

***Sauk County Humane Society
2015 Annual Report***



**SAUK COUNTY
HUMANE
SOCIETY**



WHO WE ARE

The Sauk County Humane Society was formed in 1921. The purpose of the organization at that time was “...the prevention of abuse of children or cruelty to animals and for the enforcement of the law relating to said subjects in the County of Sauk.” Since 1921 the purposes and the membership have changed with the times. The Society no longer deals with child abuse but concentrates on Animal Care and Welfare. In 1981, the Society was reorganized into its current form. Today, the Sauk County Humane Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charity.

The mission of the Sauk County Humane Society is to encourage responsible treatment of animals through:

- Preventing cruelty to animals,
- Finding homes for animals,
- Promoting spay-neutering efforts, and
- Extending humane education and outreach.

We operate one of approximately 13,600 independent community shelters nationwide. We are an open admission animal shelter where no animal is turned away in its time of need, no matter what its age, condition, extent of injuries, or behavior. It is our belief that no animal, or person turning to us with an animal, should be turned away. “Out of sight, out of mind” is not an option for us.

WHAT WE DO

The Sauk County Humane Society is a full service Humane Society. One of our functions is to operate the Sauk County Animal Shelter, including handle Animal Control duties for the county. Some of these responsibilities include: retrieval of stray, trapped, or injured animals; care of stray animals at the shelter; completing dog and cat bite reports; providing rabies observation services; coordinating rabies control measures with the Department of Public Health; providing a clearing house for the location of lost companion animals; and euthanasia of animals when needed.

Additional programs provided by the Sauk County Humane Society outside the scope of our contract include: serve as an open admissions shelter where no animal is turned away; shelter and care for owner-surrendered animals; education and outreach to include bite prevention, humane animal care, how to be a good companion animal guardian, the importance of spay/neuter programs and proper animal care; low cost spay/neuter open to anyone; Spay/Neuter Assistance Program (SNAP); animals in crisis programs to help people who are experiencing various difficulties keep their pets instead of turning them into the shelter; serve as a resource for wildlife questions; provide volunteer transport of injured or unweaned wildlife to rehabilitators.

The County contract pays less than 50% of the cost of operating the Animal Shelter and providing these services. We must raise the balance each year through fundraising, adoption and return to owner fees, donations, and grants.



WHERE WE ARE AS OF 2015

2015 turned out to be an exceptionally strong year for us. Adoptions are up, revenue is up, volunteer numbers are up, there are more programs, and we are helping more animals and citizens than ever. And for the first time in seven years, the shelter became financially stable. To better appreciate how far we've come, a summary of our evolution over the past four years is provided below.

OUR TRANSITION

In 2011 the shelter was in crisis. The Board of Directors knew something had to be done. Two members stepped in, rolled up their sleeves, and went to work transforming the shelter. This was a painful process for many of those involved but necessary in order to save the shelter. Today, we are proud of what we have accomplished and where we are. Over the past four years, the shelter has emerged as an organization that puts compassion and empathy for animals first while also serving the pet owners of the community. 2012 was a "clean-up" year and 2013 a year of stabilization where new habits began to become the norm. In 2014, these habits evolved into a culture of putting the animals first in every facet of shelter operations. The changes were profound and we were finally positioned to begin to tackle the more difficult problem of pet over population in our area. With drastically needed changes behind us and a new culture in place, in 2015 we were able to look strategically toward the future.

