LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

To Our Wonderful Supporters,

The fall Pawpourri is AWLA’s annual fiscal year report and also serves as the historical record for our organization. When we celebrated AWLA’s 75th anniversary last year, staff combed through reports dating back to the late 1940s and delighted in the stories of a bygone era.

Which is to say... we know this year will mark a critical chapter in our organization’s history and the items in this report will indelibly shape future AWLA accounts and retrospectives. The record will show that our animal care staff risked their health to come to the shelter and care for the animals; the animal control team, our first responders, took the constantly-evolving pandemic in stride and continued to provide exemplary service to Arlington County residents; the community support department worked tirelessly to support pet owners with provisions and services for their animals; and many, many more accounts of AWLA staff who rose to this unprecedented challenge.

And, most importantly, you were here with us through it all. When the pandemic struck, you stepped up to foster animals and clear our shelter. When we had to postpone our annual Walk for the Animals – and then subsequently cancel in-person activities – you graciously donated funds to allow us to continue our life-saving work. And when residents needed a helping hand, you provided critical supplies to keep our pet pantry fully stocked.

When the book is finally closed on this pandemic, history will show a fearless group of AWLA staff, volunteers, and supporters who rallied together in the face of a global pandemic in order to save lives and help ease the suffering of a community. Your support made it all possible – thank you for everything you have done, and continue to do, for the animals and people in this place we call Home.

Sam Wolbert, President & CEO

T	HE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS BEEN LIFE-CHANGING FOR EVERYONE, including staff and animals at AWLA. Overnight, we had to assess and re-evaluate the best course of action for our human and pet populations and work together, across departments, to implement that plan. Even then, due to the rapidly-evolving nature of the pandemic, we had to adjust, and readjust our policies and procedures to accommodate the latest best practices. Throughout it all, our staff and community demonstrated compassion, resilience and strength.

Animal Control staff not only remained available 24/7, they expanded their outreach, knowing that Covid was affecting many families in our community. Our Community Programs team streamlined processes, created online forms that can be accessed from anywhere, and made our always-popular kid’s summer camps virtual. They also transformed our Rabies & Microchip Clinic from walk-in to drive-in, broadened the scope of our Safekeeping Program, and expanded our Pet Pantry to include delivery service.

AWLA Behavior staff continued to work with shelter pets and increased the number of people and pets they were able to help by offering behavior and training classes online as well as private lessons via Zoom. After a temporary pause, our Adoptions team shifted from in-person to virtual animal-human meet-and-greets and socially-distanced, hands-free adoptions. This change brought with it a steep learning curve, but our Adoptions staff prevailed and we all breathed a collective sigh of relief when we were able to resume our life-saving work of finding homes for homeless animals. With no surgeries to perform, they tended their personalities so much more. “The pandemic has given me a chance to work with our animals one-on-one, so we can hang out with them, do more enrichment with them, and get to know their personalities so much more.”

- Kiran

Animal Care Tech Kiran and Tilda

When adoptions were paused, so too was our shelter veterinary team. With no surgeries to perform, they tended to the animals at the shelter, developed informational tools for staff and began providing telemedicine consultations online. As soon as they could, they were back in their scrubs performing surgery.

Last but not least, our Animal Care Technicians (ACTs) remained on duty, working at the shelter every day throughout the stay-at-home orders. They are the glue that holds the shelter together. They feed, medicate, and care for shelter pets, day in and day out. Now that more of our animals are awaiting adoption in foster homes, ACTs are able to spend more time with the animals at the shelter and expand their skill sets with cross-training opportunities with other departments in the shelter, including Adoptions, Behavior, and Communications.

The silver lining of the pandemic has been the ability to quickly transform previous wishlist items into a reality. All these changes have improved life for pets and people, and the world of animal welfare is the better for it.
SHELTERING IN THE TIME OF COVID

The Animal Care team has a wide range of responsibilities that include daily animal care, assisting the Adoptions and the Foster teams, and maintaining our facility. There is no job that they can’t or won’t do. I am very proud of my team for continuing to work so hard during such a difficult time, making sure our animals have everything they need to be safe and well cared for.

- Jose

I am so proud of how quickly we adapted at the beginning of the pandemic, and it’s been amazing to see how much our community stepped up to help!

- Erin

With the exception of all of us wearing masks, my team and our work hasn’t changed very much - things have for the most part been business as usual! It was a little bit tough to shift certain things to a more virtual set-up, but animals still need care and so we are here to make sure they receive the care they need!!

- Dr Galati

“I have found working during quarantine to be somewhat challenging, since I have a three-year-old at home. But it’s wonderful to see so many of our animals in foster homes and out of the kennels. Knowing they are in homes getting the constant TLC they deserve makes me very, very happy.”

- Christina

The quiet lets me focus on my work.

