

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION

To be a community-centered shelter that supports the human-animal bond through compassionate care, adoption, education, and advocacy.

Homeward Bound
Addison County's Humane Society



FAREWELL FEARLESS LEADER



As 2023 came to an end, so too did our time with Executive Director Jess Danyow at the helm. We sent her off with our sincerest thanks for the leadership she provided and growth she fostered in our beloved organization from 2013–2023.

In the decade that Jess was leading the charge, animal welfare work changed dramatically, Homeward Bound grew significantly (programming, animals served, fundraising, community impact), and the world endured a global pandemic. The establishment of PetCORE to provide a hand up to those struggling to provide for their beloved pets, the addition of an in-house veterinarian to the shelter roster, the building of a spay/neuter surgery suite, and the introduction of Community Pet Clinics are enormous accomplishments that Jess can be proud of and will serve the shelter and greater community for many years to come.

Animal welfare is serious business, but I would be remiss if I didn't share that we had some good fun with Jess along the way! For instance, CatSnip, also called "the great neuter-a-thon of 2023" that saw 413 male cats from Rutland and Addison counties get neutered in the month of April! Our inability to put up the Lights of Love tree successfully, the April Fool's joke involving the surrendering of a donkey, and the times we held Coin Drives on Route 7 will always bring a smile to my face!

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT:

GROSS INCOME:
\$982,958

COST OF GOODS:
\$137,956

EXPENSES:
\$916,627

In 2024 we anticipate welcoming our next fearless leader to the Homeward Bound family. In the meantime, we will continue to tackle our work with enthusiasm and confidence knowing that you, our most loyal friends, will be with us every step of the way.

Our sincere thanks to you all.

Hannah Manley
Development Director

Cover: Many years ago, Norton Latourelle of Norton's Gallery in Shoreham created and donated a "kitty bank" sculpture to Homeward Bound in honor of his beloved cat, Ace, a one-eyed black cat. Early in 2023, shelter cat Pepper posed for a photo with his look-alike in Cat Land. It was a priceless moment captured by avid volunteers, the Doucet family!

TINY TIM

Tiny Tim was born to Demeter, a young cat who arrived at the shelter through our Trap-Neuter-Return program the first week of June. Just days after being placed in a foster home, Demeter gave birth to four kittens. Tiny Tim was the runt of the litter and presented with neurological issues.

Tiny Tim was unable to successfully latch to his mom to nurse, so he was syringe and bottle fed by his foster family. He depended on them for absolutely everything. He was snuggled constantly and truly cared for by every member of the family, even a sheep named Peggy! Our foster coordinator began receiving the most adorable kitten photos on a regular basis — Tiny Tim sleeping on his right side, on his back, with a book, curled up in the crook of an arm. The cuteness was endless, each picture exuding tender love.

With the knowledge that the wobbliness caused by Tiny Tim's neurological issue may or may not improve over time, his foster family decided that they were the only family that was going to be able to truly care for him and decided to make him a permanent member of their family! Tiny Tim is living proof that love, compassion, and acceptance can make overcoming even the most insurmountable obstacle possible.

We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to Julie Hathaway for her photos of Tiny Tim which inspired our 2024 foster kitten calendar fundraiser. We would also like to thank every foster volunteer who has stepped up for the most vulnerable animals at Homeward Bound. This is truly a labor of love and makes a tremendous difference in the lives of animals like Tiny Tim!