IMPORTANT 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

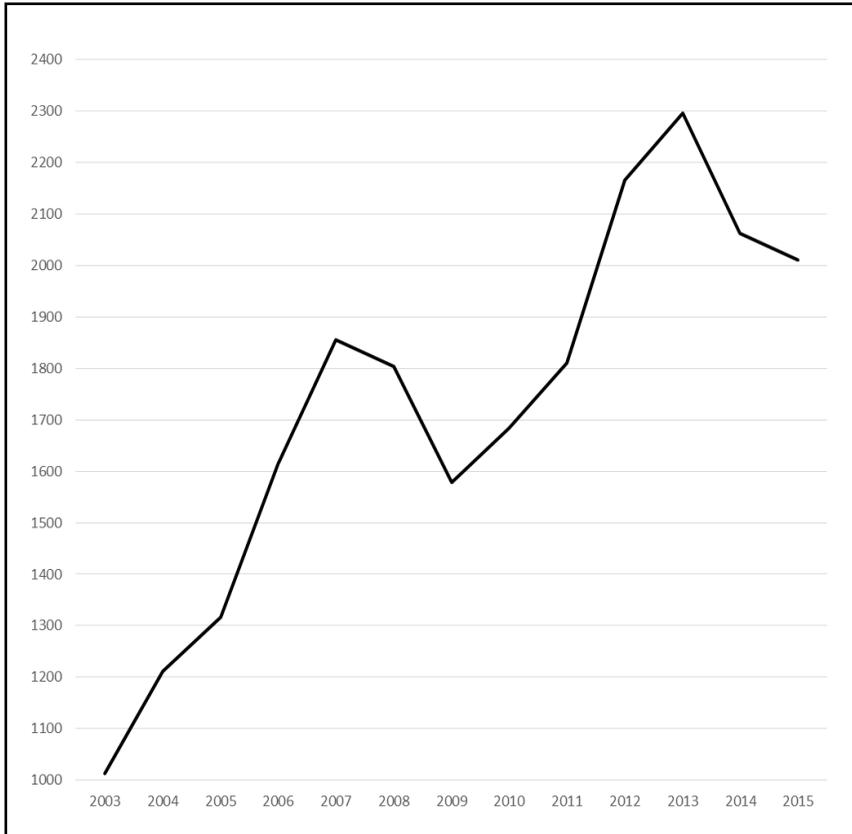
- 🐾 Both dog and cat adoptions continued to increase. December and September were our largest and second largest months, respectively, in four years for cat adoptions.
- 🐾 For the first time in seven years, we ended the year in the black financially. We accomplished this without compromising our core values or reducing our care of animals or services to the public.
- 🐾 Our largest fundraiser of the year, the PAWS Walk and Fun Festival, raised the largest amount ever, bringing in over \$30,000 for the animals and people we serve. The event was sponsored by a record breaking 97 sponsors.
- 🐾 We held our first annual Fall event, Bark after Dark, which raised over \$7,000 for the shelter.
- 🐾 Volunteers logged a record number of hours at 14,955.
- 🐾 We spayed/neutered 549 cats and began spaying and neutering small dogs in our low cost spay/neuter clinic.

JNTAKES THROUGH THE YEARS

The Sauk County Animal Shelter opened on June 1, 1999 after 20+ years of effort—first a dream and then finally a wonderful reality. Every year we rededicate ourselves to continuing to build on the foundation laid by our predecessors.

By all accounts, the shelter was full within days of that opening. Within weeks, more than 500 animals had come into the shelter and within six months over 1,000. Today, we are averaging more than 2,000 animals each year. Without strong relationships with other shelters and rescue groups and without a cadre of wonderful foster volunteers, we would be unable to humanely care for these animals waiting for adoption. Thankfully, we saw a 2.5% dip in the total numbers in 2015, from 2063 to 2011. However, before we become too optimistic that there is a new trend emerging, we need to recognize that as surrounding shelters become more and more limiting and as we remain an open admissions shelter, this trend could easily reverse.

We are optimistic, however, that our focus on a strong spay/neuter program will eventually result in fewer homeless animals coming through our doors. In the meantime, we will continue our stewardship to ensure the shelter is one of which the community can be proud and to show our children that we as a county value the lives of animals and need to show kindness and respect for all living things.



Animal Intakes Since 2003

2015 ANIMAL STATISTICS

Incoming:

	Dog	Cat	Rabbit (domestic)	Other*	Wildlife*	Total
Surrender	205	742	35	36		1018
Stray	252	472	4	7		735
Return	17	20	2	1		40
Seized	9	2				11
Bite	24	13				37
Quarantine						
Safekeeping	14	13				27
Protective Custody	1	1				2
Transfer In	4	2				6
Wildlife					121	121
Cremation Request	3	11				14
TOTAL	529	1276	41	44	121	2011

