

Fall 2020

Animal Tails

Paving the Way to Happiness

Navigating COVID-19

**Volunteers Make
a Huge Difference**



Building a Place Where Happiness Begins

Dear Friends,

My 2021 calendar arrived yesterday. I held it in my hands and said, "Please be better than 2020." Flipping through my tattered 2020 calendar, the marks of a year off-the-rails stares back at me. Black Sharpie crosses out AWA events week after week. Scribbled in red ink are new activities I didn't think we would be doing when we laid out our 2020 program and event activities.

I expected to kick off the new building's groundbreaking with a huge party in April; visit with hundreds of supporters & pups at May's Paws and Feet; and be writing my normal fall newsletter filled with stories and glimpses of our new building's opening day.

Saving pets' lives remains my emotional roller coaster – some days bringing me to tears and other days lifting me up. Yet, 2020's pandemic gave me fright like I would sustain riding Gyro Drop – at the top, the bottom falls out and you plunge.

It is because of our donors and your unbelievable trust in AWA that it continues 'moving forward' by asking "what needs to get done?" and "what is most needed to save pets' lives?" There isn't time to really wallow in the fear, to be paralyzed by the unknown, to hide or turn away from what is there.

Days after Friday, March 13th - I formed a COVID-19 task force at AWA to answer the questions above, as well as, to come up with a plan to remain open and operational while putting the safety of our staff, volunteers, adopters, clinic clients and the public front-and-center.

As you read our Fall 2020 newsletter, it is my sincere hope that you are inspired by the stories of lives saved, the ingenuity of our team to come up with new ways to deliver programs, and our scrappy determination to always be there for the animals - no matter what.

We are entering the most important giving season for any charity. More than 40% of our donations come in November and December. This year - more than other years in the past - these donations are critically needed as we claw our way out of COVID-caused financial losses this year.

May the roller coaster, loop d loop, and heart stopping thrills of 2020 soon come to an end, and with you by our side, let 2021 be filled instead with merry-go-rounds, lazy rivers, and ferris wheels.

Thank you for making AWA your local Charity of Choice by Giving Local and Helping Local.



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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Foster Families Keep Adoptions Going

Construction and COVID-19! One was planned, and the other was an unpleasant surprise. Both disrupted operations at the shelter and threatened to limit - or even stop - the lifesaving work at AWA. We knew we could depend on foster volunteers to care for animals during the construction of the new shelter, but when the mandatory shut down from COVID-19 occurred in mid-March, things looked dire.

How could we accept animals from overcrowded shelters or hoarding situations if the shelter was closed?

Then something truly amazing occurred. Interest in fostering animals exploded. With so many animals in foster care, the "Fur-ever Finder" program was created to allow foster families to find adoptive families for the animals in their care. This eliminated the need for their return to the shelter, limiting exposure to staff and adopters.

Quill and Latte, two blind kittens that arrived at AWA, found love and an adoptive family thanks to foster care volunteers. To date, these dedicated foster families have **cared for 744 animals** in their homes, allowing AWA's lifesaving mission to continue through construction and COVID-19. We thank all our long-term foster volunteers and those that joined us for the first time this year!



Happy "Tails" From Our Friends

ROUGH BEGINNINGS WITH HAPPY ENDINGS



Roo (formerly Mitch) is doing amazing!

"He is fully potty trained and knows sit, stay, lay down, and roll over. He has adjusted well to his new home and loves going on his daily walks! He also loves going to the dog park to interact with other dogs and their owners. Despite his small size, Roo only enjoys the dog park if he's on the big dog side. I'm so lucky to have him and he has made these hard times so much more enjoyable."

Jennie



Binx (formerly Batman)

"He is a great addition to my little cat family. He has settled in and loves his new friends. He has such a fun personality and loves to cuddle. Thank you AWA!"

