

You can't buy love...



*But you can adopt it*

2016  
Annual Journal



# Nearly 4,000 homeless pets found homes in 2016

AAWL spent, on average, \$442 per dog and \$385 per cat while in our care

## 3,824 HOMELESS PETS

(1,446 Cats and kittens, 2,378 puppies and dogs) were taken in by AAWL in 2016 and provided with food, shelter, medical care, exercise, socialization and a lot of love from our staff and volunteers



## 3,740 CATS AND DOGS

(1,408 and 2,332 respectively) found their forever homes and a second chance at life



## 591 KIDS AND ADULTS

attended one of our camp programs

## 174 PET PARENTS

participated in our dog training programs



## 60,543 HOURS

time that volunteers donated

## 2,263 UNDERAGE

puppies and kittens or animals recovering from illness or medical treatments were nurtured by over 100 foster families until they could be put up for adoption

## 3,040

felines and canines were spayed/neutered by our veterinarian staff prior to being adopted

## 1,134 VOLUNTEERS

logged hours in 2016

## 243 TITLE ONE

kids and families participated in our educational programs

## 10,096 KIDS AND ADULTS

learned about our unique humane education programs

## 821

kids, family and friends celebrated their birthday at AAWL





ARIZONA ANIMAL  
WELFARE LEAGUE & SPCA  
ARIZONA'S OLDEST & LARGEST NO-KILL SHELTER

## The Human/Animal Bond.....magical

Dear Friends:

Recently, we asked our adopters to send us stories about how adopting their pet from AAWL has changed their lives. I wasn't sure what to expect, but I hoped we would get a little insight into what happens after the happy family goes out the front door of the shelter with their new family member.

The results were not only overwhelming, but they were extremely gratifying to those of us who do whatever is possible to prepare the animal for their new family. AAWL takes in all ages and types of dogs/cats, puppies and kittens into our care. We see them when they are scared, hungry, sick or injured, or just wary of their new surroundings. Our staff and volunteers feed them, cuddle them; provide them with their vaccines and other medical care --- whatever they need. During that process, we get to know their personalities, their little quirks, their likes and dislikes and, for those that need a little extra time to feel comfortable around strangers, we give them extra TLC in our offices and on breaks from the shelter. We love them and provide the necessary care so you can eventually love and welcome them into your home.

AAWL works hard to find each animal that perfect home to match their individual needs and requirements, no matter how long it takes. Even though we have been placing animals in homes for over 40 years, I'm always amazed at how many people say, "he/she picked us" -- it happens ALL the time. As I learned from so many of these stories, many people weren't even looking for a pet to adopt when their new pet "found" them. It's heartwarming. The human/animal bond is an amazing thing and hard to describe unless you have been fortunate enough to experience it. You will read some of the stories in this annual journal that describe the magic that happens between an adopter and their pet. One that fills a hole in the heart, or that helps end debilitating loneliness and/or that teaches someone to love again, when they didn't think it was possible. . . all due to the unconditional love of a special animal that comes into their lives, sometimes in unexpected ways.

Each year I am amazed at how much we have accomplished, none of which could be done without the generosity of many. Our work never ends and the enthusiasm for our mission never wavers. Please use the enclosed envelope (or visit our secure website at [aawl.org](http://aawl.org)) to make a donation today. These lives that have been --- or will be --- changed forever only exist because you care enough to support the programs that make them possible.

With Gratitude,

*Judith A. Gardner*

Judith A. Gardner  
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## YOUR COMMUNITY RESOURCE



aawl.org



### Sonia Breslow Campus & Chandler Adoption Center

AAWL rescues animals from being euthanized at other shelters and, when possible, directly accepts homeless animals, preventing them from entering over-full shelters. We make a permanent commitment to each animal we save – they are examined by our medical team, vaccinated, microchipped, spayed/neutered and given a behavior assessment. We excel at finding each individual animal an appropriate home, no matter how long it takes.



AAWL has one of the largest and most creative humane education programs in Arizona, ranging from kid's camps to adult programs. Programs are offered year-round.



