

Annual Report 2024



Celebrating lives saved and futures created.

This report highlights our achievements and the incredible impact our shelter has made in the community over the past year.

From the Shelter Director - Tucker Chase



2024 was another great year of growth and community engagement for the Bitter Root Humane Association. Our impact was not only felt in Ravalli County but beyond our valley into neighboring states like Idaho and Washington, and as far as California, Texas, and New York. Through the generous donations of local businesses and the public, we were able to once again offer roughly 42,500 pounds of food and countless other supplies like beds, blankets, water bowls, cat litter and toys, to anyone who needed them through our free community pet pantry. As the only animal shelter in the valley, BRHA is proud to continue our founding principles of offering a haven to all domestic animals no matter their needs or circumstances.

We were once again recognized nationally as a no-kill shelter, allowing us to qualify for support from several national organizations. Locally, groups like the Rapp Family Foundation, the students at Bitterroot Early Learning Network, and Evans Ace Hardware, along with private donations, made it possible for us to not only keep our doors open seven days a week, but also provide the community with free vaccines, microchips, ID tags, and for the first time in our shelter's history, public low-cost spay and neuter services. It takes an amazing amount of effort and money to provide the services and life-saving work that our shelter gives 365 days a year, and we do it relying purely on donations and grants. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for shelters to operate without contracts with their local municipalities, but that is where we find ourselves still. Without the support of the public through monetary donations and volunteer work, we would not have been able to help the 958* pets that came through our doors in 2024, resulting in nearly 700 adoptions and close to 200 lost pets returning home.

We saw some truly inspiring stories this past year. The most heartwarming of our animal tales was a lovable dog named Duke who first came through our doors in August of 2022 and spent 677 days waiting for a new home. Duke came to the shelter as a stray with some rough edges but with the devotion and determination from our staff and volunteers, he was able find a loving, forever home.

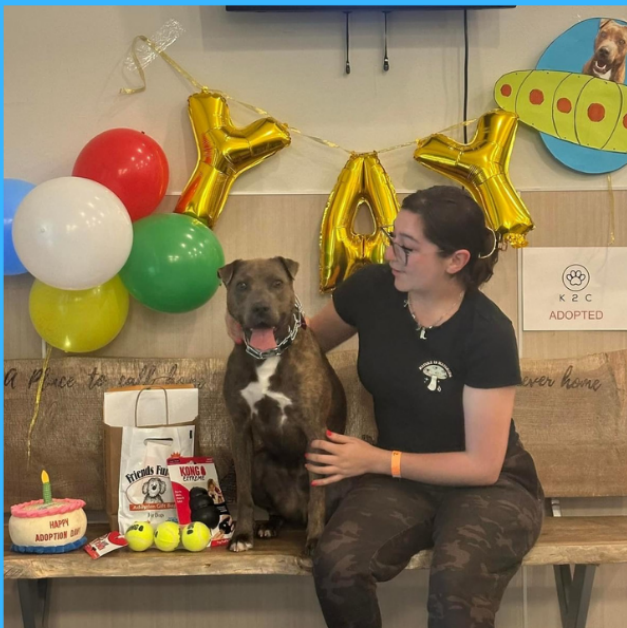
Director's Report Cont'd...

Another example comes by way of Texas where a spunky little pup named Ruffles was having a hard time adjusting to shelter life. The Bitter Root Humane Association was asked to give her a new place to stay while she was being considered for a new lease on life through the Search Dog Foundation in California. We gladly accepted the opportunity, and Dog is My Copilot, in collaboration with Petco Love, flew her from sunny Abilene, Texas to Hamilton, Montana. While here, staff and volunteers were able to put her through the rigorous tests that showed her potential, and after several interviews with the Search Dog Foundation, Ruffles was accepted into their program and is well on her way to becoming an amazing search and rescue responder.

I am so thankful for the community support that we have received this year. Our first gala, affectionately called The Howling, turned out to be the biggest fundraiser to date. Without the assistance of our community and local businesses, BRHA would not be able to help the pets and owners in our valley, plain and simple. I look forward to 2025 and the plans we have to continue to grow our community services and impacting the lives of so many more pets that call our valley home.

Tucker Chase

Shelter Director



“Duke” on his adoption day



“Ruffles” hard at work training for her new job!

