

WHATCOM HUMANE SOCIETY
PAW PRINT

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2026

KINDNESS ♥ COMPASSION ♥ RESPECT

Welcoming a New Member to the Pack

A MESSAGE FROM THE WHS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

I hope that you're enjoying the summer season, which is always a bustling time at the Whatcom Humane Society.

I've been asked more times than I can recall over the years how I and other WHS staff and volunteers decide which pets to adopt. With thousands of domestic animals arriving at our doors each year, not a day goes by that I don't hear, "I could never work or volunteer there; I would bring them all home." My truthful reply is always, "You learn quickly to know your limitations." And yes, most of our staff and volunteers share their homes with a variety of animals, big and small. My husband and I currently share our household with several spoiled former shelter animals, including four cats ranging from 3- to 19-years-old, four chickens, a plus-sized senior corgi named Luna, and our newest addition, Leon, a 5-year-old pitbull who joined our household last fall. Our limitations: There is NO MORE room on the bed!

After the loss of my beloved 15-year-old dog Zane last year, I knew that our household would need to start the search for another dog to join our pack. A dog that could be a friend and protector to Luna; a dog that could get along with four sassy, opinionated cats (who adored Zane, and he adored them!); and a dog that would, for the most part, leave the chickens who free range on our property most days—and then are secured in a luxury coop that cost more than my car at night!—alone.

My heart was still very much grieving the loss of Zane, and I was not in a big hurry to add another dog to the house. I Continued on pg. 4

Whatcom Humane Society
CARING FOR ANIMALS SINCE 1902

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STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

WHS believes that all animals, as sentient beings, have value beyond economic measurements and are entitled to legal, moral, and ethical consideration and protection.

OUR MISSION

WHS advocates for animals; educates the community to promote humane treatment and respect for animals; and provides for abandoned, injured, abused, or neglected animals.

OUR VISION

A community in which all animals are treated with kindness, respect, and compassion.

SHELTER LOCATION

2172 Division Street
Bellingham, WA 98226
Phone: 360-733-2080
Fax: 360-733-4746

SHELTER SERVICES

360-733-2080 ext. 0
Tuesday-Sunday, 11:00-6:00
Adoption Counsels Stop at 5:00
Closed Mondays & Major Holidays

ANIMAL CONTROL DISPATCH

360-733-2080 ext. 3017
Tuesday-Sunday, 10:00-6:00
Monday: Please Call 911
for Emergency Dispatch

FARM FACILITY

By Appointment Only

WILDLIFE REHAB CENTER

Seven Days a Week, 9:00-5:00
Phone: 360-966-8845
Not Open to the Public;
Please Call for Assistance.

WHS THRIFT SHOP

1534B Birchwood Ave
Bellingham, WA 98225
Phone: 360-543-6792
Shopping Hours:
Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00-5:00
Donation Drop-off:
Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00-4:00

Whatcom Humane Society
CARING FOR ANIMALS SINCE 1902

25TH ANNIVERSARY → 9/13/26

11am-3pm
WHS Shelter Field
2172 Division St

Dog Days of Summer

Pet-related Vendors & Exhibitions

Canine Games & Contests

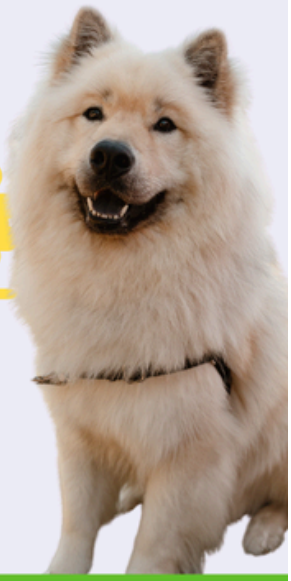
Animal Caricaturist

Vegan & Vegetarian Food Trucks

Pup Cups & Paws For A Beer Garden



FREE ALL-AGES COMMUNITY FESTIVAL!



SCAN ME

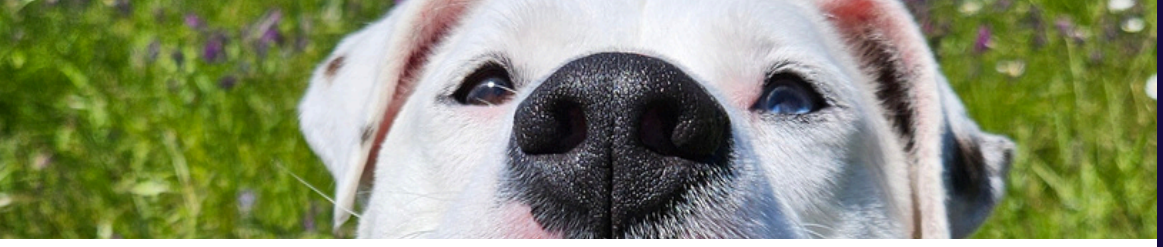
A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO OUR 2026 DOG DAYS OF SUMMER FESTIVAL SPONSORS:
Animal Emergency Care, Dewey Griffin Subaru, Industrial Credit Union, Walton Law, K&S Injury Advocates, North Coast Credit Union, Fairhaven Veterinary Hospital, Sierra Belleville State Farm Agency, Boundary Bay Veterinary Specialty Hospital, KAFE 104.1 FM, Cascadia Daily News

Vendor Spots & Sponsorships Still Available!



