



Annual Report 2025





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STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028



Scan to see
it here



Cover photo: Harley
Credit: Victoria Grieve

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.



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Lakefield Animal Welfare Society is situated on the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg people and is covered by Treaty No 20. We understand that advancing meaningful reconciliation must move beyond good intentions, superficial reforms, and symbolic gestures. Hence, we recognize our responsibility in pushing for real accountability and transformative change.

We offer our gratitude to the Indigenous Peoples for their care for, and teachings about, our earth and our relations. As an animal welfare organization, we are particularly inspired by Indigenous environmental stewardship and the spiritual significance of human-animal relationships in Indigenous cultures. We look forward to strengthening our relationships with Indigenous communities as we work to eradicate the root causes of animal vulnerability and to build a more compassionate world together.



A MESSAGE from the Director of Operations

As I look back on 2025, I am filled with gratitude.

Every successful adoption at LAWS has a story behind it, and that story has many contributors. Along the way, an animal may be helped by a community member who notices they need assistance, treated by veterinary professionals, cared for by shelter staff and volunteers, welcomed into a foster home, and ultimately adopted into a loving family. Each journey is made possible through the efforts of people who donate, fundraise, sponsor, volunteer, foster, advocate, and simply show up when animals need them most. The animals at LAWS are truly supported by an entire community.

We saw that throughout 2025.

Like many shelters, we continued to welcome animals with

increasingly complex medical and behavioural needs. Kitten season was particularly challenging, with many kittens requiring specialized diets, medication, and intensive daily care. Yet what stands out most to me is not the challenges themselves, but the way people responded to them. Our incredible team showed up in amazing ways, caring for animals through illnesses, recoveries, setbacks, and successes, and providing comfort, compassion, and unwavering support every step of the way. Foster families made room for one more litter. Veterinary partners helped us navigate difficult cases. Volunteers gave their time. Donors ensured animals received the care they needed.

What I am most proud of is the community we are fortunate to be part of. Every day, I see people come

together because they believe animals deserve kindness and the opportunity for a better future. That collective commitment is what makes this work possible.

To everyone who supported LAWS this year—our staff, volunteers, foster families, veterinary partners, donors, adopters, local businesses, and community members—thank you. The animals in our care are safer, healthier, and closer to finding loving homes because of you.

As we look ahead, I feel hopeful. The need for our services continues to grow, but so does the compassion of this community. It is a privilege to do this work alongside all of you, and I am excited for what we can accomplish together in the years to come.

LYNDSAY LISSON-DE ELL

A MESSAGE from the Chair of the Board

When I reflect on the past year at LAWS, I am reminded that animal welfare is ultimately about people. Behind every adoption, every successful medical treatment, and every animal given a second chance is a community of individuals who care deeply and choose to make a difference. Our staff, volunteers, foster families, veterinary partners, donors, sponsors, and supporters all play essential roles in helping vulnerable animals find safety, healing, and loving homes.

This year also marked the first full year of leadership for our Director of Operations, Lyndsay Lisson-De Eil. Lyndsay has brought energy, compassion, and a remarkable ability to balance the many demands of a busy animal welfare organization. Whether supporting staff, engaging with our community, responding to unexpected challenges, or advancing strategic priorities, she consistently leads with professionalism, optimism, and a genuine commitment to the mission of LAWS. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Lyndsay and the entire staff team for their dedication and hard work throughout the year.

As an organization, we continued to make meaningful progress in support of our mission. While providing compassionate, high-quality care to animals remained our primary focus, important work also continued behind the scenes to strengthen our foundation for the future. From strategic planning and organizational sustainability to facility planning and community engagement, we are working to ensure that LAWS remains well-positioned to serve animals and our community for many years to come.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support of LAWS. In a world that can often feel uncertain, this community continues to demonstrate the power of kindness, generosity, and compassion. LAWS is a bright light in our corner of the world, and that light shines because of people like you. Together, we are making a difference—one animal at a time.

MARILYN STRAIN





Kindness *in Action*

A highlight of our year was our **Bailey & Charlie Emergency Medical Campaign** in late 2025. While the campaign focused on two individual animals, their stories reflected the kind of urgent, often complex medical care LAWS provides regularly.

Bailey, a seven-year-old Bulldog, arrived in our care suffering from severe dental disease and an elongated soft palate that made breathing difficult. After nine infected teeth were removed, she still required major surgery to address her airway issues.

Charlie, a surrendered Maine Coon, arrived with a painful ear polyp, severe infection, and balance issues that required advanced imaging and surgery. Together, their cases demonstrated how quickly routine shelter care can become specialized, high-cost medical intervention.

Our campaign goal was to raise \$15,000 to support their treatment. Thanks to the immediate and overwhelmingly generous response of our community, that goal was surpassed within days. The campaign concluded with **over \$20,000 raised**, and Bailey and

Charlie each received treatment, made full recoveries, and were adopted into loving homes.

Their stories are a testament not only to the resilience of animals, but also to what is possible when community comes together to support them.



Partners in Compassion

DR. NORA FORTUNE

Veterinarian, Champlain Animal Hospital

For more than three decades, Dr. Nora Fortune has been caring for animals in our region and witnessing firsthand the challenges faced by both pets and the people who love them. She joined Champlain Animal Hospital in 1990 and has been a trusted veterinarian in the community ever since.

The landscape of animal welfare looked quite different when Dr. Fortune began practicing. Local vets frequently encountered animals in need with few resources to help them. Kittens were routinely abandoned, stray dogs were injured on roads, and families facing financial hardship often had nowhere to turn when their pets required urgent care. The need for a community-based shelter in the Selwyn area was clear.

