

# ANIMAL TALES

News from Stafford Animal Shelter

Summer 2023



## INSIDE

- Mom Knows Best
- Check Your Chip
- "Barks & Brews" 5K
- Bunny Bonanza & more...

## Contact Us!

Stafford Animal Shelter  
3 Business Park Road  
Livingston, MT 59047  
Phone: (406) 222-2111



Website: [www.staffordanimalshelter.org](http://www.staffordanimalshelter.org)  
Follow us on Facebook & Instagram!  
Email address: [info@staffordanimalshelter.org](mailto:info@staffordanimalshelter.org)

The shelter is open 24/7 for safe stray drop offs. We are open by appointment 7 days a week or by walk-in Wednesday - Sunday from Noon - 5:00. Visit us!



### STAFF

**Executive Director**  
Lauren Smith  
[LSmith@staffordanimalshelter.org](mailto:LSmith@staffordanimalshelter.org)

**Director of Administration**  
Alicia Davis  
[ADavis@staffordanimalshelter.org](mailto:ADavis@staffordanimalshelter.org)

**Director of Operations**  
Christa Nelson  
[CNelson@staffordanimalshelter.org](mailto:CNelson@staffordanimalshelter.org)

**Veterinary Assistant**  
Chelsea Delia  
[vetcare@staffordanimalshelter.org](mailto:vetcare@staffordanimalshelter.org)

**Canine Specialist**  
Nick Radovich  
[dogtrainer@staffordanimalshelter.org](mailto:dogtrainer@staffordanimalshelter.org)

**Veterinarian**  
Dr. Julie Kappes, DVM

**Animal Care Coordinators**  
Daisy Castro  
Elizabeth Davidson  
Shallen Gurtler  
Jaiden Huttinger  
Sarah Jane Lamb  
Grace Nutting  
Lucia Nziengui Bousseguie  
Alex Roberts

### BOARD

**President**  
Sue Dailey

**Vice President**  
Nikki Fox

**Treasurer & Secretary**  
Darcy Cook

**Directors**  
Andy Art  
Stephanie Cunningham  
Hannah Pauli  
Chris Raley  
Vicki Regula  
Gwen Strachan

**Facilities Assistant**  
Dale Fowler



**Meet Chessa! Sponsored & Special Needs**  
She's a 4 year old Bengal Cat mix. She was surrendered due to health issues, FIP. We are looking for a "fospice" (foster+hospice) to give her a loving home for however long she has left. Stafford to sponsor medical care.

## Letter from the Executive Director 🐾

Summertime and sunshine! As we fill up swimming pools and splash around with our canine companions, Stafford Animal Shelter recognizes the lull in adoptions, while the community enjoys their summer. Employees are hard to find. Housing, not to mention pet-friendly housing, is almost nonexistent or unaffordable for many in our community. Stafford Animal Shelter is proud to be a foundational organization binding people and their pets, together. However, animals are experiencing longer stays, combined with the increased need to surrender animals related to evictions and the local housing crisis, limits our capacity for care, at any given time. It is an equation of unsustainability.



Now, as we continue to forge ahead and navigate the ever-changing animal welfare landscape, we are not immune to the challenges of a tough economy with rising costs. Over the past year, these rising costs and inflation have impacted families in our community and increased the need for our services. Our resources are stretched thin, and the cost to save lives is increasing. Our work cannot stop for the more than 1,200 animals that rely on us each year, and we cannot continue this work without you.

Stafford celebrated its one-year anniversary from the historic flood on June 13, 2023. We are proud to have saved over 500 animals, just this year and 577 animals since re-opening following the devastation. YOU are the reason our shelter was saved! As we start to look ahead, we know this is just the beginning for many of our neighbors. There's still work to do in our community's recovery — and we want you to know we'll be here for you. These trying times have emphasized the community's reliance on our critical programs, Safety Net/Emergency services and underscore the need for us to continue to be a resource for future generations.

