

YORK COUNTY SPCA

PET GAZETTE

FALL EDITION

BEHIND THE SCENES OF
SPAY & NEUTER SUCCESS

**THE FUNDING GAP
HURTING ANIMALS**

—AND HOW WE FIX IT

**OCTOBER IS FOR
UNDERDOGS**

**SMALL GIFTS.
BIG IMPACT.**

INFINITE GRATITUDE.

WHAT YOU MADE POSSIBLE
ON GIVE LOCAL YORK DAY

TALES FOR TAILS

SIT. STAY. READ. REPEAT.





LET'S CHANGE THE SYSTEM FOR SHELTER ANIMALS

STEVEN MARTINEZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Across Pennsylvania, animal shelters like the York County SPCA provide essential public health and safety services—taking in stray animals, some of whom are sick or dangerous, providing vaccinations for zoonotic diseases like rabies, controlling pet population growth rates, enforcing animal cruelty law, and offering safe refuge to animals in crisis. **But here's the hard truth: unlike many other states, Pennsylvania has no legislative mandate for local or state governments to support this work. Meaning, we provide a government function with very little to no government funding, forcing us to be the animal services department that the government doesn't have to pay for or administer.**

Throughout Pennsylvania, animal sheltering is treated not as a government responsibility but as a charitable cause. As a result, shelters like the YCSPCA must rely heavily on donations, grants, and limited municipal contracts. For example, over 72% of our funding comes from our generous community of donors, and less than 7% of our budget is made up of municipal fees. We receive zero dollars from the county, state, federal governments or from the national ASPCA. To me, that represents an unbalanced relationship that puts way too much of the burden on nonprofits to fundraise to provide a basic government service.

The public disagrees with this approach. According to a recent Human Animal Support Services (HASS) survey, **67% of respondents said additional funding for shelter services should come from sources other than voluntary donations—and 35% said they would support a small tax increase to make it happen.***

This funding gap creates real challenges. It limits how many animals we can help, it strains our staff and resources, and it forces us to make difficult decisions about how to prioritize care. Yet we do this work—because we believe York County people and pets deserves safety, stability, and compassion.

You can help us go even further. Contact your municipality and county commissioners and urge them to support public funding for animal shelters like the York County SPCA. Let them know that caring for stray, sick, and vulnerable animals is not just a charitable activity, but an essential public service that deserves public investment.

As a dedicated supporter of our lifesaving work, you are the reason we can keep going. Your generosity fills the gap where government support falls short. But we also believe it's time for the system to change. Local and state leaders must recognize animal sheltering as the essential public service it is—and invest in it accordingly.

Until then, thank you for standing with us. Together, we're not just saving animals, we're building a safer, more humane and compassionate York County for people and pets. 🐾



Source: *Human Animal Support Services (2023, September 28). *Human Animal Support Services (HASS) Releases Community Values Survey Results*. Retrieved July 23, 2025, from <https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/press-release/human-animal-support-services-hass-releases-community-values-survey-results/>

BRIGID'S SECOND CHANCE

DR. NATALIE WEEKES, VMD, SHELTER MEDICAL DIRECTOR



At the York County SPCA, we believe every life matters – and sometimes, all it takes is a second chance to prove just how strong that life can be.

Brigid, a one-year-old Pit Bull type dog, came to us in crisis. She was barely holding on - emaciated, weak, and in obvious pain, she could hardly stand. For several weeks, her stomach was severely distended and tender, and she had been vomiting and was lethargic.

We were initially contacted to consult regarding humane euthanasia. However, when we saw Brigid, we realized we needed to ask more questions before making any decisions. Despite her condition, her eyes still held a quiet spark. We performed x-rays and bloodwork, and what we found was heartbreaking... A large intestinal foreign body had likely been sitting in her system for nearly two months, wreaking havoc on her digestive tract.

After seeing these findings, we rushed Brigid into emergency surgery that same afternoon. The damage was extensive. Over two feet of her small intestine had been destroyed by the blockage and required removal. Still, we persevered for Brigid – with determination, hope, and a heavy dose of love.

