A LETTER
from the CEO

As a leader in the no-kill movement here in Arizona, AAWL is focused on leveraging community resources and partnerships to ensure positive outcomes for pets. In 2022, we rescued and provided life-saving veterinary care to 1,985 dogs and 1,908 cats throughout Arizona. Every year, we spend nearly $1.5 million in veterinary costs for our animals, which includes everything from basic diagnostic testing and preventative vaccines to more complicated orthopedic surgeries and costly medication.

Our live release rate -- which continues to be above 97% -- reflects the “no-kill” principle that we were founded upon in 1971. These life-saving results were made possible this year by growing our medical and behavior capacity to take on more challenging cases such as parvo and distemper, which we have been able to successfully treat by exploring alternative treatments and improving specific protocols. These investments have resulted in improved health outcomes for animals in our care and would not have been possible without the support of our AAWL community of donors, adopters, fosters, volunteers, and staff.

Sadly, though, if we’re truly going to reduce the number of healthy and treatable animals that are euthanized each year in shelters across Arizona, we must do more. The animal welfare needs of the pets and people throughout the state far outweighs our capacity to help address them. In Maricopa County, animal welfare organizations across the Valley are struggling with higher intakes because of complex issues such as housing instability or lack of veterinary and behavioral care. A total of 36,526 cats and dogs came into Phoenix shelters in 2021. Tragically, it has led to an increase in the animals who are suffering.

This year’s Impact Report demonstrates how we’ve leveraged your philanthropic donations to respond to these community needs. Our new board-approved strategic plan looks even further out into the future and lays out the vision for how we’re going to save 40,000 lives over the next five years by focusing on Finding Adoptable Animals Homes, Delivering Affordable, Accessible Vet Services, Keeping Pet Families Together, and Recruiting & Retaining Excellent Talent.

As I approach my second year as President/CEO of AAWL, I’m hopeful that we will be able to grow our base of AAWL supporters who feel strongly about our future goals and want to make a lasting impact on the animal welfare landscape in Arizona. Please consider making a tax-deductible stretch gift TODAY! Your personal, financial support ensures we have the resources to save more animals like Flash, Chico, and PJ who are featured in this report and were given a second chance at life thanks to your donations. Thank you for helping us save their lives, and I look forward to partnering with all of you to save many more!

With gratitude,

Alessandra Navidad, CEO

OUR YEAR at a glance
MABLE

After receiving a medical plea from one of our partners, Mable arrived at AAWL severely underweight and dehydrated. She was lethargic and her stomach was sensitive to touch. Our medical team ran bloodwork, checked her thyroid levels, and performed x-rays, which all came back normal. However, Mable’s condition continued to decline and was unable to gain weight. Since she was unable to have normal bowel movements, we suspected that she had GI lymphoma.

We placed Mable on a treatment plan for the cancer and found her a foster home, but we weren’t sure what her prognosis would be. We didn’t know how much time Mable would be able to live comfortably, but Mable’s health made a drastic improvement after a couple weeks in her foster home. She was able to gain weight and her real personality started to show.

After a month in her foster home, Mable was cleared by our medical team to go up for adoption, and quickly found her forever family.

SNAPPLE

Snapple came to AAWL from one of our Rural Rescue partners after he was rescued from a hoarding situation where he lived with 45 other dogs. Because of this, he didn’t have many positive interactions with humans, and was very frightened and overwhelmed by the shelter environment.

Our team knew he wouldn’t make much progress with socialization if he wouldn’t leave his kennel, so they found Snapple a foster family to help him build his confidence.

In just a few days, Snapple had progressed in leaps and bounds. He even started to play and approach his foster family for head scratches and back massages. All Snapple needed was a safe place to gain confidence and learn that the world wasn’t a scary place.

After over a month in his foster home, Snapple found his forever family! Now he is thriving in his new home, and his personality has started to shine. He even has a group of dog friends in his neighborhood that he loves running and playing with every night.

FLASH

Flash had severely enlarged eyes, likely due to untreated glaucoma, when he arrived at AAWL from one of our rural rescue partners. His eyes were beyond repair, so the best thing we could do to help him was to remove his eyes since they were causing him a lot of pain. Flash recovered quickly from surgery, but he would need to learn to navigate the world in a whole new way. Our team knew that Flash would do best in a foster home while he waited for his forever family, so that his fosters could help him learn to adjust to his new world. Flash thrived in his new foster home and was ready to find his forever family. But it turns out, he already found them, they just had to make it official! Flash’s family absolutely adores him, and he has come such a long way from where he was when he first arrived at our shelter.