Forever



Before



After

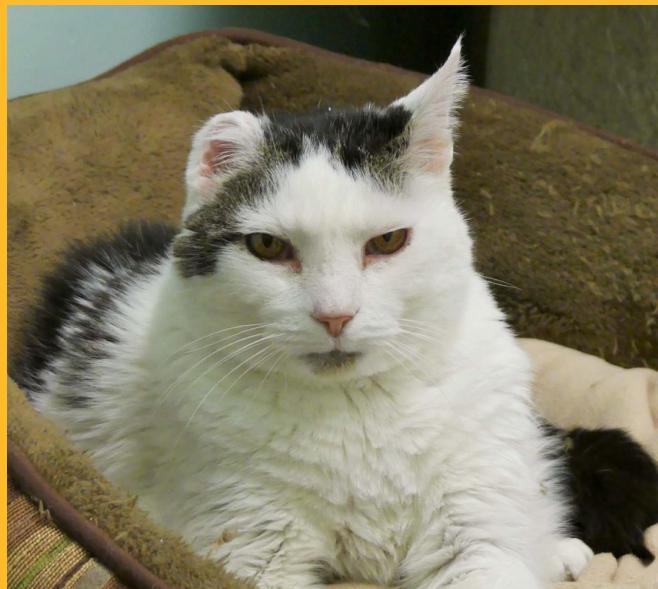
BY THE NUMBERS



657
owner surrenders



759
adoptions



242
PetCORE animals enrolled

160
strays



17

Spay the Mom participants

13

Pets in Crisis



190

Active volunteers

1,982

spay/neuters in our surgery suite

A ROADMAP

STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2023 we launched a new three-year strategic plan that will see us through 2025 and bring updates and improvements to our building, expanded programming, and professional development and support to our staff.

In addition to gathering community stakeholder data early in the year, we invited the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) for a site visit to complete an assessment of shelter operations and identify areas of opportunity.

The field of animal sheltering has expanded and shifted focus so much in recent years and we wanted to ensure we are embracing best practices. We were thrilled when the consultants from the ASPCA Shelter Medicine Services team agreed to come to Middlebury and assess our shelter capacity and the efficiency of our spay/neuter programming and wellness clinics, as well as the flow of animals through the shelter.

Prior to the in-person visit, the ASPCA reviewed Homeward Bound's standard operating procedures, online presence, and shelter metrics. Once on site, they observed the day-to-day operations and gathered information through conversations with point of care staff, volunteers, and shelter leaders. They looked at our practices for infectious disease management, record-keeping, facility use, population management, sanitation, and more.

The three-day consultation was inspiring and energizing for all of us. We were commended for the cleanliness of our facility, the community-centered focus of our programs, and the high level of dedication to the animals demonstrated by our staff. Additionally, we were given guidance around our stretched capacity with regards to the physical facility, staffing levels, and resources available to provide for both homeless animals and the owned pets in our community.

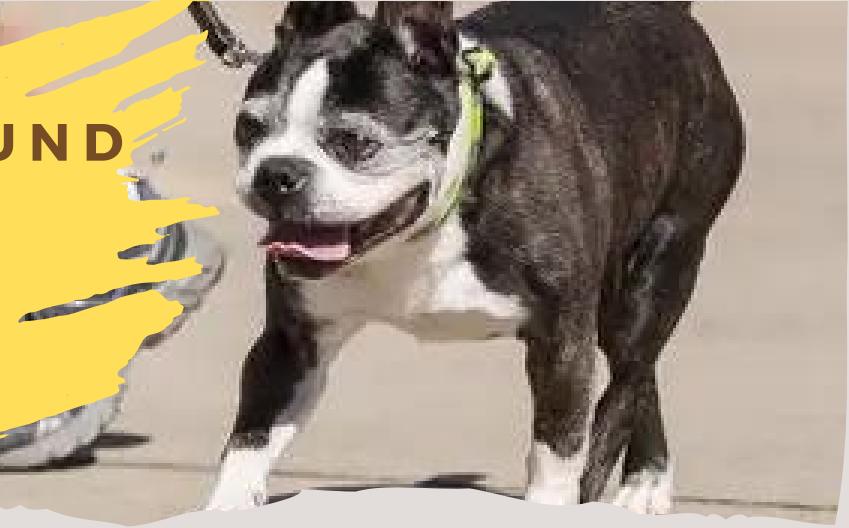
The observations of the ASPCA team, coupled with written data that we provided, resulted in a written report with suggested recommendations for improvement. That document, in turn, helped to inform our 2023–2025 Strategic Plan—a road map for the next three years.

HOMEWARD BOUND

2023-2025

Strategic Plan:

Making every day count!