- Gilbert

“We’ve gotten so many new fosters that want to come and help. We’ve been keeping 250 kittens in foster homes at any given time. We’ve been able to save more kittens than ever because there are so many people willing to welcome them into their homes.”

- Vanessa

“Working during quarantine has given me a greater appreciation for how much I enjoy my work and my coworkers. Not being able to interact on a daily basis has been tough, but it makes the time at the shelter even more meaningful to me.”

- Kristin

“My favorite part of quarantine has been seeing so many animals go to foster, and seeing the shelter so empty!”

- Lauryn

“I’m very proud of my team’s resilience and their ability to accept and roll with changes as abruptly as they happened, both with CDC guidelines and our own shelter policies.”

- Charnita

“When we had fewer volunteers and staff in the building, it was hard on the animals - they were used to people being around all the time. But, so many animals went to foster that I’ve really been able to spend a ton of personal time with the ones who are still here, which is great.”

- Daniel

“Consider myself very lucky that I was able to continue to come into the shelter, instead of working from home. So many of my family and friends have been stuck at home, but I get to come in (probably saving my sanity) to spend time with our animals and my coworkers.”

- Alexandra

“The extra attention to cleaning protocols is a great thing (although COVID isn’t), because we have to be extra thoughtful, which only makes work better and safer for us and the animals!!”

- Susan

“Our Team Treated 1,311 Medical Conditions, Ranging from Common Illnesses Like Upper Respiratory Infections to More Complicated Conditions Like Hepatic Lipidosis.

Our Vet Team Performed 1,564 Surgeries, from Neuters to Perineal Urethrostomies.

Our Team Cared for a Total of 3,577 Animals.
When the coronavirus pandemic first hit, my colleagues and I worried how it would affect the animals in our care. When it dawned on us that life as we knew it would not resume anytime soon, we knew we had to find ways to adapt in order to continue to serve the people and animals in our community.

One of the ways we adapted was by introducing virtual adoptions. We weren’t sure how the public would respond to this new process, since meeting an animal on a Zoom call is a far cry from spending time with them in person. But it worked! Though it hasn’t been without its challenges, the virtual adoption process enabled us to safely adopt out animals even during the height of the pandemic. With many of our animals in foster homes, it took some sharp scheduling skills to coordinate online meetings between adopters, fosters, pets, and AWLA adoptions counselors. However, the matchmaking was easier. Our adoptable animals were relaxed and their true personalities were on full display in their foster homes.

We have now reopened for in-person adoptions on a limited basis but, given the success of the virtual process and the greater number of animals in foster homes, virtual adoptions are here to stay!

The joy, excitement, and appreciation we witnessed as we accompanied people on their adoption journey made every long day, technological challenge, and virtual obstacle worth it. Now more homeless animals have beds of their own, people who were feeling alone have found companionship, and the world of animal sheltering and adoption has been reimagined - for the better.

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As the pandemic approached our country, I was still reeling from the sudden death of my dog back in November. I could have convinced myself for months or years that I was ill-prepared to adopt again. When I look at my two cats today, I think about what I would have missed out on if I listened to that fear and apprehension. Knowing that I was going to be stuck at home indefinitely was what pushed me to adopt my little Juniper and Clover (formerly Rita and Joy) in April. They were eight weeks old when I picked them up and for over 100 days, I was home with them full time. I watched as they tripled in size, both in weight and personality! They are the most carefree, sweet, and adventurous girls! What originally felt like terrifying isolation transformed into the opportunity to watch these two grow up. It turned out that not only was I prepared to adopt again, but my heart was fuller than I knew was possible. I also gained the unexpected gift of a new, kind-hearted and generous network. I had the pleasure of virtually meeting several ‘foster moms’ from the AWLA Kitten College as I went through the process. I was so inspired not just by the love and compassion they share with their foster kittens, but by the support they offered me - exploring uncharted territory as a new cat mom.

If this unprecedented chapter in our history has taught me anything, it has been to slow down in some ways, but to hurry up in others. Life is short, and depriving ourselves of happiness even for one day is a true loss. In addition to the healing, the joy, the laughs, and the lessons that pet ownership has woven into this pandemic way of life, all of that love I have for animals finally had somewhere to go again. For me, that was everything.”

- Kimberly

“Cupid has been doing exceptionally well since we brought him home in March. After hiding in our bedroom for much of the first day, it was such a delight to see his little, orange, stitched-up head pop out of a clothing rack later that night. My husband was so worried about Cupid sleeping by himself in our second bedroom that he slept with Cupid for not one night, not two nights, but the entire first week we had him. Quarantine hit, and days turned into weeks as we watched Cupid heal and slowly grow back his fur. During these months at home, we’ve had all the time in the world to play with him (which we are pretty sure he could do all day). His favorite toys are ones that fly like birds that he can prey, hunt and pounce on. He’s very social and extremely vocal. He is constantly chattering, cooing or squeaking at you to play with him. He loves to eat and thinks any food is his for the taking whether it’s on the counter, in a box, in the fridge (he loves to peer inside when we open the door) or on your plate. He is the cutest little orange cat and has healed so incredibly well.”