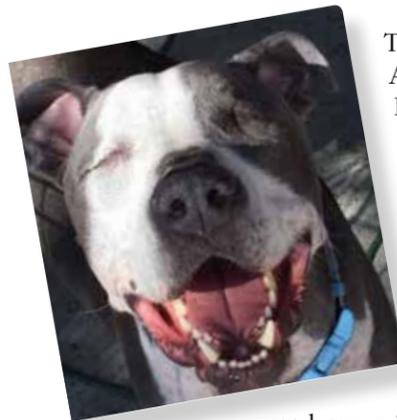
AAWL offers a wide range of dog obedience and dog training courses to help overcome any current or potential behavior issues. We offer fun agility classes, Shy Dog, Feisty Fido, Leash Manners and certified Canine Good Citizen classes.



AAWL's low-cost veterinary clinic provides a wide range of services, including wellness and preventative care, dental cleanings and extractions, treatment for infections or skin disorders, X-Rays, surgeries such as mass removals, spay/neuters and much more at a substantially reduced cost.

# Lovingly written by Bruschi's human Mom, Meredith

## Bruschi - The Dog with the Strong Bond & Big Smile



This is a story about an Arizona Animal Welfare League (AAWL) pup – formerly known as Johnny – who has changed our lives forever. On Thanksgiving morning 2012, my husband, Jack, saw the segment for adoptable pets on CBS 5 news. “Johnny” was described as a blue nose pit bull mix that was born with a birth defect. He was almost completely blind. The AAWL team member that presented Johnny said that because of his condition, he'd do best in a family with older, or no children, that had experience with a blind dog and had an adult dog in the home that might be able to help Johnny make his way around.

At the time, Jack felt we already had a full house with three cats – Sox, Brady and Molly - and two dogs – Shadow and Grace. All of the cats were on prescription food. Molly was receiving medication and even injections at one point for severe allergies. Shadow, our black lab came to us at 6 years old with major separation anxiety and 10-year old, Grace, was blind due to cataracts that developed from her diabetes and had a permanent tilted head after coming down with vestibular syndrome (aka doggie vertigo). So, we not only had a full house, but also had our hands full!

None of that mattered when I heard about this little blind puppy named Johnny. We were the perfect family for him! How could we not adopt him? The Monday after Thanksgiving, I called AAWL, and a week after I made that first call, Johnny became a part of our family and since then, he has been known as Bruschi (pronounced brew-skee). He is named after Tedy Bruschi, a former NFL player that had a debilitating stroke in February 2005 at 31 years old only to work very hard to recover and return to the NFL in October that same year. We thought this little puppy deserved a strong name.

It didn't matter that Bruschi couldn't see. Like most puppies, he was feisty and was good at getting into things. He was also very smart and took well to his training. With his vision impairment we knew we needed to form a special bond with our boy, since the rest of his life Bruschi is going to depend on us to be his eyes and will need to trust us to guide him. We also know that pit bulls can get a bad rap, so we wanted to do everything we could to set Bruschi up for success. The spring after we adopted Bruschi, we enrolled him in the AAWL's “Best Bully” training class. This process truly built a foundation of trust and guidance for all of us. We were so impressed with our instructor. She had never trained a blind

dog before and so much of her training was focused on building trust. She did her homework, spent time getting to know Bruschi and taught us techniques that did not rely on eye contact. Bruschi graduated first in his class.

As Bruschi grew, he developed glaucoma in both eyes and had to have them removed and we learned he had also contracted Valley Fever. Through the process, his appetite suffered and he lost considerable weight caused by a mix of his medications for his valley fever plus a thyroid issue. But he would show up to every appointment with a smile and a wag for everyone he met. Bruschi loves people and I wondered how people would treat the pit bull with no eyes. It is so very important to us that he feels happy and loved and the thought that someone might shun him because he was different, broke my heart.

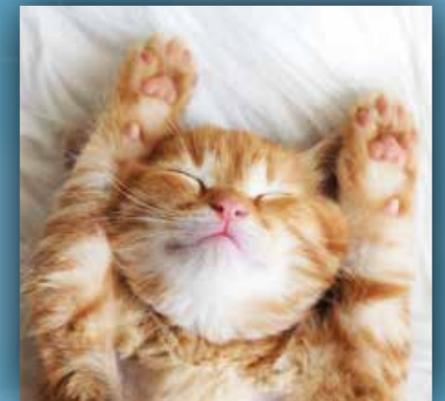
All of that time spent worrying was for nothing. Bruschi is the most resilient dog I know. Only two days after surgery he was tearing through wrapping paper Christmas morning. Bruschi is just plain happy. He knows we love him and he trusts us to take care of him. He's not afraid of anything. His biggest joy is found running around the dog park, tongue hanging out with not a care of the world. He loves meeting new people and there is just something so special about Bruschi that people gravitate to him. Everyone always comments on his smile. Bruschi has taught us that no matter the situation, there's always a bright side. To always put a smile on and you'll get one in return. It has taught us to view things in a new light, no matter how bad a situation might be.