Interested in being a vendor at the 2026 Dog Days of Summer Festival? Pawsome! Please review the 2026 vendor requirements and application using the QR code above & submit your completed form.

If you are interested in festival sponsorship, please reach out to Development Manager Paige España at development@whatcomhumane.org.



THE WHATCOM HUMANE SOCIETY

PUP CUP TRUCK

COME HAVE A PUP CUP - ON US!

WHS has a new outreach vehicle we will take to parks, community events, parades, festivals, breweries & more to promote kind and responsible dog ownership, the importance of licensing your pets, and to reward good dogs (and naughty ones too!) with a **free pup cup!**

Visit our events page at whatcomhumane.org to find where our Pup Cup Truck will be making its appearance next! WOOF!



WHS COMMUNITY PET FOOD BANK



Our pet food bank provides for homed animals in need and operates entirely by donation. We accept almost all kinds of pet food, even open bags. We can't take prescription diets, expired food, or food not in its original bag. Donations can be dropped off at our Division Street shelter Tues-Sun, 11am-6pm. You can also purchase items from our Chewy and Amazon wish lists at whatcomhumane.org/donate

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Scott Rice, *Secretary*
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Maya Hartford, Jane Talbot
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Animal Care Supervisor
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Sarah Hansen, *Vet Assistant*

THRIFT SHOP

Dana Browne, *Manager*
Jo Williams







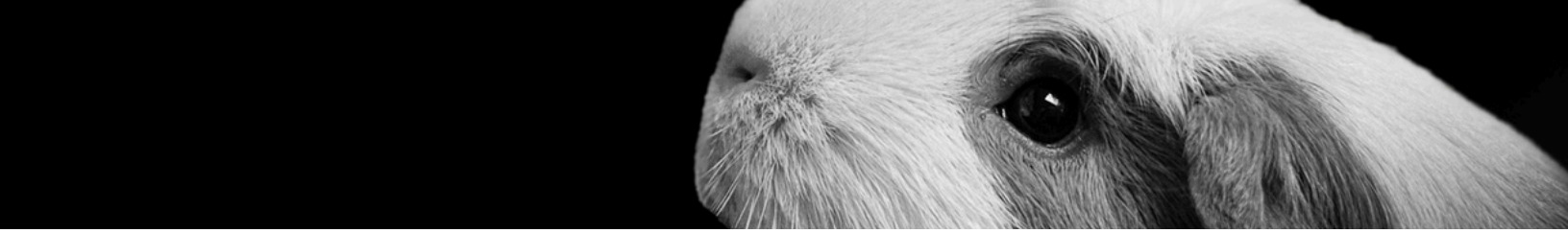
Letter from ED, continued from pg. 1 | But of course, there were so many amazing dogs coming in and out of the shelter, I knew it would not be long before a dog "picked me." In addition to the WHS shelter dogs, my social media feed was FULL of videos and stories of wonderful puppies and adult dogs being cared for at local rescues and neighboring shelters.

One night while "doomscrolling", I came across a post from my hometown shelter in Olympia. Their animal control officers had found an emaciated dog in a park (a park that I spent a lot of time in as a kid). The dog weighed only 19 lbs. and was covered in sores and deep cuts, unable to stand, and was missing large patches of fur. He had clearly suffered unimaginable neglect and abuse and most likely was dumped and left to die. The post was asking for community assistance to obtain any information that could help identify the person or people responsible for this horrible situation. I watched the video several times, and it brought me back to the day in 2010 when Whatcom Humane Society animal control officers had rescued Zane from a horrific situation and brought him to WHS for life-saving care. Knowing my colleagues at Joint Animal Services in Olympia, I had full confidence that they would provide the best care possible for this dog.

I thought about that dog off and on over the next few days, and then as fate would have it, I attended an animal welfare conference in Yakima where those very same Joint Animal Services colleagues were also in attendance. I inquired about the dog (named Littlefoot, due to his resemblance to the popular cartoon dinosaur) and the status of the case—and the more info I learned, well, I was hooked. This dog needed a home that had experience with severely abused animals: Check! Over the next several weeks, I stayed in communication with Joint Animal Services, who provided updates on Littlefoot and his recovery. He was being fostered in a home with another dog and cats: Another check! Once cleared by the shelter veterinarian, I made arrangements to go pick him up and transfer care to WHS.