Alongside fellow vets and dedicated community members, Dr. Fortune helped support the efforts that eventually became the Lakefield Animal Welfare Society. LAWS provided an essential lifeline for animals in need as well as the veterinary professionals who were determined to help them. ***“When you came into work and found a box of kittens on the doorstep, there was finally someone to call,”*** she reflects.

Today, Dr. Fortune continues to provide weekly care at the shelter, bringing her expertise and deep commitment to animal welfare to every patient. With a particular passion for helping senior animals and the complexities of shelter medicine, she understands the emotional toll that this work can take.

One recent patient who stands out is Kaz, a dog who arrived frightened, uncomfortable, and suffering from chronic skin issues and painful infections related to allergies. Through months of patient and persistent care from the whole



team, Kaz transformed into a healthy dog who is ready to form strong bonds with his forever family.

Cases like Kaz's remind her why this work matters, and after more than 35 years in practice, Dr. Fortune remains hopeful. She has seen remarkable progress in attitudes toward animal welfare, fewer unwanted litters entering shelters, and a growing recognition of the importance of spaying and neutering. She believes these changes reflect a society that increasingly values and respects its animals.



One day, perhaps, shelters may no longer be needed. Until then, LAWS is grateful for her partnership, wisdom, and unwavering compassion for the animals who need it most.

Year at a Glance

490
adoptions

350
spay and neuters

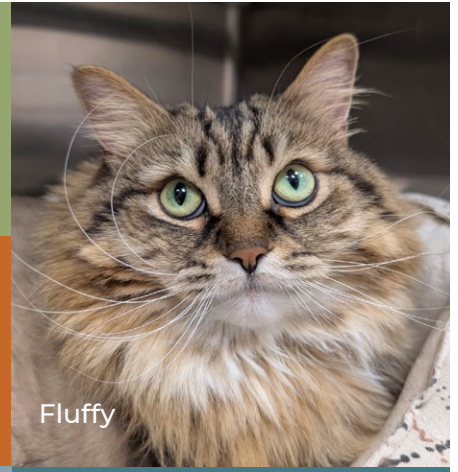
445
cat adoptions

8,000
volunteer hours

45
dog adoptions

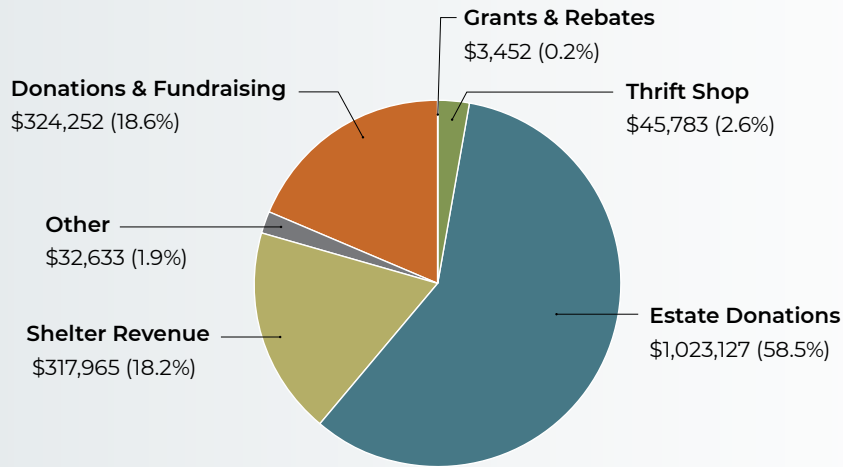
495
rabies vaccines
administered

464
microchips issued

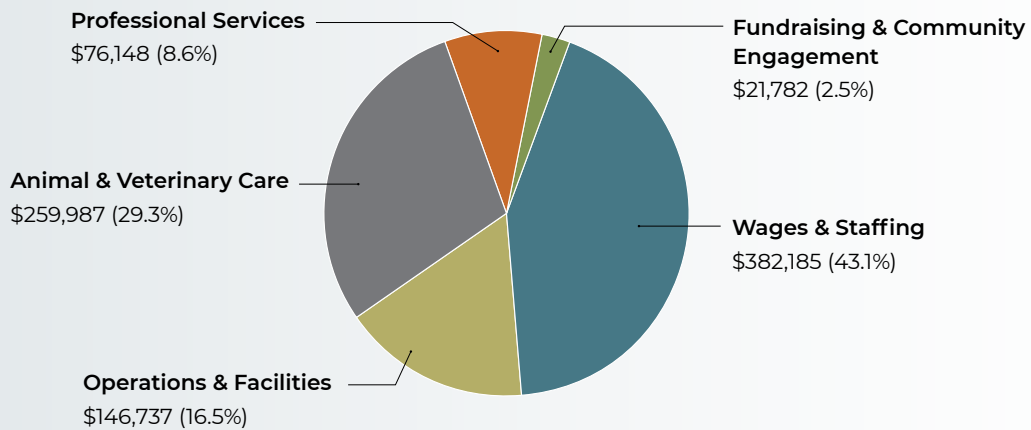


Fluffy

REVENUE How you made it possible



EXPENSES Your dollars at work



Want to Get Involved?

Our volunteers are an essential part of the daily operations at LAWS. Their involvement touches everything from animal care, fostering, and routine cleaning to supporting events, gardening, and running the thrift store. We can never thank them enough.

If you're ready to help make a difference to the animals at LAWS, please visit our website for more information and submit an application. lakefieldanimalwelfare.org/get-involved



POWERED BY COMMUNITY SUPPORT

As a non-profit, no-kill animal shelter, LAWS receives no government or private sector funding for our daily operations. The care we provide is made possible through the generosity of donors, adopters, sponsors, volunteers, businesses, and community supporters who believe every animal deserves a second chance.



DONATE NOW

Support animal welfare efforts in your community.

lakefieldanimalwelfare.org/donate

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