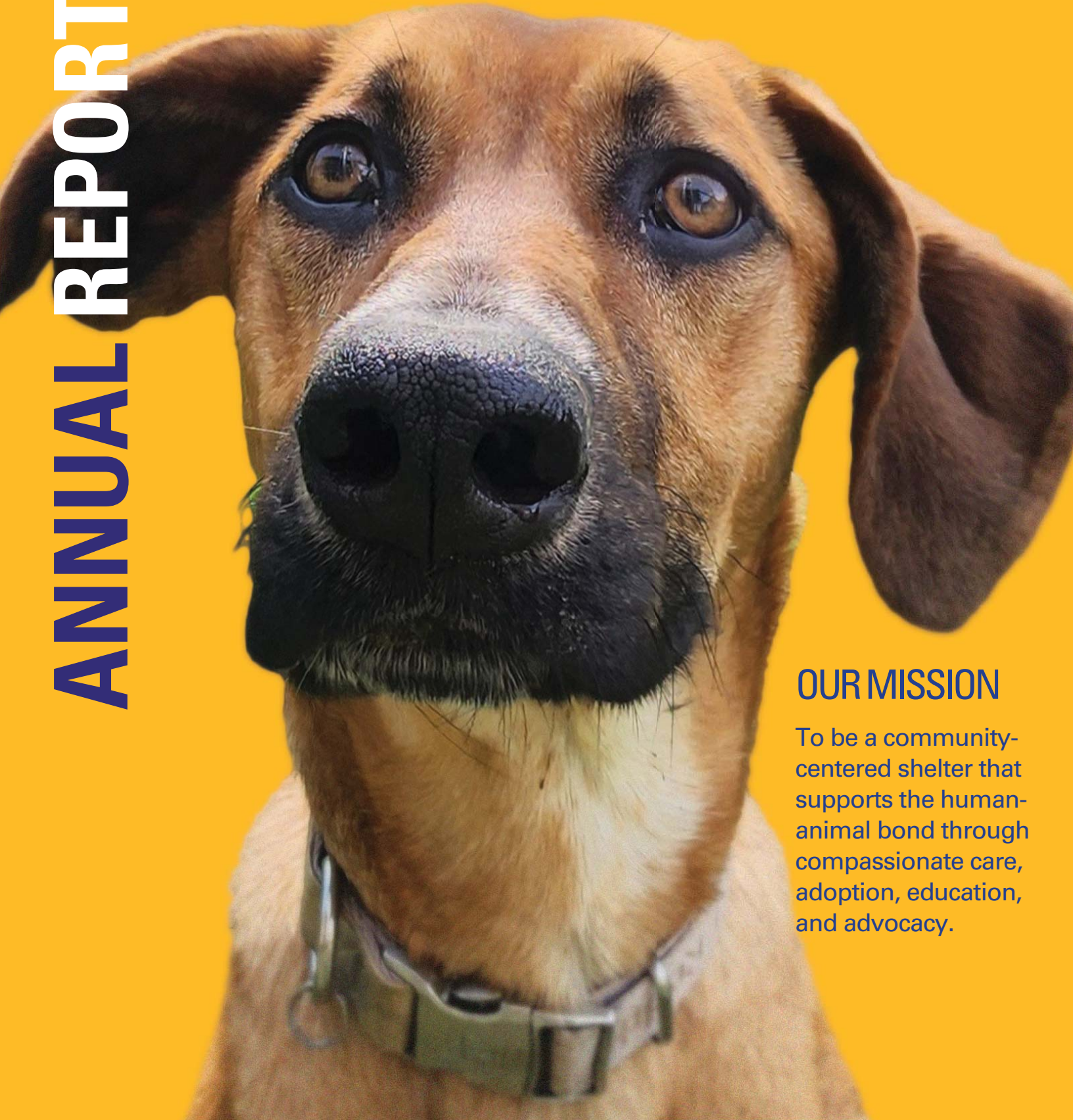


2025

ANNUAL REPORT

Homeward Bound
Addison County's Humane Society



OUR MISSION

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

A YEAR OF TRANSITION



As I reflect on the past year, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as the Executive Director at Homeward Bound. This staff, this community, and these animals make my heart full.

