Change

A lot has happened at the AWLA over the past year. In October, the AWLA’s Executive Director Megan Webb announced that she would be resigning from the role she had held for more than six years. In her stead and with the unanimous consent of the AWLA’s Board of Directors, Webb’s second-in-command, shelter COO Stella Hanly took over the position.

Beginning in August, contractors for the City of Alexandria began work on additional roofing that would protect the AWLA’s six outdoor dog runs from the elements. The construction was at times disruptive and meant that we could take in fewer animals over the course of the fall and winter, but the end result is a more comfortable experience for dogs at the shelter, as well as a safer work environment for Animal Care staff.

And in September, we announced our new Community Programs department (more on the following page), which will expand upon our efforts to help not only homeless but also owned animals throughout the community, to give every animal the chance to find — and stay in — a home where they are loved.

In 2020, we will continue to grow, to push forward and help animals across the region with the highest level of care: moving animals through the shelter even more quickly to decrease their length-of-stay, reducing euthanasia rates and assisting our neighboring communities in need. With the conclusion of the shelter construction, we will care for more animals and find new ways to keep animals with their families. We will host more activities at the AWLA and continue to find new ways to bring people into the shelter. We will be updating the building’s interior to reflect the fun and caring organization we know we are. We will continue to grow our relationships in the community and make the AWLA the best place it can be for homeless animals. 2020 will also be a year of change...change for the better. Change for the animals. Change for the community. And we thank you for your support through it all!
In the Community

Our efforts to help animals don’t stop at the shelter doors. With our newly created Community Programs department, we are expanding the number of ways we can help owned pets receive the care they need to stay with their families.

How did we help in 2019?

More than 7,000 pounds of pet food and supplies provided through programs like Animeals and the community Pet Pantry.

More than 130 animals assisted during 2019 In-Community Pet Care Fairs.

262 animals who received spay or neuter assistance through the SNAP program for low-income residents.

1,774 days that pets whose owners were facing emergencies were sheltered at the AWLA through our Crisis Care program.
What’s in an adoption fee?

On average, the AWLA invests more than $500 into the care of an animal, which does not include major surgeries and other medical treatment that many of our residents require. When you adopt, your support goes right back to the AWLA to help even more animals in need.

Average AWLA Cost - $535
Average Adoption - $200

Please note these tables represent the AWLA’s 2019 fiscal year, which took place July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019. The 2019 fiscal year audit is not yet complete, so these totals are subject to minor fluctuation.
In 2019, more than 200 animals were treated by the AWLA’s veterinary team for major medical issues, ranging from life-threatening fever to debilitating cataracts, broken bones, chronic conditions, and, of course, injuries and malnutrition in cases of abuse and neglect. The AWLA’s contract with the city helps cover the cost of food and housing for stray animals, but it is only with the support of our community that we can be ready to help an animal in urgent medical need, like Pip.

Changing Lives

When Pip was dropped off at the VCA Alexandria Animal Hospital in mid-July, it was easy to see that something was wrong. The 8-week-old black kitten was mewing pitifully and couldn’t stand on his front left leg. Further examination showed a fractured wrist and scabbed abscess that indicated infection. It was clear Pip needed help.

The AWLA’s veterinary team confirmed VCA’s diagnosis: Pip’s leg had suffered severe trauma and was no longer functional. It would need to be amputated to prevent further infection. Pip was also malnourished and dehydrated, and staff had a hard task trying to stabilize him so he could undergo this major surgery.

And there were the costs to consider. Amputation and rehabilitation are not cheap, and they aren’t in the AWLA’s annual budget, so we reached out to our community. And you responded quickly, raising the funds for Pip’s care almost overnight. Pip spent two weeks growing strong enough for the procedure in the home of an amazing foster caregiver, and in early August, he underwent surgery.

It was a success! Since Pip’s leg had been non-functional for so long, he’d gotten used to being without it, and just a day after his surgery, he was already bounding with his canine foster brother and enjoying his new lease on life. After he recovered fully, he returned to the AWLA and was adopted the same day. We are pleased that Pip is able to live the life of a happy, normal cat in a home of his own... because of YOU!