Allison



Teddy (formerly Gadget)

"He was rescued from neglect in Texas at just 4 months old. We fell in love with this tiny pup who wouldn't even look at us, he just sat on the floor, turned away with his head hung. We knew we were the right family to give him all the love he can stand and to build his confidence. He was absolutely terrified of

EVERYTHING, but he has come such a long way! He's so full of life and love and is now 2 years old. His underbite is everyone's favorite. Thank you so much for everything you do for all kinds of pets and for uniting us with this special boy!"

Amanda



Rey (formerly Jen)

"At first, she was super shy, but we have been patient with her and she has definitely come out of her shell. She is a spoiled girl, and we love her so much! Thanks again AWA!"

Taylor



Alaska

"She has really come out of her shell.

We couldn't have asked for a better dog for us! She loves going on hikes or just relaxing on the couch watching TV. We are so thankful that she has joined our family. Thank you so much!"

Kari



Monica

"She is doing great! Almost all her hair has grown back, and she has adjusted well to being home. She loves sitting on laps and being pet. Also, I am working from home, she is often sitting on the dining room table with me during the day while I work. We are so happy she's part of our family!"

Jen

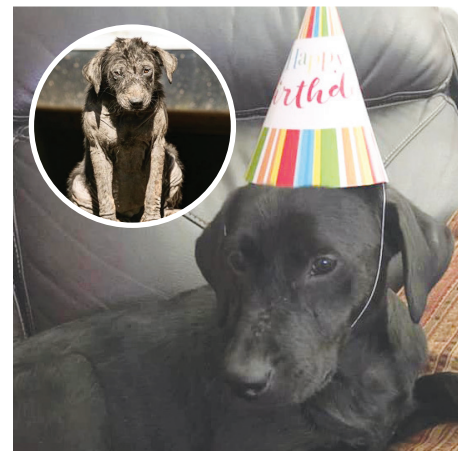


This is Ember (on the left) with her mom and sister Molly.

She was one of the ten dogs rescued from a South Korean meat farm where she lived a neglected life in a cramped wire cage. Her fur was so matted that she could hardly move.

When she arrived at AWA, she was underweight and suffering from heartworm disease.

Now look at her, she's enjoying the life of a princess.



Remember Ludo? He was brought to us from a horrendous hoarding situation in Tennessee. He was covered in mange. After arriving at AWA, he was placed in foster care where he got his first taste of what living with a loving family could be like. He then was adopted and here he is now celebrating a new life of love and companionship.



COVID-19 CHANGED OPERATIONS AT AWA BUT SAVING



Starting last March, things at the AWA changed dramatically, as it did for everyone due to COVID-19. When the shutdown went into effect, we were a little disoriented, but we found our bearings and got creative. Services and programs critical to the mission of saving animals' lives and assisting pet owners in the community had to continue.

My how daily operations changed – navigating remote work, appointments for adoption, training foster volunteers to find an adoptive family and do Zoom adoptions with the staff, Facetime medical consults on animals during their intake exams or for special surgeries, and testing parking lot and appointment based vaccine clinics.

What couldn't be morphed was replaced when the COVID-19 task force asked, "What will pets need now to remain safe? What will they need in 2-3-4 months?" (Yes, back in March we thought we would be resuming "normal" come fall. But sadly, now we are hoping by late summer 2021 the masks can come off, we can gather at events, prospective adopters can mingle through the shelter visiting the pets at their pace, etc.)

New programs came to life in days. **Neighbors Helping Neighbors** – like our Pet Rehoming program, where people post their pets on our site to find them new homes - this program matches pet owners with good Samaritans, willing to provide temporary guardianship for their pet until the owners are able to care for them again. We also partnered with the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA), providing space in the shelter for people who needed to board a pet for a short period of time due to illness or hospitalization. COVID-19 first responders could also take advantage of this program. **Through these programs 438 pet owners have received counseling allowing them to retain their beloved pets.**

Addressing the reality of declining income due to canceled sponsorships, events and fewer donations meant cutting back on staff positions, figuring out how to use fewer supplies like exam gloves due to shortages and cost increases, and moving our shelter-clinic-offices around ourselves in our cars and not hiring a moving company. There was a day when a 5' stainless steel cage was in the back of an employee's car going down the driveway between the old shelter and the Pet Clinic for assembly.