FINDING ADOPTABLE Animals Homes
Sonia first heard about the Arizona Animal Welfare League after receiving a flyer about our low-cost clinics and other services at her daughter’s school. Now just a few months later, she volunteers at our low-cost vaccine clinics to help pet owners who primarily speak Spanish. She helps them fill out paperwork and shares other opportunities available to them and their families.

Sonia shared that it’s often hard for those in the Latinx community to come across low-cost services that are accessible to them. Oftentimes, she finds that locations are too far, appointments are booked out, or there are issues with language barriers that discourage owners from bringing their pets in. That’s why when she found out about what AAWL was doing she knew she had to get involved.

Sonia is a huge animal lover and has four dogs herself. She knows what it meant to be able to get her pets fixed and fully vaccinated at no cost and she wants other pet owners in her community to know that these resources are here.

Sonia says she couldn’t ever imagine, under any circumstances, having to leave her pets behind. “No matter where I go, I will take my dogs with me.”

Unfortunately, sometimes that is the only choice some pet owners are left with when they can no longer afford to care for their pets. She has witnessed many dog owners leave behind their pets after moving away or moving into a place that doesn’t allow them. She never wants that to be her because every single one of her pets are “part of the family.”

No one should ever have to give up their pet because they can’t afford to care for them, and that is the reason why Sonia is so passionate about spreading the word about AAWL.
Animal return/surrender rates have increased from 10% to 23%, with some animals ending up at our shelter after being in a home for over 5 years. Reasons range from increased housing costs and job instability to behavior challenges and rising veterinary costs. In addition to our lifetime commitment to our animals, we plan to ramp up our behavior programs by hiring more staff to provide adopters and community members with more free or low-cost behavior support, including increasing training options, expanding our behavior hotline, and training volunteers to help us serve more pet owners. We believe that by investing in shelter intervention strategies we can end the vicious cycle of animal sheltering and keep families together.

KEEPING FAMILIES

At the height of the Covid-19 shutdown, when businesses across the state remained closed, our adoption counselors, animal care technicians, behavior and intake staff, and medical team members continued to come to work to provide food and water, clean cages, conduct behavior assessments, and manage the animal-related needs at our shelter. In 2022, we conducted a salary study to gather compensation data and develop a more competitive salary structure to help us increase recruitment and retention. We are now leveraging this data to develop a financially sustainable hiring plan that we believe will help make AAWL the employer of choice for animal welfare professionals in Arizona. In addition to paying fair market wages, we also plan to partner with schools and workforce development organizations to recruit youth volunteers to create a hiring pipeline for future AAWL veterinarians and animal caretakers. Investing in our frontline animal care staff members is critical to our mission and will help us serve more pets in need.

RECRUITING & RETAINING

At the height of the Covid-19 shutdown, when businesses across the state remained closed, our adoption counselors, animal care technicians, behavior and intake staff, and medical team members continued to come to work to provide food and water, clean cages, conduct behavior assessments, and manage the animal-related needs at our shelter. In 2022, we conducted a salary study to gather compensation data and develop a more competitive salary structure to help us increase recruitment and retention. We are now leveraging this data to develop a financially sustainable hiring plan that we believe will help make AAWL the employer of choice for animal welfare professionals in Arizona. In addition to paying fair market wages, we also plan to partner with schools and workforce development organizations to recruit youth volunteers to create a hiring pipeline for future AAWL veterinarians and animal caretakers. Investing in our frontline animal care staff members is critical to our mission and will help us serve more pets in need.

CHICO

11-year-old Chico came to AAWL from one of our county partners and was adopted a few weeks later, only to find himself back at our shelter after six months. Over the next couple months, he struggled with various medical issues, including having a mass removed from his jaw that luckily turned out to be benign. Finally, he was cleared by our medical team and was able to find his forever home. Several months later, his adopter called our behavior hotline after she was struggling with Chico urinating outside of his litterbox. Our Feline Behavior Manager called to offer some assistance and tips on how to alleviate the problem, including adding more litter boxes and having Chico’s vet check for a possible UTI. Our team counseled her and let her know Chico was welcome back at our shelter, and that we would do a full medical recheck to see if we could find the source of the behavior. Chico returned to the shelter, but after a couple weeks, his adopter called saying how much she missed Chico and was willing to work through the litter box issues. Our team released Chico back to his family and continued to work with them until Chico’s litter box issues were resolved.

