

Building Better Futures

Annual Report 2024

Resilience in a Blizzard

A historic blizzard
and a vow to protect

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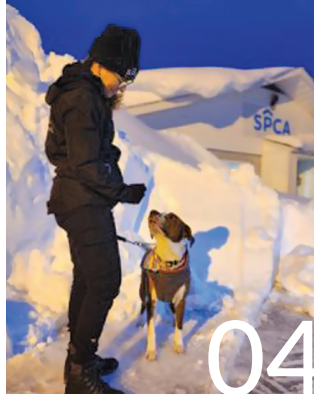
Unleashed & Opened

More than a shelter

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FROM THE GUEST EDITOR'S DESK



In the following pages, you are going to read stories of how the Nova Scotia SPCA Builds Better Futures: Better futures for animals, pet families, staff, volunteers, community, and students. You'll read about courage, resiliency, and devotion. All the articles are my favourite, but celebrating the opening of our first shelter in decades (*unleashed & opened*, pg. 12) is a special one for me.

Donors, volunteers, staff, and contractors all came together to build a beautiful facility in Stellarton, enabling us to help even more animals in Northern Nova Scotia. The first two adoptions were Piper and Paddington, kittens from our Preventing Unwanted Pregnancies program. The smiles on everyone's faces highlight that the future of North Nova is filled with many "Best Days Ever."

Elizabeth Murphy, **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**



The Nova Scotia SPCA's shelter staff, veterinary technicians, veterinarians, enforcement officers and support staff are directly responsible for ensuring the protection and welfare of animals across the Province of Nova Scotia.

As a Board, we want to thank the staff; their dedication and professionalism to animals, pet families and in our province are unmatched and unwavering.

The SPCA grows every year, from adoptions to programs to animals served. To support this growth, we continue to focus on enhancing our organization by providing training and programs for staff and increasing opportunities for revenue development.

As we look towards the next year and beyond, we stay committed to ensuring the best outcomes for animals, pet families, and staff across the province.

Mike Hurley, **CHAIR OF THE BOARD**



Resilience in a Blizzard

By Ryan Toomey

In February 2024 a historic blizzard enveloped Nova Scotia, challenging our resilience and the very fabric of our bond with each other and the animals we vow to protect. Amidst the snowdrifts and icy winds, the Nova Scotia SPCA, particularly our **Cape Breton Shelter**, faced an unprecedented test of spirit and determination. The blizzard's impact was felt deeply across the community, but nowhere more acutely than at our aging Cape Breton Shelter, a beacon for animals in need since 1977. With the storm threatening the structural integrity of our facility, a swift and coordinated **evacuation effort** was put into motion.



Animal Care Attendant Muhammad Haroon slept two nights in the shelter to take care of the animals. A snowmobile ride (his first ever!) helped him get home.



"The evacuation was a moment that tested our resolve and underscored the depth of our commitment to the animal friends in our care," reflected Jennifer Lewis, our Shelter Manager.

"In the face of uncertainty, our team acted with unparalleled courage and efficiency, ensuring the safe relocation of our animals. It was a stark reminder of the lengths we will go to protect every life entrusted to us."

Meanwhile, the blizzard rendered our **thrift store** inoperable, cutting off a vital source of funding for our shelter. Brenda Cunningham, our Thrift Store Manager, recounted the

Herculean effort to reopen: “After the storm had calmed, our team faced mountains of snow between us and our mission. With sleds in tow, we made our way to the **thrift store**, knowing every moment we were closed was a moment lost for our animals in need. We shoveled for hours, fueled by determination and the knowledge that reopening as soon as possible was critical.”

The stories of dedication from our staff were mirrored by the overwhelming support from our community. Neighbors braved the snowy conditions to bring food and essentials to our shelter staff, embodying the spirit of communal resilience. “In times of crisis, the true spirit of our community shines brightest,” the Nova Scotia SPCA Team shared. “The support we’ve received has been overwhelming. It’s a testament to the bond we share, not just with each other but with the animals we vow to protect.”