Moving out of the old shelter.



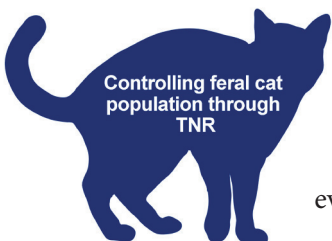
Summer Camp in a Box for dog lovers.

Humane Education events and Summer Camp were canceled, so Alicia our Volunteer Coordinator, came up with the idea of "Summer Camp in a Box", which included fun camp activities and humane education materials to share with children about the importance of treating animals respectfully. The feedback we received was very positive including this message from Deborah.

“Ordered these for my grandchildren. They are having a great time with everything in the box.”

It was crucial to continue supporting the feral cat caregivers by offering **Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR)** programs. With the assistance of Sam Dolan, a Tufts University veterinarian student, who joined us as an extern after losing her summer employment due to the pandemic, a new pilot **MASH program** was developed. This style uses several stations to create a more streamlined flow for efficiency and requires several volunteers, allowing them hands-on training and a clearer understanding of how important spay/

neuter programs are for controlling feral cat populations. With the limit on surgeries allowed in the clinic plus an increase in costs of medical supplies, this MASH style event provides quality care at a lower cost, allowing continued assistance to feral cat communities. The August event was so successful that a second event was held in early October.



Dr. Emily and volunteers at TNR MASH event.

ANIMALS' LIVES & HELPING PET OWNERS CONTINUED

Knowing that the financial hardship accompanying the pandemic would put stress on pet owners' ability to feed their pets, risking more animals being surrendered to shelters, the **"grab and go" Pet Food Pantry** was expanded for daily pickup. Then Amazon contacted us asking if we would like to receive two pallets of pet food and supplies from a regional distribution center, every few months. Of course, we said yes! Once online shopping exploded due to COVID-19, the pallets grew to ten and contained more than just pet food and supplies. Additional items in the shipments included household cleaning items, art supplies and school supplies. Even after securing all we needed for the clinic, shelter and development office, there was still more! We were being buried. Soon the office began to look like a warehouse. To spread the supplies to others in need, Sue, the Development Assistant, contacted nine local organizations with an offer to share our excess. They were delighted to receive these much-needed items to pass along to the families they assist. **To date, 600 kids have received school supplies; household cleaning items have gone to 800 families; and more than 30,000 pet meals have been provided to pets in need.**



Liz, the Behavior Coordinator at AWA, shared her skills and knowledge by **mentoring students** from Animal Behavior College. These students spend three to four months gaining hands on training, studying learning theory, basic obedience and how to work with problem behaviors such as jumping, digging, or chewing. These students enrich the shelter dogs' lives, and a few have become AWA employees after earning their training certificates. **Liz and her staff worked with 193 dogs and cats since January and with training and behavior modification they found success and happiness in their new adoptive homes.**



Of course, lifesaving never stopped. Our **medical team** fixed the eyes, bones, and sores of hundreds of ill and injured cats, treated puppies with Parvo and dozens of dogs with heartworm. **1,173 animals have been adopted** at AWA this year, below are the stories of four dogs who overcame dangerous situations or illness and found a better life.

Theo and Garrus were living in deplorable conditions, raised solely for human consumption in South Korea. They were confined to cramped, filthy wire cages and valued only for the money they would earn when sold to the meat vendor. We heard from their adoptive families, and it appears they are adapting to their new roles as treasured pets wonderfully.

"Theo (formerly Beob) is adjusting beautifully to being a real dog. He loves walks, snacks, hugs, pets, and rubs. He now eats from his raised bowls in the kitchen with Watson, but he still isn't sure about toys. He loves all people he meets and other dogs."



Theo relaxing in his new home.