Brigid survived, and not just that, she is thriving! Her recovery hasn't been easy, and her journey continues, but today, she's in her warm, caring adoptive home. She's gaining weight, learning to trust, and enjoying life's simple pleasures – like fresh cantaloupe and sunny naps.

Brigid is a powerful reminder of why we pursue this lifesaving work. Her story is one of resilience, compassion, and the incredible things that happen when we choose to fight for the animals who can't speak for themselves.

Thanks to your support, we're able to say "yes" when it matters most. Brigid's life didn't end the day she entered our shelter; instead, it started over.

Because every life deserves a second chance. 🐾

WHAT TO EXPECT: YOUR PET'S SPAY/NEUTER APPOINTMENT



CLINIC CORNER

DR. KIMBERLY MANN, VMD, CLINIC MEDICAL DIRECTOR

The York County SPCA Spay/Neuter Clinic offers affordable spay/neuter services for owned cats and dogs, as well as free-roaming community cats. Here's what to expect when your pet comes in for surgery:



BEFORE SURGERY:

Schedule online at www.ycspca.org. Choose a date, share your pet's medical history, and pay a deposit. You'll get confirmation and reminder emails with drop-off details and instructions to prepare your pet. Our staff may email asking for more medical history or records from your veterinarian. This helps us keep anesthesia and surgery as safe as possible. Some pets with special needs may be better served at a full-service hospital.

DROP OFF:

If your pet is up to date on Rabies, please bring the certificate on surgery day. When you arrive at YCSPCA, remain in your car. Volunteers will direct parking and share a list of additional services. A veterinary technician will confirm your contact info, review your pet's history, and answer questions. They'll then take your pet inside for a physical exam. If you requested pre-op bloodwork, it will be drawn at that time, and you'll be called if there are concerns. Please keep your phone nearby.

SURGERY:

Pets get pain medication before anesthesia to keep them comfortable after surgery. An anesthetic injection and gas keep them asleep. Veterinary technicians monitor vital signs and prepare your pet for surgery. The veterinarian then performs the spay or neuter, which can take under a minute for male cats, or up to 15-20 minutes for large female dogs.

RECOVERY:

Pets are monitored closely as they recover from anesthesia. Vet staff monitor their temperature and other vitals, and provide care as needed. Each pet is fitted with an e-collar to stop them from licking at the incision when they are awake. Staff will then check on patients throughout the afternoon before they go home.

PICK UP:

Pets go home the same day as their surgery, usually between 3-4 p.m. You'll get an email with recovery instructions, and your pet will go home with pain medication. When you arrive, please remain in your car; a staff member will answer any questions you may have and then bring your pet out to you.

FOLLOW UP:

If you have any questions after your pet's surgery, the best way to contact us is via email, at clinic@ycspca.org. We are also available for post-op rechecks, Monday through Friday, between 9 a.m. and 2p.m, with no appointment necessary.

FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE SERVICES WE OFFER,
PLEASE VISIT YCSPCA.ORG/SPAY-NEUTER-CLINIC OR SCAN THIS QR CODE.



GIVE LOCAL YORK SPOTLIGHT/ STAFF



Thank you for showing up in a big way!

Because of you, we raised more than **\$150,000 from 962 donors** to support the animals who rely on us for safety, healing, and hope.

Out of the 1,001 gifts made, 73% were \$50 or less, serving as a powerful reminder of what is possible when a community rallies together for a cause. Every single gift made a difference. **Your gift made a difference. From all of us here at the York County SPCA, thank you for your support and for being part of this lifesaving mission!**

\$151,827.89
RAISED FROM
962 DONORS



YCSPCA STAFF AND VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

- **Steven Martinez**, Executive Director
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- **Jessica Hoffman**, Development Director
- **Beth Loucks**, CPA, Finance and HR Director
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CELEBRATE PITBULL AWARENESS MONTH THIS OCTOBER



**KARI HERCHELROTH, CVT,
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR**

Here at the York County SPCA, October isn't just another month—it's Pit Bull Awareness Month, a time that our dedicated staff, volunteers, and the dogs we care for hold dear. Our shelter is home to a majority of pit bull-type dogs, with around 60-80% of our canine residents falling into this category at any given time.