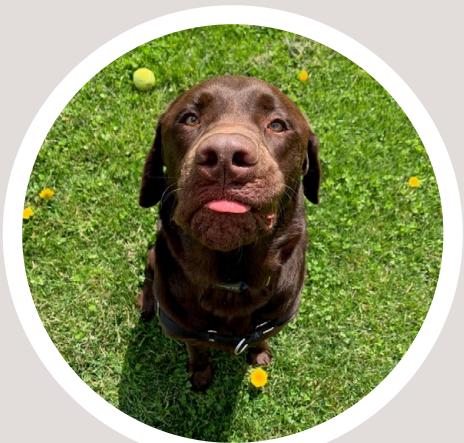
Philosophy & Programming

- Grow emphasis on intake diversion/surrender prevention and support for community pets
- Expand PetCORE and PetFIX services
- Increase staff skills to address behavioral and medical needs of in shelter animals
- Leverage volunteers to increase capacity



Facility and Technology

- Renovate dog kennels to improve welfare of long-term residents and support rehabilitation
- Expand parking and building soundproofing
- Modernize and automate communication systems



Staffing & Governance

- Increase professional development opportunities and access to human resources support
- Maintain competitive pay and benefits for industry
- Conduct policy review and revisions

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THE IMPACT YOU HAVE MADE



TRANSFORMATION

The winner of the most amazing “before” and “after” in 2023 was Doodle! This 15-year-old arrived at Homeward Bound as an owner surrender. She was such a mess we weren’t even sure of her breed! What her grooming revealed was that she was a lovely miniature poodle with lots of love left to give. Just two weeks after her disheveled arrival, Doodle was adopted and is living out her golden years in northern Vermont.



NOT ALONE

Nothing makes us sadder than thinking of an old animal alone, confused, and in pain. This is how 18-year-old Harold came to us in early May. He had been abandoned after his owner was evicted and was brought to us by local law enforcement.

Harold was emaciated, suffering from muscle atrophy, and presented with a swollen jaw. He immediately began receiving pain relief, wet food, antibiotics, and joint supplements. By early June he was up in Cat Land charming staff, volunteers, and visitors alike. On June 21, the Summer Solstice, the stars aligned for Harold and he found his person. We didn’t know it at the time, but Harold would pass away just three months later. We take heart in knowing that his last several weeks were not spent alone, but in the presence of true love and kindness.



HANDFUL TO HOME-SWEET-HOME

Hunter came to us in July 2022 as an adolescent Walker Coonhound still learning how to control his size. We’ll just say it — he was a bit of a nightmare! We took him on long walks and spent hours at our dog park to help him burn off his puppy energy, however he was very strong and pulled on his leash. On the plus side, Hunter was great at using his nose to solve puzzle toys (anything to provide mental stimulation and tire this guy out was a win!).

We found Hunter to be impatient and apt to nip or bark for attention during play and training. His impulse control came into question, especially when we found him launching himself up and out of his kennel —a physical feat we had yet to

observe! Impressive, yet concerning when we began thinking about a successful placement.

Every day Hunter worked hard with us. The focus of his extensive training with staff and our dog trainer was game-based with lots of positive reinforcement. He was smart and the training paid off. When the end of January rolled around, Hunter found his sweet spot in a loving forever home with a Mom who is accustomed to challenging dogs and was 100% determined to make Hunter’s placement work.

THE OLD MARRIED COUPLE



Gummi came to us as a severely underweight stray, just 6 pounds. He was so unwell that shelter staff weren’t sure he’d make it through the night but this guy was a survivor. Not only did he survive that first night, he thrived in the shelter setting. He blossomed personality-wise and nearly doubled his weight! Despite his aging, creaky bones, Gummi was an easygoing, incredibly lovable cat.

Miss Fluffy Tail was surrendered when her owner could no longer care for her due to failing health. Just like Gummi, she arrived very skinny and unwell. We learned that she had never been to a veterinarian. Her hyperthyroidism was quickly diagnosed and she began receiving twice-daily medication to regulate her thyroid. Miss Fluffy Tail was known for her grumpy expression, but this girl had plenty of love to share.

Gummi and Miss Fluffy Tail were roommates in Community Room 2. Our feline coordinator would say that they lived like an old married couple, each on their own side of the room with an “invisible line” of sorts separating them. She said they “kind of dislike each other, but love each other a lot, too!”