"Garrus (formerly Sam Geun) has been adapting beautifully. Learning about these market dogs and gaining his trust has been eye opening and rewarding. When we first adopted, he was reclusive but so wanting for attention and love... and in the past two weeks, he has become so comfortable and loving. He is a big goof who loves sleeping, walks, chicken jerky, being outside, his big, small brother, and his boxer neighbor."



Garrus keeping watch on the neighbors.



Tommy posing for adoption photo.

Tommy was surviving on food scraps stolen from dumpsters or handouts thrown by kitchen staff and diners at beachfront restaurants in Puerto Rico. When the tourists stopped visiting and the restaurants closed, Tommy and his fellow "beach dogs" faced certain starvation. We can't guarantee Tommy hasn't stolen a morsel of food from the table at his new home, but his survival no longer depends on it.



Blake getting his parvo exam.

When **Blake** arrived at AWA, he was anemic, dehydrated, filled with worms, and lethargic. He was one of the puppies that tested positive for parvovirus. The medical staff at AWA provided lifesaving care, and soon he was growing stronger every day. He's now living a great life with his adoptive family. Getting immediate medical attention once arriving at AWA saved his life.

Despite the unexpected challenges and disruptions brought by COVID-19, the drive to do more - even when it looks impossible - is what AWA has done for over 70 years. Always being **"more than a shelter"** to pets and people, these accomplishments and lifesaving stories would not have been possible without **support from you, our donors.**

PAVING THE WAY TO HAPPINESS

Thanks to you, our generous donors, **\$2 million** has been raised for the capital campaign *Building a Place Where Happiness Begins*, 80% of the \$2.5 million goal. The public phase, *Paving the Way*, which coincides with construction has finally begun, after an eight month delay due to COVID-19.