We often hear, "You only have pit bulls." While that isn't wholly true, it can feel that way when walking through our shelter. Sadly, pit bull-type dogs tend to stay with us longer than other breeds because of myths and stigma. But to us—and to many loving families—pit bulls are just dogs: loyal, playful, affectionate, and deserving of every chance to be loved.

Last October, we dedicated the month to busting some of the most common myths about pit bulls. Many were surprised to learn that "pit bull" isn't a breed at all, but rather a broad term used to describe dogs with certain physical traits. Even DNA tests often reveal surprises: some dogs that look like pit bulls aren't, and many dogs that don't look the part carry pit bull DNA.

Pit bulls can be wonderful family pets. They excel as therapy dogs, emotional support animals, and even in search-and-rescue and law enforcement roles. Like all dogs, they should be judged by their individual personalities, not dismissed because of unfair labels.

At the time of writing this article, we have several long-term canine residents in our shelter, some of whom have been with us for almost a full year. They are all pit bull-type dogs. These dogs are friendly, adoptable, and eager to be part of a family.

Throughout October, we'll be shining a spotlight on these dogs across our social media platforms, sharing their stories, photos, and educational posts to help people see beyond the stereotypes. We're also excited to announce the launch of new pit bull-themed merchandise, including a special candle made just for Pit Bull Awareness Month. And to top it off, we're hosting a "Pit Bulls & Friends" adoption event, a fantastic opportunity for our long-stay residents to find the loving homes they deserve.

You can be part of the change: share our posts, donate, foster, or adopt. Together, we can help these amazing dogs get the love and respect they truly deserve. To learn more about this initiative and what we have planned for 2025, visit our website at ycspca.org. 🐾

**JOIN US FOR OUR PIT BULLS & FRIENDS ADOPTION EVENT
ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19 FROM 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M.**

**ADOPTION FEES WILL BE WAIVED FOR ALL
ADULT DOGS THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY
OF OUR FRIENDS AT
BEACON DOG BEHAVIORISTS**



BEACON DOG
Balanced Humans/Balanced Dogs





**TAYLOR HARRIS,
MARKETING AND EVENTS
MANAGER**

PAWSITIVE MINDS: ENRICHMENT AND MENTAL WELL-BEING FOR SHELTER PETS

Life in a shelter can be incredibly stressful for all animals. While our team at the York County SPCA provides love, care, and safety every day, the reality is that living in a kennel environment can take a toll on an animal's mental health, personality, and overall well-being. That's why **enrichment** is so critical!



Enrichment isn't just about toys or treats—it's about giving animals opportunities to exercise their minds, express natural behaviors, and find moments of joy and comfort in a sometimes-overwhelming setting. Whether it's puzzle feeders that challenge them to think, scent games that engage their powerful noses, or simply time outside to explore new sights and smells, enrichment helps keep our animals mentally stimulated and emotionally balanced.



This type of mental exercise is just as vital as physical exercise. Animals who regularly engage in enrichment activities are often calmer, more confident, and better able to manage the everyday stressors of shelter life. Over time, this can help them become more adoptable by encouraging positive behaviors and presenting their best selves to potential adopters.

Our goal is to make sure our animals have access to essential tools for their well-being. Thanks to your continued support, we've been able to invest in things like new enrichment supplies, play areas and programs designed to stimulate each animal's mind and spirit. These efforts make a life-changing difference—transforming anxious, withdrawn pets into happier, more social companions ready to find their forever homes.

**IF YOU'D LIKE TO SUPPORT
EFFORTS LIKE THESE, PLEASE
SCAN THIS QR CODE OR VISIT
YCSPCA.ORG/FALL**



Ultimately, enrichment isn't just about keeping animals busy—it's about giving them dignity, comfort, and a chance to be themselves, even while they wait for a family to love them. Your generosity helps our animals become better citizens and gives them a true second chance at the joyful life they deserve. 🐾

JOIN US FOR THE YORK COUNTY SPCA COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER OPEN HOUSE!



ALY MALAY, VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



YORK COUNTY SPCA COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER OPEN HOUSE

DATE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 TIME: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM. LOCATION: YORK COUNTY SPCA

Are you passionate about animals and looking for a way to give back to your community? The York County SPCA invites you to our Community Volunteer Open House on Sunday, September 21st from 2:00pm to 4:00pm at the York County SPCA. No prior registration is required! Just stop by and see how you can make a difference in the lives of animals in need.

At the open house, you'll have the chance to learn about three of our most needed volunteer roles: dog walking, canine enrichment, and clinic assistance. These volunteer opportunities are essential to the work we do every single day to care for homeless pets and help them find their forever homes.

You'll also have the unique opportunity to meet current volunteers who serve in these important roles. They'll be available to share their experiences, answer your questions, and explain how their efforts directly impact the well-being of the animals in our care. You'll hear firsthand why our volunteers are so passionate about their work and why volunteering at the York County SPCA is such a rewarding experience.

If you're interested in joining our team of dedicated volunteers, getting started is easy. Visit our website at www.ycspca.org, click Get Involved, then Volunteer, and finally select Become a Volunteer to complete our volunteer questionnaire. Once submitted, you'll be invited to attend an orientation where you'll learn more about the services we provide, receive a tour of the shelter, and discover the next steps in our onboarding process.

Our volunteers are truly the heart of our organization. We simply could not do our daily lifesaving work without them. As one of our spay/neuter clinic staff members shared, "If there isn't a volunteer back here helping on a day, the staff really feel that absence." Volunteers play a crucial role in ensuring our animals receive the care, enrichment, and attention they need every day.

Whether you have a few hours a week or a few hours a month, your time can make a real difference. Join us on September 21st and find out how you can help save lives, one tail at a time. We hope to see you there! 🐾



TO LEARN MORE AND REVIEW UP-TO-DATE DETAILS ON THIS EVENT, SCAN THIS QR CODE OR VISIT [YCSPCA.ORG/ EVENT/ VOLUNTEER-OPEN-HOUSE](http://YCSPCA.ORG/EVENT/VOLUNTEER-OPEN-HOUSE)

COMMUNITY/ ADOPTION SPOTLIGHTS



GIRL SCOUTS VISIT THE YORK COUNTY SPCA

In April, 25 Girl Scouts from the Heart of PA visited the York County SPCA to learn about our mission and how we help animals in need. They read to our shelter pets, earning their "Pets" badge, and brought donations—including handmade cat scratchers—to keep our cats entertained. Thank you, Scouts, for your kindness and creativity!



M'KAYLA'S NJHS PROJECT

For her National Junior Honor Society project, M'Kayla organized a donation drive, collecting much-needed supplies for our animals. During her visit, she met many shelter pets, making the day extra special. Thank you, M'Kayla, for your compassion and hard work!



NATALIE'S GENEROSITY

Natalie Fisher, a Distinguished Honors Student at Commonwealth Charter Academy, donated to the York County SPCA for her NJHS project. A future volunteer and member of an adopting family, she knows how much these contributions matter. Thank you, Natalie!

JOIN THE YORK COUNTY SPCA ALUMNI FACEBOOK GROUP!

Have you adopted from us? Join our Alumni group to share updates, photos, advice, and happy tails. Connect with other adopters, celebrate milestones, and get sneak peeks at events and spotlights. Search "York County SPCA Alumni" on Facebook or scan this QR code today!



PEBBLES (LUCY) - ADOPTED JUNE 6, 2025

"We are enjoying this little bundle of joy so much. She is doing well and is already potty trained (for the most part) and she goes in the crate with no problems when we have to leave her for a short while. We absolutely adore her and are so blessed to have her in our life!"

-Kimberly



WILLOW & PHILLY (MACY & RUSSELL) - ADOPTED AUGUST 2023

"These two are our best friends who love boxes, playing with pipe cleaners, scratches and of course watching football with us! They are the best thing that has ever happened to us."

-Taylor



EYORE (EGYPT) - ADOPTED NOVEMBER 2024

"She immediately made herself at home! She loves blankets and naps on our king size bed. She loves watching the world go by from her window. Car rides and grass rollie pollies are her favorites! The perfect mix of energy and chill with all the silly and sassy you could imagine. She is our pittopopotamus!"

-Sarah

TALES FOR TAILS PROGRAM INSPIRES YOUNG ANIMAL ADVOCATES



ALY MALAY, VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

At the York County SPCA, compassion is one of our core values, and it can start at any age. That's why we created Tales for Tails Presented by Rutter's Children's Charities, a special program held on the fourth Sunday of every month that invites kids ages 17 and younger to visit our shelter and read to our cats, dogs, and small animals. Not only does it provide socialization and enrichment for our shelter pets, but it also gives young animal lovers a meaningful way to engage with our mission and practice their reading skills even before they're old enough to become official volunteers.



Recently, two young participants, Bennett and Carson, turned their Tales for Tails visit into even more impact. After spending time reading to and bonding with our animals, they decided to help further—by hosting multiple lemonade stands. They sold lemonade, cookies, Pop-Tarts, and other treats, raising funds for the York County SPCA and pets waiting for their forever homes.

Thanks to their hard work, Bennett and Carson surpassed their fundraising goal, directly supporting countless animals in our care. Their creativity, generosity, and compassion are a powerful reminder that anyone—no matter their age—can make a difference.

Whether you'd like to read to a furry friend or launch your own fundraiser, there are many ways for young people to help animals in our community. To join our Tales for Tails mailing list or learn more, scan the QR code or visit ycspca.org/events/tales-for-tails.



INTERESTED IN HOSTING YOUR OWN FUNDRAISER OR DOING A PROJECT AT HOME TO HELP OUR ANIMALS? WE'VE GOT IDEAS AND RESOURCES READY FOR YOU IN THE VOLUNTEER SECTION OF OUR WEBSITE.

GOOD NEWS (AND SOME CAVEATS): HOW THE OBBBA AFFECTS YOUR CHARITABLE GIFT TO OUR SHELTER



TYLER LERMAN, YCSPCA BOARD MEMBER

A new law enacted on July 4, 2025, introduces changes to how charitable deductions work—and many of those changes can benefit supporters of local nonprofits like ours! Here's what you need to know:

1. A DEDUCTION FOR EVERYONE

Starting in 2026, if you do not itemize deductions (which is the case for the majority of taxpayers), you can claim a tax deduction for cash donations to public charities—up to \$1,000 for individuals and \$2,000 for couples filing jointly. This is a wonderful boost for household donors who previously didn't receive any tax benefit for their generous heart.

2. CHANGES FOR ITEMIZERS—A FLOOR AND A RATE CAP

If you do itemize, the new law introduces a 0.5% "floor" on adjusted gross income (AGI)—meaning only the portion of your gift above that threshold qualifies for deduction. For instance, a couple with \$200,000 in AGI must exceed a \$1,000 floor before any donation qualifies. Additionally, the law reduces the effective deduction rate for high-income filers: even if you're in the 37% bracket, your charitable deduction will be capped at a 35% benefit.

3. WHAT GOES ON—AND WHAT DOESN'T

Here's a bright spot: cash contributions to public charities can still be deducted up to 60% of AGI—and this generous limit is now permanent, instead of reverting to lower amounts after 2025.

4. CORPORATE GIVING—A NEW THRESHOLD

If your business supports us, note that corporations can now only deduct charitable contributions that exceed 1% of taxable income. Smaller business donations below that threshold won't be eligible, though they can often be carried forward under certain rules.

5. PLANNING TIP: NOW'S THE TIME TO "BUNCH"

These changes take effect in 2026, so 2025 may be the last year to enjoy full benefits under the old rules. Consider "bunching"—making larger, one-time donations now (perhaps into a donor-advised fund) to exceed the standard deduction threshold and maximize tax advantages.

Overall, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) opens new doors, particularly for non-itemizers, but also adds thresholds that may reduce deductions for itemizers. As always, thank you for supporting our furry friends. Your generosity matters more than ever.

If you have any questions about what this means for you, contact your financial advisor or reach out to the team at Smith Wealth Advisory Group at 717.779.2814 or www.SmithWealthAdvisory.com. 🐾



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