SARA SKROMME Canine Behavior Manager

Sara has been a part of AAWL for over five years, and since she joined our organization in 2017, she has been promoted four times and now manages our entire Canine Behavior department! Sara started her career at AAWL as one of our Animal Care Technicians. But her love and dedication for our animals was quickly recognized and she was promoted to Intake Specialist, where she would conduct field and in-shelter evaluations of animals to assess their behavior and medical needs before they entered our care. Last year, she was promoted to our Lead Behavior Specialist, and we prioritized training opportunities to help her continue to expand her skillset. Sara received her CPDT-KA certification after passing her comprehensive exam and gaining over 300 hours in dog training experience. Sara’s exceptional leadership skills and her commitment to finding ways to grow and improve our behavior department lead to her most recent promotion to our Canine Behavior Manager.

DR. SARA PADILLA Shelter Veterinarian Extern

Dr. Sara always knew she wanted to become a vet because it would combine her two passions: animals and science. She eventually went on to study veterinary medicine at the University of Mexico and graduated with two degrees. Sara wanted the opportunity to become a licensed vet in the United States, and through a few shared connections, was connected to our team. AAWL like many other shelters and vet clinics across the United States have been struggling to find qualified veterinarians. After reviewing Sara’s extensive educational background and meeting with her, we knew she could be a great asset to our team. We offered to sponsor her to come work for us at our shelter clinic as a veterinarian extern and in turn she would be mentored by one of our long-time relief vets while she studied for her licensing exams. Then once she passes her state licensing exam, Dr. Sara will become our low-cost community clinic veterinarian, which will give AAWL the opportunity to reach and serve Spanish speaking pet owners in our community to help keep their pets safe and healthy.

PJ

11-year-old Chico came to AAWL from one of our county partners and was adopted a few weeks later, only to find himself back at our shelter after six months. Over the next couple months, he struggled with various medical issues, including having a mass removed from his jaw that luckily turned out to be benign. Finally, he was cleared by our medical team and was able to find his forever home. Several months later, his adopter called our behavior hotline after she was struggling with Chico urinating outside of his litterbox. Our Feline Behavior Manager called to offer some assistance and tips on how to alleviate the problem, including adding more litter boxes and having Chico’s vet check for a possible UTI. Our team counseled her and let her know Chico was welcome back at our shelter, and that we would do a full medical recheck to see if we could find the source of the behavior. Chico returned to the shelter, but after a couple weeks, his adopter called saying how much she missed Chico and was willing to work through the litter box issues. Our team released Chico back to his family and continued to work with them until Chico’s litter box issues were resolved.
WAYS TO GIVE

GIVE THROUGH YOUR WILL
By making a bequest or other planned gift to AAWL, you will continue to save the lives of homeless animals for years to come.

MAKE A ONE-TIME OR MONTHLY DONATION
Your monetary donations help run our day-to-day shelter operations and our various programs. No amount is too small, and your generosity will be rewarded by wagging tails and soft purrs from those that need our help the most.

GIFT OF STOCK
Making a gift to AAWL via stock, bonds, or mutual funds, allows you to have an immediate impact on the lives of homeless animals.

TO OUR AMAZING Volunteers & Fosters
All the lives we saved this year wouldn’t have been possible without all of you. Thank you for your dedication and for always being a champion for the animals.

FINANCIALS
AAWL has a financial obligation to ensure that all donations and community funding we receive directly supports our lifesaving programs.

Please note that these financials are budgeted financials for 2022, and are not audited. If you would like to review audited numbers please visit aawl.org. 2022 audited financials will be available to review next year.

REVENUE $5,635,916
EXPENSES $5,801,735

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

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Sir Michael Delight Foundation
Sonia Breslow
Soul Singh & Meher Khalsa
Vernon Nichols
Walter Station
Warren Lueker
William Dick

Thank you to our amazing volunteers & fosters.

ALL THE LIVES WE SAVED THIS YEAR WOULDN’T HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT ALL OF YOU. THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION AND FOR ALWAYS BEING A CHAMPION FOR THE ANIMALS.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO DONATE & MAKE YOUR GIFT AT: LINKS.AAWL.ORG/WAYSTOGIVE

243
ACTIVE
FOSTERS
499
ACTIVE
VOLUNTEERS
31,221
VOLUNTEER
HOURS LOGGED
52,778
FOSTER
HOURS LOGGED

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Amrita Sahasrabudhe, Past Chair (2019)
Karen D. Johnson, Ph.D.
Jennifer Axel
Maria Barquin

Amanda Zink
Cindy Pries
Alessandra S. Navidad, CEO

Thank you to our generous supporters.
UPCOMING EVENTS

DESIGN FOR DOGS
February 24, 2023

WALK TO SAVE ANIMALS
November 4, 2023

To make a donation:
Arizona Animal Welfare League
25 North 40th Street
602.273.6852 x106
aracelycruz@aawl.org
aawl.org/ImpactReport
Tax ID: 23-7149453