When I arrived, I found a sad, skinny, intact male pitbull who seemed so small and frail. I loaded him into a crate in the back of my car and off we went for the 3+ hour drive back to Whatcom County. Needless to say, we did some serious bonded during those 3 hours…

Fast forward a few long months: Leon, as he is now known, has gained almost 35 lbs. He has been neutered (thank goodness!), is healthy, goes to doggie daycare, just graduated from obedience training (with the suggestion that he would benefit from a repeat class), and his best friend in the house is Rerun, our 19-year-old cat. **I Continued on pg. 5**



Letter from ED, continued from pg. 4 | He is fiercely protective of his humans, loves his corgi sister (she thinks he is an enormous DORK!), loves to play with plushy toys, and mostly leaves the chickens alone. He regularly poops on the back porch, has terrible separation anxiety, and feels the need to be held like a baby. So, yep, he is perfect!

I'm grateful to my colleagues at Joint Animal Services for saving Leon. Most likely, the person or people responsible for harming him will never be found. But much like Zane, Leon's story and his life will inspire and motivate me daily in my work and ongoing efforts to help animals in our community and region. I will continue to fight the good fight for animals—big and small; domestic, farm, and wild—and remain steadfast in my commitment to WHS and our open-admission shelter philosophy, where no animal is turned away and all animals are treated as sentient beings and provided with kindness, care, respect, advocacy, and protection.

Here at WHS, we have a busy summer ahead, with a lot going on at our shelters and in the community. I hope you will find time to attend an upcoming outreach event (where you might get the chance to visit our super cool new pup cup truck!), open your heart and home to a new companion animal, join our volunteer team, shop at and/or donate to our thrift store, become a monthly supporter, or just stop by to say hi! Leon and Luna are regular "helpers" in my office and would love to meet you.

On behalf of the domestic, farm, and wild animals in our community, thank you for continuing to provide us with the resources to remain ready to respond to animals in need.

With gratitude and appreciation,



Laura Clark, Executive Director



Whatcom Humane Society
CARING FOR ANIMALS SINCE 1902

LICENSED TO explore.

And your pet license can do so much more! Get your Whatcom Humane Society pet license today at
whatcomhumane.docupet.com

DocuPet®
A safe and happy home for every pet

WHS has partnered with DocuPet to provide an enhanced pet licensing experience for residents. When you register your pet with WHS, you will receive a unique license tag to attach to their collar. Learn more at:
whatcomhumane.org/services





A Pawjama Party Like None Other

On Saturday, April 18, Whatcom Humane Society participated in our first-ever Shelter Slumber Pawty, a 24-hour event hosted by Project Bella Foundation and comprising 98 different animal welfare organizations from across the US and beyond raising awareness and lifesaving funds to support animals and their communities.

The pawty at WHS featured over 20 participants and a whirlwind of activities, including festive decorations to highlight our adoptable animals, canine playgroups and enrichment, foster kitten snuggles, treats for all of the animals made by our youth-based Humane Heroes Club, oats with the goats at our farm, listening to coyote howls while camping at our wildlife center, and so much more.

Globally, the event raised over $1.6 million for animals in need, and we are so grateful to our participants and our community for helping us reach 3rd place in total funds raised per organization at over $60,000 raised!

Below is a reflection on the event from one of our participants and WHS Thrift Shop staff member, Jo Williams:

We did it! All of the other participants and I survived 24 hours living side-by-side with the animals at the WHS shelter as part of the nationwide Slumber Pawty to raise awareness of what daily life is like for shelter animals. I was paired with two wild and NOT potty-trained puppies, so my reflection is limited to the dog side of the building. Here are a few things I learned along the way:

1) The WHS staff are dedicated, caring, hardworking, and kind people. They never sit, and they accept being covered in dirt, drool, pee, poop, and treat crumbs for their entire shift.