Thanks to an adopter who came to the shelter with an open heart, a desire to take in a pair of adult cats, and no qualms about older cats with medical needs, these two rode off into the snow squalls one winter afternoon and we couldn’t have been happier for them!

Hunter



Doodle



Harold



Gummi & Miss Fluffy Tail



THE IMPACT YOU HAVE MADE *CONTINUED*



WINNING THE LOTTERY

Luna came to us when her owner, who had become homeless and tried to keep her with him as he lived on the streets, realized that she deserved more than he could foresee giving her. He brought her to us in the hopes that she could find a better life than he could provide.

Luna was with us about six weeks and didn't get much attention at all from prospective adopters until one very special couple came along and knew she was perfect for them! Luna's forever family reports that she is a wonderful, sweet, affectionate dog and an absolutely perfect fit for their family. She loves going for walks, enjoys the dog park, her daily peanut butter Kong, and snuggling! They said, "We won the lotto, thank you guys so much for saving her!" We think Luna won the lotto, too!



U-HAUL DELIVERY

A random U-Haul truck pull into the shelter driveway. Shortly after, three ferrets were surrendered to us. They came with no food, no supplies, no toys, no cage, just three ferrets in a broken carrier. Their family was moving that very day. They had rehomed the family cats and dog with success but had not been able to rehome the ferrets.

Due to the fact that this was an unplanned surrender and we don't frequently have ferret guests at the shelter, we didn't have the necessary supplies at the ready and rallied to purchase what was needed. What started out as a terribly unsettling day for these three small animals ended with nutritious food in their bellies, fun toys within reach, safe housing over their heads, and the kind touch of a loving human.



MENDING MAVERICK

Maverick came to us over the summer as an injured farm cat. He had a large gash on his leg that required us to apply antibiotic cream every day. He tolerated his treatment and epitomized resilience during his road to recovery.

Over the course of his two months with us, Maverick's body healed and he allowed us to get to know him better. We learned that he loved affection and catnip, but was not a fan of wand toys! In October, Maverick was adopted by a sweet family who is providing him with an abundance of catnip and cuddles. He adores his girl and gets to share her bed at night.

Hippo was a very sick kitten. He arrived at the shelter as a stray from a barn in Shoreham. He was bottle fed by our volunteer coordinator at home and at work. And then along came new volunteers Rebecca and her daughter, Elizabeth. They took a special interest in Hippo, being sure to spend time with them during their shelter visits.