This blizzard will be remembered not just for the immediate challenges it presented, but for the stories of courage, compassion, and community it inspired. It has reaffirmed the importance of preparedness, the value of companionship, and the strength found in unity. As we move forward, we carry with us the lessons learned, the gratitude for the support received, and the determination to build a stronger, more resilient future for the Nova Scotia SPCA and the animals we cherish.

It was a stark reminder of the lengths we will go to protect every life entrusted to us.





In Our Best Friends Era

In just two months, PetSmart New Minas helped 45 kittens from the Kings SPCA find loving homes. “It is so lovely to have a partnership like this; the love for animals is shared,” says Heather Chapman, RVT and Shelter Liaison, based out of Kings.

“There is a ripple effect to the adoption events,” explains Chapman. “While the kittens were in-store getting adopted, families were still coming to the shelter to adopt. This meant that senior cats were getting adopted. Honestly, the partnership is a win for kittens, cats, shelters, and adopters.”

Through PetSmart Charities of Canada™’s in-store adoption program, stores donate space to help adoptable pets find homes. In Nova Scotia, SPCA shelters across the province partner for adoption events with their local PetSmart stores, creating new families.



Petline is a proud partner of the Nova Scotia SPCA, providing newly adopted animals with a complimentary trial and donations back to the SPCA for every customer who purchases one of our pet health insurance policies.



At the Nova Scotia SPCA, we’re proud to be part of the Hill’s Food, Shelter & Love® program and we feed all our pets Hill’s Science Diet.



To: Loving Families

From: The Nova Scotia SPCA

When Canada Post letter carriers put their key in a red sidewalk mailbox, they expect to find envelopes of all shapes and sizes, maybe even a small package. But sometimes, they find other things.

On one warm summer day in Halifax, three cats were among the bill payments, birthday cards, and wedding invitations. The cats looked up at the mail carrier, hopeful for water, food, and love. A manager at Canada Post knew what to do; he called the Nova Scotia SPCA, which took in the special mail.

The cats were quickly named by the staff in honour of their rescuer. Stamp, Postcard, and Letter sustained minor injuries. Nova Scotia SPCA Investigators immediately started interviewing witnesses and reviewing all footage from nearby cameras.

Meanwhile, the two kittens who were six weeks old, and the one cat who was five months old, received medical treatment at the Dartmouth shelter.



"This kind of abuse is unacceptable," says Chief Inspector Kevin Strooband. "The SPCA is here to work with pet families, we encourage people to reach out and learn about the programs and supports that are available across the province." Supports like Pet Pantry, which can help with food and litter, or Paws & Support, if someone is fleeing intimate partner violence.

Today, the three purrrrrfect packages are happily living in loving homes. Being sent to their new homes is a great outcome, but remember, cats – or any animals – should never be mailed in the first place.



¹
Mom Anita says Cattastrophe (formerly Postcard) is the most curious little kitty. He loves to snuggle, and his favourite toys are plastic springs, which he hides all over the house, and his least favourite thing is a closed door.

²
Stamp is now called Jasper, and according to mom Shelley, he is mischievous and loves to drink water straight out of the taps.

WE'RE BIG ON SECOND CHANCES.



First Chances at a Secondhand Store

If you visit the North Nova thrift store today, Dawson will greet you with a big smile and eagerly offer his help. It might shock you to know that his confidence has not always been that high; on his first day of work, he was all nerves.

"I was really anxious when I started," remembers Dawson. "Because what if I messed up and gave people the wrong item, or overcharged them?"

Dawson is part of a 20-week, virtual province-wide program for youth, called Skills2SucSEED (S2S). S2S has participants complete 24 workshops over 12 weeks covering the topics

of developing digital literacy, wellness, and pre-employability skills. They then complete an eight-week, paid, work placement.

For Dawson, he knew that he wanted to work in a shop, and the new North Nova SPCA Thrift Store was at the top of the list. For store manager Rebecca MacDonald, it was an immediate yes.