Key Numbers

1060 animals received

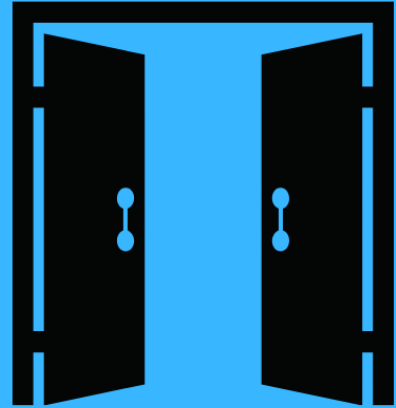
525 dogs

479 cats

39 pocketpets

10 livestock

7 other



190 lost pets returned home



779 pets adopted



4899 volunteer hours



From the Volunteer Coordinator - Charlotte Sellers



2024 has been an extraordinary year for the Volunteer Program, filled with growth, learning, and connection. The volunteer force continues to steadily grow month by month, with November seeing the highest number of volunteer hours recorded this year. This remarkable momentum inspires hope and a deep sense of gratitude as we look to the future. With more volunteers joining our team, the opportunities for meaningful engagement continue to expand.

This year, we made it a priority to strengthen our presence within the community, being present at more events and activities throughout the valley. By being actively involved, we've not only encouraged people to become volunteers but also fostered new relationships with individuals and organizations. Each event, every hour donated, and all the connections made remind us of the incredible impact we can achieve together.

4,899 hours of volunteer were logged this year; a testament to the dedication and generosity of our volunteers. These hours, meticulously recorded using our new software, reveal a consistent trend of growth, showcasing the expanding reach and influence of our program.

Dog walking continues to be the cornerstone of our volunteer activities, driven by a passionate and dependable group who have made it a daily ritual. These dedicated individuals not only walk dogs but are now stepping into mentorship roles, helping new volunteers gain confidence and skills. They've also started contributing to behavior evaluations and updating pet profile information, demonstrating a deep commitment to the well-being of the animals in our care. Their efforts exemplify how small acts of kindness can ripple into profound change.

This summer, our volunteers helped bring BRHA to the heart of the community through a variety of events: pop-up adoptions, fundraisers, "friend"-raisers, and social gatherings. Whether walking dogs, wrangling kittens, or setting up event spaces, our volunteers made each event a success. These moments, both with and without our furry companions, allowed us to forge meaningful connections with people and businesses. The relationships we build at these events are the foundation for attracting more adopters, donors, volunteers, and friends, all of whom are vital to supporting our mission.

Volunteer Report cont'd...

In the coming year, BRHA's new Behavior and Enrichment program will give volunteers opportunities to make an even greater impact. From creating enrichment items like boxes, tubes, and stuffed Kongs, to assisting with behavior evaluations, volunteers will play an essential role in enhancing the quality of life for the animals in our care.

The "Tales 4 Tails" program will invite children to read to our animals, fostering socialization and literacy skills. As kids fill punch cards through 15-minute reading sessions, they'll earn gift cards to local businesses—a win for our animals, our children, and our community.

Building on this year's successes, we aim to deepen our involvement in the community. BRHA will become a standing member of the Hamilton Downtown Association and increase its presence at downtown events. We are also collaborating more closely with the Chamber of Commerce, participating in their business-to-business events, and partnering with local schools to expand humane education initiatives. Additionally, we plan to work with the police department to offer community service opportunities for juvenile offenders, embracing the chance to positively influence lives beyond our shelter.

As we reflect on 2024, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for the volunteers who give their time, energy, and hearts to BRHA. Every hour, every smile, every shared moment has strengthened our mission and brought hope to the animals and people we serve. Together, we are building a more compassionate community—one connection, one step, one act of kindness at a time. We look forward to the adventures and opportunities 2025 will bring, confident that with your continued support, we will achieve even greater things. Thank you for being an integral part of this journey.

Charlotte Sellers

Volunteer Coordinator



Volunteers

AT THE HEART OF IT ALL...



“Petting, scratching, and cuddling a dog could be as soothing to the mind and heart as deep meditation and almost as good for the soul as prayer.” – Dean Koontz

Wet noses,
beating hearts!



BRHA continues to be a no-kill shelter.

95% of the animals entrusted to our care were saved.

While euthanasia remains low, it is an unfortunate reality.

We never place a time limit on any animals but there are circumstances such as severe aggression or those that are seriously ill with diminished quality of life that we assist in passing peacefully.

We are part of the Bitterroot Community!

378 community pets received FREE microchips and 416 ID tags during our initiative.

568 community dogs and cats received FREE vaccines through our partnership with PetCo Love.

12 spays and neuters were performed in our first in-house community, low-cost clinic!

More than 42,500 pounds of food and supplies was distributed from our FREE pet pantry, helping to keep loving owners and their pets together.

We assisted during wildfire season, offering supplies and compiling available evacuation sites for livestock, campers, trailers, and families. We supported local Red Cross shelters with crates and pet supplies for evacuees.





Our Team

Board of Directors

Lisa Allison - President

Jen Chase - Vice President

Vanessa Hammond- Secretary

Linda Williams - Treasurer

Barbara Garten

Robin Dewey

Chad Hillman

Gina Knepp

Cynthia Fisher

Melissa Ryan



President emeritus

Kathy Good
Kathie Butts

