yesterday
today &
tomorrow

Annual Report 2013
Heather Balester
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Vicky Serhan

Garry Taroli, Esq.

Robert Weaver

Our mission is the prevention of cruelty to animals by providing shelter for unwanted, discarded, neglected, and often abused animals, an adoption program to place these animals into caring, permanent homes, to offer humane education programs to enlighten the public about animal problems and humane law enforcement and prosecution programs to address animal cruelty.

2013 Board of Directors

Marsha Basco, Esq.
Andrew Bigda, Esq.
Joseph E. Kluger, Esq.
Garry Taroli, Esq.
Barry A. Yelen, Esq.
Dear Friends,

It has been a privilege to work as a volunteer for the SPCA of Luzerne County. Since I cleaned my first cat cage back in 1988, I’ve watched the SPCA wage a constant campaign to protect the welfare of all animals in our county, to assist and educate their owners, to find homes for the many animals who needed a second chance, and to seek justice for those who abused or abandoned them.

We’ve made enormous progress in all facets of our mission. Our building is larger, more modern, and better equipped than ever. We have more and better programs to serve even more animals and their owners, and we have never been more committed to the enforcement of humane laws.

But none of this would be possible without your support. We hope that this report will give you some insight into the myriad ways your SPCA improves not just the lives of the animals it serves, but also the quality of life in every community in our county.

Thank you for being there for us, and for the animals.

Sincerely,

Heather Balester
President

The cats pictured here are just 5 of the 2,810 cats we received in 2013. These five cats were either the result of an unwanted litter of kittens or were abandoned at the shelter.
The SPCA of Luzerne County was founded in 1957 because there was no agency to care for and control the abandoned, lost and abused animals in Luzerne County.

Over the past 57 years, we have taken in over 600,000 animals. We have continued to be the primary organization in our community to help and fight for all the unwanted, abandoned, abused/neglected animals.

Being the only “open” shelter in our area is a challenge - but a challenge that we embrace willingly. Helping all of the animals that come through our doors is who we are. Open shelters do not discriminate, do not turn away any animal - no matter their age, health and especially not because of their breed.

We have experienced great growth and many remarkable changes since we were established. Our future will continue to touch the lives of the animals and people we serve. We are excited about what lies ahead and we are ready to make a difference for the animals we love and protect.
In today’s electronic world, technology plays a significant role in telling our story. The internet and social media allow us to connect to people and share information about our shelter, the animals we have available for adoption, the challenges we face and what kind of help and support we need most. We utilize the internet and tools like Twitter, Facebook, Petfinder, Petango and our website to reach beyond our county borders.

In 2013, we launched a new website. The new site was created to highlight more available animals, the programs and services we offer and the fundraising events we host each year. An added feature to this streamlined design is a fully functional storefront, where we can process donations, registration to events and recurring contributions.

We have worked closely with local news media this past year. Our animals are featured weekly in both the Times Leader and Citizen’s Voice, as well as on WBRE’s Pet of the Week. We also have scheduled regular appearances on WBRE TV-28’s PA Live broadcast, the Eyewitness News Daybreak and WNEP TV-16 News. We presented important topics like licensing/microchipping, spaying and neutering, animal cruelty and we share the stories of the hundreds of animals at the shelter and why they come to us.
We have seen a 17% decrease in our intake numbers from 2013 to 2012.

**ANIMAL INTAKE 4857 TOTAL**

1342 OWNER SURRENDER

- 914 Owners
- 333 Owners
- 95 Other

Down from 2012 1514*

2577 STRAY ANIMALS

- 1894 Owners
- 641 Owners
- 42 Other

Down from 2012 3135*

879 SERVICES REQUESTED

- Euthanasia, Cremation, and/or Burial

- 517 Owners
- 290 Owners
- 72 Other

Down from 2012 939*

20 TRANSFER IN

- 0 Owners
- 5 Owners
- 15 Other

39 WILDLIFE IN

Down from 2012 - 61*

*Intake totals for 2012
Every month, we take in hundreds of lost, abandoned, unwanted, abused, or neglected animals. Regardless of what brought them to us, these animals are hopeful for a new beginning. We provide a lifesaving second chance through our adoptions program and our strong relationships with our pet partners.

We work closely with other animal welfare and rescue groups seeking the best possible outcome for every animal. Over 56 animals were transferred to other shelters, as well as breed or special needs rescue groups in 2013.