- Lauryn

“Rooster came home to us on a stormy evening, and with the thunderstorm and rain, Rooster was a little afraid of getting into the car. The minute we got home however, he stopped being anxious. He was so comfortable and “at home” – and he has been since! He is a sweetheart and such a good boy. He cuddles up right next to us, and is a lovable goofball at all times. Together, we have traveled to sunflower fields and explored several rainy paths. We have spent lazy Sundays binge-watching Netflix and also worked through uber-productive weekdays together. We have chased many unattainable squirrels and stopped to smell dozens of flowers. Rooster is our partner in almost everything we do, and we wouldn’t have it any other way. This pandemic has been difficult for everyone, but Rooster helps make our lives happier and wholesome, and brings out the best in us. He truly is the love of our lives!”

- Tamoghna and Sreyoshi

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- Kimberly
Founded 75 years ago by a small group of volunteers, AWLA continues to be supported by hundreds of volunteers who share their time and talents to ensure that AWLA achieves its mission of improving the lives of animals and people by providing resources, care, and protection. We want to thank each and every one of our dedicated volunteers for all that they do - without them, our work would not be possible.

A day at AWLA without volunteers is like a day without sun. That is how we felt during the pandemic when AWLA’s wonderful volunteers were asked to stay safe at home. Thankfully, after many grey days, we were able to slowly welcome our volunteers back to the shelter, some to familiar roles, and others to new opportunities.

One of these new roles was with our Veterinary Team, who needed an extra set of hands to assist with surgery. We discovered that volunteer Sally Reinholdt, one of our regular Cat Room Assistants, and a recently retired nurse, was uniquely qualified to help. She told us, “I never imagined I’d have an opportunity to use my years of experience in this way, post-retirement. I’m having a great time helping out with the vet team.”

A WLA’s mission is not only to find homes for adoptable animals, but to help owned pets remain at home - safe, happy, and healthy - with their people.

Sometimes all it takes is a little food, a leash, a collar, or a Kong to help a family keep their pet. Maybe times are tight or maybe a bored dog is barking too much - whatever the reason - AWLA’s Pet Supply Pantry is a resource for our community.

Each year, the Pet Supply Pantry helps hundreds of pet owners in Arlington. Over the past few months alone we provided 17,000 pounds of dry pet food to local families. We have also automated the process so that pet owners don’t have to visit the shelter in order to benefit from the Pantry. Now patrons can submit an online request for supplies and they will be delivered directly to their homes either by Amazon or our partner, Dogma Dog Bakery.

If you’d like to support AWLA’s Pet Supply Pantry, become a Pet Pantry Partner and collect supplies or funds to keep this valuable community resource stocked and ready for business!

We anticipate the need for our Pet Pantry to increase in the fall and winter months as the economic impact of the pandemic continues to affect our community. Find out how you can help support the Pet Pantry by visiting www.awla.org!

Office Associate Erin helps a local family with our Pet Pantry

by Ashley Hay, Director of Community Support
In July 2017, thanks to the generosity of AWLA donor and volunteer Willa Lutz, AWLA’s Kitten College began its mission to save neonatal kittens - the most fragile of homeless animals. Before the creation of the Kitten College, AWLA had about 30 kitten foster families and took in just 92 kittens annually - now, we have more than 250 foster families and saved 1,487 kittens last year alone! Our foster families’ love and commitment to caring for kittens inspires us every day, and the Kitten College continues to expand.

One of the exciting ways that the Kitten College grew this year was with the establishment of six satellite campuses. Since neonatal kittens are so fragile and need to be fed every few hours, many shelters are forced to humanely euthanize them by the end of the day if a rescue or foster cannot be found. That’s where we come in. A call goes out, our transport volunteers spring to action, and the kittens come to AWLA. We are able to do this because in Arlington we are lucky to have well-established spay/neuter and community cat programs, which keep the cat population in check. Not all shelters are so lucky. The goal of the satellite Kitten College campuses is to empower our partner-shelters to keep and care for kittens born in their communities by providing resources, training, and guidance. The outcome? Together we are able to save even more kittens who, in addition to being the most vulnerable shelter animals, are also the most adoptable if they can survive the critical first weeks of life.