It has been an exciting time since taking the reins last March. We celebrated our 50th anniversary with a golden gala in the spring which included dinner, dancing, and a walk down memory lane. Our supporters came through with record-breaking donations which included the purchase of a 1-acre lot adjacent to our current building. As you can see from our financial snapshot, donations and grants make up over 76% of our revenue. We could not do this without you!

We expanded our PetCORE program to include more families in need of assistance by removing the application requirement to receive supplemental pet food. We purchased a new-to-us van to broaden our Trap-Neuter-Return services and will utilize it for off-site community wellness clinics in 2026.

We continue to temporarily house animals at no charge for families that need short-term care while they navigate crisis and prevent unexpected litters through our Spay the Mom program. These programs are at the core of what we do, and we are proud to be in a position to grow and adapt to the needs of our community.

Speaking of growth...the Board of Directors has created a new strategic plan for the coming years which includes a building renovation and expansion, an increase in services to the community, and added capacity for animals. Stay tuned as we lay the groundwork for what will become a model shelter to others in the Northeast! There is a lot of work ahead of us, but the direction we are headed in is very exciting. I look forward to walking step in step with our community to help those who need it the most in 2026 and in years to come.

All my best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karin Page
Executive Director

Cover: *Roxy came to us as a stray in early May via the Bristol Police Department. Not yet a year old in a big, scary world, Homeward Bound became her safe haven. Sporting long legs and a long tail, we called her a kangaroo in disguise! She was very agile and faster than lightning. We discovered that food was the best form of motivation for young Roxy. Whether biscuits, peanut butter, or chicken, she was there to gobble it all down! While she enjoyed people and treats, her playful personality came out when another dog was around. It seemed she needed a canine friend for comfort. Two months after arriving at the shelter, Roxy was adopted by a family prepared to give her the time and patience to truly trust and feel safe... and a canine friend to help her along the way.*

2025 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT:

TOTAL REVENUE:
\$1,267,779

TOTAL EXPENSES
\$1,007,355

NET OPERATING INCOME:
\$138,449

EARNED REVENUE
\$283,934

UNEARNED REVENUE
\$969,385

COURTNEY'S COMEBACK

Courtney arrived as a stray in early November and her "lost and found" post instantly pulled on the heartstrings of our community. She was underweight, dirty, and so very sad. With love, kitten food (for the extra calories), warmth, and medical care, "Courtney from Court Street" made a comeback we will not soon forget.