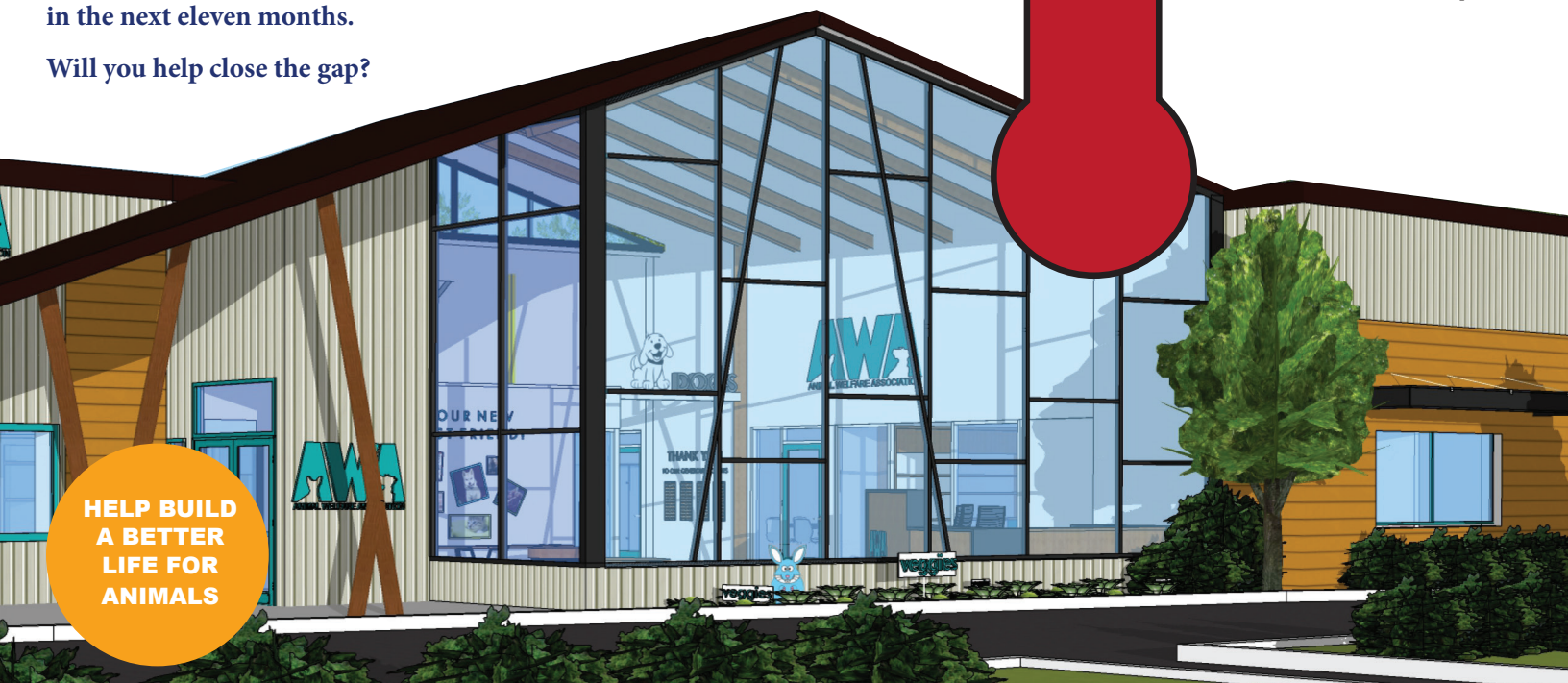
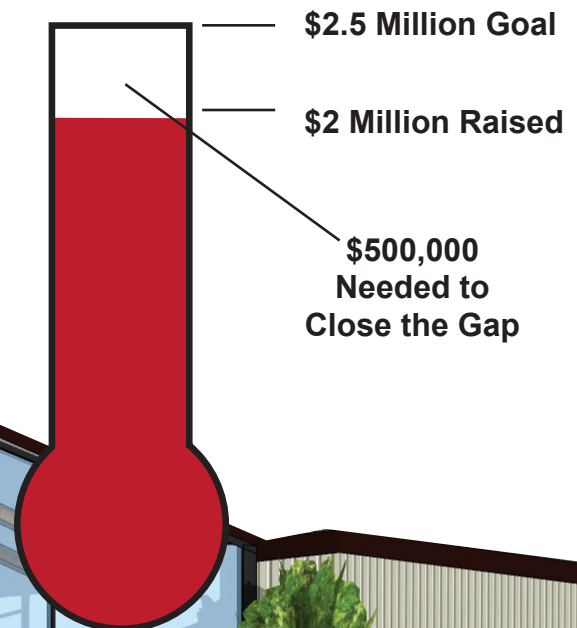
Hopefully, when this newsletter reaches you, the old shelter will have been demolished and the new 25,000-sf building will be slowly emerging, on schedule for an October 2021 opening.

We are excited to be moving closer to the reality of a facility that will allow better care for animals in need, along with reaching out into the community with expanded programs and services.

Before we can celebrate, we need to raise the remaining \$500,000 in the next eleven months.

Will you help close the gap?

Building Cost - \$6 Million



Ways You Can *Pave the Way* to Happiness

Naming Opportunities are still available. Add your name, or the name of a loved one, to a portion of the building, and be a part of the AWA story.

Have your name displayed on the **North Paw Wall**, as a constant testament to your generosity, with a donation of **\$500** or **\$1000**.

Have your name on a place of honor on the **Honor Roll Wall**, in the lobby entrance, for a donation of **\$300**.

No gift is too small! Your support will make it possible for more animals to be saved and cared for in this much needed new space.

To donate or pledge your support today visit awanj.org/capital-campaign



Benefits of the new state-of-the-art building

- **Double** the space dedicated to adoptive services
- **42% increase** in the number of pets housed & cared for everyday
- **Twice** the medical space to care for ill & injured animals
- **Classroom space** for humane education & volunteer programs
- **Dental and imaging** areas in the Pet Clinic
- **And so much more**

HOMELESS ANIMALS NEED YOUR HELP!

As we approach the busy holiday season, and bid a “not so fond” farewell to 2020, **we wanted to celebrate all the animals whose lives were changed this year at AWA.** They arrived neglected, scared, sick or injured. Because of your unceasing support, they are living healthy, happy lives with their new families.

But we cannot spend too much time celebrating, because 2021 will soon arrive with new challenges and opportunities to save many more animals.