*5 bats, 1 beaver, 2 cardinals, 1 chickadee, 4 cockatiels, 1 coot, 3 ducks, 1 eagle, 4 ferrets, 3 foxes, 10 gerbils, 2 geese, 1 grosbeak, 9 guinea pigs, 1 gull, 2 hamsters, 4 hawks, 1 hummingbird, 4 lovebirds, 4 wild mice, 1 muskrat, 3 opossums, 2 parakeets, 2 parrots, 2 pigeons, 19 wild rabbits, 30 raccoons, 2 rats, 7 robins, 1 snake, 7 sparrows, 13 squirrels, 1 swallow, 2 tortoises, 2 turtles, 5 woodcocks, 3 woodpeckers

Outgoing:

	Dog	Cat	Rabbit (domestic)	Other*	Wildlife*	Total
Adoption	169	276	6	22		473
Return to Owner	193	44		3		240
Transfer Out	30	94	29	23	52	228
Service*	102	261		4		367
Died**		4				4
DOA	5	14			11	30
Wildlife Release					6	6
Euthanasia	43	559	6		58	666
TOTAL	542	1252	41	52	127	2014

*Bite quarantine, safekeeping, protective custody, owner requests, cremation requests.

** One hit by car cat died upon arrival at the shelter; one cat died while undergoing emergency care at a veterinary clinic; one unweaned kitten died on the way to the shelter; one newborn kitten died overnight after failing to thrive with its mother.

Our Animal Control staff is on-call 24/7 365 days a year, including weekends and holidays. In 2015 the AC staff took 461 calls, handled 149 bite cases and impounded 390 animals.



EUTHANASIA STATISTICS

The year-end euthanasia rate for all animals was 33.1% (including wildlife), compared to 53.7% and 39.5% for 2013 and 2014, respectively. Most important, as in prior years, **no healthy, adoptable animal was euthanized.**

The number of dogs that need to be euthanized is very low in our community. At only 8.17%, this number is significantly below the national average (reported to be anywhere between 31% and 56% depending on source) and 33% less than 2014. Although cats do not fare as well, the 44% is near or well below the national average (anywhere from 41% to 71% depending on source) and significantly lower than in 2013 and 2014 at 71.5% and 53%, respectively.

	Dogs	Cats	Other Domestic
Health	13	243	5
Age	3	100	1
Bite Quarantine	3	5	0
Behavior	24	211	2
Space	0	0	0

Euthanasia Reasons

Because we do not turn our backs on the injured, sick, diseased, and otherwise unadoptable animals as well as the people who have nowhere else to turn, and because we serve as the last refuge for animals that are turned away from other jurisdictions, our euthanasia rate will likely be higher than our neighbors. Furthermore, while we are grateful the need to euthanize has been significantly lower for 2015, until the community begins to take the problem of pet overpopulation seriously, especially for cats, we will continue to see euthanasia rates much higher than any of us would like. What we will not do is myopically focus on an arbitrary number at the expense of alleviating animal suffering.

SCHS believes in helping the greatest number of animals with our available resources. That is why we will accept any animal that comes to our door. We attempt to place healthy, adoptable animals into new homes. We provide rehabilitation for animals who may need extra care and attention before they are adoptable. We use precious donations to provide veterinary care to sick and injured animals. We use rescue groups, other shelters, and foster homes. The reality is that due to the overwhelming volume of animals coming into our shelter, healthy adoptable animals could possibly be euthanized due to resource constraints. Despite that, thankfully, because we move heaven and earth using other resources, we have not had to euthanize a healthy adoptable animal in many years.

We are here for the animals no one else will take and are here for anyone who needs to surrender their animal, no matter where they live or the condition of the animal. We rely 100% on donations to provide this service.