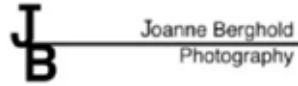
This year, we plan to do just that by embarking upon our "Friends For Life" campaign so that pets and people have access to care during their times of greatest need. Our mission expands beyond adoptions to address the increased demand for animal health, behavior, and Safety Net services. Your support of Stafford Animal Shelter's programs ensures every animal who comes through our doors is met with kindness, compassion and will receive high-quality care during their stay with us. YOU are the reason animals get to know love when they have nowhere else to turn. YOU are the reason families who need a helping hand can keep their pets with them, changing their lives. YOU are the reason we've been here, supporting our community for so many years, and YOU will be the reason we'll continue to be here. Thank you, as always, for your support of Stafford Animal Shelter, the animals and each other. I'm grateful for each one of you. We can only do this, together with you, for the animals. Every day, I am thankful to be a part of this amazing community. My heart is with you, now and always!

Lauren Smith  
Executive Director

## Our Partners

Thank you to all our sustaining Business Partners who generously donate financially and through in-kind services to help us provide care to homeless pets while they await their homes. We ask our community to patronize, support and thank our supporters who share a passion for Stafford's mission. If you are interested in becoming a Business or Veterinary Partner, please contact Lauren Smith, [LSmith@staffordanimalshelter.org](mailto:LSmith@staffordanimalshelter.org) for information on our program.

### Leader of the Pack \$10K+



### Friend for Life \$4K



### Top Dog \$2.5K



### Pick of the Litter \$1.5K

- Antlers Bar & Shamrock Ent.
- Arrowhead Electric
- Bridger Animal Nutrition
- CEM Bookkeeping & Tax Services, Cat Moody
- Community Closet
- Charles Schwab of Bozeman
- Eyecare Professionals & Mountain Eyewear
- Hills Pet Nutrition
- Iron Maiden Welding
- Jon Ellen Snyder – ERA Landmark Real Estate
- Livingston Tree Lawn & Snow Removal
- Mark's In & Out
- Murdoch's Home & Ranch Supply
- North Western Energy
- The Obsidian Collection

### Pet Patron \$500+

- 2 Basset Brewery
- Allied Storage
- Amazing Acres Pet Resort
- B Bar Ranch
- Berkshire Hathaway Home Services
- Buffalo Restoration
- Cilla Mae's Old Fashioned Fudge
- City of Livingston
- Crazy Peak Brewing Co.
- Dean's Zesty Beverages
- First Interstate Bank
- Gardiner Market
- The Help Desk Livingston
- Help Every Pet of Hardin
- Landmark ERA - Brooke Weimer
- Mark's In & Out
- Montana Gift Coral & Copper Horse
- Montana Title & Escrow, Inc.
- Neptune's Brewery
- Outhouse Heating and Plumbing, LLC
- Ri Mason Photography
- Security Title Company of Montana
- Shane Lalani Center for the Arts
- Stacey & Darren Raney, Berkshire Hathaway HSM
- Vellinga Auction & Real Estate
- West Paw
- Yellowstone Appliance
- North Western Energy
- The Obsidian Collection

### Cool Cats \$300+

- A.E. Nobel & Associates
- All Service Tire & Alignment
- At Home on the Range Pet Cemetery
- Bank of the Rockies
- Big Timber Ace Hardware
- Black Dog Rehab
- CN, LLC Bookkeeping, Christina Nelson
- Citizens Bank & Trust of Big Timber
- Coffee Crossing
- Colmey Veterinary Hospital
- The Firehouse, Inc. Big Timber
- First West Insurance
- Franzen-Davis Funeral Home
- Graybeal's All Service HVAC
- H & R Block - Steffanie Haring
- High Country Wildlife
- Huppert, Swindlehurst, & Woodruff
- Insty Prints
- Livingston Ace Hardware
- Livingston Health Care
- Livingston Home Outfitters
- Logan Auction Services
- Montana Farrier Supply
- Oie Motor Company
- PetCo
- PetSmart
- The Spur Line
- Western Glass Company
- Windy Way Rock Shop
- Wood's Rose Market