It is during the holiday months that we receive 40% of our yearly donations. Will you give so we can continue to care for animals throughout the year and into 2021?

By becoming a **Constant Companion** or joining the **Lifesavers Circle** you will provide consistent funds to ensure the programs at AWA remain strong, especially during these uncertain times.

No donation is too small! Every gift supports the vital mission of saving the lives of animals at AWA.

\$35 provides kitten formula and bottles, so I grow big & strong.



\$100 spays or neuters puppies like us to help control pet population.



\$150 helps me be a good dog through behavioral training, so I can find a forever home.



\$500 transports dogs like me from overcrowded shelters so our lives are saved.



Give hope to homeless animals this season.

2020 HOLIDAY DRIVE TO SAVE LIVES

Every gift makes a difference and provides food, shelter, medical care, loving adoptive families, and so much more!

support.awanj.org/give-the-gift-of-life

CONSTANT COMPANIONS

Monthly giving is an incredibly efficient way to provide care to the homeless animals at AWA.

support.awanj.org/constantcompanions

GIVE LOCAL. HELP LOCAL. SAVE LOCAL.

Support the Pet Recovery Plan to help combat the negative impact of COVID-19 on pets and pet owners in the local community.

awanj.org/pet-recovery-plan

JOIN OUR LIFESAVERS CIRCLE

Become a Defender, Rescuer, Guardian, or Liberator so AWA's programs can remain strong.

awanj.org/life-saver-circle

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NEW CHARITABLE GIVING RULES

The IRS has eliminated the charity deduction cap for 2020. Donors can fully deduct gifts equal to as much as 100% of adjusted gross income (AGI). Also, donations of up to \$300 can be deducted from taxable income, without itemization.

Additional ways to support AWA's mission

PLANNED GIVING

Planned gifts are one of the most effective ways to ensure that AWA can carry on its mission for years to come.

Options include wills, annuities and trusts, gifts of appreciated property, life insurance, and retirement plans.

support.awanj.org/planned-giving

IRA ROLLOVER GIFTS

An IRA rollover is a great way for you to support AWA.

The gift is tax-exempt and can be used to meet all or part of an IRA required minimum distribution (RMD).

support.awanj.org/ira-rollover-gifts



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\$10 tickets. The more you buy; the bigger the jackpot; and the better your odds.

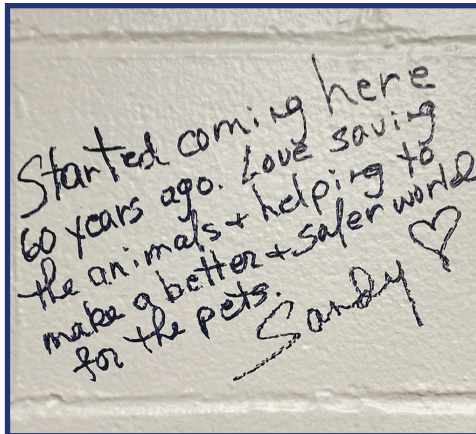
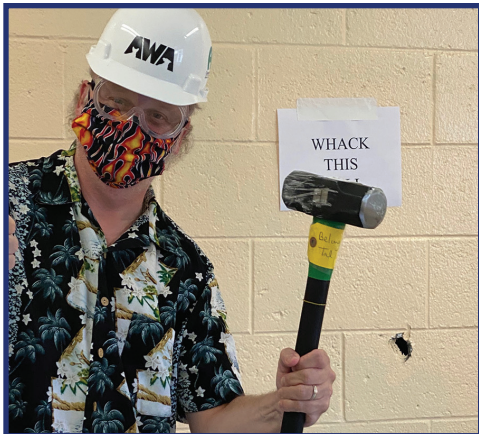
Raffle Drawing
December 10th at 6pm



Instagram: @AWA_NJ

Twitter: @AWANJ

Saying Goodbye to the Old Shelter



More than 150,000 animals found their forever homes in this old shelter over the past 55 years!

