

annual  
report

# animal welfare matters

A publication of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria



Animal Welfare League  
of Alexandria

## Same Shelter, New Website

Please visit [www.alexandriaanimals.org](http://www.alexandriaanimals.org) to take a tour of our new website. Special thanks to our friends at Firefly Partners for creating an updated look and easier way for visitors to view our animals and online resources.

## Vola Lawson Animal Shelter: Hours for Animal Visitation\*

Monday	1:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Tuesday	1:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Thursday	1:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Friday	1:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Sat & Sun	12:00 noon - 5:00 PM

\*On Wednesdays, the shelter is closed for all business and animal visitation.

We are open for surrendering owned and stray animals and other emergencies from 11:00am to 8:00pm Monday-Friday and 9:00am to 5:00pm Saturday-Sunday.

## How to Reach the League

[www.alexandriaanimals.org](http://www.alexandriaanimals.org)

[www.facebook.com/  
alexandriaanimals](http://www.facebook.com/alexandriaanimals)

[www.twitter.com/AlexAnimals](http://www.twitter.com/AlexAnimals)

## Board of Directors:

Gordon Kromberg, Chair  
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## League Offers Hope to Homeless Animals; Outreach and Events for Animal Loving Community

### 2010 in Review

Celebrating our 65th year of service, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria remembers our accomplishments of the past year and thanks our supporters. On the following pages, join each AWLA department as we highlight our favorite stories of 2010 and enter our 65th year of helping animals and supporting community.

### Babies Abound

Countless new kittens, litters of newborn guinea pigs, and foster volunteers caring for puppies. Sometimes the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria seems to be part nursery and part animal shelter. Our staff and volunteers handle each new "bundle of joy" with care and love. Learn more about the youngsters in our care on the following pages.

### Special Needs Get Special Care

League staff members treat each companion animal as an individual—and sometimes this means extra medical care. Thanks to Sarah's Fund and our Seniors' Fund, the League is able to help many of our special needs residents—providing treatments that we would otherwise be unable to afford. On page four, read more about the extra care our staff provide.

### Staff Spreads the Word

The League welcomed hundreds of students in 2010 for a variety of educational opportunities ranging from summer camp to birthday parties to shelter tours and workshops. Our Animal Ambassadors help us teach important lessons about animal care and our responsibilities to the creatures in our homes and backyards. See page seven for our humane education updates.

### Events Offer Hope and Fun

With a variety of events, the League invited community members to help us raise awareness of animal homelessness...and to have some fun while doing it! From reunions to photo contests to the Olde Towne Dogge Walke, we hoped to spotlight the needs of homeless animals while celebrating the special bond that exists between caregivers and their companion animals.

### Join Us

...as we embark on more animal adventures and celebrate all the pets who have come through our doors.



Facilities and Maintenance Manager Tommy Scott gently handles an adoptable rabbit.

# A Message from the Chairman and Executive Director

## 2010 was a remarkable year for the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.



Gordon Kromberg  
Chairman, Board of Directors

We continued to see the effects that a struggling economy has had on pet owners throughout our area - resulting in an almost 30% increase in the numbers of animals surrendered to the shelter. The families they had once been part of were now faced with job loss, home foreclosure, or other financial problems which forced them to make the difficult decision to bring their pet to us.

Fortunately, we have also seen our community rise to the challenges posed to us to care for this increased number of animals and to help even more people with their animal-related questions or problems.

You have increased your financial support of the AWLA; signed up to volunteer or increased the number of hours you volunteer for the AWLA; provided in-kind services to AWLA with a variety of technical and professional skills; and, encouraged friends, neighbors, and co-workers to adopt a shelter animal instead of purchasing one.

Thank you to all of our donors and partners in helping us to meet these challenges and provide excellent care for the animals who seek refuge under our roof. As we enter our 65th year of serving our community, we renew our pledge to be a safe haven for **every** animal who needs care.