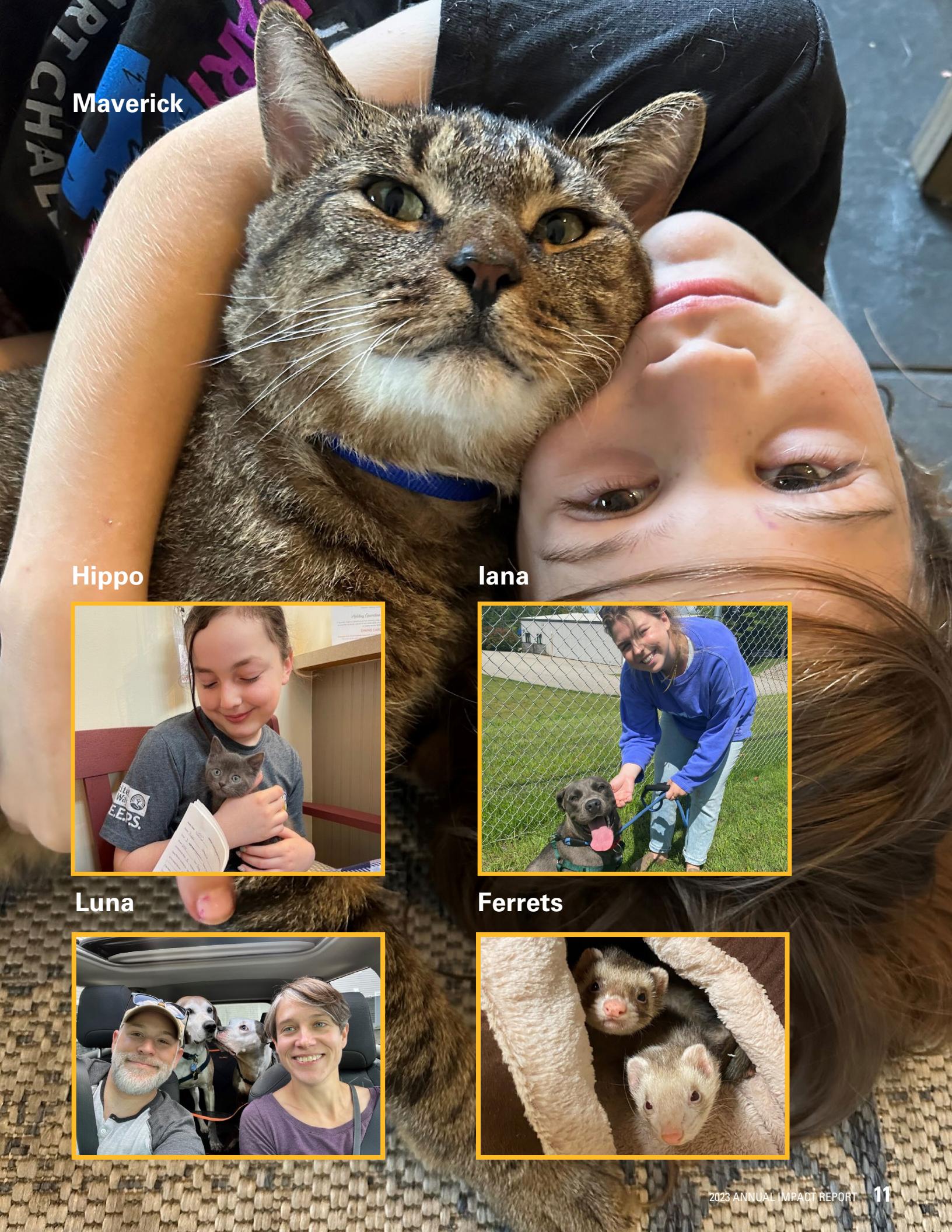
LITTLE HIPPO

For her birthday, young Elizabeth collected money and bought "one of each" from our wish list, delivered in baskets. At the same time, Hippo had overcome his obstacles and was thriving, ready for adoption. On December 9, Elizabeth was in for the surprise of her life when she came to volunteer and pick up her baskets. Her mom had made arrangements to adopt Hippo, so when Elizabeth picked up her baskets, one of them contained a very happy Hippo ready to go home with her!

WORTH THE TRIP

Iana was on the loose in West Addison during the peak of summer, seemingly abandoned. Many people were concerned and tried to catch her, but she was shy and frightened. The first person to gain Iana's trust was a woman from out of state. She was the one to deliver Iana to Homeward Bound. The connection was undeniable and what happened next was remarkable. Understanding that whoever adopted Iana would need to take extra time to get to know her and develop a comfort level with her before adopting, her rescuer began visiting Homeward Bound on weekends, staying at a local Airbnb! When Iana was ready, her adoption was finalized. She is now a resident of the Bay State!

Maverick



Hippo



lana



Luna



Ferrets



DONATIONS OF TIME AND TALENT

Volunteers are vital to the work of Homeward Bound. You can find them walking dogs in every kind of weather, socializing the most fearful of cats, reading books to rabbits and guinea pigs, and fostering the animals struggling in shelter. They are governing the organization on our board of directors, playing the harp in Cat Land, providing Reiki in the Dog Barn, tackling mountains of laundry, and bottle feeding orphaned kittens throughout the night. You will find our volunteers creating social media content, registering Woofstock walkers, knitting cat mats, hosting animals for respite overnights, managing supply drives, and so much more! Our volunteers share their time, unique talents, and most importantly, their hearts, with the animals of Homeward Bound. We are grateful beyond measure for these kind, compassionate human beings! We could never accomplish our Mission without them!



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Homeward Bound
Addison County's Humane Society



Homeward Bound, Addison County's Humane Society

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Middlebury, VT 05753

www.homewardboundanimals.org

Adoption Center open Tuesday–Saturday, 9:00am–3:00pm.
Dogs meet and greets by appointment only.