We are very pleased to have a partnership with PetSmart and Petco. We are able to place cats at all three of these locations. We also take dogs there regularly for additional exposure.

When an animal becomes lost or stray, we provide shelter and care while we search for their families or find them new homes. In several different cases last year, animals came to us that had been missing for days or months. We were honored to reunite these pets with their families.

We sold 2,396 dog licenses in 2013. We cannot stress enough the importance of licensing, microchipping and having personal identification on your pet - it may be the only way your pet will get back home.
We know that spaying and neutering our pets makes them healthier, improves their quality of life, and helps reduce the need for euthanasia of “surplus” pets for whom no homes are available. This is especially true for cats, who reproduce at a much faster rate than dogs. But the cost of such surgeries can be prohibitive for low-income cat owners. That’s why, since 2008, the SPCA of Luzerne County has funded the Spay/Neuter Assistance Program (SNAP) for cats. With the help and cooperation of six veterinary hospitals in our area, more than 3,300 cats owned by low-income residents of Luzerne County have been “fixed” since the program’s inception. In 2013 alone, the SPCA invested more than $30,000.00 in this important effort. The program is administered by the volunteers of Valley Cat Rescue, helping to keep costs as low as possible. We also subsized the cost of sterilization for “bully breed” dogs in Luzerne County with 4-PAWS Spay/Neuter.

These programs are just the first step towards rectifying the problem of pet overpopulation. Every animal we are able to help through these programs means fewer unwanted and possibly abandoned kittens or puppies.

Humane Education is a vital part of who we are and what we do. We continue to do educational presentations at area schools and for civic organizations throughout the year. We share information about the SPCA and the services we offer, as well as cover topics on animal safety, animal cruelty, overpopulation and careers in animal welfare. We also schedule presentations and shelter tours for area girl and boy scout groups.

Humane Education is an invaluable tool in teaching kindness and the humane treatment of all living creatures.
Our three full-time Humane Officers investigated 764 initial cruelty complaints in 2013.

Each investigation required an officer to contact the complainant, process the information, go to the property in question, assess the situation, contact the owner of the animal and discuss the complaint/situation. Most of these cases required multiple visits. In many of these situations, our officers educated the owner about proper animal care, the importance of veterinary care, Pennsylvania Dog Law requirements and what is needed to rectify the situation.

Failure to comply with the law or continued neglect results in legal action. Cases may take months or years to go through the court system. In 2013, we filed 39 cruelty charges. Of the charges heard in court, one was found not guilty and arrest warrants were issued for 17. The remainder were either found guilty or pled guilty.

We want to share just one of the cases from 2013. The dog pictured above is the same in all four photos. We confiscated 12 live and 7 deceased dogs. They were abandoned by their owner for months in a building not fit for any living creature. All the dogs were starved and frightened. We were able to, after medical care and socialization, get all of the dogs placed into forever homes. We sought justice for the dogs by filing 12 first degree misdemeanor and 19 summary offenses against their owner. This case is scheduled for May 2014.

A number of studies have drawn links between the abuse of animals and violence against people. These studies indicate that people who commit acts of cruelty towards animals rarely stop there.
As a result of a significant donation to the shelter, we were able to build two outside dog runs. This area is for exercising our dogs, group dog training sessions and potential adopter meet and greets with their dogs. Once the dog run project was completed, our local Home Depot staff donated six benches for use in the dog runs and for the walking path areas.

We held a press conference in April with the George Greig, Department of Agriculture Secretary, on the importance of dog licensing and the launching of the newly developed dog license website - licenseyourdogpa.com.

Some great volunteers from Sordoni Construction and Benco Dental came to the shelter to help with painting, cleaning and outside clean-up projects during United Way’s Day of Caring. We also had volunteers from Blue Cross and several local boy scout troops came to work on other projects throughout the year.

Pictured below from left to right: Blue Cros of NEPA employees volunteering, Home Depot staff donating benches, and Sordoni volunteers during Day of Caring.
The SPCA is very fortunate to have a dedicated work force of staff and volunteers.

Although, we have only 24 paid staff, half of which is part-time, we are able to provide for all the animals brought into our facility. We care for these animals 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Obviously taking care of the needs of all these animals is a huge job. We could not do it alone. We rely on the help from our many volunteers.