As we move into the second decade of the 21st Century and beyond, we know we still have many challenges ahead. But we also know that with the continued support of our friends and supporters, we can conquer them.



Martha C. Armstrong  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gordon".

Gordon Kromberg  
Chairman, Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Martha C. Armstrong".

Martha C. Armstrong  
Executive Director



Walkers—both human and canine—participate in the 2010 Olde Towne Dogge Walke.

## Special Events Putting the “Fun” in Fundraising

Just as the number of animals in our care increased in 2010, so did our expenses. Thankfully, League supporters understand that pets require consistent care, regardless of the economic climate. Despite the tough economic times, the League was able to maintain a high level of care and service for our companion animal residents.

Generous donations and our fun special events are critical to ensuring that our residents receive the care that they deserve. Whether our supporters entered their pet in our photo contest, asked friends to pledge support in our dog walk or remembered our animals during the holiday giving season, every gift is appreciated.

In 2010, general donations and special events revenue accounted for \$1.1 million of the League’s \$2.7 million budget. More than \$2.1 million of the League’s expenses are directly related to our animal care, adoption and outreach programs—and every donation helps to support our work.

Our special events help the League in a variety of ways---by raising critical funds while helping us to spread important messages about animal welfare and animal homelessness. One great example of this is the Olde Towne Dogge Walke which is organized by Shannon and Bobby Mahoney of Capitol Heel and benefits the League.

The fourth annual Olde Towne Dogge Walke held on September 26, 2010 brought together 492 registered human walkers who collectively raised over \$41,000 for the League. Participants pledged their support for the League as individuals, walking with their canine pal or as part of one of the 34 participating teams.

Awards were given to the top individual and team fundraisers. The top individual fundraiser was Sandy Yamamoto and the top fundraising team was Team Ann, a group organized by the Olde Towne School for Dogs who walked in memory of Ann Messersmith Nadjar, a dog trainer and lifelong animal lover.

The 2010 Dogge Walke started and finished at Alexandria’s historic Market Square and included many of Old Town’s scenic highlights. Congressman Jim Moran and Alexandria Mayor William Euille showed their shelter support by reaching out to their canine constituents.

The walk also welcomed “Virtual Walkers,” which included cats, hamsters, birds and other dogs who preferred to show their support from home.

The 2011 walk is scheduled for Sunday, September 25th and the League looks forward to another fantastic turnout.

## AWLA Revenue and Expenses (FY 2010)

### REVENUE

Adoptions/Educational Programs	\$222,663
Donations	\$998,116
Funding from the City of Alexandria	\$1,055,859
Merchandise sales and other	\$41,411
Special events (net of expenses)	\$77,909
Investment income	\$282,893
Net assets released from donor restrictions	\$23,078
<b>Total revenue (FY 2010)</b>	<b>\$2,701,929</b>

### EXPENSES

Animal services	\$1,626,723
Animal control	\$362,083
Community outreach	\$126,686
Fundraising	\$280,425
Management and general support	\$180,695
<b>Total expenses (FY 2010)</b>	<b>\$2,576,612</b>

## Special Thanks

The League is fortunate to have the support of these animal-loving companies and thank them for their ongoing support of our work, our staff and the animals in our care. Thank You!



**Animal Hospitals**

VCAhospitals.com



**KIMPTON**  
hotels & restaurants  
HOSPITALITY



# Animal Care

## Treating Every Animal as Our Own

### 2010 Summary Statistics

A total of **1,217** animals were adopted from the League.

- **598** cats
- **376** dogs
- **229** small animals (including guinea pigs, hamsters, birds, reptiles, amphibians and others)
- **14** domestic fowl

**249** companion animals were transferred from other adoption agencies to the League for our care

**65%** the lost dogs who arrived at the League as strays were reunited with their owners

More than **200** dogs adopted from the League polished their manners in our Charm School

The League's animal care staff handle an amazing array of animals every year. From boisterous puppies to nervous cats to all varieties of companion animals who lost their homes and had to adjust to a very new environment—animal care technicians fed, cleaned and cared for them all.