"I was so excited to be part of this program, and the experience has been fantastic," MacDonald says. "The program speaks to me personally as I enjoy working with people from all walks of life. I am an advocate for people who want to work and our

whole team has that mindset. I honestly don't think you can have enough of these opportunities."

Across the province the Nova Scotia SPCA has partnerships with various organizations that are helping people overcome barriers to employment. For Skills2SucSEED program officer Michelle Sayers, finding the right employer is key in helping participants succeed, and she feels lucky to have Dawson at the thrift store. "It's great when you have an organization like the SPCA that is inclusive, transparent, approachable, and adaptable. We look forward to partnering in the future."



And the future is what Dawson is thinking about. After a few weeks of shadowing staff, he is now coaching them. He loves to be at cash and enjoys the physical labour of working in a store. Helping customers from the moment they walk in, through to cash, and then bringing their purchases to their cars, shows how high his confidence has soared since he started working at the thrift store.

Dawson hopes that after his work term is over, a job might open. Until then he plans to come back and volunteer. He loves socializing with customers and staff. But also, being next door to the SPCA shelter, he can't give up the perk of break time cat cuddles.

2024

By the numbers

Sheltering & Care

5,304 animals served

Pet Pantry

4,777 animals served

Veterinary Services

220 animals served

Investigations*

3,455 animals served

Tartan Tails

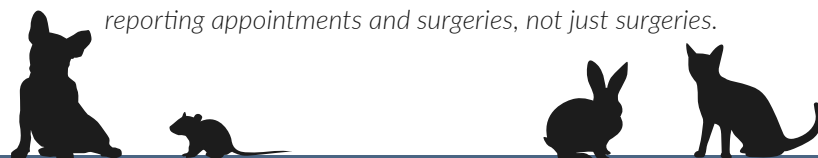
Veterinary Hospitals**

10,788 animals served

Over 24,000
animals served
across the Nova Scotia SPCA

**New reporting details this year demonstrate additional transparency to include the number of animals investigations has intervened on behalf of, not just the number of cases.*

***New reporting details this year indicate that we are also reporting appointments and surgeries, not just surgeries.*





Courage is the Bear

by Sarah Lyon

When your last name is the name of an animal (albeit not a companion animal), and you are a veterinary assistant, the comments write themselves. But for Jennah Bear, the connection to animals and the SPCA goes farther; it's an integral part of her culture, and her childhood.

"When I was little and was asked 'what do you want to do when you grow up?' I always answered that I would work for the SPCA," says Jennah. "But then an adult would always tell me, 'No, that is not a workplace, that is for volunteers', so I found a different career path."

In 2022, Jennah graduated from Saint Mary's University with a degree in criminology. A lover of reading true crime, she thought she had found her forever job. But life doesn't always work out like we planned. "I spent a year working as a barista, and while I can make a great shaken espresso, I knew it wasn't my calling."

Jennah worked up the courage to start applying to go back to school. She remembered that love of, and dreams of, working with animals that she

had as a child. "I started searching schools that had programs for veterinary technicians and that's when I saw the Nova Scotia SPCA College of Animal Welfare." Bear applied for the veterinary assistant program, knowing that she would have a better chance of getting a job after graduation.

Well known Mi'kmaq educator, Trevor Sanpass has been interviewed before about the seven sacred teachings that have been a part of Mi'kmaw life from the very beginning. He says, "The traditional laws, also known as the grandfather or grandmother teachings, are at the heart of many Indigenous cultures, including the Mi'kmaw culture. They are the basis for a worldview that is rooted in respect for one another and the natural world. That's why each lesson is associated with an animal."

*Love is the eagle, respect is the buffalo,
courage is the bear, truth is the turtle,
humility is the wolf, wisdom is the beaver,
and honesty is the sage or Bigfoot.*

In the Wolastoqey language, the word for bear is 'Muwin.' "But when the Europeans came over", says Bear, "They started to ask us what the names meant, and they just ended up using the English version instead because it was easier for them to pronounce and remember. So instead of using the word Muwin, they started calling us Bear."

