

# Animal Tails

## Dear Friends,

Ten years of impactful program growth - remarkable adoptions, public classes, humane education, wellness and low-cost surgeries **all leveled in just six days**. That is the power of a pandemic. Life at AWA took a drastic turn on Friday March 13.

We were working to "flatten the curve" while following guidelines on "social distancing," super-sanitizing everything, cancelling and postponing events, and limiting the number of people in the buildings at one time. But over the weekend something changed.

The adoption center saw only a few adopters. The Vaccine clinic had 1/3 its number of clients. Staff and volunteers were anxious to be at work, and by the end of the week, donations slowed, registrations to Paws and Feet dried up, transport friends were worried about getting the dogs to us, and work ground to a slow grind.

The animals in the shelter never missed a belly rub, a Kong treat or walk on the trails. Yet, it was an eerie day when you realize "this isn't like the movies." This is real.

That night to clear my head I went for a walk. I had to come to realize that the amazing programs we began in 2009 - right after the economic decline - had to evolve post COVID-19.

**Yet, I know it will be ok.**



## A SPECIAL COVID-19 BULLETIN

*(Continued Inside)*



# From the Executive Director

(Continued from Cover)

We've been building lifesaving programs for decades. The last ten years prepared us, and COVID-19 is testing us, so that when we open the doors of our new building, and 'happiness begins,' we will be stronger than ever and alive with a vision that will carry us forward saving pets and people for another 74 years.

This special newsletter is to share with you the impact the last few days have had on AWA, where the needs are so we bounce back, and how - despite what is going on - we continue to do all we can to save pet lives by touching the hearts of people, and giving them a helping hand. One of my AWA mantras is, "AWA, always moving forward!"

“It is my hope that by the time you read this letter, we are bouncing back from this crisis and moving forward to our new normal.”

## OUR MISSION

AWA is dedicated to eliminating animal suffering, promoting the importance of the human-animal bond and improving the role of animals in the well-being of people.

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## What a Difference a Decade Makes: AWA's 2010-2019 Community Impact



**23,264 pets** have found new loving homes.

Adoptions



**58,714 pets** were helped to stay healthy and enjoy life.

Vaccines Given



Spay/Neuters

**87,596 pets** were "fixed" preventing unwanted litters.



Total Pets Helped

**Our grand total? 169,574 pets** - and their owners - **receiving assistance from AWA!**

## "Money Doesn't Grow on Trees"

That old saying was never more relevant to AWA than it is today. Because of the necessary cancellation of three months of fundraising events (including our largest fundraiser, (Paws & Feet Doggie FunDay), due to COVID-19, we estimate AWA will suffer a shortfall of more than \$150,000 in revenue between now and the beginning of June. But AWA doesn't stop because of setbacks. **We are still here caring for homeless animals every day.**

It feels as if we are dealing with the fallout from the 2008 financial crisis AND Super Storm Sandy combined into one. We know from these past experiences, in a matter of months, **many in the community will need our help.**

As we feel the trickle-down effect of the troubled economy, families - perhaps your neighbors - will have difficulty caring for their own animals. Hundreds of our friends, neighbors, and families will need pet food, veterinary care, respite care, relinquishment care, etc.

And then they will turn to AWA for help.

AWA receives no funding from national organizations or the government. AWA is a non-profit organization funded by your generosity. We know we will get through this together!



Please go to [support.awanj.org/COVID](https://support.awanj.org/COVID) to assist us in this time of crisis, call (856) 424-2288 x107, or return your gift in the enclosed envelope.



# Safety and Care are Always Priority #1

This is a rapidly evolving situation, and we are doing our best to respond to it in a timely manner. The reality is: by the time you read this, our "news" will likely be overshadowed by the "current" status at the time.



**The welfare of our community, employees, volunteers and animals is always our top priority.** Navigating how to save pet lives, deliver some essential services, and protect people - while experiencing staff shortages and social distancing - has meant quickly modifying current service delivery and suspending programs such as Pet Therapy, Humane Education, and Volunteering.

Adoption applications will be available on-line, and that will be followed by a phone conversation with an adoption staff member. **As of this writing, adoptions and relinquishments will still take place, but by appointment only, and during reduced hours.**

In place of our onsite Pet Pantry for community members in need, pet food will be placed in outdoor Grab Bags. We are introducing a Foster-to-Adopt program. If you are fostering a pet, we encourage you to look for potential adopters, and we will help you with that process. We will be answering pet behavior questions, and providing training on other topics, through social media with daily video tips. Volunteers are being tapped to do pet enrichment projects at home.

