

# ANIMAL TALES

News from Stafford Animal Shelter

Summer 2024



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3 Business Park Road  
Livingston, MT 59047  
(406) 222-2111



[www.staffordanimalshelter.org](http://www.staffordanimalshelter.org)

Follow us on socials

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. Walk-Ins, Adoptions & Volunteering  
Tuesday - Sunday from Noon - 5:00.



## STAFF

### *Executive Director - Now Hiring*

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

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

Kadie Smith - Veterinary Assistant  
[vetcare@staffordanimalshelter.org](mailto:vetcare@staffordanimalshelter.org)

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

### Veterinarians

Dr. Jamie White & Dr. Tarek Isham

### Facilities Assistant

Dale Fowler

### Animal Care Supervisors

Daisy Castro & Alex Roberts

### Animal Care Coordinators

-Amanda Garant

-Analeese Harrison

-Sarah Jane Lamb

-Grace Nutting

-Lucia Nziengui Boussengui



Just part of our incredible shelter team!  
Their compassion & dedication are the heart of our organization.

## Letter from the Executive Director

I am pleased to share with you that our Fur Ball Gala: The Wonderful Wizard of PAWS was a resounding success! Together, we raised over \$116,000 to support our great work and mission.

The gala was a true testament to the power of community and the impact we can achieve when we come together. In August we will be hosting Barks and Brews, another event that brings us together with our community. It is heartwarming to connect with everyone, share stories, and raise awareness about the work we do. Your engagement and enthusiasm at these events fuels our mission and inspires us to keep pushing forward.

This year has been amazing, and it is with a heavy heart that I announce my departure from Stafford Animal Shelter. This decision was not made lightly. It comes after much reflection and consideration, as I pursue my career as a Family Nurse Practitioner. I want to express my deepest gratitude for the opportunity to work alongside such dedicated and passionate individuals. My time here has been one of the most rewarding and fulfilling experiences of my life.

I have seen firsthand the incredible difference we make in the lives of the animals in our care, and I am confident that Stafford Animal Shelter will continue to lead the way in advocating for their best interests. Your unwavering support and commitment to our mission has been truly inspiring. Together, we have achieved so much, and I am incredibly proud of the positive impact we have made in the lives of countless animals.

To our staff, volunteers and fosters, your selfless contributions of time, energy, and love have been the backbone of our organization. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed, and I am continually amazed by your generosity and dedication. It has been an honor to work with each of you, and I am confident that that you will continue to do incredible work for the shelter.

With heartfelt thanks and best wishes,  
Lauren Smith

## Board of Directors

Gwen Strachan - President  
Darcy Cook - Vice President  
Chris Raley - Treasurer

Andy Art  
Stephanie Cunningham  
Hannah Pauli  
Vicki Regula

**Thank you to our Board for volunteering their time & expertise!**

# Stafford Animal Shelter Updates & Fun Facts

Did you know we practice "Managed Intakes"? An animal welfare term that refers to a thoughtful process whereby admission to an animal shelter is scheduled based on the shelter's capacity to provide humane care and assure the best and most appropriate outcome for each animal admitted.

**695+**

Animal Intakes

**695+**

Live Outcomes

**111**

Animals Sent to Foster

**267**

Surgeries Completed

**0.3%**

Euthanasia Rate

## Reasons for Surrender

- Behavior (dogs) - 28.5%
- Loss of housing/Moving- 18.7%
- Expenses/Can No Longer Care For- 15.3%

Research has shown that brief outings (~3 hours) and temporary fostering programs (~2 days) increase likelihood of shelter dog adoptions by 500%-1400%.  
(and 100% of our dogs are happy about that fact!)