Every staff member has his or her "favorites" but a few League residents stand out because of their stories or their personalities.

Turbo, a small mixed breed dog, arrived at the League last spring. His hair was matted and desperately needed grooming. As staff members cut away some of his hair, they uncovered multiple infected sores in need of immediate medical attention. After surgery and patient

staff and volunteer care, Turbo found a new home with adopters who appreciate his resilience and spunky personality. Animal care staff were critical to Turbo's care, treatment and recovery.



Staff also remember a special cat named Drake. Drake was brought to the shelter by a Good Samaritan who had found the cat with severe puncture wounds on his neck. Our staff cleaned and cared for Drake and helped him make a complete recovery. When Drake went to the vet to be neutered

we discovered he had a heart murmur—and staff worried that adopters would shy away from a cat with a heart condition. Thankfully, Drake's adopters saw beyond the heart murmur to the incredible cat that staff so tenderly cared for.

Turbo and Drake are just two of the thousands of animals who have experienced the care that League staff share with all our animals. As long as animals enter our building, compassionate hands will welcome them.

*A League volunteer helps an adoptable dog gain confidence.*



# Adoption

## Spotlight on Kenya and The Todd

In 2010, more than 1,200 animals found new homes through the League's adoption program. From dogs to cats to chinchillas and turtles, League staff and volunteers worked to make lifelong matches for all our adoptable animals.

To help send animals home more quickly, staff streamlined the adoption application process and promoted animals on the web and through local media outlets. Staff and volunteers took adoptable animals to outreach events and on field trips around Alexandria.

Some animals were adopted almost immediately upon entering the adoption program, while others took longer to find just the right home. Two longer-term residents from 2010 played special roles at the shelter.

The Todd is a hound who arrived at the League from transfer partners in West Virginia. Staff appreciated his easy-going nature and identified him as an excellent Animal Ambassador during our summer camp program.

During his stay at the shelter, The Todd met with hundreds of visitors, including every one of our summer campers. He gladly joined campers for walks and training time and amused everyone with his play yard antics—showing everyone just how much he loves water. The Todd appears



*Kenya and her kitten take a catnap in their foster home.*

with League campers on page 7. You can also see a video of The Todd on our website by clicking the "You Tube" button at the bottom of the home page.

Just as summer drew to a close, The Todd found his new home. Although staff were grateful for his assistance during summer camp, we were thrilled to send him to a permanent, loving new home.

Another League graduate, Kenya arrived at the shelter as a stray and gave birth to a litter of kittens just a few days after her arrival. Kenya's kittens quickly found homes, but Kenya didn't find the right adopter until 10 months after her arrival.

Despite the length of her stay, Kenya remained polite and gentle with visitors—welcoming people with a gentle head rub and soft greeting.

For both Kenya and The Todd, the AWLA was home for much of 2010—and all staff are thrilled that they have both now found their permanent homes.

## Promotions Generate Adoptions and Fun

The Animal Welfare League is always willing to try creative strategies to bring in new adopters. From "Certified Pre-Owned Cats" and "Love is in the Air" to our special "Black Friday" and "It's a Wonderful (Second) Life" promotions, League staff employed a variety of marketing themes to attract adopters and highlight our residents' great qualities.

"If there's a way for us to garner more interest in adoption or in a particular pet, we'll try it," said Sara Glennon who manages the League's adoption program. "All the different promotions are our attempts to increase foot traffic and get more people looking at our adoptable animals...Plus these promotions are fun."

For Halloween, staff members dressed as black cats. During the Certified Pre-Owned

Cats promotion, staff covered the cat adoption room with creative, car-themed cat descriptions. For adopt-a-dog month, the League hosted "Dogtoberfest," and welcomed back League graduates and served root beer and pretzels to all shelter visitors.