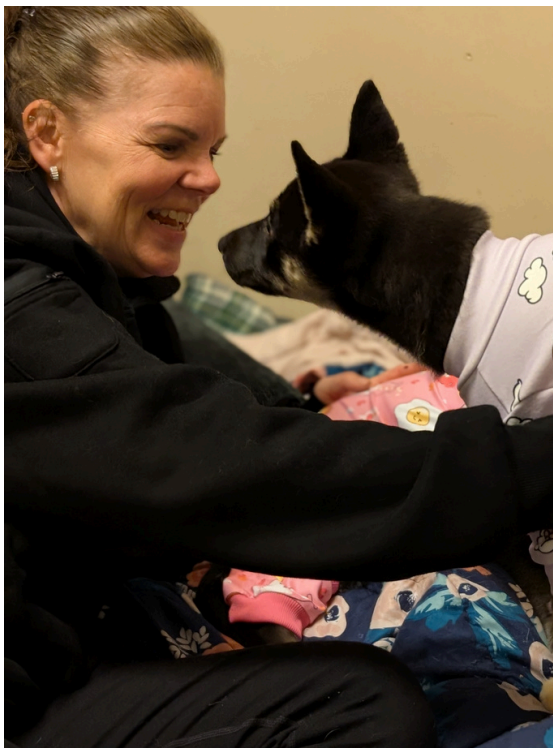
2) The dogs are confined to indoor/outdoor kennels for most of the day, but the dedicated volunteers who come in to take each one out for walks around the 9-acre property work just as hard as the staff. Each dog is given a walk (or two) each day, and some participate in playgroups with other dogs. *Volunteers are the key to any shelter!*

3) The shelter was open to the public during the daytime hours of the Slumber Pawty, and while I would like to say everyone entered the kennels in a calm, respectful manner, I can't say that was the case. There were many people who came in yelling (actively dancing in front of the glass kennel doors shouting "what up, boy?!"), making direct eye contact, and tapping the glass, all of which stresses the pups out more than they already are. We need calm bodies.

| Continued on pg. 7



Snuggle time for volunteer Sofia & Opal.



Staff member Jo enjoyed many puppy kisses from Belle and Gipley.



Volunteer Phil had a sleepover with the kittens!

Shelter Slumber Pawty, continued from pg. 6 |

4) The dogs know the routine. While I thought the kennels would come alive once the staff ended their shift (think *Toy Story* when the humans leave and the toys party), they all settled in for a night of quiet around 6:30pm. There was minimal barking or movement until 6am when the dogs heard the first staff members come on shift to start making their breakfast.

5) Each pup is given an extensive behavioral evaluation, and potential adopters must meet the necessary criteria based on the pup's needs, not the potential adopters wants. Some pups have experienced extreme trauma, and even though they are so cute and you want to adopt them, maybe you can't because the pup is scared of men or their prey drive is too high for them to live with cats, or chickens, or even kids. Meeting the best needs of the pups is the number one concern for WHS, not the best needs for adopters—and that can be a difficult thing for some people to accept.

6) While I work more on the financial side of WHS—raising money by helping to manage our Thrift Shop—now that I've seen firsthand the day-to-day life of our shelter animals, it makes me want to go back to the shop and work even harder to raise funds! I can't even begin to describe the amount of money it takes to run a shelter that doesn't turn any animal away. From food to pet/office/laundry supplies to utilities to vet bills to trainers for behavior assessments and training, and much more—we need the cash to make it happen!

A huge THANK YOU to those of you who donated to my personal page during this fundraiser. Both WHS and I truly appreciate it, and I am honored to work for such an important nonprofit organization that our community really, really needs. I'm also grateful to be a part of a community who loves and adores animals as much as I do.



Wildlife Center Supervisor Anna camped out at the facility, sleeping in a hammock much like some of our Virginia Opossum patients!



Bedtime stories with Luna & staff member Pebble—a purrfect way to settle in!



Afternoon walkies with volunteer Grace and Petey the wonder pittie!



Freya and Mr. Milo enjoyed some sweet sleepover digs in the Animal Control office.



Reflecting on Wildlife Rehabilitation & the United States' 250th Anniversary

WRITTEN BY ANNA SCHWABE, WHS WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CENTER SUPERVISOR & LICENSED WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR

As we celebrate the United States' 250th birthday as a nation this summer, I can't help but reflect on where we have come in terms of welfare for our wildlife neighbors and where we hope to be in the next 250 years. Wildlife rehabilitation is rooted in welfare for our patients while they are in care, as well as after their release to their natural habitats. Thought for their continued welfare after we are no longer monitoring and providing care for them runs through every decision we make. Afterall, the best possible welfare while they are with us means little if we leave them in a state where they are unable to live a full, healthy life in their natural habitats after their release.