Bruschi's perseverance, determination, good hearted attitude, fearlessness, and independence, despite his disability, have been such an amazing addition to our lives. In every new place and space, he enjoys meeting new people/animals with a huge smile and he is always ready to explore without the fear of obstacles. He is an example of making the best of any situation, engaging everyone that he 'sees', and putting trust in us to place him in environments that he is comfortable in (although, I think he is pretty comfortable wherever he goes!). From vet visits to restaurants to the dog park, and even crowded noisy places, he is always ready to go.

We are so thankful to have him in our lives. It's as if it's in his DNA and he is the one teaching us how to live our lives in the best possible manner. I know Jack was meant to see that TV segment on Thanksgiving morning. Bruschi was meant to be with us and we were meant to be with him. We are beyond thankful to AAWL that we found him.

*Dogs, for a reason that can only be described as divine, have the ability to forgive, let go of the past, and live each day joyously. It's something the rest of us strive for.*

~Jennifer Skiff~



*Can you tell the story about how you rescued me again?*



We live more enriched lives now that Bobbi's in it. I get up early to take a long run with her, and we, as a couple, take her for long walks each night; making our relationship even stronger!

- Kim & Kevin

Bayley has brought so much love and joy to our family and home. We cannot imagine our family without him. When we travel without Bayley, we repeat his name every day to remind ourselves of his warm brown eyes, gentle spirit and boundless love.



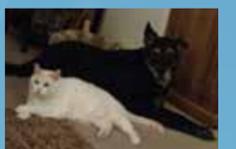
- John & Pamela



Crosby and Jude taught me to love again and for that, I will be forever grateful.

- Kellye

We now have a reason to come home after work. We get greeted at the door with a wagging tail, excitement and kisses. They really do give so much, and we humans really don't deserve them.



- Andy & Suzette



A lot of people have reservations about adopting. I'm so glad we took a chance on Stanley because all he needed was a little love and a stable home life for him to fall in love with us. Life has gotten exceedingly better since he became a part of it.

- Randee



# Written by Sofia's proud Mom, Alison

## Becoming a Cat Person - With a Little Help from Sofia

After six months of discussion, my boyfriend and I decided to visit the AAWL cattery on a Saturday in January 2015. We spent a

couple hours visiting with the kittens and cats, but I wasn't connecting with any particular animal (my boyfriend happens to be a cat whisperer and would've taken them all home with us!).

After one final look around, I spotted a small, black kitten alone in her crate; a kitten that we hadn't seen before. I took her out and it was love at first sight for all three of us. We left the Cattery to buy all of the necessary kitten items and returned an hour later to pick her up.

We found out that she had chronic diarrhea and that was the reason her foster family had returned her. The solution was a grain-free diet and as someone who is lactose-intolerant, I figured that the kitten apple doesn't fall far from the human tree. Aside from this dietary need, she was in perfect health; small, at 6 months old and only 3 lbs, and perfect. The moment we got her home and opened that carrier, she knew she was home.

She doubled in size within her first month home (and has topped off at a lovely 8.2 lbs). If she isn't sleeping directly between us each night, she is sleeping in her strawberry-shaped soft house that we have at the foot of our bed. She is the most loving and sweetest, smartest cat that has ever lived! We know all cat owners say the same thing, but it's extra true in our case.

Not only had I never owned a cat before, I didn't know I was a cat person until we adopted Sofia. That's what I tell people when they say they're reluctant to get a kitten or cat - you may not know you are a cat person until you fall in love with one for yourself. She has brought more love and joy to our lives than we could have ever imagined. As I type this entry, she is sitting in my lap and carefully noting every word I write.

She talks to us (I swear). When we ask her a question, her different "meow" tones tell us what she wants. She has her own special chirping language that she uses to talk to her outdoor friends, the birds that regularly visit our balcony railing. She shows us where her lost toys are by laying in a certain spot and pointing her legs in a specific direction. She tells us she wants to play by dropping one of her favorite leopard-print soft balls next to us - this means it's time to play fetch. The laser is one of her ultimate favorite toys. It hangs from one of our key hooks and she sits beneath it to let us know it's Laser Time. If only one of us is home, she is extra affectionate. She knows that we are on our own and may need additional

cuddles from the most wonderful cat that has ever lived. We love her so much that we talk about her as a parent would talk about their human child - our fur baby is everything to us. She even has her own Instagram! She is extra supportive of all the other Social Media Savvy Black Kitties out there.