"Basically, we try to create a welcoming atmosphere here—and let people know that we're glad they took the time to visit. If they end up adopting from us—even better," said Suzanne D'Alonzo, Education and Training Manager for the League.

Interested in learning more about adoption or other special events at the League? Check our website ([www.alexandrianimals.org](http://www.alexandrianimals.org)) or join our electronic mailing list for the latest League news.

*A League volunteer helps a resident perfect her "sit."*



*Beagles Maxx and Johnny Cash (AWLA graduates) celebrate Dogtoberfest with their adopters.*





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## Animal Control at a Glance

Number of calls for service: **2701**  
Number of cruelty investigations: **241**  
Number of wildlife assisted: **698**  
Number of animals quarantined: **70**

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*An Alexandria firefighter was one member of the team of emergency professionals who helped bring this kitten to safety—and a new home.*

## Animal Control Helping Animals One Call at a Time

The League's animal control officers never know what they will find when responding to a call. In October, Animal Control Officer Shannon Williams received a call to help a trapped kitten. Officer Williams had no idea how complex this operation would ultimately be.

An area resident heard a kitten crying from an electric transformer box in an apartment building and called the League for help. When she arrived at the scene, Williams discovered that the kitten had fallen into a pipe under the transformer box and could not make his way out of the pipe. Williams could not reach the kitten to remove him from the pipe, nor could the kitten exit the pipe on his own.

Both Dominion Power and the Alexandria Fire Department were called to assist Williams with the kitten's rescue. After attempts lasting three hours, the team attached a rescue net to a long, flexible pole guided by a remote camera to locate and secure the kitten. Emergency workers then carefully slid the kitten up the pipe and to safety.

The kitten was approximately five weeks old and in good health, despite his ordeal. After several weeks of rest and recuperation at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter the kitten was adopted and went to his new home.

Williams said, "This case was far more involved than I ever thought it would be, but I was so happy to help this little guy to safety. After all the stress he endured, I'm thrilled he found a loving home."

Animal control officers are trained to assist domestic and wild animals that are injured or in distress. Officers respond to all calls placed within the City of Alexandria and also provide critical assistance to the city's human and animal residents.



*Alexandria's Animal Control Officers from left to right: Chaun Gorden, Joy Wilson, Shannon Williams, Pete Fitzgerald and Allan Corman*

### Did You Know?

Our animal control officers handle a wide range of duties including:

- Answering calls regarding wild and domestic animals in distress
- Patrolling the city's 18 dog parks
- Licensing for dogs and cats
- Issuing pet store permits
- Conducting cruelty investigations
- Responding to bite reports
- Managing animals in safekeeping
- Investigating suspected rabies cases
- Providing public education and outreach

...and much more! Our officers are often on the road and in the field—and always willing to answer questions regarding pet ownership in the City of Alexandria. Stop and say hello!

# Humane Education

## Helping Area Students Appreciate Animals

The League's humane education program engaged hundreds of young visitors with a variety of fun, animal-focused programs in the past year. These activities help students to better understand animal shelters and the animals in our care. They help our residents by providing them with additional opportunities for enrichment and socialization.

Suzanne D'Alonzo manages the League's humane education program and highlighted League programs that offer different educational experiences for youth. "We are excited to offer students hands-on animal experiences. These types of activities are more interesting for the students, and very beneficial for our animals. Our residents have more opportunities for play, training and socialization. This extra attention supplements what our staff and volunteers already provide—keeping our animals happy and engaged with visitors," said D'Alonzo.

D'Alonzo described two Scouting activities "Bun Fun Day" and "Shelter Fun Day" which brought area Scouts to the shelter to learn more about specific pet needs. Topics covered included training and enrichment for animal companions as well as proper greeting and handling techniques and the unique needs of rabbits, guinea pigs and many of our small animals such as gerbils and hamsters.