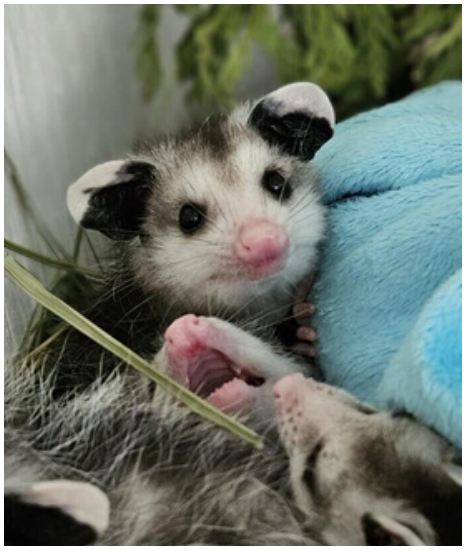
Part of ensuring post-release welfare for our patients (and all our local wildlife) is ensuring our ecosystems are healthy. If the ecosystems don't have what wildlife need to survive—natural foods, clean water, hiding places, corridors to hunt and move, etc.—they won't be able to meet their own needs and their welfare will be poor. Similarly, if we incorporate elements into their ecosystems that they are not adapted to handling—invasive species, high-speed vehicles, barriers such as highways, etc.—their natural activities will also be disrupted and their welfare will be poor. These types of ecosystem-level welfare issues are the vast majority of the reasons we see patients in care in the first place! So part of our work toward improving welfare for our wildlife neighbors has to include healing our local ecosystems and incorporating human structures into those natural systems so that our daily lives enrich the natural community rather than degrade it.

Wildlife rehabilitation began as (and continues to be) a response to the ways humans have carved out a living separate from the land and ecosystems we occupy—and so, as my Indigenous mentors like to remind me, we did not have a particular need for organized wildlife rehabilitation 250 years ago! Many Indigenous nations and communities knew how to keep the ecosystems healthy as part of their way of life: *communities built within ecosystems instead of viewed as separate from them*. Just as we grieve what the founding of the USA did to disenfranchise many Indigenous people and communities, we also grieve what it did to humans' relationships with our diverse ecosystems. And just as we celebrate the survival of the many Indigenous communities now thriving and stepping forward as leaders in animal and ecosystem welfare as well as in human rights and welfare efforts, we also celebrate the survival of our many diverse, beautiful species. We celebrate the steps we have taken toward improving welfare in their native habitats as well as their own adaptations to thriving in the spaces we carved out for them unintentionally.

From the Lacey Act—which prohibits the sale, transport & trade of illegally taken wildlife—to the Endangered Species Act, the US | **Continued on pg. 9**









Continued from page 8 | has developed many laws and regulations designed to protect wildlife and the environment various species need to thrive. Because of these regulations, species on the brink of extinction in the US have made remarkable comebacks, including Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, American Alligators, eastern Steller Sea Lions (still working on our western population!), and Brown Pelicans. Advances in research, rehabilitation techniques, and cross-discipline collaborations have resulted in major steps in the right direction of other species, including the California Condor, Northern Sea Otter, and Snowy Plover. We celebrate these achievements and are proud to contribute in our own small ways to the protection of welfare for our local wildlife.

We also celebrate the ways in which many of our wild neighbors have adapted to habitats designed with only humans in mind. Coyotes and dove species are frequently referenced in the news for their urban-savvy behaviors, and even the aforementioned Peregrine Falcon has been noted to hunt adeptly in urban environments. In our local Bellingham, we are lucky to have not one but two Great Blue Heron Rookeries in town, as well as a massive variety of songbird and raptor species commonly noted in yards and in parks. Not to mention that Northern Raccoons and Black-tailed Deer are such a common site around town that we frequently get calls asking for advice about how to be good neighbors to them while keeping them out of trouble!

The naturalization of our cityscapes and the recent focus on creating wildlife corridors (connections between wild areas to allow safe passage of wildlife that require a large range) have helped to make our cities better homes for those species who don't adapt as readily to urban life and create good habitat for their improved welfare. Plus, we've noticed that these improvements to our cities like more natural spaces, cleaner and better connected waterways, and natural shade structures have major benefits to human welfare too! Many of the ways to improve human lives often overlap with the ways to improve animal welfare too. We also celebrate these advances and are proud to influence the ways our human neighbors can live in harmony with their wildlife neighbors.

I reflect on all of these things, and while we must acknowledge the difficulties that wildlife in the US (and PNW) have had to face over the last 250 years, I think it is fitting that we celebrate the immense diversity of species we still have, the many advances we have already made toward their improved welfare, and the creative and adaptive ways many of these species have learned to live alongside us. The WHS Wildlife Rehabilitation Center is honored to work with many of the species included here as well as many others, and we stand in wonder at the dignity and unique ways of being each species we care for brings to the world. It is our privilege to strive toward ever greater welfare for our patients, both in care and after their release. It is our hope that in the next 250 years, the offspring of our released patients live in a world in which their welfare needs are met without need of our intervention. Thank you for your support of WHS's mission to provide care and welfare to all the animals in our community, including the wild ones!

Whatcom Humane Society

WHS THRIFT SHOP

Great Finds For A Great Cause!