Now Jennah is connected even more with animals. She graduated from the Nova Scotia SPCA College of Animal Welfare and works full-time at Tartan Tails Veterinary Hospital in Dartmouth. "What I love about working at Tartan Tails is the team's energy and sense of community. The team has been welcoming and extremely helpful in showing me the ropes and ensuring that I have everything I need to do my job confidently and efficiently," she says.

That little girl in Plaster Rock, New Brunswick was told she couldn't have a career at the SPCA. Now, because the woman with the name Bear had the courage to apply to the Nova Scotia SPCA College of Animal Welfare, the future looks bright for Jennah having a career at the SPCA.

For Wet Noses and Bluenosers

Living in New Scotland, Nova Scotians know tartan. Whether it's the dark blue of the provincial tartan, or the green of the Cape Breton tartan, it is worn proudly.

Tartan is a patterned cloth of crossed horizontal and vertical bands in multiple colours, forming repeating symmetrical patterns known as setts. Originating in woven wool, tartan is most strongly associated with Scotland, where it has been used for centuries in traditional clothing such as the kilt. Historically, we recognize specific tartans, with Scottish clans, and families.

When the idea of a re-brand of the Nova Scotia SPCA hospitals was being considered, families were at the heart of the "why." Pet families were not finding our veterinary hospitals as the name with the SPCA in it was confusing. We wondered, how many pet families were going without, or delayed getting help, because the name turned them away?

"A re-brand was important because we are open to all pet families, but with SPCA in the name, many thought we were only open for shelter pets, and that's not the case," says Tartan Tails Dartmouth veterinarian, Dr. Mike Ackerley.

"It is important for people to know that they can choose Tartan Tails as their veterinary hospital."

With families in mind, members of the SPCA communications and marketing department, tasked with the re-brand, couldn't stop thinking about their own families. Commonalities included being guardians of furry family members,

"Since rebranding our hospital from SPCA Veterinary Hospital to Tartan Tails Veterinary Hospital, we've seen more pet owners choosing us as their primary veterinary clinic for regular care," says Dr. Kyla Wuhr, Director of Veterinary Services. "Our new name has helped clarify that we are open to the general public – not just shelter animals. We are now welcoming more families



and immigrant roots of Scottish origins. And while a few concepts were created and evaluated, there was one that stuck out as being the one: Tartan Tails Veterinary Hospital, where we help wet noses and Bluenosers.

The re-brand was launched in August at the Dartmouth and Cape Breton locations and unveiled in September at the unleashing of the North Nova building in Stellarton.

bringing in their pets for puppy and kitten vaccinations, annual check-ups, and parasite prevention."

In 2024, there were more than 10,000 surgeries and appointments at the Tartan Tails Veterinary Hospitals.

This rebrand, similar to tartan itself, symbolizes family and hope for new beginnings.

Unleashed & Opened

By Sarah Lyon

It was another beautiful day in Northern Nova Scotia when supporters gathered outside the new North Nova SPCA. Excitement filled the air. The community had been waiting for this day. After a donation of land from the Town of Stellarton and fundraising by a committee of community leaders, each wall that went up and window installed was watched with anticipation.

North Nova SPCA is the first new SPCA shelter built in our province in over two decades, replacing the 40-year-old Pictou shelter. As you can imagine, animal sheltering changed a lot during that time. Building a new facility meant the Nova Scotia SPCA was able to implement a lot of the new findings and research in North Nova.

"From the floors that are non-slippery and have no seams, to the new kennels in the cat adoption rooms, there are improvements you can see, and ones that you can't," says Sandra Flemming, Chief of Capital Planning and Shelter Operations Advisor. "We also have a complex ventilation system to prevent the spread of disease and dog kennels that connect by a portal. I could go on and on about this shelter!" laughs Flemming.



Dogs like Rebel have benefitted from another Nova Scotia SPCA first – adoption pods! There are three rooms with windowed doors and brightly painted walls on the adoption floor. There, potential adopters can see a dog. Rebel had been with the SPCA for three months in Cape Breton and was moved to North Nova when it opened. This allowed her to meet potential new adopters, and she got adopted!