### Veterinary Partners

- Alpenglow Animal Hospital
- Animal Care Clinic, Dr. Sherrie Nash
- Colmey Veterinary Hospital
- Cottonwood Veterinary Hospital
- Paradise Valley Equine
- P.E.T.S Bozeman
- Sleeping Giant Animal Clinic

## A Big Dill

Stafford Animal Shelter received a request to surrender a tabby cat named Dill in February. Dill's owner could no longer care for him. He had a history of urinary crystals and required a special prescription diet to decrease his chances of them reoccurring. The owner was changing jobs and moving, although Stafford provided alternatives to surrender, through financial support, food and veterinarian costs, it was decided it would be best for him to find a new home.



Our cover boy was very shy and scared initially when he arrived. Dill exhibited signs of fear, anxiety, and stress by consistently hiding, crouched, not eating, enlarged pupils and his ears were held back. Stafford Animal Shelter's team performs daily monitoring of each animal in our care. It was agreed that Dill would do best away from the other cats. The staff then decided to move him into their break room so he could have the run of the place.

He continued to hide and shake. One afternoon, the team was sitting down to have lunch and they could not find Dill anywhere so they started to look and call for him, suddenly he popped out of the cupboard! The staff immediately made the cupboard his cozy hideout. It took Dill a few weeks, to begin to feel comfortable in his new space. He started to come around to the team and new people. Dill was so special, and his meow was just as special as him. It was raspy and hoarse. He began to greet each team member, each day with a meow and a soft rub.

Our special guy spent a lot of time here at Stafford Animal Shelter, we knew he wanted to be the only cat and that he did not enjoy dogs. It took time for him to warm up to new people and when a client would meet him, he was timid and shy, but boy was he the coolest cat once he felt safe and comfortable! Dill's dietary restrictions and previous medical history was disclosed to every interested adopter, this was a barrier for some, but not all.

On June 24th, after being at Stafford Animal Shelter for 118 days, Dill met his match, Maya. Maya set out to adopt a cat that would become her emotional support animal. Maya was looking for a very specific cat that would be rather sociable, but able to be left alone as she is a full-time student. Maya met a lot of cats at Stafford, but the instant she met Dill, she knew he'd be the perfect addition.

*Maya shared, "Through the adoption process, we had help finding a vet that can deal with Dill's anxiety and getting Dill the right food for his special diet! When we brought Dill home, after three hours of hiding under a cabinet, he was ready to play and snuggle! The staff were so helpful in helping me find the right fit!"*



Dill's new favorite spots are on her weighted blanket and on a plastic lid under the bed. He likes to run around the apartment and check out all the cabinets. He loves sleeping on the bed with his humans and as soon as the first alarm goes off in the morning, he's ready for his morning cuddle.

Stafford Animal Shelter goal is to help people and pets. Please contact us if you need resources, if you need support for your pet or if you are in a crisis. One of Stafford's goals is to provide alternatives to surrender and keep people and their pets TOGETHER!



"At Stafford we pride ourselves in saving lives through integrated medical and behavioral programs. We balance disease control and medicine with the emotional & behavioral wellness of shelter animals."

Every dollar donated is critical to provide life-saving care for animals in need.  
**YOUR donations make this possible!**

Donate @: [staffordanimalshelter.org](https://staffordanimalshelter.org)



Donate Now!

## Mother's Day

Stafford Animal Shelter has rescued five mothers and their babies. Each family tells their own story. Each mother delivered around 8 puppies each. If you do the math, that is 45 animals, including mama! The natural state of motherhood is unselfishness.