PARK MANOR SHOPPING CENTER

1534B Birchwood Ave
Bellingham, WA 98225



STORE HOURS:

Tuesday-Saturday,
10:00am-5:00pm

DONATIONS ACCEPTED:

Tuesday-Saturday,
10:00am-4:00pm

QUESTIONS? CALL 360-543-6792

Please visit whatcomhumane.org for info on what items we can and cannot accept as donations.

Donate, Shop, Volunteer For the Animals!



Thank You for Making our Gala & Auction Out of This World!

BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT, WE EXCEEDED OUR GOAL!

From our event sponsors, to the businesses and people who contributed auction items, to our volunteer crew from start to finish, to our Gala participants (online and in-person), and everyone in between, the success of our largest annual fundraiser takes nothing short of a village of helpers, and we are so grateful to each and every person who gave their time, skills, products, profits, and heart to animals in need. With your support, we exceeded this year's goal and raised over $281,000!

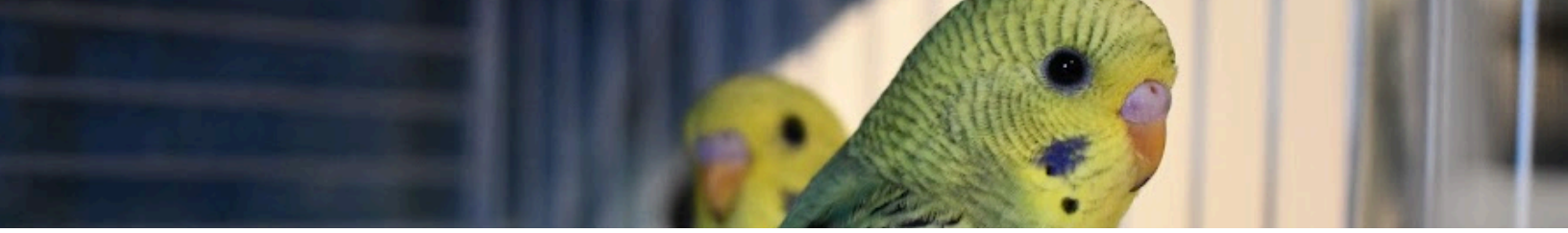
If you attended the Gala, bid in our online auction, or joined in this year's event in any way, we welcome your feedback—we are always looking for how we can make this fundraiser bigger and better for the animals and our community. Please reach out to our Development Manager, Paige: development@whatcomhumane.org or 360-733-2080 x 3014. And, of course, don't forget to take a moment to enjoy more photos from the event via the QR code to the right!

Heartfelt thanks once again for making Whatcom Humane Society's 24th Annual Gala & Auction a cosmic celebration of kindness!



P.S. We are thrilled to announce that our Gala dog, Bob, went home shortly after the event! After five months in WHS's care, Bob was more than ready for some new digs and a person of his very own. He got all that and more with his new mom, a house with a big backyard, positive reinforcement obedience classes, and so many new adventures to come. Congratulations, Bob! We love you, and we hope you have the best life ever!





Give & Get: News About the 2026 Donation Tax Break

We're sharing some exciting news that makes 2026 the perfect time to lend your support to Whatcom Humane Society! New tax provisions that took effect starting January 1, 2026, have created a valuable benefit for the majority of Americans who take the standard deduction. In previous years, if you didn't itemize your taxes, your charitable giving didn't secure a direct tax write-off. That changes this year.

Here's the Good News

For donors taking the standard deduction, there is now an additional tax break available permanently. **You can now deduct up to $1,000 (for single filers) or $2,000 (for married couples filing jointly) in cash gifts. This deduction is available on top of the standard deduction.** Put simply, your support for WHS can officially count toward lowering your tax bill! Quick Example: If you're married, filing jointly, and take the standard deduction, a $2,000 gift to WHS could reduce your taxable income by $2,000—on top of the standard deduction you're already receiving. That's real savings, available right now.

What Can You Do Now?

- Utilize the cash gift deduction: To qualify for this benefit, gifts must be made in cash (checks or credit card donations count). *Note: the benefit does not apply to gifts to donor-advised funds or private non-operating foundations.*
- Maximize the cap: Consider making a gift of $1,000 or $2,000 early in the year to fully lock in this deduction right away.
- Be a "tax-smart" donor: You don't need a complex financial portfolio to earn a tax benefit from your generosity. Simple, direct giving now rewards you at tax time.

This Matters to Us—and You

Your support fuels our mission and helps us serve our community with kindness, compassion, and respect for all animals. By supporting WHS this year, you are not only making a savvy financial move, you're also ensuring we'll have the resources needed to be there whenever an animal needs us.