The building has been named after the Hon. Elmer MacKay and

his wife Sharon, who were a driving force in Pictou County and surrounding areas in getting a new shelter. "The SPCA is multi-purpose, multi-faceted, and multi-dimensional," says Elmer. Sharon agrees and notes how important it is that the new location will allow for the expansion of SPCA programs like Paws and Support.

"It is exceptional that the SPCA has a program to help with the pets of those fleeing domestic violence or someone who is sick and has no one to look after their animal during a hospital stay."



Leading the build and fundraising committee was the duo of Marsha Sobey and Steve Smith, who, along with the Nova Scotia SPCA, really focused on keeping as much as possible in the community. Local contractors were hired, and many local businesses donated funds and time. “The support from family and friends, small and big business, foundations, organizations and clubs, towns and municipalities, and indeed our local contractors, has been very generous,” says Marsha

There are many unique features of the 9,148-square-foot building. Mostly, the facility is more than a shelter! The building also houses Tartan Tails Veterinary Hospital and the social enterprise SPCA thrift store. There are 45 spaces to house animals, and attached to the building in the front is a Catio. On warm days, cats will be able to step through the free-roam room window to the outside for play time and sunbeam snoozes.

And the shelter isn’t just replacing an old one – it is also helping another location. Animals from the Colchester shelter are travelling to North Nova for surgery appointments. Previously they were driving to Dartmouth. “The opening of the new hospital in Stellarton has significantly enhanced the well-being of shelter animals in Colchester,” says Jessica Murphy, RVT and Medical Care Coordinator at the Colchester shelter. “With access to faster veterinary care, animals receive timely treatment, which accelerates their readiness

for adoption and helps them transition into their new homes more quickly. This has greatly reduced their time spent in the shelter, resulting in a less stressful environment and a more positive experience for the animals.”

When you step inside North Nova you will notice the pops of colour. Fire hydrants on washroom doors, blue donor plaques, and fun facts on the walls of the cat adoption rooms. In the lobby is an interactive donor wall titled **Epqwalul – I Shelter You**. At the top is a painting by local Pictou artist Ron Robichaud. The painting depicts a boat returning to the shores as a storm is approaching and is titled **Coming Home**.

When the SPCA spoke to a Mi’kmaq language keeper, they learned that ‘coming home’ couldn’t be translated, but you could say **I shelter you**. And what better name is there for a wall that lists the donors who built a temporary, safe home for the animals of Northern Nova Scotia?



*The SPCA is multi-purpose,
multi-faceted, and multi-dimensional*
- Hon. Elmer Mackay



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE NOVA SCOTIA SOCIETY FOR THE
PREVENTION OF CRUELTY NON-CONSOLIDATED
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR
ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024

REVENUES

Donations and fundraising . . .	\$5,469,245
Service	1,846,012
Shelter operations	1,697,452
Government enforcement grant	1,064,000
Bequests	986,167
College of Animal Welfare	302,701
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	96,972

Total Revenues \$11,462,549

EXPENSES

Shelter operations	\$4,826,184
Fund development and outreach	2,383,550
Administration	2,195,618
Investigations	1,229,430
College of Animal Welfare	413,604
Amortization of tangible capital assets	372,860
Programs and services	90,318

Total Expenses \$11,511,564

EARNINGS FROM

OPERATIONS \$(49,015)

OTHER INCOME (LOSS)