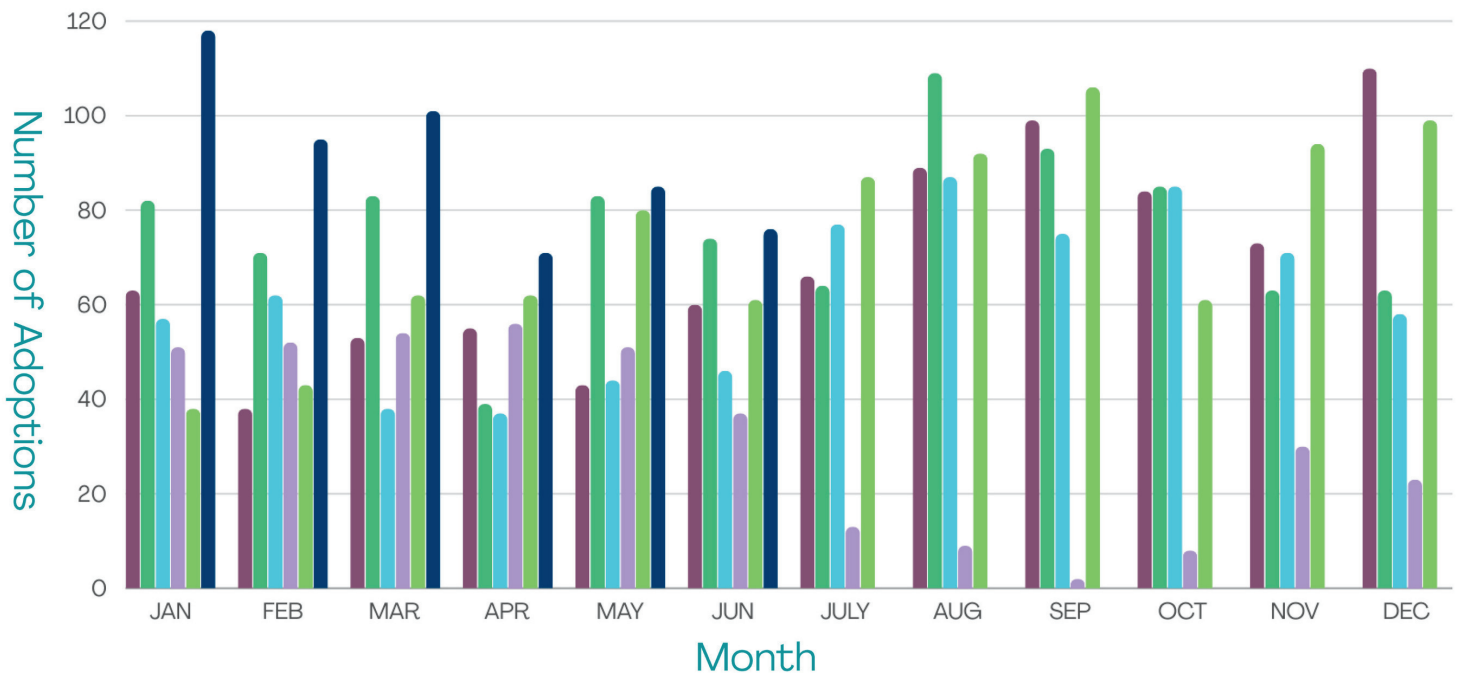
## Shelter Support & Reservation Rescue



When capacity allows, we work with many municipal and non-profit shelters as well as reservation rescue groups throughout the state to help them work within their capacity. When working with reservation rescues, we strive to be respectful and maintain positive relationships with tribal leaders.

# Awesome! ON TRACK TO BE OUR BEST YEAR YET!

## Adoptions by Month





## The Curious Case of Bernard “Buttons”



What a tale of resilience and recovery we have to share about our cover boy. At just three years old, Bernard, a brave feline, has already faced more than his fair share of challenges. Bernard was brought to the Stafford Animal Shelter, as a stray, in critical condition, suffering from a severely broken jaw, pneumonia, and extreme malnourishment. It was clear that he needed urgent care to survive.

Upon his arrival, our dedicated medical team quickly sprang into action. Bernard underwent complex surgery to mend his fractured jaw and received intensive nutritional support to address his malnourishment. Bernard’s pneumonia was treated with antibiotics. Thanks to the expertise and compassion of our veterinary staff, Bernard’s recovery began.



