



2023 IMPACT REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

My time at AAWL over the past three years has involved much learning and growing, especially as I've tried to navigate running an animal shelter and two veterinary clinics during a housing crisis, severe labor shortages, and high inflation - challenges that have led to a dramatic increase in the number of animals that are surrendered. It's heartbreaking to surrender your beloved pet because you can't afford to care for them. Sadly, it's a conversation our staff has all too often these days.

The stress of caring for traumatized animals and people can cause an emotional toll, pushing many in the animal welfare industry to the brink of exhaustion. For that reason, our organization developed a new strategic plan that invests in helping animals and the people who care for them. First, we invested in our 84-person team. We completed a pay study and increased the salaries of our front-line workers by 9%. Second, we invested in new community programs to keep animals in their homes and out of the shelter.

In this year's Impact Report, you'll read about how we've increased behavior support for adopters and expanded our low-cost vet services for pet owners in East Maryvale. These strategies operationalize our vision to preserve the human-animal bond and they are made possible thanks to caring animal lovers like you. Here's to another year of saving lives together.

Double Your Impact

Two long-time AAWL donors are matching all donations - dollar for dollar - up to \$25k through December 31, 2023.

The donors, who wish to remain anonymous, created a foundation to enrich the lives of animals and named it after their family dog Mickey, a special needs Dalmatian. Their philanthropy is tied to deep-rooted family beliefs around kindness to all living beings. Besides being AAWL donors, they also adopted Jack, a black pittie who has now become a well-known AAWL ambassador around town.

OUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE

3,938 LIVES SAVED

1,893 Dogs Saved **2,045** Cats Saved

13,577 Vaccines **139** Rural Rescue trips

3,635 Surgeries Performed
Inc. Spay/Neuter

With gratitude,

Alessandra Navidad
President and CEO



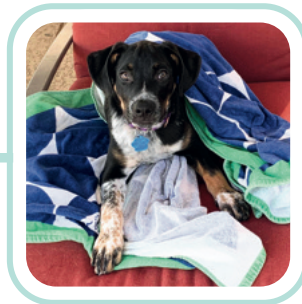
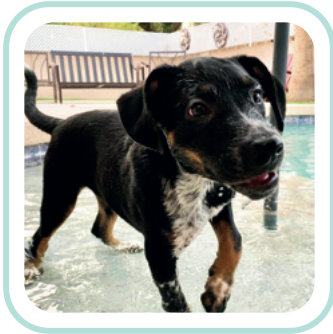


FINDING ADOPTABLE HOMES

In 2023, AAWL saved the lives of over 3,900 cats and dogs from across Arizona and the southwest. Most of these animals needed intensive veterinary and behavior care. Our staffing capacity to meet the needs of every animal in the shelter plays a major role in our ability to help our local and rural rescue partners. This year, we sent an experienced vet tech on our rural rescue runs and added a fourth person to our behavior team. Next year, a veterinarian will join the foster team, allowing us to intake more animals with serious medical concerns.

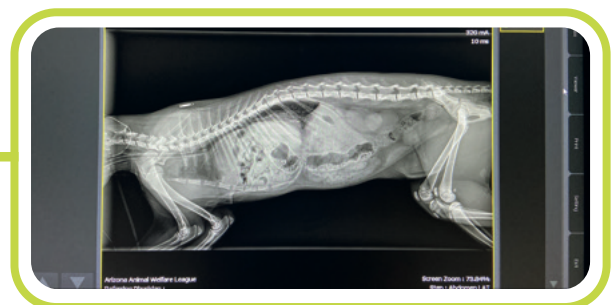
REX

Rex arrived at AAWL with two femoral fractures. He was barely six weeks old when he was found on the side of a road. Our partners suspected he was thrown out of a car. After performing x-rays, our medical team felt his fractures could heal on their own with strict cage rest in a foster home. It took the patience, dedication, and commitment of a caring foster to avoid painful surgery and help Rex pull off this amazing recovery. Just six weeks later, Rex's fractures were healed, and he could bear weight on his back legs! Now Rex can finally romp and play like a puppy in his new home!



BARRY

Barry was surrendered to AAWL after being found by a good Samaritan. When he went under to be neutered, our veterinarian discovered that he had a congenital diaphragmatic hernia, which meant his stomach, liver, and intestines were pushed into his chest cavity. Without treatment, the hernia would continue to compress his lungs causing breathing difficulty. If Barry had been at another shelter, he most likely would've been euthanized, but luckily, one of our veterinarians was able to perform the surgery to correct the hernia. And after a month in a foster home, Barry was up for adoption and quickly found his forever family.





AFFORDABLE ACCESSIBLE VET CARE

Approximately 40,000 animals enter Phoenix-area shelters every year, and AAWL has seen an increase in the number of pet owners who surrender their animals because they can't access or afford veterinary care. Through our outreach efforts, we've connected with nearly 600 Latino pet owners, who consider their pets as part of the family, yet can't afford to cover their own basic needs, let alone pay for pet food or preventative care.

They are often forced to make the heart-wrenching decision to surrender their pets to a shelter because they got sick and couldn't afford care, which can lead to devastating emotional consequences for those pets and their families. To meet this critical need for vet care, AAWL plans to recruit and train a network of vet health care promoters to serve as an important extension of our shelter by regularly interfacing with the bilingual pet owners and connecting them to bilingual vet care resources and services. We also will expand our community-based vet services into East Maryvale, which is considered a "veterinary desert."

ELOISA & MAX

Eloisa is a pet parent and AAWL volunteer, helping to connect others in East Maryvale to our services. She knows first-hand how important it is to have access to affordable vet care.

Eloisa's dog, Max, had a large mass on his chest that needed to be removed, but she could not afford his surgery.

Luckily, AAWL was able to subsidize Max's surgery to remove the mass and get him neutered. We also were able to get Max up to date on his vaccines and provide him with flea/tick medication. It was a huge relief for Eloisa to be able to get Max the care he needed. She wants to make sure other pet owners know AAWL is here to support them, so that they are never faced with the difficult decision to surrender their pets because they can no longer afford to care for them.



SCAN



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KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

In 2023, around 44% of AAWL's returns were for a behavior-related reason, which is why we expanded our behavior program to help keep animals in their homes. We are now dedicating an adoption counselor full-time to follow-up for four months post adoption. Since we launched this program, we have seen a 23% decrease in returns for our behavior dogs.

OPIE

Opie came to AAWL in 2021 from a rural rescue partner, and was adopted a few months later. His dad was a first-time dog owner who contacted our behavior hotline. At just a year old, Opie still had puppy energy and needed to refine his manners. He would get overly excited when he saw other dogs and didn't know how to respond to commands. After several private lessons and guidance from our behavior team, Opie was able to perfect several commands and learn how to walk on a leash and ignore other dogs on his walks.



CHOPSTICK & SIMBA

With our expanded focus on behavior, we created a space for our Feline Behavior Manager to work with cats who are struggling for a variety of reasons. This new room allows cats, like Chopstick, to gain confidence with new people in a quiet environment. It also creates a big open area for overstimulated and high-energy cats, like Simba, to play. Both cats were in the behavior room for very different reasons, but ended up becoming best friends during their time there. Simba was able to burn off his excess energy by having another cat to play with, so he was calm and friendly when meeting potential adopters. Chopstick became more social after observing Simba's interactions with people.

Now both cats are thriving in their forever homes. Simba has a younger, high-energy cat to play with and Chopstick joined a multi-cat home where he can interact with people at his own comfort level.

