

Why we are proud of CHA Animal Shelter

Citizens for Humane Action Inc., DBA, CHA Animal Shelter is a 501(c)(3) non-profit animal shelter dedicated to finding loving, permanent homes for homeless cats and dogs in Franklin and surrounding counties.

CHA Animal Shelter depends upon a small staff and many dedicated volunteers to provide quality care, hope, and homes for the lost, abandoned, and unwanted animals that pass through the shelter.

CHA Animal Shelter goes beyond the typical care and treatment for its residents. Through its Emergency Medical Fund (EMF), we have been able to provide treatments for such conditions as heartworm, intestinal parasites, and dental disease, along with the more critical care required for broken bones and other severe injuries. The EMF has helped us save many animals that may not have otherwise had a chance at life. CHA established an Enrichment Fund in 2008 in order to improve quality of life for our residents during their stay with us.

CHA Animal Shelter operates as a limited intake, low-kill shelter. We only have a limited number of cages and once we are full we cannot accept any more animals. We also have an extensive network of foster homes, which will temporarily take in animals that might otherwise be too young, too sick, or too scared to be in the shelter. Once an animal is accepted into the adoption program, we work hard to find them permanent, loving homes, no matter how long that takes.

Successes over the years

CHA started in 1975 when three friends noted the growing number of stray animals wandering the streets of Franklin County. They formed a non-profit corporation under O.R.C. § 1717.05 and set out to feed, shelter and find homes for these animals.

Originally operating out of the basement of one of these founders, CHA was able to care for only a small number of dogs and cats. Despite its size and limitations, CHA's reputation for helping the homeless was already beginning to firmly take root.

By the early 1980s, the demand for CHA's services far exceeded the capacity of anyone's basement. The all-volunteer group managed to rent an old farmhouse on Westerville Road where they had cages for nearly 60 animals. Soon the group realized the need to hire a small part-time staff to better care for the animals. They also continued their efforts to reach out to the community for donations and began an aggressive program to find "foster homes" for their animals that needed a respite from their cages at the shelter.

In the past decade, CHA has increased the number of animals it can find homes for by establishing satellite adoptions in several PetsMart locations and extending its outreach to the community by staffing CHA information tables at hundreds of public events and securing air time on local radio and TV stations. And in an effort to ensure long-term income and awareness, CHA has trademarked its largest annual fundraisers - the Dog Jog™, Picnic with the Pups™, Paws to Party™ Wine Tasting, Par for Pets™ Golf Outing, and Hogs for Dogs Poker Run™.

Then in the late 1990's, CHA took on one of its most courageous undertakings. As the walls of farmhouse shelter were literally crumbling down, CHA knew that it was time to move out and move on. CHA volunteers began their search to investigate the best shelter designs, equipment and programs in order to build a new shelter. After many months of seminars, visits to other shelters, meetings, and discussions, the plans for the new CHA shelter were drawn. The designs followed the plan to create not the biggest, fanciest shelter, but the most efficient, sanitary, and comfortable place for the animals that CHA had been diligently serving for over 25 years. Although the new shelter was not elaborate, it was certainly going to take more money than CHA had. It was then that the Capital Campaign Committee was created and a rigorous Capital Campaign was launched to raise the funds to get the desperately needed shelter built. CHA also entered into a relationship with the Columbus Foundation to help secure and raise financial support and manage our endowment fund.

On June 14th, 2003 the doors to the new CHA opened! The animals at CHA finally had what they deserved: separate wings for dogs and cats, isolated sick areas, windows to light their rooms, larger cages and runs, play rooms, and green grass for walks. It was a happy day! But, CHA did not stop there.

Current successes

The staff and volunteers constantly look for ways to improve life for the animals and their chance to be adopted. Since the opening of the new shelter in 2003, CHA has made some significant improvements to its programs. CHA dogs are behavior evaluated through a program called Safer Testing. All animals are microchipped, before leaving the shelter (and are of course, spayed or neutered). CHA has added "real" rooms for cats who are having difficulty adapting to a cage and a spay/neuter recovery room for dogs to get special care and rest after surgery.

CHA was one of the pioneers to promote and practice "pediatric" spay/neuter. Before many shelters, all the animals at CHA, puppies and kittens included, were spayed or neutered before leaving the shelter. CHA's most shining recent addition is its fully operating, in-house Spay/Neuter surgery room. For the first time, CHA can, with the help of local veterinarians, spay and neuter its own animals at the shelter. This forever dream finally became a reality in the beginning of 2008.

Our goal is to offer low- or even no-cost spay and neuter, as well as some other services, to the general public, so we can continue to expand our mission to end pet overpopulation outside our shelter walls. December 19, 2009 CHA will offer its first Low Cost Cat Spay Neuter clinic to the public.

What now?

As the last 30 years have shown, whatever improvements CHA continues to make will be for the betterment of the animals and will remain within the philosophies that keep CHA as one of the most respected animal shelters in Ohio.