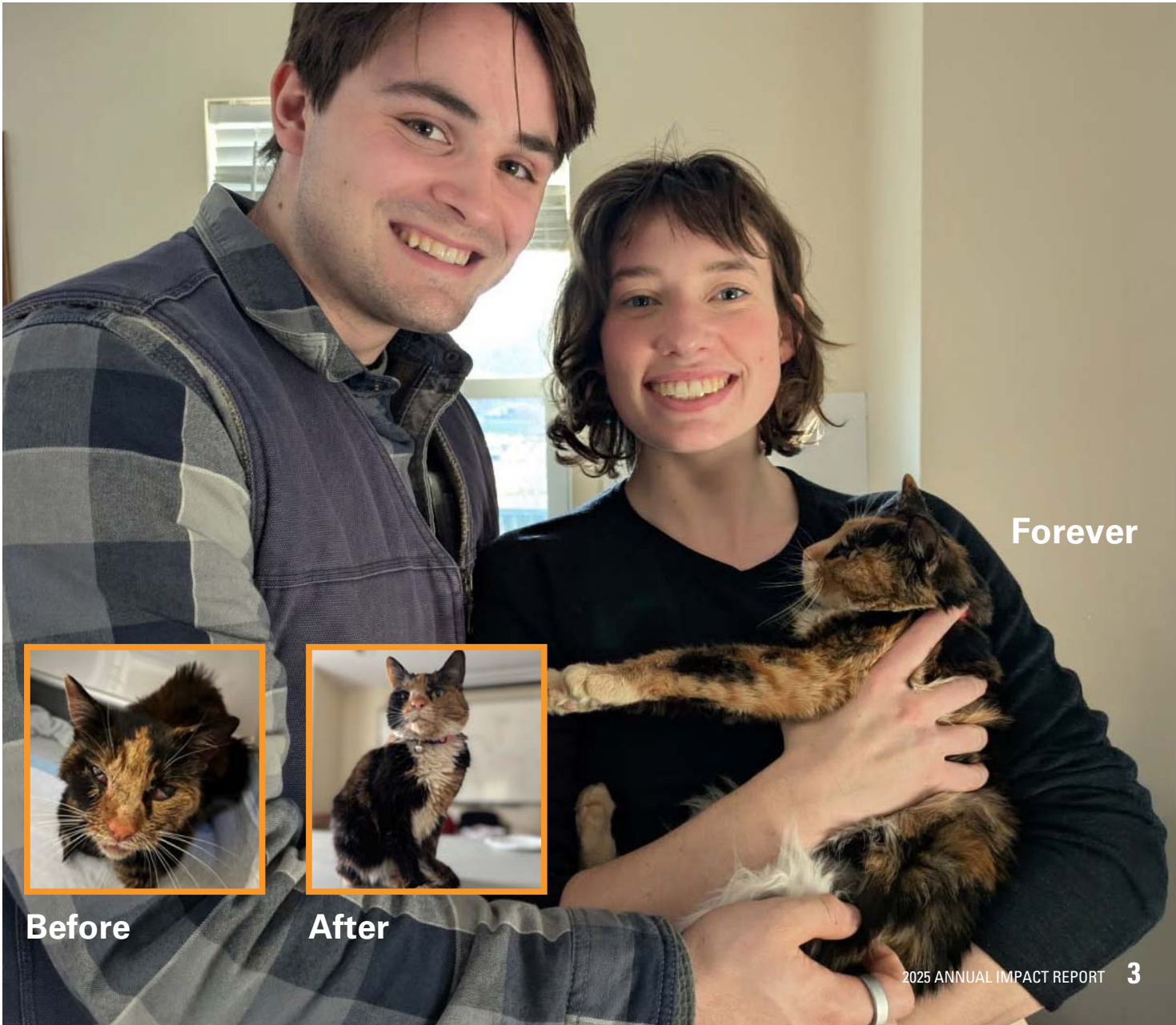
Once she was cleaned up and feeling better, Courtney showed herself to be beautiful, both inside and out. We were enamored by her friendly, affectionate personality and particularly her ability to make biscuits with all four paws at once!

Three weeks after arriving at the shelter, Courtney was adopted by Ethan and Molly, just in time for the holidays! We checked in with them recently and

learned that Courtney is completely at home. She is chatty, cuddly, and can be counted on to spend hours on the couch with them. They report that she is still a "fierce predator," pouncing on anything and everything. She has recently become fascinated with her own tail, leaping around and chasing it!

When pipes at her home burst this winter, a mattress was moved into the living room. Courtney has taken ownership of this mattress, burrowing into it and jumping on it from all over the room. She has a big personality!

Courtney's guardians say she is full of love. They scoop her up, hold her tight, and she purrs loudly in return. "She is a treasure."



BY THE NUMBERS



445

owner surrenders



676

adoptions



220

PetCORE animals enrolled



147

strays



13

Spay the Mom participants



10

Pets in Crisis



1,128

spay/neuters in our surgery suite



171

Transfers from other shelters

HOMeward BOUND'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

THE GOLDEN GALA

On May 14, 2025, Homeward Bound turned 50! We could not let such a big milestone pass by without a celebration, so two days later we hosted a gala at the Brandon Inn. The evening was marked with a delectable buffet, a “walk down memory lane” presentation, slideshow, gold-themed silent auction, music, and dancing. It was an energy-filled evening celebrating our beloved shelter and how far we have come over the past five decades.





ROOM TO GROW

November 18 was a monumental day in the life of the shelter because we became the proud owners of the 1-acre plot of land that abuts the shelter! It consists of the open space next to O'Reilly Auto Parts and up part of the hill to Middlebury Fitness. We are incredibly grateful to Rob Alberts and Sarah Raunecker for selling us the land and to long-time shelter friends, Roberta and Philip Puschel, Jeff Nelson, and Paul Mahan for the extraordinarily generous donations that made this purchase possible.

A NEW AMBASSADOR

In an effort to bring awareness to the county's bricks and mortar shelter and put a spotlight on our 50th anniversary, we asked our Shire Town to adopt a canine as Mayor for a 1-year term and they were happy to oblige.

The inaugural Middlebury Dog Mayor race produced four outstanding candidates, raised \$7,500 for the shelter, and garnered media attention from all over the country! Mayor Tela won the popular vote and was "sworn in" on June 16.