Through the League's summer camp, students gained a practical working knowledge of the different animals commonly received at the League. D'Alonzo was also pleased to encourage campers to think critically about issues of animal homelessness, overpopulation and animal care. She and her campers explored a variety of ways to help shelter residents from treats and training during camp to setting up donation drives and collecting funds to help animals.

"We want every student to know that any effort, big or small, makes an impact for our animals. Their involvement helps these animals find homes faster and helps keep their spirits high while they are here," D'Alonzo said.



*Left: Summer campers enjoyed spending time with The Todd, one of our Animal Ambassadors.*



*Above: Youth volunteers made vegetable kabobs and groomed guinea pigs—much to our pigs' delight!*

## Humane Education at a Glance

Last year, League staff conducted:

- 31** shelter tours
- 15** Birthday Pawties
- 10** week-long summer camp sessions
- 21** student service projects
- ... and hosted **4** student interns.

Through the League's humane education program, more than **830** students visited the shelter to learn about pet care and ways to help homeless animals. These students chopped hot dogs and made dog treats, decorated thousands of cat toys and groomed guinea pigs. Our shelter friends made beds and blankets and even conducted donation drives for our animals! Their hard work was much appreciated by all our residents. Thank you to all our young visitors!





## Volunteers Help in Every Department

### Volunteers and Fosters at a Glance

220 volunteers

Spent a total of 24,000 hours working in the shelter or at events

Volunteers cared for 135 animals as part of the League's foster program

The League is fortunate to have an energetic and talented crew of assistants. Volunteers play a variety of roles at the shelter, helping with everything from socializing animals to transporting wildlife to assisting in the front and administrative offices. Volunteers provide the people power to provide many of the extras that keep our residents (and staff!) happy.

Long-time volunteer Nancy Posey helps to keep the League's front office humming. Staff and visitors all comment on Nancy's gentle way with both pets and people. Whether answering a call, helping someone who has lost a pet or rubbing the ears of a resident dog, cat or other pets, Nancy's sincere love of animals shines in everything she does.

League executive director Martha Armstrong commented on Nancy's dedication. "The front office can be a busy, emotional place to work, yet Nancy puts her experience and compassion to great use in every situation. Nancy, and all the volunteers who help in administrative capacities provide just as much help to our residents as those volunteers who socialize cats and walk dogs."

The League is fortunate to receive help from a variety of talented people who help us "behind the scenes," in our administrative offices. Whether helping with our website, accounting, promotional materials, or donations, League volunteers demonstrate that there are 1,001 ways to help homeless animals.

Thank you!

## Fostering Their Future

In 2010, the League's foster program helped 135 animals. Foster caregivers provide at-risk pets with the extra time and attention that they need before entering the adoption program. From underage puppies and kittens to those animals recovering from surgery or medical treatment, League volunteers welcome their fosterlings with a smile and gentle touch.

Foster caregivers may be asked to provide a calm place for a pet to relax and recover after surgery. On the other end of the spectrum, caregivers may house rambunctious puppies or kittens until they reach an age and level of development at which they can be adopted.

Last summer, Candace, a small Parson Russell Terrier mix needed special help and a foster home. Candace arrived at the League and staff suspected she was soon due to deliver a litter of puppies. We identified a caregiver and transferred Candace to her foster home in time for the arrival of her five healthy puppies.

For the next eight weeks, Candace's foster caregiver worked with League staff and volunteers to ensure that the puppies had everything they needed, including appropriate socialization and exposure to new people and places.

When the time was right, Candace's pups entered our adoption program and found fantastic homes—and a great adopter for Candace herself! Kudos to Candace for raising five fun puppies, and many thanks to Candace's foster caregiver for providing all the support she and her puppies needed!

If you are interested in learning more about the foster program, please visit [www.alexandrianimals.org](http://www.alexandrianimals.org).



Nancy Posey visits with a League resident.



This kitten enjoys meeting a League volunteer.



Fostering with the League is a rewarding experience.