Because I know the love and joy that Sofia brings to our lives, I was over-the-moon when Whitney Steele, from AAWL, came to me with the idea of hosting a monthly [kitten adoption pop-up shop](#) at my workplace, the shopping center Scottsdale Quarter. The way I phrased it to anyone that asked what it was about this event that made me so excited: "everyone deserves to have a love like Sofia".

Our summer kitten pop-ups are the most rewarding events I've had the privilege to host over the course of my 12-year marketing career. Each event, I pray that we adopt out all the babies that will be there for the weekend. I am an avid cat lover and cat enthusiast - the phrase #saveallthecats is an often-used hashtag on my cat-related social media posts. My boyfriend and my lifelong goal is to one day follow in the footsteps of Beth and Howard Stern - have a crew of six cats of our own and a foster room full of little nuggets needing a good home. I wouldn't have even known this was a passion of mine if it hadn't been for AAWL and finding our angel kitten.

I've attached some photos, but there are thousands more where these came from! Thank you so much for taking the time to read our story. We love Sofia and AAWL and want to do anything and everything to raise awareness for your amazing organization!

*She clawed her way into my heart and wouldn't let go.  
~Missy Altijd~*



# Community Partners



**Fix.  
Adopt.  
Save.**

Our Community Commitment

AAWL is proud to be one of seven animal welfare organizations in the Valley that collaborate on the Fix.Adopt.Save initiative which began in 2012. Supported by grants from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, PetSmart Charities and the Arizona Community Foundation, we have collectively reduced the euthanasia rate in our community by 81% since we began in 2012. This incredible achievement has only been possible with hard work, cooperation and collaboration and due to the support of our funders. For additional information visit [fixadoptsave.org](http://fixadoptsave.org).



AAWL is honored to have been selected for the last three years by Halo Purely for Pets and FreeKibble.com to receive food for our shelter. Not only does the food donation allow AAWL to use those funds towards saving more homeless animals, but it provides our shelter 'guests' with high-quality, healthy and yummy food which they love.

## Arizona Rural Rescue Groups

This year, AAWL was able to work with many smaller, more rural rescue groups throughout the state of Arizona who have limited, if any, resources and are forced to euthanize most of the animals they receive. The AAWL team, consisting of our veterinarian, Director of Operations, Clinic Manager, Behavior Manager and others were able to provide these groups with much needed supplies (i.e. food, cleaning materials, equipment) and, even more importantly, shared with them their expertise on how to attract volunteers, increase adoptions, use social media and fundraise so that they can save more lives in the future. Our goal for next year is to continue to help more groups in order to save more lives.

### Our work is possible, because of those who care.

PetSmart Charities  
The Nina Mason Pulliam  
Charitable Trust  
Valley Automobile Dealers Association  
Arizona Community Foundation  
Maddie's Fund  
Petco Foundation  
OHSO Brewery  
Eric Cassee

Community Tire Pros  
The Agency Arizona  
Fry's Community Rewards  
Facings of America  
Arizona Diamondbacks  
#LovePup  
Scottsdale Quarter  
Tony LaRussa  
Pet Club

Heartfelt thanks to all of you who have  
adopted and donated to save lives & bring joy.

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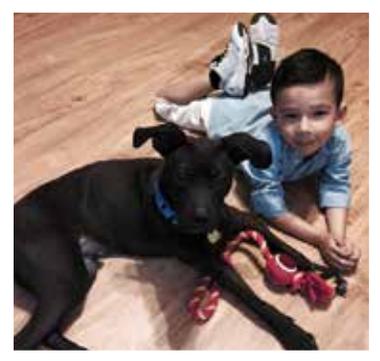
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ARIZONA ANIMAL  
WELFARE LEAGUE & SPCA  
ARIZONA'S OLDEST & LARGEST NO-KILL SHELTER

**MAIN CAMPUS**

Sonia Breslow Adoption Center  
25 North 40th Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85034

**CHANDLER FASHION CENTER**

PetMatch Adoption Center  
Near Dillards  
Chandler, AZ 85226