Of the five mothers two births occurred in our care. Ladybug was found as a stray in Big Timber. When she arrived at Stafford Animal Shelter, she was visibly pregnant. Ladybug was never reclaimed by her owner, and she was not microchipped. As birth was approaching, Stafford placed Ladybug in a foster home to deliver in peace and quiet. Ladybug delivered eight healthy puppies, she was able to whelp all her babies until it was appropriate to wean. Each puppy was spayed or neutered and found a new loving home, even mom! Stafford Animal Shelter supports and encourages all pet owners to spay or neuter their animals, to reduce the number of homeless pets and avoidable litters.



Siya arrived and was surrendered to Stafford, in labor. When she arrived her owners had explained they were living in their vehicle and unable to provide Siya and her puppies the care they needed. After the couple left, they ran back in with a PUPPY! Siya had delivered one puppy in the car. Siya was found to be anxious and scared. However, another baby was imminent.



Siya was so scared she was unable to focus on the birth process and breaking the birth sac; therefore, our team had to step up and step IN! The team broke the birth sac and presented the puppy to mom, again too anxious to clean and stimulate the newborn. Stafford's staff had to support Siya and her babies, so the team stimulated the puppy and cut the cord. The puppy's life was up to us! One of our staff members sat inside Siya's kennel, to comfort

mom and settle her down with classical music playing in the background. Siya laid down next to Alex, Animal Care Coordinator, finally. We knew another baby was on the way. Siya was now able to focus.

Siya delivered 7 more healthy puppies. A special thanks to All West Veterinarian Clinic and Dr. Karyn Cook for fostering Siya and her babies. Stafford Animal Shelter is proud to share all animals have now found loving homes and have been spay and neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped. Stafford is paving the way to improving animal welfare. Contact us if you need resources to provide care to your animal.



Warm weather means "Kitten Season"! We start to receive more questions about what to do for young kittens who appear to be abandoned by their mother. We know staying together with their mother is the best chance for their survival! Here are questions to consider when determining whether kittens need your ( or our) help!

### Are the kittens quiet?

- **Yes:** Let them be. Mom does not spend 24 hours a day with them. Oftentimes mom needs to leave to go find food for herself in order to continue to care for the kittens.
- **No:** Hungry kittens will cry loudly. If they are quiet after 2-4 hours, then mom was probably there.

### Are the kittens clean?

- **Yes:** If mom is still caring for her babies, the kittens will be extremely clean!
- **No:** If they are covered in dirt, feces, have crusted urine on their bodies, they need your help. We can help too. Call us!

### Are the kittens sick/hurt?

- **Yes:** If kittens are sick, they may have ocular discharge, nasal discharge or their eyes may be crusted shut. If a kitten is hurt it may have wounds or open sores. These kittens need help. Call a veterinarian or Stafford for assistance.
- **No:** Let them be.

### Are the kittens thin?

- **Yes:** Kitten bellies that are sunken in, bones showing and pale skin, rather than being full and round, aren't being fed. They need you or a foster! Call us to provide additional assistance & support.
- **No:** Kittens, whose mom is still caring for them, eat frequently and their bellies are round and full.



### Is the nest in good condition safe from predators & inclement weather?

- **Yes:** Let them be.
- **No:** Mom may have abandoned them. Call the shelter, we can help you protect them & get the care they need.

## Check Your Chip

Microchips do not replace a tag and collar, but they can make all the difference when it comes to getting your pet back. One in three family pets will get lost, but only about six out of 10 microchips are registered.

August 15th is Check the Chip Day. If your pet is microchipped, make sure your information is up to date with the company your pet is microchipped through. Not sure if your pet has a microchip? Stop by Stafford Animal Shelter or local veterinarian office to have your pet scanned. Stafford will be able to provide you with the number and information on how to make sure it is registered. Do you know your pet's microchip number but aren't sure of the company?

You can look up that information here: [www.petmicrochiplookup.org](http://www.petmicrochiplookup.org)

Microchipped dogs are more than twice as likely to be returned to their owners. Microchipped cats are more than 20 times as likely to be returned to their owners. When a microchipped pet is not returned home, it is usually due to incorrect or missing owner information in the microchip registry.