*What's not to love about Homeward Bound?
They're some of the most compassionate people
around.*

*They've been helping animal friends since 1975.
Finding loving homes and saving lives.
Whether it's dogs, cats, or bunnies, or even
a bird.*

*You give them a voice though they can't say a
word!*

*Whether lost, abused, or abandoned, or at the
end of their rope.*

*Your programs raise awareness and give
animals new hope,*

*You're like Guardian Angels looking down from
above,*

*Giving so many second chances and
unconditional love.*

*Keep up the great work providing shelter and
care,*

Especially to those for whom life wasn't fair!

Karen Almond, Proctor, VT

IMPACT STORIES

We see some of the County's most vulnerable animals here at Homeward Bound. When they come into our care, we pour our collective heart and soul into them. We are devoted to making their journey easier and your support makes it possible. Here is just a glimpse of your impact in 2025:



LOLA'S LIFE-CHANGING MOMENT

Lola was hit by a car and badly injured. She suffered a pelvic fracture, and her hips were displaced. To add insult to injury, her family abandoned her at the hospital. The hospital manager called us and asked if we could help; they would tend to her injuries if we could provide a place for her to recover (a 6-week commitment) and a new home when she was healed. If we couldn't take her, Lola would have to be euthanized.

Initially, Lola went to a Homeward Bound foster home for recovery. When she was doing better, she returned to the shelter for cage rest - no jumping, running, or playing. No fun! After being upgraded from a condo to a private room, Lola was allowed small daily walks with the goal of slowly easing her back into normal exercise without further injury. Slowly, but surely, she gained strength in her back legs with no signs of pain, and her resilience was rewarded with a loving, forever home.

WILLOW WAITS & WINS

Two-year-old Willow was surrendered to the shelter because she wasn't getting along with the other cats in the house. Her previous owner described her as playful, food motivated, and sweet. We found her to be independent, affectionate, curious, and a good deal sassy! That last trait isn't necessarily uncharacteristic of our feline friends in general, but it can be a bit off-putting to potential adopters when a cat takes a whack at them! They quickly move on and opt to adopt the sweet kitty who purrs and rolls around on the Cat Land floor, and we certainly can't blame them.

For this reason or perhaps just timing, Willow's stay became a long one. Days, weeks, and months passed with no traction towards a forever home. We promoted her to lobby cat, giving her full run of the public spaces in the hopes it would help. She provided some spirited entertainment and, just like the lobby cats before her, the additional opportunity to socialize and the added exposure paid off.

A potential adopter came through the doors and asked to meet Willow. A swipe from Willow that drew blood didn't even deter her! We held our breath as they left, praying for the success of this placement.

The next day, not 24 hours later, we received a phone call from the adopter...she awoke to Willow snuggled up beside her in bed like she belonged there! And instead of snappy scratches, Willow was affectionately nudging her new mom. Willow was home.

NEVAEH'S JOURNEY

For two weeks, we took calls from concerned citizens about a stray dog around North Ferrisburgh. It was during a hot spell, and they were worried about the well-being of this skittish girl. Our canine coordinator took the calls and provided guidance. One woman went above and beyond for the dog, documenting every sighting.

In mid-June, the dog was delivered to the shelter by the same woman who had been keeping such close tabs on her. The dog, who we named Nevaeh (heaven spelled backwards), was exhausted. She was covered in fleas and ticks, her skin looked awful, ribs were showing, and we were concerned she may be very sick.

Nevaeh slept for the better part of three days, and as she felt better her personality shone through. She was happy, wiggly, and thankfully her bloodwork confirmed she was healthy, too!

Not surprisingly, the woman who delivered Nevaeh to us was completely invested, so much so that when the stray hold was up, she said she'd like to do a trial adoption ("foster to adopt"). Her updates were the highlight of our days. Of course, our favorite was, "She's doing so well. She's a huge snuggler, snores like a freight train, and loves to tap dance. I definitely think I'm going to keep her, I really can't imagine saying goodbye!"



Willow



Lola



Nevaeh

IMPACT STORIES *CONTINUED*



PEGGY, OH CATHERINE, NOW KATIE FOR SHORT!

Over the winter, an adorable cat began wandering amongst the horses with what looked like a peg leg at a farm in Addison. The cat had appeared out of nowhere and made herself at home. They fed her and named her "Peggy," but didn't have any long-term plans for her.