**Like so many small businesses, we are struggling. But from the struggle comes hope - and hope leads to action. With your help, we know "we will rise up together."**

*Please check our website and Facebook page for the latest news from AWA: [awanj.org](http://awanj.org).*

## Suddenly Everything Changed

**After 14 months** of fundraising and planning, AWA was 5 weeks away from the start of construction of its new adoption/education center. Hardhats and shovels were ready for you to wear at the Demolition event in April.

Like many aspects of our daily lives, COVID-19 changed our plans. The start of construction is now moved to early this summer, as we are dependent on the opening of schools, government agencies and people returning to their worksites.

AWA remains committed to Building a Place Where Happiness Begins - to animals needing our care now and in the future - and to serving the community's pet owners.

We have waited 10 years for this new building. I think we can wait a few months more. To help us continue achieving our capital campaign goal or learn about AWA's plans to expand vital programs and services, please go online to donate at [support.awanj.org/capitalcampanndonation](http://support.awanj.org/capitalcampanndonation)

During Phase 1 of the Capital Campaign, **253 loyal donors have contributed 74%** toward the \$2.5 Million goal.

Next steps? The Public Phase of our Campaign -- its start timed with the TBD date of Construction Kickoff. (Traditionally, the last 20% of funds needed are raised from community wide donations.)

The uncertain times before us may bring new obstacles to raising the remaining funds. **Yet we are resourceful.**

We have YOU to help us, and we can't forget how fortunate we are to have raised more than \$1.8 million to ensure AWA has a home to grow its amazing program.





# How You Can Help

**We know it can be difficult** to look to the future when the present seems so uncertain. Although we don't know when, we do know this will pass. Let's plan together for today and tomorrow.

## Today

- Create your personal plan for your pet: Be sure your pets have proper identification/microchip; keep their updated vaccination, veterinarian, special needs, and medication information (dosage and administration) records in one place whose location you note on your refrigerator; ensure all medications are up-to-date; and finally, identify an emergency pet caregiver who can step in if you become ill.
- Become a virtual animal advocate by liking our Facebook page, smiling at the adoption pet posts and then take action. Share the post, share a pet's story and find pets homes!
- Consider donating to a local, private nonprofit. Support a local business. All of us are hurting. All of us depend on you to help us help others.

*(Please note the CDC states: "At this time, there is no evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread COVID-19 or that they might be a source of infection in the United States." However, it is just sensible hygiene to wash your hands before and after you interact with your pets.)*

## Tomorrow

- **Give Local. Help Local.** Thank you for making AWA one of your Charities of Choice. Homeless pets' needs will never go away.
- Become actively involved in AWA's recovery. AWA relies on the help provided by people like YOU. When the crisis has passed, AWA will be in the middle of kitten season with hundreds of kittens in need of care in Foster volunteer homes. Volunteers will be so needed to help us double our Vets on Wheels efforts in the City of Camden to keep pets healthy and with their families this summer.
- Consider adopting a shelter pet. Open your heart and your home, knowing this pet has likely experienced its own personal stress during this crisis.

## First came the Lemons...

**After at least 24 years of raising money** for a cause and partying like an animal, AWA's signature Paws and Feet Doggie FunDay won't happen in 2020. Its annual gross revenue has been approximately \$100,000, and it supports so many of AWA's programs. Losing that revenue will be difficult for AWA.

## ...then Came the Lemonade

The creativity of AWA staff is unparalleled. Faced with the ramifications to the animals due to this difficult decision, several new virtual fundraising events will be occurring this spring:

1. **Join us for an on-line auction.** Support your local businesses by purchasing gift certificates, and then donate them to AWA for the online auction.
2. Buy a ticket for the **springtime 50-50 raffle**. We will be pulling the winning ticket on May 22nd.
3. Walk in our **virtual Paws & Feet Replacement walk**, with the choice of two distances (Smile Mile and a 3 Mile Stroll), and you will receive a one-of-a-kind commemorative 2020 t-shirt.
4. **Whine & Whiskers** will bring wine & cat lovers together in the comfort of their homes for a night of wine drinking, petting cats and socializing. Stay tuned for details on the date, ticketing and a unique gift for each registrant.

Contact [events@awanj.org](mailto:events@awanj.org) for more information.

**You ARE the heart of AWA. We are able to do our work because of YOU, and we are grateful for your support.**