From fostering animals to cleaning, feeding and socializing the animals in our care to helping with our events - our volunteers are there for us. Words can not express the gratitude that we have for the 321 volunteers who donated 8,470 combined hours for us in 2013! If we had to pay for additional staff to cover these hours - it would have cost the shelter over $60,000.00 last year (at minimum wage). Our volunteers also help by donating supplies, attending our events and contributing financially.

Foster homes help us provide care to animals that may be too young to be at the shelter or that may have illness or injury and need a little more TLC prior to adoption. From spring to fall, we receive litters of kittens that are too young to be at the shelter and most of which are too young to be away from their mothers. Many of our staff foster these litters of kittens until they are ready for adoption - 180 kittens were fostered in 2013.
Through the dedication of our volunteers and staff, the success of our annual events in 2013 have increased. Our golf outing, although it was cold and rainy increased in revenue, sponsors and attendance.

A groovy time was had by all who attended our 4th Annual Skate Event with a wild 70’s theme at Skate Away in Wilkes-Barre.

The Dog Days of Summer event hosted by Cork Restaurant and Bar is always a wonderful event. We greatly appreciate Ruth and Bill Corcoran for all their support with this event and so much more!

Our 23rd Annual Walk for the Animals was a huge success too! We had 307 walkers, 31 t-shirt sponsors and 17 sponsors at different levels for the event.

At our second annual Bone Appetit event in November our more than 250 guests experienced fabulous food from 15 area restaurants, wine from Bartolai Winery and delicious desserts made by Bernis Emmett and Heather Cole.

In 2013, we also hosted over 60 Adoption Events at Petco, PetSmart, Pet Supplies Plus, Weis Markets in Nanticoke, Mountain Top and Dallas, First Community Bank, Triple Syxx Hair Salon, Big Lots, and at ERA Real Estate to name a few. Barnes and Noble hosted two fundraising book fairs last year, where we were able to bring cats and small animals. Our fundraising events are a wonderful opportunity to have fun while helping the animals.

The success of all our events would not be possible without our 2013 Corporate Sponsors - A. Rifkin Co., AAAA Limousine and Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs; our Print Sponsors- Corcoran Printing, Independant Graphics and Fast Signs; and our Media Partners - WBRE, WNEP, Citizen’s Voice and Times Leader - THANK YOU!!
During our events, we not only present available animals for adoption, we also offer resources and educational information to the public.

Offering rabies vaccination and microchip clinics is extremely important. Many people in our community want to do the right thing for their pets but might be restricted due to their financial situation. We held five Rabies/Microchip Clinics in 2013 - three at the shelter, one in Hazelton and one in West Wyoming. We worked in partnership with Representative Phyllis Mundy to host the second annual Cause for Paws clinic in her district.

We asked fans to help us support the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins and the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Railriders at fundraising events we organized during their seasons. We also worked with the Penguins AHL Hockey team to produce a calendar for 2013. The calendars were sold at Penguins games, at the shelter and at adoption events held throughout the community. Many of the available animals at the shelter were depicted in the calendar.
2013 has shown a growth in our investments, in our programs, in our building and physical location, and our reserves.

As of December 30, 2013*

**INCOME**  
$924,907

**EXPENSES**  
$1,078,097

**Contributions** - 34%  
**Trust Income** - 28%  
**Adoptions & Programs** 19%  
**Special Projects & Promotion** - 18%  
**Investment Income** - 1%

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**Programs and Services** 85%  
**Management & General** 8%  
**Fundraising** 7%

*This is unaudited financial information.*
Going home will continue to be a major objective for 2014. We will continue our work to care for the animals that come to us, to find the home in which they came from, or to adopt them into good, caring new homes. As such, going home remains the focus of our lifesaving and life changing goals.

Our community is out of balance. Every year thousands of homeless animals enter our shelter or go to other community rescue groups. Unfortunately, there are more animals than adoptive homes. We want to lead the charge in reducing: the number of homeless animals, the number of animals reproducing and the number of animals being euthanized. We want every healthy adoptable animal to find a caring and forever home.

However, much work still lays ahead – more animals to treat, more preventive work to dramatically reduce the overwhelming numbers of unhealthy and unwanted animals within our communities, and more bridges to build between hardworking animal welfare organizations throughout our community and state.

Together, we can help overcome the issues that are much bigger than any one organization.

The generosity of our supporters will help us achieve our goals. We could not do this without YOU!

Our Vision
Lead the way towards an aware and engaged community dedicated to compassionate and humane care of animals by promoting successful placement and responsible pet ownership.

Continue to help us help them and the community we live in!