USING OTHER SHELTERS AND RESCUE GROUPS

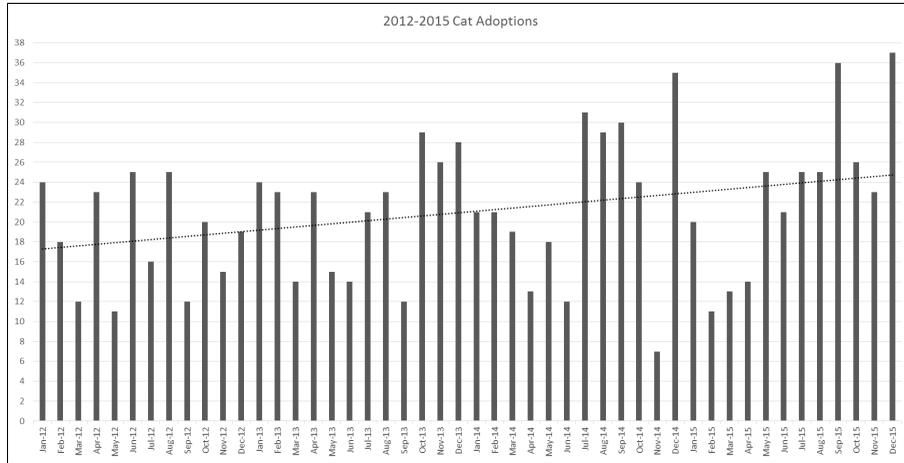
We couldn't begin to save the number of animals we do without strong relationships with other shelters and reputable Rescue Groups. When we become perilously close to capacity, we not only reach out to other shelters, but to breed specific rescue groups. We transferred 228 animals in 2015.

Animals Transferred in 2015

	Dog	Cat	Other	Total
Cinderella's Hope Cat Rescue	0	1		1
Coulee Region Humane Society	13	13		26
Dane County Humane Society	9	74	35	118
Four Lakes Wildlife Center			40	40
Great Lakes Bengal	0	1		1
Ballweg Wildlife Rehabilitator			1	1
HAWS-Humane Animal Welfare Society			2	2
Kitties on the Prairie Cat Rescue		1		1
Mad City Cavies			6	6
Oshkosh Area Humane Society			1	1
Paw Prints Ranch		1		1
Small Scale Reptile Rescue			4	4
Soaring Eagle Wildlife Rehab			3	3
Specialty Purebred Cat Rescue		4		4
Washington County Humane Society	7			7
WI Wildcare			4	4
Wild Bird Barn			1	1
Wisconsin Humane Society			7	7
TOTAL				228

ADOPTIONS

Cat adoptions continued to increase in 2015. December was our highest month for cat adoptions in four years. We have achieved this without compromising our adoption criteria as we continue to take our stewardship of the animals in our care very seriously.



The percentage of dog adoptions per intake was up slightly from 2014. To help increase adoption of all pets we are holding more Adopt-A-Thons throughout the county. Available pets can be seen every first Saturday of the month at the Sauk Prairie Small Animal Hospital and the third Saturday of the month January through September at Blain's Farm & Fleet.





GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

We take great pride in the focus and attention each individual animal receives when it comes into our shelter. This attentiveness begins from the moment the animal arrives. We have a two step process in place that ensures, among other things, no injury or illness is overlooked. Step One involves a brief scan of the animal to check for wounds, injuries, or anything that might require immediate medical attention, e.g., extremely high temperature. For strays, it also includes a scan for a microchip. Unless the animal is extremely fractious or dangerous, Step One is completed immediately upon intake.

Milkshake was found in a parking lot with a huge, golf ball size hard bulge on her side. Surgery was required to remove what the emergency vet said was the largest bot fly larvae he had ever seen.

Tinker had severe dental disease and a heart murmur which required an expensive echocardiogram to determine a possible cause.



Magic and her kittens health began to deteriorate. Already too thin, Magic was losing weight and was heading into dangerous territory. And her babies were starting to lose weight. Serious medical intervention got them back on the road to good health.

Step Two, which also must occur on the day an animal arrives, involves a more thorough exam during which overall health is assessed and vaccines given. In cases where an owner is likely (tags, collars) Step Two might be deferred a day or two. Similarly if an animal is particularly frightened, we might wait until it has a chance to relax and calm down.



Oakley was stranded in a tree for three days, screaming his lungs out. Once we coaxed him down we discovered a severely prolapsed rectum.

Lady had what was supposed to be routine surgery for a cherry eye but during recovery one of the stitches became embedded in her eye, requiring emergency attention. Recovery included a specialized contact and very close medical attention.