Recently, Stafford Animal Shelter received a stray cat in on July 12th. Stafford Animal Shelter scans all animals upon intake for a microchip. At intake, the cat indeed had a microchip. Stafford was able to contact his owner, Zoe. Zoe had been missing Juba, now named Thomas, since Easter! Thomas had been missing for 94 days! Zoe had been so sad since she lost her cat companion. Zoe was not expecting to be able to see Thomas again. Reclaim rates at Stafford for the past year were for 63% dogs and 6% for cats.



### Lost a Pet?

- Email us a description & file a lost report with Stafford
- Stop in our shelter: Stop in often, it isn't always possible to match a pet to lost reports, photos or over the phone
- Call Animal Control +/- Park County dispatch at 406-222-2050 and report your pet missing.
- Use Social Media: Post photos & details. We recommend "Bozeman Lost Pets", "This is Really Livingston", Craigslist, Yard Sale / Classified Pages..
- Good Old-Fashioned Flyers– Canvas your neighborhood by putting up color posters. Post at the dog park, grocery stores, veterinarian's offices & talk to locals. Display in your vehicle and ask friends & family to do the same.
- Place an Ad: Local media- KGLT & The Livingston Enterprise
- Visit [www.lost.petcolove.org](http://www.lost.petcolove.org) PetCo has some great tips & technology to register your lost pets.
- Be patient and don't give up!



### Why it's important to act right away:

A stray left at the shelter after three (3) days is available for adoption. In order to reduce a pet's stress and stay, we also accept "pre-adoption" applications from the public. All adoptions are final & adopters will not be contacted to return a pet if the original owner steps forward.

### Found a Pet?



- If the pet is wearing ID please contact the owner, and if possible, keep until they can be reunited.
- Remember our tag line: "All Cats Who Wander are not Lost" so unless it is injured, it's best to leave it be (and not feed it). Observe its behavior for 24 hours, it will most likely return to its family.
- If you find a pet and have the ability to keep it in your home, please post it on social media (see above) as most pet owners are desperately looking for their missing pal and respond quickly.
- If you cannot keep the pet, we have a 24/7 stray drop at Stafford Animal Shelter, located to the left of the main entrance. This is monitored and temperature controlled so it is safe year-round.
- If you find an injured pet, or if it's an animal related emergency or crime, please contact law enforcement at 406-222-2050

## Bunny Bonanza 🐾

Stafford Animal Shelter prides itself as the only animal shelter in Southwestern Montana that is a sanctuary to pocket-pets and zoo critters, including but not limited to: fish, birds, guinea pigs, hamsters, ferrets, reptiles, and bunnies. This year alone, Stafford has already received thirty-one rabbits. A rabbit's gestation period is only thirty-one days; therefore, if not spayed and neutered they can reproduce relatively quickly. There are several species of wild and domesticated rabbits and it's important to know the difference before helping them or bringing them to the shelter.



Wild Cottontails like to live at the edges of open areas. This means they love our suburbs. Yards, parks, playgrounds, and office parks, often with small natural buffers in between, contain small areas of habitats that rabbits love.

Here today, gone tomorrow is one way to describe rabbits in the wild. Given the many predators who make meals of rabbits, their populations can rise and fall dramatically over the course of a year. Sometimes, by doing nothing and letting nature take its own course, the landowner sees the same result as they might from trying to "control" rabbits.

As critical members of our ecosystem, rabbits form underground burrows that strengthen our soil health and they serve as a food source for many larger predators. Their valuable place in the food web (as well as human threats such as habitat loss, trapping and cars) means they often don't live long, but most live somewhere between one and nine years. (Domestic rabbits live about five to 10 years.) Adult wild rabbits eat clover, grass and other plants, as well as twigs and even bark, if other food sources are scarce. Gardeners may find that rabbits nibble their flower and vegetable plants in spring and summer and the bark of fruit and ornamental trees and shrubs in the fall and winter.

