**2021: A Year of Responding to Community Needs**

**2021 - A Year of Challenges**

Not too many of us will look back favorably on 2021. We have lost too many friends and family members, and weathered so much uncertainty, loss and fear. Here at GAHS we’ve dealt with staffing challenges, cancelled events, equipment breakdowns, supply shortages and the ever-present challenges of homeless and needy animals.

But 2021 was not without hope. The needs made all too visible this past year have allowed us to sharpen our mission and build out a strategic plan to guide us through the coming years. We are building a stronger and more resilient organization to address the changing needs of pets and our community. We know that together we’re stronger, and to that end we’re working more collaboratively with other service organizations assisting families in need - because pets are part of the family.

We hope you will stick with us as we head into 2022. We know the one thing that will not change - lots of furry faces looking to us for shelter, food, love and care - and we cannot do that work without you. We’re so glad you are part of the GAHS family and we wish you a brighter New Year!

Katie Lisnik, Executive Director

**Pet Food Partnerships**

2021 was all about expanding our reach to help more pets in need! We’ve partnered with another 9 local agencies and organizations to provide pet food for needy community members in conjunction with their human food pantries. We’re so proud to be working with wonderful organizations like St. Mary’s and Kaydenz’ Kitchen to help keep pets in homes where they are loved.

Not everyone can get to the shelter for our weekly Fetchin’ Food Pantry. These new partnerships allow us to get needed dog and cat food out to community members with transportation issues and those in our contracted towns outside of the Lewiston-Auburn area.

**Medical Needs Abound**

Cats hit by cars, amputations, urinary blockages, mange, and so many more medical conditions passed through our doors this year. Whether they were stray animals or pets at risk of being surrendered because their family could not afford medical care, GAHS was there to help. In 2021, we were able to resume a full calendar of free vaccine clinics, including a return to Kennedy Park in Lewiston, providing important preventative care for several hundred animals.

We are excited to announce the addition of Dr. Nicholas Urbanek to our medical team, allowing us to assist more animals and provide expanded medical services in-shelter. As we head into 2022, we’ll be working hard to expand programs to assist owned pets in urgent need of medical care, as well as low-cost spay/neuter options.

Our local veterinary community has been hit hard by the pandemic and we will support those most at-risk to help keep families together.

**Enlisting an Army of Kindness**

As with medical and food needs, we also saw an increase in the number of animals needing temporary care due to their family being in the hospital, homeless or facing domestic violence challenges. Thanks to a growing foster program, we were able to provide temporary care and reunification with families once they were back on their feet. Through partnerships with organizations like Safe Voices, we’re able to help even more pets in need.

With volunteer and foster home numbers growing, we truly have an “army of the kind” able to help us grow our programs and expand the safety net for animals at risk. We are so appreciative of the amazing people who help us with their time, talents and homes.

King Triton, a stray hit by a car, had significant head and body trauma. He remains in foster care as he heals.
Thank you for being part of our work. Despite challenges, we still made 2021 a great year for needy pets, with your help!

Adorable Gizmo was in need of a caring home due to significant medical challenges. Thanks to our kind fosterers, he has that and more!