Because we strongly believe no animal should suffer while on our watch, an animal may be sent for advanced veterinary care that is beyond our capabilities at the shelter, either under emergency circumstances upon examination in Step One, or as a result of findings discovered at check-in. Because this can be extremely cost prohibitive, we have set up a fund for just

this purpose, known as Betsy's Fund. This fund was established in 2002 after a small, stray Cocker Spaniel who came into the shelter with toenails grown into her pads, severely infected gums, flea infestation, and worse, who was being eaten alive by maggots living in her flesh all over her body. This sweet dog was given immediate and intensive veterinary care and badly needed TLC from a foster volunteer. However, after several days, it was clear she was losing her battle...her kidneys began to shut down and the decision was made to humanely euthanize her.

Betsy's Fund provides for acute medical care for homeless animals brought to us in critical condition and allows us to proceed with life-saving health care by taking the animal to a veterinary hospital. This year we were able to save over two dozen animals through the generosity of donors who contribute to this fund, including cats Milkshake, Ducky, Magic and her kittens, Binks, Spot, and Oakley and dogs Tulip, Emily, Tinker, Lady, and Linus among others. While we were not able to save all of the animals who received extraordinary vet care, nonetheless, because of Betsy's Fund, we were able to go the extra mile to ensure every effort was made that could be.

Binks was found on the side of the road with the worst prolapsed rectum we had ever seen. Poor little guy could not even sit down.



After Spot's five kittens were weaned she developed a dangerously high temperature and severe cellulitis and had to have one of her mammary gland surgically excised after which she needed close monitoring.



Linus had a terrible skin condition that required months of specialized treatment.



Emily had a severely prolapsed vagina that required medical treatment twice before it could be corrected.



Tulip was found in terrible shape. She had recently had puppies, her face was full of open wounds, her mouth was full of open sores, some of which had already necrotized, and her bowels were full of rocks and sand.

Ducky had not been able to defecate or urinate for a very long time due to a rock hard ball, four inches in diameter blocking him. After emergency vets removed the blockage, he was so sore it was difficult for him to go to the bathroom.



KEEPING PETS WITH THEIR OWNERS

Sauk County Humane Society is dedicated to keeping pets and their families together. We currently have four active programs designed expressly to keep pets with their owners. Together these are referred to as our “Companions in Crisis” programs. The first, the Josh Diehm Memorial Fund, was established in late 1997 in memory of long-time supporter and animal lover, Josh Diehm. This fund helps residents without means who find themselves facing unexpected or large veterinary bills for their pets. Funded entirely of donations, we are able to help people pay for emergency medical care for a pet they might otherwise have to surrender, put to sleep, or let suffer.

In February 2012, we started three additional programs: Pet Partnership, Safekeeping and the Pet Food Pantry. These programs are designed to help residents keep their pets rather than giving them away or surrendering them to the shelter during difficult times. The Pet Food Pantry supplies low-income individuals with dog and puppy food, cat and kitten food, and kitty litter (when available). People who have suffered financial tragedies, lost their homes from fires and other disasters, fallen victim to sudden illness, or have to flee quickly from domestic abuse, can keep their pets at the shelter or in one of our foster homes through our Safekeeping Program. Through our Pet Partnership Program, volunteers will help individuals with no safety net available care for their pet in-home on a temporary basis if they are unable to due to recovery from surgery, hospitalization, or some other reason.

	Number of people helped	Number of animals helped	Dollars spent	Days spent in shelter
Josh Diehm	60	58	\$4,592	5
Pet Food Pantry	80	186	\$0	
Safekeeping	17	27		285
Pet Partnership	1	1	\$0	

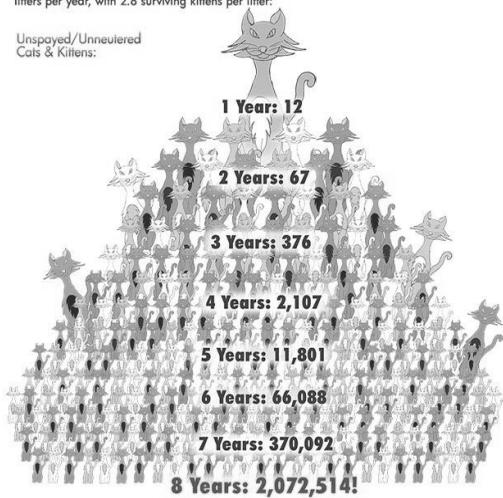
Animals and Individuals Helped in 2015



What impact will the Campaign to Save Pets' Lives have?

