

Lakefield Animal Welfare Society



ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Rescue | Rehabilitate | Rehome | Educate | Empower





## A Message from: Marilyn Strain, Chair of the Board

As we reflect on the past year at the Lakefield Animal Welfare Society, one thing stands out: our community's unwavering compassion and commitment to animal welfare. In a year marked by economic uncertainty and growing demand for shelter services, LAWS remained a beacon of hope – not only for the animals who arrive at our doors, but for the people whose hearts are touched by our mission.

2024 was a milestone year for us – the first under our new 2024–2028 Strategic Plan, which will guide our work and impact for years to come.

This plan is anchored in four strategic pillars:

- Stable & Diverse Funding
- Investing in Our People
- Engaging Community and Collaboration
- Improved Facilities and Infrastructure

Already, we've made meaningful progress. We completed a Reserve Fund Study to support long-term planning and sustainability, retained a Financial Advisor to strengthen our financial stewardship, introduced a more formalized annual operating plan and budget process to guide our work, and were deeply honoured to receive several generous legacy gifts – a powerful affirmation of the trust our community places in us.

We also welcomed Lyndsay into her new role as Director of Operations, marking a significant leadership transition. Her passion and dedication – alongside our incredible staff and volunteers – are the driving forces behind everything we accomplish. To our donors, adopters, volunteers, and community partners: thank you. Your support is the foundation of LAWS, and we're excited to continue building a future where every animal is safe, cared for, and loved.

With gratitude,

Marilyn

### 2024 Board of Directors

Marilyn Strain, Chair  
Jackie Jacobson, Secretary  
Linda Twohey, Treasurer  
Jo-Anne Elliott, Advisor  
Dee Hargreaves, Foster Coordinator  
Phyllis Lennox, Advisor  
Meghan Moloney Keating, Fundraising  
Sarah Mortimer, Human Resources  
Carla Rinaldo, Facilities

## See Our Strategic Plan Here





# A Message from:

## Lyndsay Lisson-De Ell, Director of Operations

Stepping into the role of Director of Operations at Lakefield Animal Welfare Society near the end of 2024 has been both an honour and full-circle moment for me.

I began my journey at LAWS as an Adoption and Shelter Coordinator, driven by a deep passion for connecting animals in need with the people who could give them a second chance. Helping individuals and families navigate the adoption process and witnessing the joy that comes when an animal finds their forever home has always been at the heart of why I do this work.



As I look ahead, I'm filled with excitement and determination for the future of our shelter. Each day, we care for animals that arrive under a wide range of circumstances. Animals, through no fault of their own find their way to us as some lost, some surrendered, some rescued from dire situations. And every day, we witness the healing power of compassion, community, and a second chance.

In the year to come, I'm eager to introduce fresh initiatives that continue to strengthen the critical work we do. Our focus remains on providing exceptional care to the animals who rely on us, while also ensuring that our services remain accessible to the people who need them most. Whether it's through education, outreach, or expanding our support programs, our goal is to empower our community to be part of the solution.

I'm proud of the dedication our staff, volunteers, and supporters bring to LAWS. Together, we are making a difference for animals and the people who love them. I can't wait to see what we'll accomplish next!

## Who We Are

### Our Mission and Vision

#### MISSION

Lakefield Animal Welfare Society champions the welfare of animals by offering refuge and shelter, providing high-quality, compassionate care, facilitating adoptions, promoting education and community engagement, addressing overpopulation issues, and delivering a wide range of essential services.

#### VISION

A community where every animal is valued, safe, and has a loving compassionate future.



Shrek, adopted November 2024





**569**  
adoptions

**532** cats adopted

dogs adopted **39**

**1.2M** happy  
tails wags

**3.5M**  
happy purrs

**4.7M** dancing  
paws

**350** spays and  
neuters

**115** dedicated  
volunteers

**40** pets provided safe  
temporary shelter

**426** rabies vaccines  
administered

microchips  
issued **493**

## Frank's Journey to Comfort and Care

**Frank's healing reminds us what's possible when care meets commitment.**

When Frank arrived at LAWS, he was in rough shape. His skin was inflamed, his fur was patchy and falling out, and he was clearly uncomfortable. Allergies had left his skin raw and irritated, and it was evident he hadn't known relief in a long time. Yet even through the discomfort, Frank's eyes held a quiet resilience.

From the moment he came into our care, Frank was surrounded by kindness. Our staff gave him daily medicated baths to soothe his skin and reduce inflammation. He received allergy medication, and with the help of our veterinary partners, we identified the specific triggers behind his condition.