After surgery, Bernard was closely monitored on-site to ensure the securement of his “buttons” that were holding his jaw in place. His buttons also lent the staff to give him the endearing nickname “Bernard Buttons”. Once stabilized, he was eventually placed in a loving medical foster home where he could heal in a calm and nurturing environment. His foster family provided round-the-clock care, ensuring he received all the love and attention he needed to regain his strength.

Today, Bernard is a testament to resilience and the incredible power of dedicated care. He has made a remarkable recovery and is now a happy, healthy cat, full of life and was adopted by his foster mom.



Bernard’s story is a reminder of the vital work we do at the Stafford Animal Shelter. It’s through the generosity of our supporters and the hard work of our team that we can give animals like Bernard a second chance at life.

Thank you for being a part of Bernard’s journey and for helping us continue our mission to save lives.

Photos: Bernard upon intake to his X-ray and surgery with our medical team. Aftercare with acupuncture, recovery in foster & adoption photo!





## An Ode to Odie

At Stafford Animal Shelter, we often witness incredible transformations, but Odie's story is particularly special. Transferred from the McLean-Cameron Animal Adoption Center after spending six months with no interest, Odie, a 76-pound bundle of energy, arrived at Stafford Animal Shelter on September 30, 2023.

Initially, Odie was rambunctious, rowdy, jumpy, and mouthy. His behavior presented significant challenges, but we were determined to help him. Through continuous behavioral modification and trust-building with our dedicated team, Odie began to improve. His regular time outside the kennel to run and play in our yards was crucial in his development.

Odie became a staple at Stafford, teaching us invaluable lessons about sheltering. He showed us the importance of investing in resources for behavioral modification, especially for animals with marginal behaviors. His journey underscored the necessity of giving every dog a second chance, even those with special needs.



*Our DOO Christa  
with Odie in shelter*



Odie required a unique home environment—no other dogs, no children, and a space to decompress. His time with us, though challenging, was also incredibly rewarding. He demonstrated that life in the shelter is not a life any animal should endure for too long. Therefore, it was more difficult to find him his ideal person and placement. He was overlooked by many adopters.

On February 1, after being at Stafford for four months, Odie's story took a joyous turn when his unicorn foster, Kinley, opened her heart and home to him. Kinley's commitment to providing Odie with a second chance at a life filled with love and Bully Sticks was a testament to the power of dedication and compassion.

Odie's successful placement wouldn't have been possible without behavioral fosters. Their willingness to offer a space for animals to recover, rehabilitate, and redeem themselves is crucial in transforming challenging cases into adoptable, loving companions. If you are interested in our Unicorn Foster Program, for animals that require a behavior foster or special needs, please contact [CNelson@staffordanimalshelter.org](mailto:CNelson@staffordanimalshelter.org)

We are profoundly grateful for Odie's journey and the lessons he taught us. His story is a beacon of hope, reminding us of the potential within every animal and the incredible impact of a second chance.

Odie spent the majority of his life in shelters. Thanks to a "Unicorn Foster" for taking a chance on him, he experienced the joys of the world and finally found his forever home!





# Kitten Season: How You Can Help

As we enter kitten season, it's crucial to understand the importance of properly handling and caring for kittens that you may come across. This period, typically from spring to late summer, sees a significant influx of kittens being born, and many of them end up in shelters. Here's what you need to know to help make a difference.

## When to Bring Kittens to the Shelter

- They appear to be abandoned or are in distress.
- They are sick or injured.
- They are in immediate danger from predators or traffic.
- They seem malnourished or dehydrated.

In these situations, immediate intervention is necessary. Stafford Animal Shelter is equipped to provide the care these vulnerable kittens need to survive and thrive.



*Rescued kittens waiting for their homes at Stafford.*



## When to Leave the Kittens Alone

Not all kittens you find need to be brought to the shelter. Mother cats sometimes leave their kittens temporarily while they search for food. Before intervening, observe the situation.

- Kittens are clean, plump, and sleeping quietly?
- You see the mother cat nearby, or she returns within a few hours?

In these cases, it's best to leave the kittens where they are, as the mother cat will provide the best care for her young. We can help once they are older & weaned.