This chart represents one unspayed female, her mate and all of her offspring, producing 2 litters per year, with 2.8 surviving kittens per litter.

Unspayed/Unneutered
Cats & Kittens:



By spaying and neutering just one male and one female cat, more than 2,000 unwanted births can be prevented in just four years – and more than 2 million in 8 years!

Recognizing that **prevention of the next generation of homeless pets has to be our number one priority**, the idea to offer a low cost spay/neuter option for people was born in early 2013. Establishing the County's first low cost high volume spay/neuter clinic is a start toward preventing future pet abandonment, homelessness, and neglect by preventing unwanted births.

In 2015, our first full year of operating, we spayed or neutered 549 cats and 17 dogs. At average birth rates for cats, that represents thousands of lives saved merely by preventing unwanted kittens being born in the first place. And those unwanted kittens will not go on to die horrible deaths outside nor, if adopted, will they take the place of cats or kittens already waiting for homes in shelters.

SPAYING AND NEUTERING

Addressing the severe pet overpopulation in our area has always been a major part of the Humane Society's mission. In 1986, we began our Spay Neuter Assistance Program (SNAP). Pet owners could obtain vouchers from us for a small discount when they had their dogs or cats neutered or spayed. Every veterinarian in the county honored these vouchers. Over the years, the program was well used. By the mid-1990's we had spent well over \$100,000 in reimbursements to the vets and assisted in the sterilization of approximately 6,000 pets. This program continues to this day, however, we have taken our efforts to the next level.

Phase I of Sauk County's first Low Cost High Volume Spay/Neuter Clinic began in September 2014. After years of seeing the flood of unwanted animals, usually cats and kittens, come through our doors, we took a long hard look at this problem and we decided we could no longer accept this as our reality in Sauk County. The single most important thing we can do to reduce the pet overpopulation problem in Sauk County is to spay and neuter--nothing else we do will alleviate as much suffering or prevent the euthanasia of animals as quickly or efficiently as spaying and neutering.



WHERE WE ARE HEADED

Sauk County Humane Society is committed to continuing our growth as a responsible steward of homeless, neglected, and abused animals and as serving as a role model for how animals should be treated. We are also committed to continue to be an open admissions shelter. We will turn no animal away in its time of need, no matter what its age, condition, extent of injuries, or behavior. We cannot imagine watching a rejected person leaving our building, not knowing what to do with the animal they can no longer care for or looking at an innocent face and saying "You're on your own." We also do not charge a surrender fee. We have found that animal dumping is a very real and serious problem in our area and has been for decades. We hear stories weekly about animals who have been thrown from cars, dumped by the side of the road, or worse. While we encourage those surrendering animals to make donations to help with animal care, we believe the risk to an animal if an individual cannot or will not pay a surrender fee to be too great to require payment.

	Out of County	%age of total intake
2012	317	14.6%
2013	408	13.8%
2014	421	20.4%
2015	557	27.7%

We recognize that by accepting ill, injured, and otherwise unadoptable animals our euthanasia rate will be higher than that of limited admission shelters. We also recognize that the animals brought to us from outside our jurisdiction are likely coming to us because they are, in fact, unadoptable, which also contributes to our euthanasia rate. As a result of being an open admissions shelter, our intake numbers include a high percentage of animals from outside the county. And that number is increasing dramatically as surrounding shelters becoming more and more limiting.

Out of County Intakes 2015

We are committed to lowering the euthanasia rate at its source, i.e., too many unwanted animals allowed to be born in the first place, rather than by turning our backs on those already born and in need. This commitment involves offering a low cost spay/neuter option as well as an aggressive education initiative that includes requiring any adopter with animals to spay and neuter their existing pets, thereby ensuring they are not part of the problem. **Community involvement in our efforts to stem the tide of unwanted litters will be essential to that success** and we are committed to working together toward a goal that reduces unwanted litters and the community euthanasias that result. We all must be committed to a **total program** of animal care and control including: an enforceable ordinance placing responsibility for the pet squarely on its owner; a sterilization program; and public information material to inform all pet owners about humane and responsible pet care and control.





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