DONATE HERE: whatcomhumane.org/donate or use this QR code

If you have questions about this information or about making your gift to WHS, please reach out to Paige at development@whatcomhumane.org or 360-733-2080 x 3014.

The above guidance is excerpted from AllianceBernstein Asset Management's blog, "Give Early, Save More: Beat the New Charitable Floor Before It Starts," available at https://bernstein.com. We encourage you to speak with your tax professional to verify how these changes apply to your specific tax situation.

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR!

When you establish an ongoing contribution to WHS, you are joining us in a pledge to be there for domestic, farm & wild animals across our region and beyond—*no matter the time, no matter the reason*. Your gift allows us to nimbly respond to the needs of our community, strengthening our core shelter services so we can deliver care, bring families together, and build a kinder world for animals. **whatcomhumane.org/donate**





PET LOSS SUPPORT

Provided by WHS

Our monthly in-person support group provides a safe place for connecting grieving pet owners with experienced facilitators and other resources. Whether you are currently suffering loss or anticipating loss, we encourage you to join us. Volunteer counselors offer support and resources for those who have been touched by:

- The loss of a pet
- Anticipating the death of a pet
- Dealing with the difficult decision of euthanasia
- Having suffered from a lost or stolen pet
- Wondering when/if they are ready for another pet

WHEN & WHERE:

First Wednesday of every month, 6:00 pm (typically 1-hour sessions)

Whatcom Humane Society
Multipurpose Room
2172 Division Street, Bellingham

FREE to attend
Registration not required

For more info, please email outreach@whatcomhumane.org or call 360-733-2080 ext. 3116

Additional resources available at whatcomhumane.org/resources

Whatcom Humane Society

Create a Legacy of Compassion

Plan for the people, pets & causes you care about with WHS & FreeWill:
freewill.com/whatcomhumane



Whatcom Humane Society

WHATCOM HUMANE SOCIETY'S WORKING CATS PROGRAM

The Whatcom Humane Society's Working Cats Program places healthy semi-feral and non-socialized adult cats with adopters looking for cats not suited for indoor-only living environments. Working cats will receive:

- Spay/neuter
- Initial FVRCP Vaccination
- Flea Treatment (30 Day)
- 1-Year Rabies Vaccination
- FIV/FeLV Testing
- Microchip
- Ear Tip
- Dewormer

WHS will also provide the adopters with instructions on how to transition working cats into their new environment.

BENEFITS

- Provides natural pest population control.
- Ideal for barns, stables, warehouses, ranches, wineries, churches, etc.
- Provides previously homeless animals with a safe place to live and reduces the number of cats euthanized.

REQUIREMENTS

- Approved WHS adoption application.
- Cats must be adopted in pairs if there are no resident cats on the property
- Adopters must provide food, water, & shelter year-round and vet care.
- Adopters will need to allow 2-4 weeks for cats to acclimate to their new space.



Contact Working Cats Coordinator: 360-733-2080 x 0
or workingcats@whatcomhumane.org
Adoption Fee: $20 per cat



WHS Community Resources

Pet Loss Support Group

Available the first Wednesday of each month at WHS from 6:00-7:15 pm. The group is free and doesn't require pre-registration. More info at: **www.whatcomhumane.org/sharing-space-at-whss-pet-loss-support-group/**

Community Microchip Scanning Station

Found an animal when WHS is closed? Our microchip scanning station is available 24 hours a day, and includes instructions for what to do if an animal does or does not have a microchip. Located outside our domestic animal shelter at 2172 Division St, Bellingham.

Lost & Found Yard Signs

Lost and found yard signs are available to borrow at no cost at the Whatcom Humane Society, and help identify the specific home connected to the lost or found pet, encourages nearby residents to stay alert and assist, and supports faster, more direct communication and reunions within the neighborhood. More info available by calling (360) 733-2080 ext. 0

Microchipping - $30

A permanent form of identification for your pet. Walk-ins welcome! (please have your pet remain in the vehicle until paperwork is completed)

Custom Pet ID Tags - $5-$8

Custom tags are available to purchase at our thrift store located at 1534 B Birchwood Ave, Bellingham WA. Available Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5pm. Call the store for details (360) 543-6792.