Baby rabbits (kits) will nurse during the first few weeks of life and then transition to greens. If you are lucky enough



to witness a kit nursing (from a respectful distance), they kick their little legs with joy. Interestingly, rabbits will excrete, eat and re-digest their own droppings to obtain the maximum amount of nutrients. Mothers feed baby rabbits only twice a day—at dawn and dusk. Baby rabbits found alone in a nest are usually not orphans. Mowing and raking yards can disturb rabbit nests. If a nest has been disturbed, put it back together and cover the babies with the grass that originally covered them. To check if the mother is coming to care for them, place several lengths of yarn or small twigs in a grid pattern over the nest. If the grid is disturbed after the next dawn or dusk, the mother is still caring for the youngsters. You can



prevent harm to baby rabbits by checking your yard carefully for rabbit nests before you mow.

(especially in taller grass). Baby rabbits leave the nest when they're 3 weeks old and about the size of a chipmunk. If you find a chipmunk-sized but fully-furred rabbit with eyes open, ears erect and the ability to hop, they are meant to be on their own. As small and helpless as they may look, they are not an orphans and don't need your help.

Outdoor cats and dogs are a major threat to rabbits. If your pet gets hold of a rabbit, bring your pet inside and find a licensed wildlife rehabilitator or veterinarian. Do not attempt to feed the rabbit; more often than not, this harms them.

Unfortunately, it's not uncommon for people to abandon pet rabbits outdoors and these domestic rabbits do need our help! Most wild rabbits in the U.S. are cottontails, who are brown with white tails. Domestic rabbits vary in size, color & ear shape ranging from 2lbs - 20 lbs (average is 5 lbs).



Stafford Animal Shelter highly recommends spaying and neutering your rabbits to reduce unwanted litters. In addition, microchipping your bunny can help you be reunited if your pet is lost. All rabbits adopted from our shelter are altered and microchipped to promote responsible care. A special thanks to Alpenglow Animal Hospital, Sleeping Giant Animal Clinic & Bozeman Rabbit Resource for their support with the care of our thirty-one rabbits so far! Thinking about adopting a rabbit? Check with us!

### How to tell the difference between a wild rabbit & pet rabbit:

- Wild:**
- typically brown to camouflage from prey
  - Ears always stand up
  - Slimmer build; sharper features
  - Don't approach humans, are extremely skittish



- Pet (Domestic):**
- Vary in size, breed, and ear type
  - Different colors
  - Soft/round features
  - Might approach you looking for help
  - Cannot survive in the wild





Stafford Animal Shelter  
 3 Business Park Road  
 Livingston, MT 59047  
 Phone: (406) 222-2111  
 Fax: (406) 222-4938  
[www.staffordanimalshelter.org](http://www.staffordanimalshelter.org)

Non-Profit  
 Organization  
 US Postage Paid  
 Permit # 96  
 Livingston, MT

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram!



or Current Resident



Stafford Animal Shelter  
**BARKS & BREWS**  
 Small Dog Realty

Join Us! Register for B & B today!

August 29th 6-7  
 Run Beer Food

Scan to Register!

Stafford Animal Shelter is excited to announce **“Barks & Brews”**, our new rendition of “Bark in the Park”! Please save the date for you and your canine companion to join us, on **August 29th from 6-7pm** to complete a 5k Fun Run / Doggie Walk!

All registered racers will receive a complimentary brew at the finish line donated by The Owl Lounge, an event t-shirt from title sponsor Small Dog Realty and Yellowstone Bank will be there grilling burgers with all the fixins’ for dinner! Registration is open and available on our website, by scanning the QR code or at the event. 100% of the proceeds raised from this family-friendly event will benefit local animals in need! Thank you to all our sponsors who are making this “fun”-raiser possible!



Leader of the Pack:



Best in Show:



Friend For Life:

