

AnimalTalk

Spring/Summer 2020

**2019
ANNUAL
REPORT
EDITION**

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

A Shift In Method, Not Mission

Think back to January when the word “COVID-19” didn’t mean anything to you. You heard about a virus in China. But the details were vague and often conflicting. Even as it spread to more countries, even as the WHO raised its global risk from “high” to “very high,” it was one headline of many. A tragic, but distant event happening somewhere else. If you were told this distant virus would change every aspect of your life here in Canada, you’d have trouble believing it.

As I write this, the country has been on lockdown for over 2 months. Our borders are closed, many businesses shuttered. Thousands of lives have been lost, while more than three million Canadians have applied for jobless benefits and emergency income aid. COVID-19 has impacted every aspect of our lives, from how we communicate with friends to how we buy groceries. New priorities have replaced the old. Plans have been put on hold.

Toronto Humane Society has plans of its own: a clear, comprehensive strategy for the next 5 years in which we’d tackle our challenges, build off our strengths, and break through to the next level as an organization. Instead of reacting to animal vulnerability, we would influence and eliminate the causes of that vulnerability. We would become an organization for learning, best practices, and knowledge exchange. We would shift towards a prominent provider of public veterinary services, a leading educator and advocate. We would steer the conversation towards a future in which animal shelters no longer need to exist.

But then our lives were turned upside down by a global pandemic. We had to close our doors to the public, cancel all events, and pull back services to bare necessities. We weren’t even sure we were going to be considered an “essential service”.

We will look back at this as a defining moment in our history. The questions we were asking ourselves were existential. When so many people are struggling, can a non-profit—whose most basic operations depend upon the generosity of donors—survive something like this?

Two very important things happened: first, there was an unexpected surge in generosity from our supporters, not just in donations but in the willingness to open their doors and provide temporary homes for animals in shelter. Second, probably in response to the overwhelming support we received, our staff adapted to this new reality with innovation and tenacity.

This issue of Animal Talk will illustrate the different ways we adapted and even expanded our work. From online virtual adoptions to a new foster delivery system; from virtual training to new telemedicine services; from an expanded Pet Food Bank to an innovative Pet Support Network – instead of capitulating, we doubled down, pushed on with our plans with our mission as our guide.

Of course, I wouldn’t be talking about any of this if it weren’t for you. Your support gave us the confidence we needed to turn our “what-ifs” into “when”, our possibilities into practical solutions in a time of crisis. Your support sustained us, inspired us, pushed us to do better and be better. For that, I thank you.

Though the future is uncertain, I take comfort in what the following pages will show you: that is, the ways in which Toronto Humane Society and our community worked to overcome the obstacles and continue helping animals in new, exciting ways. I take comfort in how my team adapted and found ways to thrive. I take comfort in knowing that, while our methods had to change, our mission of improving the lives of animals never will.

Thank you for being there with us.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jacques Messier, DVM, MBA
Chief Executive Officer

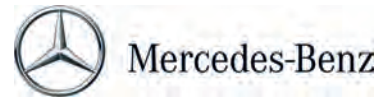
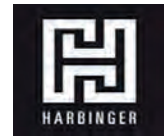


Want to keep up with what’s happening at
your favourite animal shelter?
Sign up for our **free** weekly newsletter at
www.torontohumanesociety.com



OUR CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

Through in-kind, financial support and volunteer programs, corporations across Canada are helping us improve the lives of animals.



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- Trupanion

THANK YOU
TO OUR WONDERFUL SUPPORTERS

OUR MISSION

To promote the humane care and protection of all animals and to prevent cruelty and suffering.

AnimalTalk

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The role of the board is to provide governance oversight for the Toronto Humane Society. The Toronto Humane Society board of directors is a volunteer board and no member of the board receives compensation to perform their board role.

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Canadian Charitable Registration Number 11925 9513 RR0001

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

December 31, 2019, with comparative information for 2018

	2019	2018
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,713,744	\$ 935,035
Accounts receivable	691,377	774,689
Prepaid expenses	53,631	36,502
	2,458,752	1,746,226
Investments and marketable securities	4,334,721	7,549,830
Capital assets	5,259,161	5,229,784
TOTAL ASSETS	\$12,052,634	\$14,525,840
LIABILITIES, DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 844,962	\$ 957,963
Deferred contributions	120,000	35,000
	964,962	992,963
Deferred capital contributions	557,153	735,796
NET ASSETS:		
Invested in capital assets	4,702,008	4,493,988
Restricted for endowment purposes	370,000	370,000
Unrestricted	5,458,511	7,933,093
Commitments	10,530,519	12,797,081
TOTAL LIABILITIES, DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS AND NET ASSETS	\$ 12,052,634	\$ 14,525,840

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Year ended December 31, 2019, with comparative figures for 2018

	2019	2018
REVENUE:		
Fundraising, promotion and public education	\$ 5,506,914	\$ 5,485,265
Legacies and bequests	2,976,810	3,898,142
Adoption of animal donations and related fees	1,367,749	959,398
Spay/Neuter Clinic Income	1,039,809	839,595
Unrealized gain on investments	411,963	-
Realized investment income	332,247	375,376
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	178,643	168,370
	11,814,135	11,726,146
EXPENSES:		
Animal care and shelter services	9,795,928	8,459,122
Spay/Neuter Clinic expense	1,349,923	1,096,338
General and administration	1,211,170	1,129,792
Fundraising, promotion and public education	1,044,008	942,618
Education programs	431,120	294,773
Subsidized veterinary care	198,643	301,000
Investment expense	49,905	61,513
Unrealized loss on investments	-	350,719
	14,080,697	12,635,875
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ (2,266,562)	\$ (909,729)

TORONTO HUMANE SOCIETY **BY THE NUMBERS**

We'd love to share some of our fantastic achievements from 2019 at Toronto Humane Society!

 **3,200**

Over 3,200 animals came into our care in 2019, and found their forever homes.

 **1,200**

Nearly 1,200 pets were placed with foster parents, where they waited to be adopted.

 **5,400**

Over 5,400 spay/neuters were performed last year.

 **1,800**

Every year we try to increase our life-saving capacity by building and expanding partnerships with other communities and organizations through our Rescue Transport Program. This program continues to allow us to help other organizations decrease their euthanasia rate. In 2019 our Rescue Transport Program brought over 1,800 animals to Toronto Humane Society

 **320**

Over 320 animals came into the shelter through medical surrender last year.

 **17,000**

Together we improved the lives of over 17,000 animals!

 **23,238**

In 2019, our volunteers recorded 23,238 hours within the shelter! That is over 2.5 years of hours volunteered to help the animals and with various day-to-day tasks at the Toronto Humane Society! Thank you to those 447 active volunteers who dedicated their time.

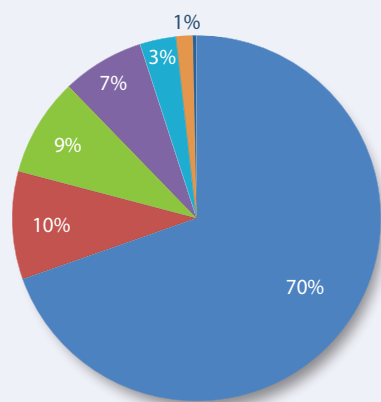
 **\$ 265,000+**

As time goes on and the cost of Veterinary Care continues to rise, the Toronto Humane Society understands how important it is to have accessible services for those who are on income supplementation.




Providing care for these individuals, helps keep animals in their loving homes, and out of the shelter system. In 2019, we were able to offer over \$265,000 in Subsidized Care Services for those in need.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Toronto Humane Society understands that we are accountable to each and every one of our donors. We remain focused on ensuring that as much as possible of every dollar received goes directly to improving the lives of animals. In 2019, fundraising and administration accounted for only 16% (7% fundraising, 9% administration) of our total expenditures. Organizations such as Charity Intelligence provide top ratings for charities with fundraising costs below 15% and administration costs between 2% and 12.5%



2019 Percent of total expense

-  Animal Care and Shelter Services
-  Spay/Neuter Clinic
-  General Administration
-  Fundraising, Promotion and Public Education
-  Education programs
-  Subsidized Veterinary Care
-  Investment Expenses

HOW WE HAVE ADAPTED IN A **TIME OF CRISIS**

And have continued to put animals in their forever homes

As the New Year rang in for 2020, everyone had high hopes, believing 2020 would be a great end to the decade, and a great start to a new one. However, 2020 took a turn and within 3 months, the status quo of Toronto, and the rest of the world had been disrupted. Midway through March most of Toronto had its doors shut to the public, including Toronto Humane Society, due to COVID-19.

Though deemed essential, we could only take in animals who were in need of urgent care due to the number of people who could be in the building, under Government Physical Distancing Guidelines. With many of our services being in-person, including adoptions, we had to get creative, and we had to do it FAST!



We decided to go virtual. The virtual adoption process is very similar to our pre-pandemic system, as you need to fill out an adoption questionnaire that provides the shelter with information on your lifestyle. Once received, an Adoption Counselor will be in touch, who will set up a virtual meeting, and if well suited for the animal you are interested in, there will be a Virtual Meet and Greet. The adoption will then be finalized via email. Since needing to close our doors in March, we have still been able to place hundreds of animals into their fur-ever homes.

Toronto Humane Society has had a lower number of animals coming into our care, and an increase in potential adopters (2,700+ applications) as many people are now working from home. With more individuals looking to adopt a pet, there is some speculation that there will be an increase of admission requests once this is all over. Once this is over, people's routines will change and it is likely more people will be unable to care for their pet. "The big thing folks should keep in mind is that pet ownership takes a fair bit of time and money, so when life starts to resemble the busier 'normal' we are used to, it will be more challenging and everyone needs to be prepared to spend time caring for their pet regardless of what life throws their way," says Greg Ratelle, Senior Manager of Client Care, at Toronto Humane Society. If thinking about adopting a pet during quarantine, please be mindful of their needs, and if your lifestyle will suit a pet once this is all over.

FOSTERS IN A **DANGEROUS TIME**

The race to get animals into homes after nationwide shutdowns



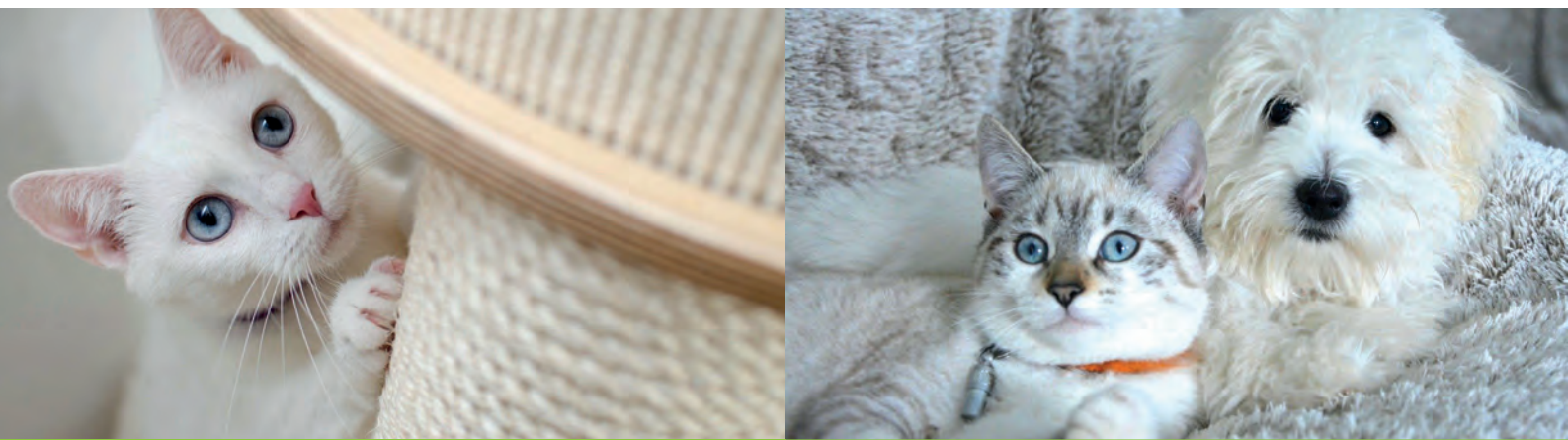
The closure of our facility came with many questions and more concerns. First among them: the animals. To keep everyone safe, we could no longer have as many staff and volunteers onsite. With fewer hands available, we had to get the animals out and into foster homes as quickly as possible.

This was something we had never done before. Not on this scale. It was a balancing act between speed and specificity, navigating the pressures of a pandemic while carefully finding the right home for every animal. After many long days and even longer nights, the team pulled it off. In less than 2 weeks, we found foster homes for over 100 animals.

"I was amazed by how quickly our foster team, Toronto Humane Society staff, and foster parents came together to accomplish this goal," said Larisa Nagelberg, Toronto Humane Society's Division Manager, Community Sheltering and Animal Transport. But this was just the beginning. "Once the animals were finally in foster care," Larisa went on, "we had to shift our focus again to make sure the 250+ animals in foster and their caregivers were receiving the support they needed." The

challenges of finding foster homes in a pandemic forced fast-thinking and fresh ideas. "Since COVID-19 began we have had to play with new strategies in foster care and implement them at unprecedented speeds," said Larisa. From the new virtual adopt-from-foster program to a Foster Parent Supply Network, necessity has helped us find new, more efficient ways of getting animals into homes.

When we closed our doors, the animals were on everyone's mind. Luckily we have a flexible Foster Team who, with the help of a generous community of animal lovers, made sure that, despite all the uncertainty, the animals would be taken care of.



SUPPORTING A COMMUNITY **IN CRISIS**

With incomes lost and people facing tough choices, we doubled our efforts to keep families together

Toronto's streets were mostly empty. Coffee shops once bustling with morning commuters were closed. Popular lunch spots were boarded up from the inside. Streetcars usually packed front to back were half full, if that. It was quiet.

If you looked closer, you'd notice there were still people moving through the isolation. Cleaners and cashiers. Couriers peddling their bikes, packing their vans, healthcare workers braving another shift. Among this small crowd were Toronto Humane Society staff and volunteers. They were driving pet food to where it was needed. They were filling a van with PPE equipment for St. Michael's Hospital. They were hauling boxes, pushing skids, doing what they could to help people care for and remain with their animals. The community was on lockdown, but people still needed help.

Here are some of the ways Toronto Humane Society supported the community through these challenging times.

Helping Frontline Workers

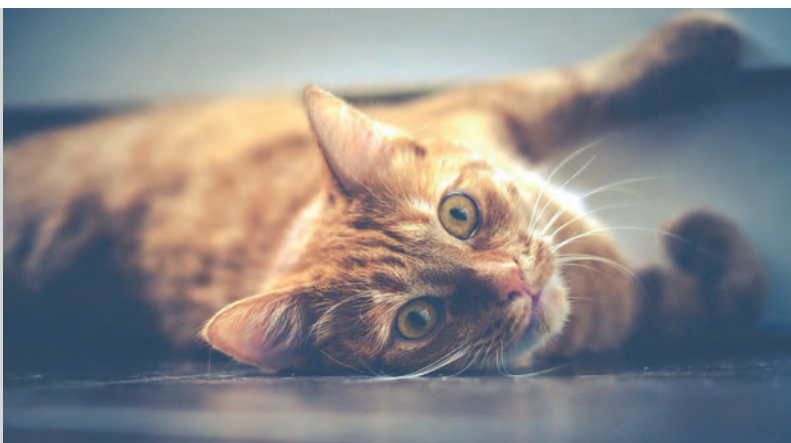
At the beginning of the outbreak, questions were plenty, facts were few. Was it seasonal? How long could it last on surfaces? Mask, or no mask? What was clear was that the people dedicating their lives to helping the sick were woefully under-equipped. Hand sanitizer and face masks weren't just unavailable at your local pharmacy. They were running out of them in hospitals, too.

We contacted St. Michael's and asked if they were in need of PPE. We received an emphatic "Yes." So, with most of our shelter animals safe in foster homes, we gathered up our unused medical gear, filled a van with it, and dropped it off as a donation. We then asked our supporters if they could sew masks for us to use in the meantime. Long story short: we won't be running out of facemasks any time soon.

Pet Parent Support Network

The launch of our Pet Parent Support Network was, in many ways, a continuation of what we have always done: help people care for their pets. In other ways, it was a new chapter in our development. Through a new, interactive database, built from and sustained by Toronto Humane Society's researchers and practitioners, frontline staff have the tools to better support people in need, all with the click of a button.

The staff network compiles the most reliable, up-to-date information in animal care, and provides to those who engage with members of the community.



This program marks an important step in our mission as we shift our focus from reacting to animal vulnerability to influencing and eliminating the causes of vulnerability. Of these causes, one stands out: the separation of people from their animals due to a lack of means or knowledge. By empowering pet parents, by giving them the resources and tools to care for their animals, we stop the cycle before it starts.

Shelter Outreach Program

Many non-profit organizations are struggling right now. Under a nationwide lockdown, they have been thrown into survival mode, forced to cut back on programs and services their communities rely on.

In the Shelter Outreach Program, we are offering the knowledge and expertise of our medical staff to shelters hit hardest by COVID-19. They can now consult with and learn from our experienced veterinarians through virtual telemedicine. The animals these organizations care for will get the veterinary care they need, while they themselves won't have to worry about costs – thanks to a sponsorship from Purina Veterinary Diets.

Foster Delivery System

Our foster network has always been important to us. But after we shut our doors, it was what determined our next steps. With less staff and volunteers on site, we had to find temporary homes for all of our shelter animals. Luckily, enough people opened their doors and provided a safe place for all of them.

Once we had the animals in temporary homes, we needed to find a way to sustain this now much larger network of foster homes. This led to the creation of a Foster Delivery System, a unique way to deliver foster supplies directly to the foster parent's home. This reduces exposure to both our staff and foster parent, all while continuing to maintain fewer people in the building.

Pet Food Bank

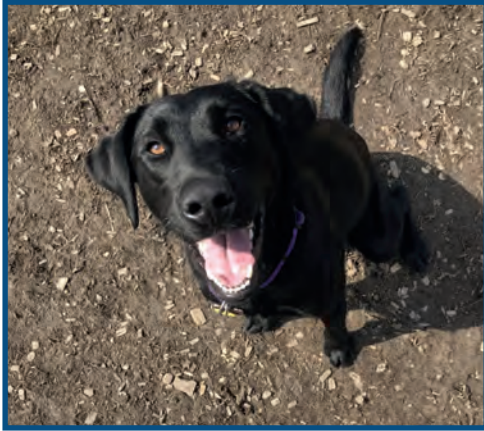
No one should ever have to choose between feeding themselves or their pet. But in the midst of a global pandemic, some came dangerously close to making that choice, or giving up their animal entirely. COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on people's lives. Many have died, while many more have lost their incomes. Some businesses won't be opening back up again. People are suddenly struggling to care for those they love, including their pets.

The Pet Food Bank has always been there to help people care for their pets. But we had to ramp it up in the wake of COVID-19. Requests for help came from families, shelters, food banks, and other animal organizations who needed help supplying petfood to their communities. We doubled, tripled, and quadrupled our efforts to meet this need. Since early March, staff and volunteers have been doing weekly handouts and drops offs for a growing list of organizations in the community. We plan on continuing these efforts for as long as we need to.

ADOPTIONS BEFORE A CRISIS

Pet parents finding love

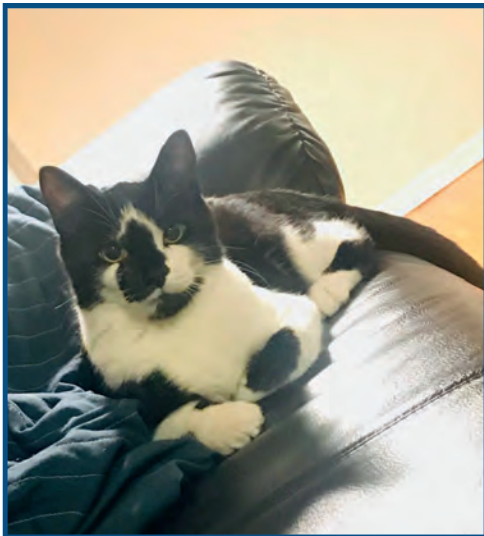
In a time of crisis, we want to celebrate some of the animals who have found their forever homes. Here are a few we have heard from recently:



Maya

April 03, 2020

(Formerly Mattie) When we first got Maya she was nervous. We don't know what she went through previously when she came from Tennessee to THS. Stairs were her biggest fright. However, diligently we worked on it. Every little thing she had been scared of she overcame and blossomed into this sweet, gentle, loving dog. Everyday she became more confident and seemingly her true self. I could not have asked for a sweeter girl. Maya has made our family more whole. We helped her, but she has really helped us. Thank you to THS staff who allowed us to see her regularly the week before we could take her home. It really helped. Maya has made everyday brighter.

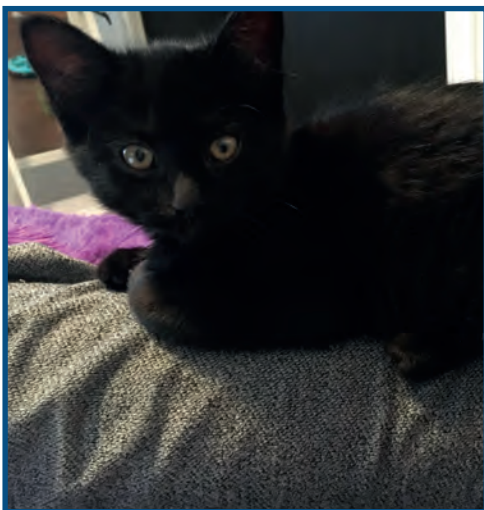


Murphy

May 07, 2020

(Formerly Charles Boyle) My first pet, my kitten, Murphy, the prince is amazing! We adopted him in May this year from Toronto Humane Society and he is now 6 months old. He has claimed his place in my home from the very first day. He is super energetic, incredibly curious and on top of it, and so sweet and friendly. He has lots of safe spaces to run around in and climb on like Superman, as well as a bunch of cat toys to play with his as he has unlimited energy. He is a natural explorer and enjoys taking naps in various places. He never fails to make me laugh with his crazy sleeping postures.

He is me and my wife's sweetheart and we both love him more than anything in life. We enjoy playing together with lots of kisses and cuddles. I have never been so happy in my entire life and feel myself super lucky to have found a new companion. Thank you THS!



Sunny

May 21, 2020

(Formerly Charlie) We had a cat since July 2017 and my daughter wanted us to adopt another one. I was a bit resistant but we went to Toronto Humane Society and as soon as we met Sunny, we fell in love with him. He is so cute, joyful and playful. He keeps our other cat Summer really busy. Now he's 8 months old, and he looks so handsome. He's very active and makes us laugh every day. We feel so blessed to have him in our lives. Having Summer and Sunny makes our hearts bigger. They are our babies. Toronto Humane Society is awesome, they allowed us to meet different kittens until we found Sunny and they were super helpful.

Thank you for the amazing job you do, allowing humans and pets to fall in love forever! "Until one has loved an animal a part of one's soul remains unawakened".

HOW WE HAVE CONTINUED TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF ANIMALS **DURING A PANDEMIC**

It has been about 4 months since we have had to close our doors to the public but we have still been here for animals in urgent need of our care. One of these animals was a 5-year-old bulldog mix named Bentley.

This sweet and friendly boy, was brought to an animal hospital in late April, as his owner noticed he wasn't urinating, and seemed to be in a lot of pain. The hospital got in touch with Toronto Humane Society who set up a Telemedicine consult to learn more about Bentley's situation. Once Bentley was brought into the shelter, it was apparent that he needed to undergo a cystotomy (bladder surgery).

Bentley was in an obvious state of pain, and cried a lot, as there was an obstruction in his urinary tract. With the cystotomy surgery, our skilled veterinarians were able to remove the obstruction and multiple blood clots.

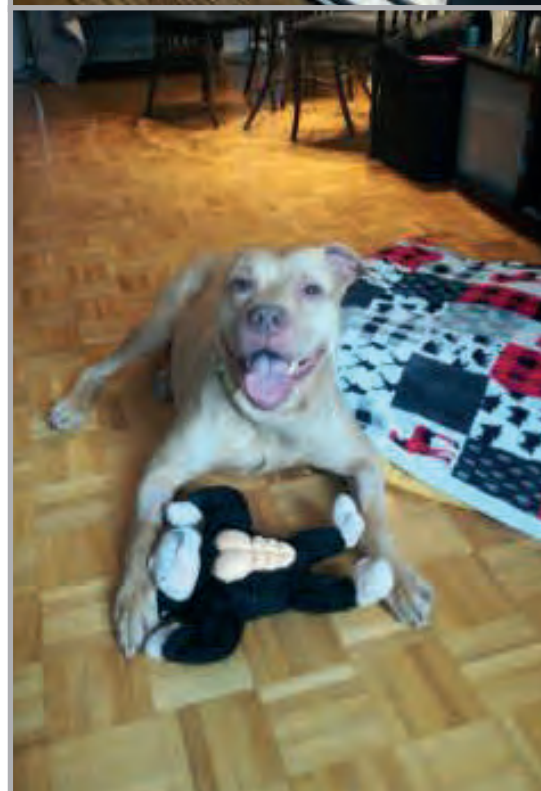
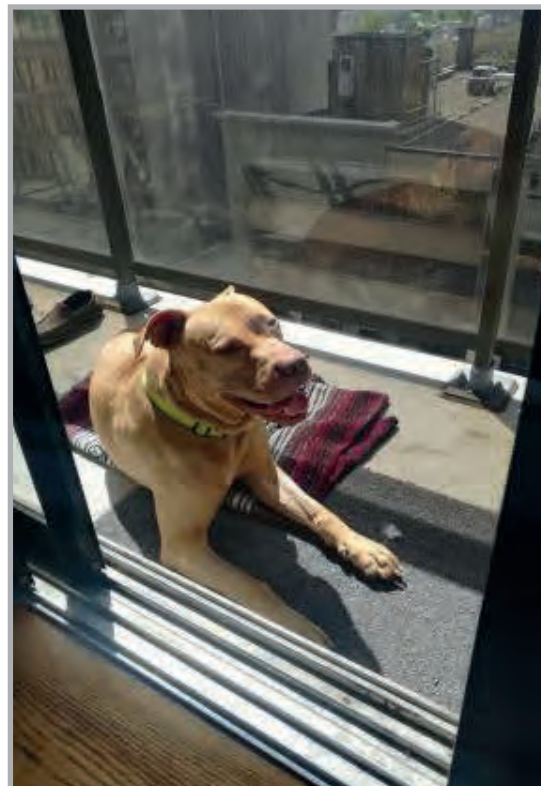
After the surgery, Bentley was put on an IV to eat. Our amazing medical team at Toronto Humane Society checked on him daily, and within two days he was given the 'OK' to stop the IV fluids and was put on to wet food, which he loved! This good boy, was put onto medications to help with the pain and other minor symptoms he was experiencing. Within the week, he was sent out to his new temporary home with one of our loving foster parents!

Bentley was settling in quite well in the apartment setting and loved going on long walks! His incision site was healing, his diarrhea was slowly resolving and his appetite was coming back! He was on the road to recovery, or so we thought.

Less than two weeks after Bentley had his surgery, his foster parent noticed Bentley seemed a bit off. He wasn't acting like his normal puppy self and at times was even shaking. After seeing his swollen incision, Bentley's foster parent knew they needed to bring him to Toronto Humane Society.

When they arrived our medical team got to work, and after running a few tests, they determined Bentley's bladder had herniated. Right away, Bentley was rushed to emerge for another surgery. Following the operation, Bentley came back to Toronto Humane Society to recover.

Days following the surgery, Bentley was re-checked and when he was all set, his loving and worried foster parent came to pick him up. Bentley is now happily enjoying puppyhood with his foster parents. He's keeping active, loves his long walks and is now on the road to recovery.



VIRTUAL SERVICES THAT **PET PARENTS CAN ACCESS**

Innovative training for canine enrichment

Since we had to shut our doors to the public in March, we have also had to be innovative with how our services could still be accessible, while still adhering to the physical distancing standards in place. As more people are now working from home, and seeing new behaviours from their canine family members, we launched our virtual training classes.

Using Zoom, pet parents receive similar results as they would with in-person training. With the pandemic, we are urging dog parents to register for these sessions as they get to spend more time with their furry family member, and add enrichment into their lives. With routines changing, new behaviours might develop or be noticed, and this is the time to work on any challenges.

If you are someone who now works from home, it is important to practice independence training, for when you have to go back to work. "Pet parents can make the transition easier for their pet by slowly increasing the amount of time they are spending alone. Even if their pet was used to being left home alone before, all the recent changes can be stressful for them. Pet parents should be working on crate/confinement training if necessary and leaving their pets alone for increasing periods of time so they are not stressed when things go back to normal," says Jessica Tartiaglia, Trainer, at Toronto Humane Society.

Though our routines have been changed, and the status quo of our daily life has been disrupted, pet parents should take advantage of our new virtual training classes, as it will help add structure to your pet's life. It's important to remember that life is always changing and the way we're living through this pandemic is likely to change again, and again, as we begin to see businesses reopen. Pet parents should be working with their pets to make sure they're ready for any potential changes.



How virtual feline behavioural classes can help your cat

When the global pandemic hit Toronto in mid-March, it sparked panic for many organizations. But at Toronto Humane Society, we used it as an opportunity to find new ways to continue improving the lives of animals. As we were hearing about new behaviours developing, it sparked some new ideas for our training team! One of these ideas was bringing to light our Virtual Feline Behavioural Classes. These classes are great for cat parents who have questions or are looking to modify their pets behaviour while in an environment that is comfortable and homey.



The consultation offers insight into problem solving which will help train cat parents while supporting the cat in need. The first session will take form in a discussion with a trainer over Skype to determine what information the owner is looking to receive. During this session the trainer will also observe the cat, and create a management and training plan that the owner will then use and practice. Following this, there will need to be a follow-up session to monitor the progress that has been made. These sessions are great for cats that may display:

- Litterbox problems
- Scent marking
- Aggression
- Obsessive grooming
- Chronic hiding

Since the pandemic, more cat owners are noticing different behaviours in their pet. Some behaviours they have not seen before, or maybe it's a new attitude that has developed as their families are home more often than they were used to. There has been an increase of pet owners noticing 'displacement behaviours' which are behaviours that happen out of anxiety and are unusual for that pet. "If cat owners notice a new behaviour, and it's alarming, like grooming too frequently and creating bald patches, the cat needs to go to the veterinarian, and the pet parents need to increase the enrichment opportunities for the cat", says Dr. Jackelyn Ellis, Manager of Feline Behaviour, Enrichment, and Rehabilitation at Toronto Humane Society. If you notice your cat acting a bit stranger than usual, bring in new toys, scratching poles, and climbing towers, and speak to a professional who can help support your cats needs!

HOW PET PARENTS BENEFIT FROM **TELEMEDICINE**



Since March, Toronto Humane Society has been coming up with great new virtual initiatives to ensure pets are receiving the same care that was being provided before the pandemic hit. One of these new initiatives is our Telemedicine Consultations which are a great way for both foster parents and pet parents to have virtual appointments with our Veterinarians, while limiting the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

“The telemedicine portion of the visit consists of getting to know the Pet Parent, taking a full medical history for that pet, discussing their options for preventative care and tailoring a plan to their pet before the curbside appointment. This allows us to save Pet Parents a visit to the shelter when possible and to create a more efficient visit when it comes time to deliver the service,” says Dr. Jamie Freeman, Veterinarian, Toronto Humane Society.

With the appointments being virtual, it saves the stress and fear that lots of pets endure when being in a car or vet clinic, and enables the pet parents to be more receptive to the information that is being given as there are less distractions. Because of this, pet parents and veterinarians can focus solely on the pet.

Another great benefit to this service is how efficient it is, as individuals in remote communities are able to use it. “For individuals in more rural, or remote areas, it can be difficult to get to a vet clinic. With this service, those individuals can use telemedicine and potentially eliminate the need for transport and associated stress for their pet! It is a great service, as it is cost efficient, and can improve access to veterinary care,” says Dr. Karen Ward, Chief Veterinary Officer, Toronto Humane Society.

This service has already benefited over 400 pets! One of these pets was a cat who needed its Annual Check-Up, and during the telemedicine consult, our veterinarian staff were able to diagnose clinical signs of feline asthma. After setting up a curbside appointment, our staff was able to send the cat home with anti-anxiety medication to allow future visits to be more stress-free. When it came time to the follow up telemedicine service, the pet parents were able to adjust the dose of her puffer, and worked alongside the feline behavioural trainer to get her used to the puffer. Her asthma is now controlled!

This virtual service has so many benefits. It has opened up the line of communication between veterinarians and pet parents, it's more cost efficient as it's less expensive and you don't need to worry about taking time from your day to travel to our facility, it allows individuals in rural areas to have access to care, and ensures a positive experience with less stress for the animal.

COMING TOGETHER, **EVEN WHEN APART**

Innovative virtual events during a pandemic

A woman and her black lab wander into Woodbine Park at exactly 9:00 am. Behind them, a young family and their three little terriers. Another group follows. Then another, and another, until the park is packed with people and their pets. At 10, they gather at a starting line. Someone in a bright green staff shirt calls out, "Ready, set, go!" And so begins Paws in the Park, Toronto Humane Society's largest fundraising event.

Woodbine Park is mostly empty now. A large COVID-19 sign greets those who try the parking lot. Yellow caution tape decorates the paths. The large stage sits alone in a field where people used to gather and enjoy themselves. At this time, it is unclear when this will happen again.

Every part of our organization was impacted by COVID-19, but the Events Team was hit hardest. Their whole aim is bringing people together. Team Experience Day, Pet Pics with Santa, Rescue Yoga, and so on. But overnight, everything was put on hold. The lost revenue was one thing. Not being able to connect with our community? That was another.

In a time of mass closures and physical distancing, the Events Team had to get creative with online platforms.

In the beginning, the shift was hard. "The biggest challenge was creating virtual events that have a similar experience to in-person events," said Alisha Uglow, Toronto Humane Society's Event Coordinator. "For many people, what makes events special is being able to interact with the animals and provide hands-on help within the building. It was difficult to provide those experiences through a computer."

But after some trial and error, the team found their footing. They came up with new, innovative ways of connecting with our supporters that fostered togetherness, even when physically apart.

Trivia Tuesdays was the first item on the list. And based on the feedback we received, it was the distraction people needed from the world outside. Our 50/50 Lottery Raffle was another. This was exciting because it was our first ever raffle. We were all so new to the process, and weren't sure what to expect. But in the first 24 hours of tickets being available for purchase, we generated over \$10,000 in sales, and finished with \$118,000 in ticket sales, with the winner taking home over \$59,000.

More virtual events have been coming one after another. Our Blind Auction, for example, was a hit, raising over \$5,500 in donations. Then of course there is the virtual Beer Tasting, Yoga Poses with your Pet, Movie nights and more. With so much of our revenue cut short by lockdowns, closures, and cancellations, these events have allowed us to continue the work we do. They have also brought people together at a time of crisis.

As for Paws in the Park, we have a plan for that too. For the first time ever, the event will play out on an interactive online platform. Do we wish we could see everyone again at Woodbine Park? Of course. But the silver lining is this: before, not everyone was able to make the trip to Woodbine Park. Now that it's online, people can take part no matter where they are. And once everything goes back to normal, we can combine the virtual with the in-person for a more accessible experience for everyone.

Bringing people together for events, big and small, is part of who we are. It's how we engage with our community. It's how we make a difference in the world. But being adaptable in changing circumstances, remaining determined no matter what we're up against – that's also a part of who we are.

While we all wait for the return to normal, expect Toronto Humane Society to continue finding new ways of bringing people together in our community.



GIFTS OF LOVE

We gratefully acknowledge the donors who have given gifts of \$80 or more in honour or in memory of a special person or pet. Tribute gifts are a thoughtful and meaningful way of acknowledging a loved one's memory, expressing your good wishes or commemorating an occasion.

IN MEMORY



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Ami Chen
Andrew Himel
Angela Lynn Jones
Anna Luczka
Anne Rahamut
Anne-Marie Horton
Arthur Pollack
Ashton Wang
Baby, Bandit, and Stinky
Bailey
Bailey Lin
Barbara Wride (Wallace)
Benson
Betty Freeman
Bianca & Osita
Bill Triantafillou
Blackie
Bonnie
Boomer Peters
Brandy Howcroft
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Donna Ashworth
Dr. Peter Venkman
Elizabeth Mahnke & Manhattan
Elizabeth Pearce
Elmo
Eustace our pigeon
Farley Mowat
Foster & Bandit Sigrist
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Leone Callander
Lex
Lexis Mayhew
Lilly Miller
Little Bub
Lobo
Lois Bertram
Lorna Stein
Lucy
Marcella Bridget Jenkins
Margaret Cox
Margaret Miller
Margarita Hall
Maria Des Tombe
Marieliese
Tisseverasinghe
Marion Nicholson
Matthew Ambrozic
Mercury Mansfield
Michael Wise
Mickey son of Lisa and Mylo

Mildred Joan Ridout
Mildred Ridout
Minou
Miss Puss Lorinc
Missy
Misty
Montana
Monty
Moses
Mr. David Jones
Mrs Bonish
Murphy, Blackie, Blinky and Sabre
Murray Cass
Murray Drudge
My lovely Luna
Noreen Marcotte
Obie
Parker
Payton
Peanut, Trooper & Thumper
Penny, Blackster & other cats
Pepper Hugessen
Phanindra Deonandan
Pollock Constance
Poncho, FluffyTikka
BouncerTabbyCleo
Qiu Qiu Wong
Regina Kapferer
Reina
Rick Roe
Riley
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Sarath Sri
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Sneezy Deezy
Sophie and Kurt Sickle
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Tuffy & Ruffy
Tuk
Tuna Boat Tony
Tyco Ebrahim
Tyrion
Violet Vieira
Virginia
Warren Batting
Warren Snow
Wendy Flynn
Wiley Bear
Willi Uthof
William Bill Morton

IN HONOUR

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Amy Tang
Bella Newhope
Ben Sheldon
Beth and Rob
Bianca and Osita
Bob & Pop
Christine
Christine Shah
Colin
Dan Dickinson
David Brickman & Valerie & Mike
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IS GOING VIRTUAL!

**Saturday August 8th &
Sunday August 9th, 2020**

Look out for more information on
our website and on social media!

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