Home To Home

A WHS Partner offering free re-homing & foster services from one home to another keeping pets out of the shelter! Check out: **home-home.org/shelters/whatcom-humane-society**

Pet Food Bank

Our pet food bank supports families during difficult times by providing free food to keep pets happy, healthy, and in their homes. Donations appreciated! (Call the shelter for details)

Tuesday - Sunday 11am - 6pm | 2172 Division Street, Bellingham WA 98226 | (360) 733-2080 ext.0



Lost & Found Pet Resources

Stray Animals at WHS

Missing a pet? To see stray animals housed at WHS visit **whatcomhumane.org > Our Services > View Stray Animals at WHS**. We recommend checking our online intakes every 2-3 days, if not daily, and visiting the shelter in-person at least once every 5 days. Please understand we cannot identify lost pets over the phone or by email, and ask that you visit the shelter in-person Tuesday-Sunday to positively ID and reclaim a pet from our custody. For more information on reclaiming a pet visit: **whatcomhumane.org > Our Services > Impounded Stray Animals**

Petco Love Lost

Petco Love Lost is a Whatcom Humane Society partner working to help reunite lost & found community pets with their owners as quickly as possible! If you have lost or found a pet please create a Petco Love Lost report and check out the community postings at: **whatcomhumane.org > Our Services > Community Lost & Found Pets**

Other Online Resources

Lost Pets of Whatcom County is one of the largest and most active lost and found pet groups on Facebook. **Nextdoor** is a private group good for spreading the word about pets who are lost and found in your specific neighborhood. Find links to these resources & more: **whatcomhumane.org > Our Services > More Recovery Resources**



Leading with Kindness: Why Positive Reinforcement is the Only Path Forward

WRITTEN BY AND SHARED WITH PERMISSION FROM ANGELA LENZ, OWNER & LEAD TRAINER AT TAILS-A-WAGGING DOGGIE DAYCARE & CANINE TRAINING CENTER

As animal lovers, our goal is always to build a community rooted in compassion, safety, and trust. This philosophy shouldn't stop when we open a training manual. For decades, traditional dog training relied on tactics of dominance, coercion, and fear. Today, modern veterinary science, animal behaviorists, and humane societies worldwide agree on a definitive truth: ***positive reinforcement is the only acceptable method for training—for all beings***. Moving away from outdated practices isn't just a trend, it's a critical evolution in how we understand and care for our best friends.

The Myth of the "Balanced" Approach

Terms like "corrective", "adversarial", or "balanced" training often sound harmless, but they mask an unfortunate reality. Balanced training claims to use the "best of both worlds", rewarding good behavior while using physical corrections to punish the bad. This approach relies on aversive tools designed to motivate a dog through discomfort, pain, and intimidation. These may include:

- Choke Chains: Tools that may restrict oxygen cause severe damage to a dog's trachea, esophagus, vertebrae, and thyroid gland.
- Pinch/Prong Collars: Collars that dig metal spikes into the sensitive skin of a dog's neck, risking physical injury and severe behavioral fallout.
- Electric/Shock Collars: Devices that deliver painful or distressing electrical stimulation to force compliance.

These methods are archaic. They don't teach a dog what to do; they merely hurt them in attempts to stop what they are currently doing.

The Hidden Dangers of Aversive Training

While physical corrections might suppress unwanted behavior in the short term, they come at a massive psychological cost. Dogs learn by association. For example, if a dog experiences pain or fear via a pinch collar whenever they see another dog or a stranger, they don't learn to be friendly. Instead, they associate that dog or person with pain. This frequently can lead to severe behavioral escalation, in which a minor issue may transform into deep-seated fear, anxiety, and barrier reactivity. Worse still, aversive methods can cause a phenomenon known as learned helplessness. This occurs when a dog completely shuts down and stops reacting entirely because they realize they cannot escape the unpredictable discomfort. A shut-down dog isn't a trained dog; it is a broken dog. **| Continued on pg. 15**



The above and below photos are from WHS's Canine Companion Training, positive-reinforcement classes that take place weekly with a variety of the shelter dogs and volunteers to help the pups learn skills for navigating everyday life.







Leading With Kindness, continued from pg. 14 |

The Power of Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement focuses on rewarding the behaviors we want to see, using high-value treats, toys, praise, and play. By setting our dogs up to succeed and reinforcing those successes, we build a reliable foundation of good behavior built on cooperation, not compliance. Science shows us that dogs that are trained with rewards learn faster, retain information longer, and experience significantly less stress. More importantly, positive reinforcement strengthens the human-canine bond. Your dog becomes an active, enthusiastic partner in the learning process because they trust you completely.

A Reflection of Us

At the end of the day, training is about communication, patience, and empathy. Dogs are doing the best they can to navigate a human world they didn't ask to be brought into. ***If you have to hurt a dog to train them, that says far more about you than it does the dog.*** Choosing force over education is a training shortcut born of a lack of understanding and tools, not a reflection of a "stubborn" animal. True leadership isn't about proving you can overpower a companion animal; it's about having the patience to guide them kindly. Let's leave the outdated, painful tools in the past where they belong. By committing to exclusively using force-free, positive reinforcement methods, we can ensure our community remains a safe, loving place for every dog and the people who cherish them.









Whatcom Humane Society
CARING FOR ANIMALS SINCE 1902

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