Gain on marketable securities . . .	580,468
Investment income	\$29,978

Total Other Incomes \$610,446

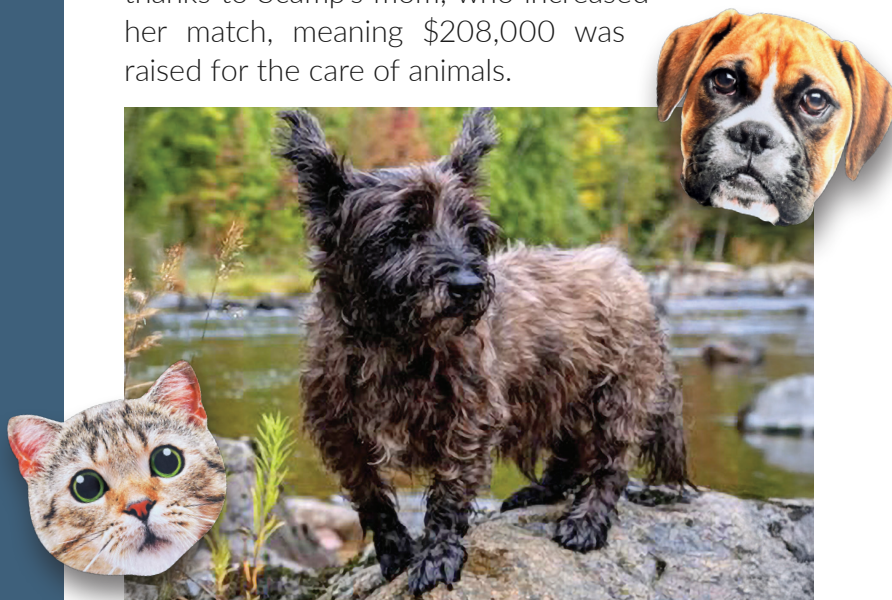
**EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES
OVER EXPENSES \$561,431**

Cats vs. Dogs

Scamp was a special dog who his mom wholeheartedly loved. "Growing up, I was surrounded by animals – cats, dogs, rabbits, and birds – all of whom taught me invaluable life lessons, none more so than my beloved dog, Scamp," she says. "He showed me that obstacles should never dim your optimism, warmth, or enthusiasm. When I adopted him, he was in rough shape, but his resilience helped him live a full life. For 15 wonderful years, Scamp's lovable and playful spirit touched many hearts."

When Scamp passed away, she wanted to honour his life, and the love he shared with her and others. So, she visited the Yarmouth Shelter to learn how she could help. Speaking with staff, she made the generous decision to donate \$100,000 in a matching campaign for GivingTuesday, as an anonymous donor. In a message to donors she said, "Scamp recently crossed the Rainbow Bridge, and in honour of the life and love he shared with me and so many others, I promise to double your GivingTuesday donations – up to \$100,000. Let's help more pets together!"

And help more pets she did! Compassionate donors in Nova Scotia raised \$103,000 as they voted for the ultimate BFF! And while Team Cat won, all pets won, thanks to Scamp's mom, who increased her match, meaning \$208,000 was raised for the care of animals.



Money donated in the community, stays in the community.

Major Thanks

Pawsitive Champion

Anonymous • Ashley Stueck • Barb Whiston • Blue River Foundation • Bob Found & Barbara Wilkes • Bruce & Carla Elliot • Bulwark Ciders • Canadian Red Cross • Christene MacDonald • Christine, Glenn & Leia Hynes • David & Karen McInnes • Diana & Cory Dobson • The Eric S. Margolis Family Foundation • GKE Foundation • Grant Thornton Foundation • High-Crest Enterprises • Joan Pettipas • Judy Crump in memory of Heaven • Judy Layne • Kathy Skoke-Fortin Memorial Golf Tournament in support of the Pictou County SPCA • Kinsmen Club of New Glasgow • Lucy Goose & Mr. Tom • Marlene Miller • Mary and Steve Griffiths • Matthew McInnes • Municipalities of Pictou County (Municipality of the County of Pictou and the Towns of New Glasgow, Pictou, Stellarton, Trenton and Westville) • Petline Insurance • PetSmart Charities of Canada™ • Port of Halifax • Ruby Fund • Sandra Jelenich • Sherry MacDonald & Mike Jones • Sobey MacGregor Foundation • Susan Kerslake • Sydney Curling Club • Town of Antigonish • True Karma Charitable Foundation • Walker Wood Foundation

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Pawsome Supporter

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my family



my sidekick

I'm Remembering Both

Keep the love going for what matters. Support animals and the ones you love in your Will.



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