## The Importance of Spaying and Neutering

One of the most effective ways to reduce the number of homeless kittens is to spay and neuter your pets. This simple procedure can prevent countless unwanted litters from being born, thereby decreasing the strain on shelters and improving the overall welfare of the pet population. We strongly encourage all pet owners to ensure their cats are spayed or neutered.

*Our shelter veterinarians & members of our team recently helped Spay Montana at a low-cost clinic bringing these kits back, fixed, and ready to be adopted.*



## How You Can Support Stafford Animal Shelter

During kitten season, we rely heavily on community support to manage the increased intake of kittens.

Here's how you can help:

**-Donate items from our Amazon wish list.**

These items go directly to the care and comfort of the kittens.

**-Make a monetary donation via our website.**

Financial contributions help cover the cost of medical care, food, and other necessities.

**-Become a foster parent.**

Providing a temporary home for kittens can be a rewarding experience to help keep them healthy & socialized.



Your help during kitten season is vital to the well-being of these vulnerable animals. Together, we can make a significant impact on the lives of homeless kittens, reduce the unwanted pet population, and work towards a future where every pet has a loving home they deserve.



## Community Pet Food Pantry



At Stafford Animal Shelter, we believe in the power of community and the importance of supporting each other, especially during challenging times. This year, our community pet food pantry has distributed over 39,000 pounds of food to help families in need and provide for homeless and lost animals across our state.

This incredible achievement was made possible thanks to the generosity of our partners: Greater Good Charities, The Community Closet and The Spur Line (helping us order at cost). However, the need for support continues to grow, and we rely on the ongoing help of our community to ensure that no pet goes hungry.

*The Spur Line helped us acquire food through grants from The Community Closet & Greater Good!*

We invite you to consider donating pet food to our organization. Contributions can be dropped off directly at the shelter or shipped to our business address. Every donation, no matter the size, makes a significant impact and helps us continue to serve our community during these hard times. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the well-being of animals in our community.

## Celebrating Fosters!

We are thrilled to announce Foster Appreciation Week, taking place from August 18th through the 24th! This week is dedicated to recognizing the unwavering commitment and dedication of our incredible foster families. Their selfless efforts have significantly enhanced our capacity to care for more homeless animals in need, ensuring that Stafford Animal Shelter can continue its mission of providing love, care, and second chances to our furry friends.

Foster families open their hearts and homes to animals that require special attention, whether they are young, sick, or simply not thriving in a shelter environment. By providing a temporary home, our fosters play a critical role in the well-being and rehabilitation of these animals, preparing them for a brighter future. Here are some ways to help!

**Itty-Bitty Kitty Committee:** *This program is specifically designed for those interested in fostering the youngest and most vulnerable kittens. Neonatal kittens require around-the-clock care and feeding, and our dedicated foster volunteers ensure these tiny lives are given the best start possible.*



**Puppy Sleepovers:** *Exactly what it sounds like! Sign up to pick up puppies and cuddle with them all night until we set up an adoption appointment for them. Keeping them in the home is much safer, and much more fun, for these tiniest shelter residents!*

Myrtle, our longest stay dog, seen below with Daisy, is a perfect candidate for a “Unicorn” Foster. She was surrendered with her pups and now she is ready to be babied herself!

**Unicorn Fosters:** *As seen in Odie’s story, a “Unicorn” is someone that has the perfect, slower, home setup to take an animal that may be harder to place. A home with no children, pets, or frequent visitors is ideal. We provide extra perks and incentives to Unicorns by offering private in-home lessons with our Canine Specialist, free doggie daycare at the shelter & a professional photo shoot. Your love, care & training with our team will provide lifesaving feedback to help find these pets homes! To get started with any of our fostering options, please email our Director of Operations Christa Nelson at [CNelson@staffordanimalshelter.org](mailto:CNelson@staffordanimalshelter.org).*







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B & B today!

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[staffordanimalshelter.org](http://staffordanimalshelter.org)

August 19th 6pm  
Run Beer Food

See Website!

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Sign up Now!

**Leaders of the Pack (\$10,000+)**



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