Peggy was affectionate, friendly, and always happy to be eating! No one came to claim her, so when the weather turned colder, the barn owner brought her to Homeward Bound.

Peggy was examined by our veterinarian who felt the issue with her paw was most likely a congenital deformity. She was also checked for a microchip ... Lo and beyond, she had been previously adopted from Homeward Bound and her name was actually Catherine! Sadly, when we contacted the owner, we learned that Catherine had run away from home and was no longer wanted.

The really good news is that in no time at all, Catherine was adopted by a lovely woman whose name was, quite ironically, Margaret! After a short time we heard from her, "My Catherine, we call her Katie for short, she is the love of our lives, my love, my heart, what a little doll she is! She has fit into our lives like she's always been here. I can't imagine why her previous owners did not want her back! Their loss."



THE MOUNTAIN KITTENS



Denali, Kilimanjaro, and Everest are not just high mountain peaks. At Homeward Bound, they were also a trio of amazingly resilient and fortunate kittens.

The story begins when a lady we were working with through our Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program discovered three baby kittens at a trap site. They were only a few days old, still sporting dried umbilical cords. Two mother cats were located on site, but sadly neither of them wanted anything to do with the kittens.

Our lead TNR volunteer picked up the kittens and delivered them to Homeward Bound. They were

freezing cold, moving very little, and not showing a lot of life. It was a grim situation, but we felt they deserved a chance.

We used our Bair Hugger (a medical device that uses forced-air warming to prevent and treat hypothermia in humans and animals) as well as a heated blanket to warm them slowly. We checked their temperatures regularly and, after two hours, they were where they needed to be. At that time, it was safe to feed them. Many orphaned kittens don't want to eat, but these three showed a desire and we knew at that point they were fighters!

The kittens went home with our vet tech the next two nights, where they were bottle fed every 2-3 hours and housed in the shelter's incubator. They reportedly "guzzled" their bottles (made with kitten milk replacer)!

This is where the story gets really good! On day two, a cat at the shelter named Tweety, who had recently weaned her kittens (Tom & Jerry), heard the mountain kittens crying and responded. We put the kittens with Tweety and she immediately started mothering them. She still had milk available and didn't think twice about caring for the mountain kittens as if they were her own!

MAGGIE MELTED HEARTS



Maggie joined us at the shelter in late February. Initially scared and unsure of everything and everyone, she still managed to thrive in the shelter setting, greeting us with the most beautiful smile every morning. She truly melted our hearts.

Weeks passed. Maggie spent her days snuggling up to volunteers and being treated to sleepovers in one of our amazing foster homes where she enjoyed being a couch potato and sleeping peacefully through the night.

She played contentedly with her toys and could keep herself quite entertained with them. Meanwhile, Homeward Bound staff and volunteers were completely baffled that this sweet girl hadn't been adopted...and then one day, the person we were all waiting for finally came along! We are certain they will enjoy many years of cuddles and companionship.

Katie



**Denali, Kilimanjaro,
and Everest**



Maggie

SPECIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

SHELTER MEDICAL NEEDS:

When animals come into our care, sometimes they require a level of medical attention that cannot be provided on site. These funds will enable us to have their needs met at local animal hospitals or emergency care.

COMMUNITY MEDICAL NEEDS:

As a surrender prevention initiative, these funds would assist pet owners in the community who are facing financial hardship by providing wellness and sick animal care. The animals benefiting from this will likely present themselves through our PetCORE program or at the time of surrender. The goal of this fund is to save lives, bridge the financial gap, and preserve the human-animal bond.

BUILDING RENOVATION AND EXPANSION:

We are in the early stage of a building project that will be transformative for the shelter as we prepare for the organization's next 50 years. In the coming months we will have architectural renderings to share and anticipate that these plans will include a new dog barn space, enhanced medical suite, revamped parking lot, and possibly some renovations to the existing structure.

If you would be interested in supporting the shelter in one of these ways, please contact Development Director Hannah Manley, at 802-388-1100 ext. 101 or email development@homewardboundanimals.org. Thank you!



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Homeward Bound
Addison County's Humane Society



Homeward Bound, Addison County's Humane Society

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Adoption Center open Tuesday-Saturday, 11:00am-3:30pm.
Dogs meet and greets by appointment only.

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Graphic Design:

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