Slowly, day by day, Frank began to heal. His fur started growing back, his energy returned, and his tail began to wag again.

It was the combination of patience, expert care, and compassion that brought Frank back to life. When he was ready, he found a loving family that embraced him completely and continued the care he needed.

Today, Frank is thriving in his forever home. His coat is shiny, his allergies are under control, and his days are filled with comfort, joy, and unconditional love.

***Because of you, Frank's story is one of healing, hope, and a new beginning.***

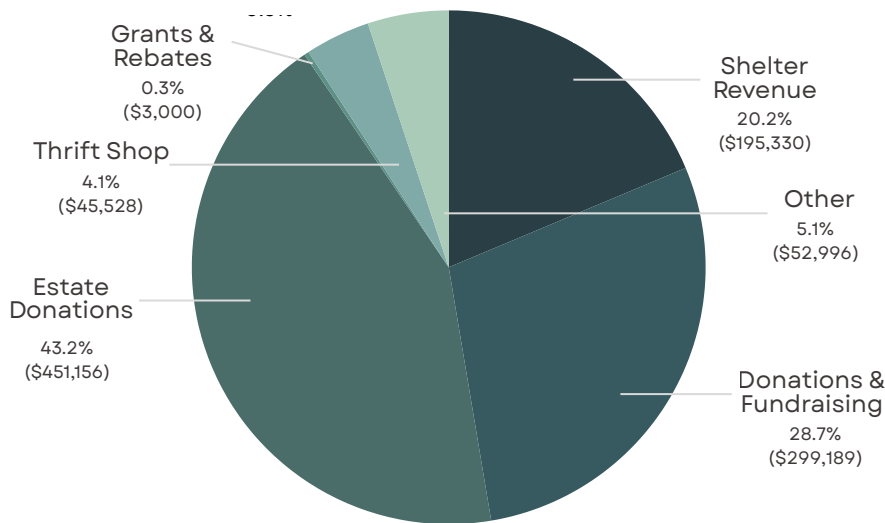
**FRANK**





# Your Impact By The Numbers

## How You Made It Possible



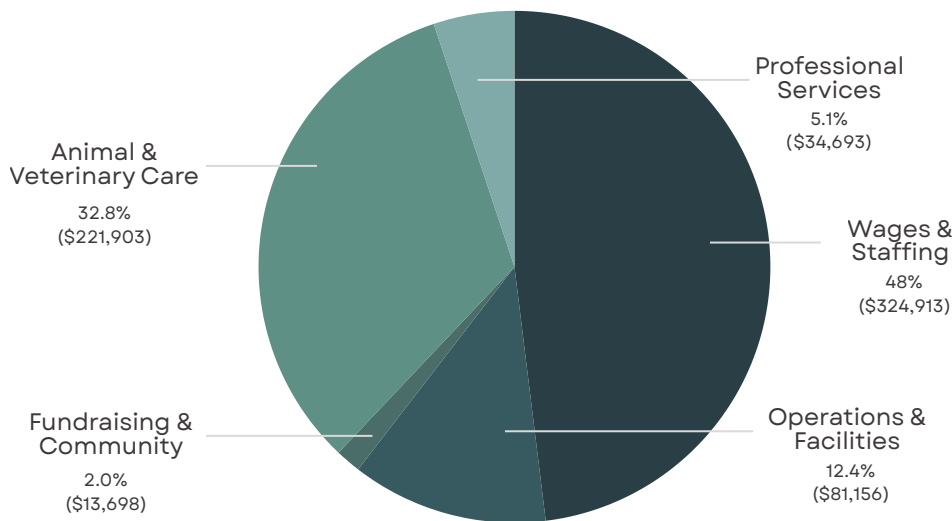
## Legacy Giving

In 2024, estate gifts made up 43.2% of our total revenue—a powerful reminder of the lasting impact one act of generosity can have. These extraordinary gifts often arrive unexpectedly but create transformational change, helping us meet critical needs and care for animals when it matters most.

We are deeply grateful to be trusted with one of the most meaningful gifts a person can make. **Thank you to every donor who chooses to leave a legacy of compassion for the animals we serve.**

Because of you, love and care will continue—long into the future.