Our current satellite campuses are:
- Middleburg Humane Foundation
- Prince Georges County Animal Shelter
- Anne Arundel County Animal Shelter
- No More Chasin’ Tails in Newport News, VA
- Animal Welfare League of Alexandria
- SPCA of Winchester, Frederick, and Clarke Counties

Our hope is that this movement will continue to grow, saving kittens across the country.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the Kitten College!
In mid-March, when stay-at-home orders were issued in Arlington, AWLA’s Animal Control team was prepared. We had PPE and knew how to use it, so we were able to shift gears and maintain our fast response times when answering the public’s calls for service.

One of my favorite stories of the past few months is that of Bongo the cat. On the way home to Colorado, Bongo and his person had a layover at Reagan National Airport and Bongo escaped his carrier and disappeared. Animal Control got the call and worked with airport security to locate the missing cat, but to no avail. Finally, after many trips (in full PPE!) to set traps and provide food, the Animal Control team was able to catch Bongo weeks after he had escaped. Though by then the pandemic was full blown, Bongo’s owner braved air travel to retrieve her lost family member.

I had the privilege of reuniting Bongo with his person and I will always remember the sight of his owner bounding down the terminal with arms wide open to embrace him. This time, I accompanied Bongo and his owner through security and made sure that the mischievous cat made his plane. In the midst of all the madness of the past few months, it’s cases like Bongo that keep us motivated, focused, and remind us just how important our role is to the community.

By Chief Jennifer Touissant

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ANIMAL CONTROL

FINANCIAL REPORT

OPERATIONS BUDGET

$3,535,609.60

MANAGEMENT/ GENERAL: $47,425.43 Administration expenses, etc.

FUNDRAISING EXPENSES: $493,497.60 Special events, online appeals, software, etc.

ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES: $549,292.10 Equipment & vehicle maintenance, officer training, etc.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH/ PROGRAMS: $646,452.72 In-house veterinary services, low-cost veterinary assistance to the public, adoption services, volunteer management, etc.

SHELTER OPERATIONS: $1,798,941.75 Medication & medical care, vaccines, food, foster supplies, etc.

INCOME

$3,395,377.37

CONTRIBUTIONS

$1,350,332.39 General donations, bequests, major gifts

ARLINGTON COUNTY

$1,419,517.00 Basic sheltering and animal control

WORKPLACE GIVING

$100,264.75

PROGRAMS

$449,262.90 Adoptions and community programs

EVENTS

$76,000.33

THANK YOU

If you have already named the Animal Welfare League of Arlington in your will or trust, or you intend to, please let us know your plans. We’d like to thank you for helping to create a world where all companion animals find compassionate and permanent homes.

Kat Williams
kwilliams@awla.org
Tel: (703) 931-9241 x220

3,318 TOTAL NUMBER OF ANIMAL CONTROL CASES INCLUDING:

167 CRUELTY/NEGLECT CASES

1,762 WILDLIFE CASES

434 STRAY ANIMAL CASES

639 BITE INVESTIGATION CASES

LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY

Making a gift to the Animal Welfare League of Arlington through a will or revocable living trust is a simple and flexible way to improve the lives of animals for years to come.

BENEFITS

• Your gift costs you nothing now and you retain control of your assets during your lifetime.
• You can change your mind or modify your gift if circumstances change.
• Your gift can remain anonymous if you choose.
• Your gift may provide tax savings or help reduce the tax burden for your heirs.
• You can leave a gift in honor or memory of someone who inspired your love of animals.
• You will be remembered as someone whose legacy included protecting the lives of animals.

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by Kat Williams, Director of Development

One of the many ways that donors support the Animal Welfare League of Arlington is with charitable bequests. Sometimes these gifts are made in memory of a person or a pet and other times donors provide lasting support for a cause that is dear to them.

Such was the case this year when Mrs. Gladys G. Shulaw bequeathed a donation to AWLA for the adoption, care, and keeping of cats. The bequest arrived with a note from her friend, Dr. Karin Pettit, and a photo of Mrs. Shulaw with her beloved cat, Brownie, whom she adopted from AWLA.

Dr. Pettit said that Mrs. Shulaw was fond of saying that when she brought Brownie home, he walked around the house and decided he would stay. Mrs. Shulaw and her husband moved to Arlington in the 1960s where she lived here until her death in November 2019 at the age of 101.

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To see a list of all donors, please visit www.awla.org/donate
WORKPLACE GIVING

One of the many important ways that donors support the League is through workplace giving programs. These donations comprise a large portion of AWLA's annual fundraising income and enable the League to provide the excellent care, programs and services for animals in our community and the people who love them.

When designating your charity of choice, please choose AWLA.

EIN: 54-0603502
Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) #90065
United Way (UW) #8804
Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC) #8068

LEAGUE HOURS

Visiting:
Mon, Wed, Thur, Fri - Noon - 7 pm
Tuesday - Closed
Sat - Sun - Noon - 4 pm
Emergencies: 24-hours a day

Contact us: (703) 931-9241