



Helping our community...four paws at a time!

Dear Friends of the Animals,

The summer season is now long gone and leaves are beginning to change. Before we know it, the holidays will soon be upon us. As I take a moment to reflect back on this year, I am so grateful for the hard work, love, and dedication from our incredible staff that I'm so very proud to be a part of.

I'm happy to announce that we were the recipient of a thoughtful award from Best Friends Animal Society that represents us achieving **a 90% or more save rate for 2022**. This accomplishment represents so much more than a number. It represents a group of dedicated staff, committed volunteers, and motivated supporters and a lot of networking. Each fraction of those percentage points also represents a life saved.

We wanted to give you a little insight on what has been going on behind the scenes this year so that you might join us in celebrating our successes! Our definition of success as a humane society not only lies in the volume of animals we bring in, but also the quality of the care we can provide to every single one that we say "YES" to.

This year, one of our main points of focus has been opening our neonatal kitten nursery where we were able to help this most vulnerable population of felines. Getting calls about abandoned kittens is always heart-wrenching. Historically, we have had to send them out to foster homes rather than bringing them into our facility due to their young age, but foster families are limited. Having this nursery has allowed us to **save the lives of 46 kittens under 6 weeks old**. These little ones were extremely lucky to have walked through our doors. With many of them coming in dehydrated, malnourished, or needing other medical attention, they would not have made it without our quick intervention and excellent standards of medical care. Along with **122 additional kittens and 31 puppies between 6-12 weeks old**, we have had our hands full this year!

We have also focused heavily on ramping up our Trap/Neuter/Release (TNR) program and targeting specific colonies of community cats in Josephine County. This program ensures that every single cat in these colonies is spayed or neutered and ear tipped so that they do not contribute to the proliferation of kittens that occur every kitten season. **So far, we have altered 214 community cats at our RVHS Surgical Clinic**. With a cat's gestation period being 2 months long and average litter size of 4-6 kittens, we are making a huge impact and preventing many unwanted babies, as well as easing the future burden on the shelters in our area by preventing this overpopulation problem from getting any worse.



Jellybean, the first kitten we took into our nursery in 2023



Thanks to our TNR program and your support, all these cats are now altered!



Our team has done a lot of work this year working to transfer out as many animals as possible to give them a better chance at finding homes. Transports allow us to send them to a different demographic area that not only has a larger adoption pool so they can find their perfect match, but also more availability of spay/neuter services so that the animal does not have to wait too long to be in a home where they belong.

In 2023, we have had an extremely full waiting list of people just needing to bring in kittens. With hundreds of kittens needing to be placed, it is not sustainable to try and bring them all in and adopt them out locally, so we have had to come up with different solutions to help our community more effectively. **To date, we have transferred out 161 felines and 24 canines.** These little lives had a second chance thanks to our wonderful connections with other shelters in our state.

Recently, we were able to help 3 adult dogs and 18 puppies from one property thanks to these partnerships. In October, we received a desperate call for help with this overwhelming number of puppies. We went out to the property with vaccines, food, and to figure out a game plan on how best to help them. While a few puppies were placed with local community members who wanted to help, the rest we took in to our facility because they needed around the clock medical care due to them being sick with intestinal parasites and poor nutrition. Once we rehabilitated them, we were able to transfer the puppies; we are happy to say that they have all now been adopted into loving homes! To prevent this situation from happening again, we also covered the entire cost to spay and neuter the remaining 3 dogs on the property.

As an organization, a part of our mission is the commitment to ending pet overpopulation in Josephine County because we see firsthand the effects when you don't. Due to the shortage of veterinarians in our area and inability for most to afford basic services like spay/neuter, we are proud to be a partner for those who need our help and who are willing to work with us to do what's best for their pets.

We have had such a busy year and it seems as if the need for our services only has increased. In addition to all of the above accomplishments, we continue to provide outreach to our community to help others and their animals. So far, **we have given pet food to 6,877 animals from our community food bank**, which is made possible from pet food donated by generous folks like you. Through our spay/neuter voucher program for the public, **we have helped 169 cats and dogs get altered** so that they do not have babies of their own. We provided outreach to our local schools via job fairs, school tours, and Critter Camp so that the next generation is inspired to make the lives of companion animals better.

As we enter this season of giving, I encourage you to give us support in any way that you're able so that we can continue our vital services for our community. We have seen a drastic reduction in donations and an equally drastic increase in the need for our services. We are eternally grateful for your support because it allows us to say "YES" to the animals who need us the most and give them a soft landing before their next adventure in life.

Team RVHS wishes you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Margaret Varner, Executive Director

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