## Your Dollars At Work



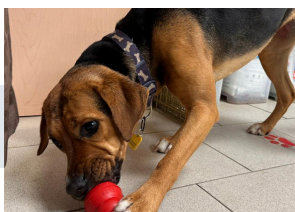
**Make a difference,  
Donate now!**



## Did You Know?

Lakefield Animal Welfare Society receives **no government or private sector funding**. We rely entirely on donations, memberships, and adoption fees to care for the animals who need us. Every dollar supports rescue, medical care, and the journey to a forever home. Thanks to your generosity, we can continue giving second chances to animals in our community.

**Every animal we help is made possible by you.**





# Hearts Behind The Mission

Meet Mark Underhill, a dedicated volunteer since 1995.



Since 1995, Mark has been a quiet force behind the scenes at LAWS—doing the kind of work that often goes unseen but makes all the difference.

If you've ever dropped by on a Saturday, chances are Mark gave you a tour. He knows the cats by name, their quirks, and their stories—and he's more than happy to share them with anyone who walks through the door.

Mark's journey with LAWS began after volunteering with youth programs in Peterborough. When that work ended, he looked for a new way to give back. Lucky for us, he found LAWS.

Today, Mark volunteers five days a week. He cleans animal condos, walks and socializes dogs, handles the donation bins, takes out the garbage, and—when the shelter is short-staffed—steps up without hesitation.

Recently, he even added Tuesday and Thursday afternoons to his regular schedule to help manage a rush of puppies and walk-in visitors.

His love for the animals is palpable. “Just being around them, playing with them, cuddling them—it's the best part,” he says. Mark's own rescue dog, a 145-pound Lab-Mastiff who was saved from a brutal dog-fighting situation, is now a well-loved senior, turning 16 this year.

Beyond the tasks and the tours, Mark embodies the spirit of LAWS—compassionate, reliable, and wholly dedicated to animal welfare. As Director of Operations, Lyndsay puts it, “If something needs to be done, Mark does it—because he knows it means something good for the animals.”

When asked why others should volunteer, Mark keeps it simple: “Because it's a great shelter.”

**Thank you, Mark, for showing us what it means to lead with heart.**

## THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to our incredible volunteers who show up with compassion, dedication, and a love for animals that shines through in everything they do. From providing enrichment, to cleaning cat condos, feeding animals, helping with yard work, organizing donations at the thrift store, folding laundry, or assisting at events, your time and presence make a lasting impact. We are truly grateful for each and every one of you.



# Bruce and Shirley Whitney: Fostering Hope, One Paw at a Time

When Shirley Whitney reached out to LAWS during the early days of the pandemic, she was simply looking for a way to help. “I thought I’d like to go play with the kittens,” she recalls. Instead, she and her husband Bruce were asked if they’d consider fostering. They said yes – and haven’t looked back.

Since then, the Whitneys have fostered more than 40 cats and kittens, including pregnant moms and fragile newborns needing weeks of care. Their home has become a place of healing, love, and fresh starts for some of the shelter’s most vulnerable animals.

Their involvement with LAWS quickly deepened. Bruce served a full term on the Board of Directors and for the past three years has coordinated LAWS team of volunteers at Delta Bingo, a vital source of fundraising revenue. Shirley quickly joined the team. Together, they also contribute generously as donors, offering both time and financial support to help ensure every animal gets the care they need.

Their impact ripples outward. Friends, neighbours, and fellow community members have been inspired by their example – donating, adopting, or stepping in to help. One friend was so moved by a rescue experience that she made a donation on the spot and has adopted two of the elderly cats needing care in their final years. Shirley and her friend are also strong supporters of the LAWS Thrift Store, both in their donations and promoting the shop to others. Shirley is also exploring a fundraising concert in LAWS name.

Among their many fosters, one kitten named William holds a special place in their hearts – sick and fragile when he arrived, he spent six months recovering with the Whitneys before going to a loving home.

Bruce and Shirley are part of a remarkable community of fosters, volunteers, and donors who make the work of LAWS possible every day. Their story is just one of many that reflect the care, generosity, and dedication that keep tails wagging and hearts full at LAWS.



## Want to get involved?

Whether you're spending time with the dogs, cleaning cat condos, tending the garden, or lending a hand at our thrift store, every role helps animals get the care and second chances they deserve.

We're always looking for passionate volunteers to support our daily shelter work, events, committees, and foster program.

Ready to make a difference?

Visit our website:  
[lakefieldanimalwelfare.org/  
get-involved](https://lakefieldanimalwelfare.org/get-involved) to learn more  
and apply today.





## Lakefield Animal Welfare Society

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Charitable Registration #: 139094221RR0001

