



A note from Meg

Dear Friends,

If you've been following along on social media, read or watched a news story, or have had time to visit us, you'll know it's been a very busy summer at Dakin. Please enjoy these heartwarming stories from the past few months that have been made possible with your generous support.

Leading up to the summer, our team knew our animal population would be significant and we planned several strategies to prepare. One goal was increased outreach to recruit new and engage current foster caregivers in our network. Our foster caregivers answered the call and were instrumental in our ability to provide care. These dedicated volunteers open their homes and their hearts to ensure the well-being and happiness of pets of all ages, species, and sizes as they await placement in adoptive homes – thank you!

Another successful strategy was reopening our doors for walk-in adoptions. This effort started slowly with a few weekend events and I'm happy to report we are now open Tuesday through Saturday from 12:30-3 p.m. While matchmaking and online adoption were most appropriate during COVID,

see [MEG'S NOTE](#) on back



MEETING THE CHALLENGE – 2023 & BEYOND

We knew the wave was coming, and it came. In the first few months of the year, during the traditionally slower winter months, we saw an unusually high number of pets arrive at Dakin in need of help. Our Community Spay/Neuter Clinic began to book out further, requests for our Moms Fixed Free program were ramping up, and our Kitten Street Team was receiving scores of phone calls reporting cats and kittens living outside. They dutifully traveled to those colony sites to humanely trap and bring these community cats to Dakin for vaccinations and spay/neuter surgery. In March, Dakin assisted a local resident whose dog population had become overwhelming. When we brought 43 of them into our shelter, it marked the largest dog rescue in our history. Based on winter and spring data, we predicted we'd see as many as 500 kittens – way more than average – enter our facility during the summer.

Dakin is certainly not immune to the challenges being faced by shelters nationwide; how to care for the significantly higher-than-usual number of pets being brought in for the help they need. But why was this year shaping up to be so demanding? Here are a few significant reasons:

see [CHALLENGE](#) inside

INCREASE IN ANIMALS ADMITTED

January – August 2022:

1,830

January – August 2023:

3,007

Moms Fixed Free: A Vital Resource

Dakin created the Moms Fixed Free program to help families in the community who become overwhelmed when their female cat or dog delivers an unexpected litter of puppies or kittens. When the youngsters are eight weeks old, mom and litter are brought to Dakin where mom receives free spay surgery and vaccines before rejoining her people. The littermates are offered for adoption through Dakin, following their own vaccinations and spay/neuter surgery.

Moms Fixed Free works to reduce pet overpopulation, which is especially important, as one unspayed female cat and her offspring could produce 420,000 cats in only seven years, while over the course of six years, an unspayed female dog and her offspring could produce 67,000 puppies.

The demand for this program really ballooned in 2023. Three years ago, 25 puppies and kittens were brought to Dakin for adoption through Moms Fixed Free. So far this year, that number has already risen to 276. Some reasons for the upsurge in litters include a nationwide shortage of veterinarians and vet staff which has resulted in long wait-lists. Furthermore, surgery fees can also be a barrier for families that are

struggling with rising food, utility, transportation, and housing costs.

Hazel's family was unable to care for the litter the four-year-old feline delivered recently, and turned to Moms Fixed Free. Among her litter of five, Stryker and Mileena would need significant care before they could find adopters. At barely seven weeks of age, both were severely underweight, malnourished and struggling with dehydration. They were weak and listless.

Fortunately, experienced foster caregiver Jerry Marchand (who holds the Dakin record for most pets fostered at over 600) volunteered to bring the kittens into his home to provide long-term treatment to get them on the road to adoption. The dedication shown by Dakin staff and volunteers helped these two tiny ones get the care they needed to thrive.

Moms Fixed Free is a vital resource for our community that your generosity supports. Because you want to give helpless animals every chance possible, little ones like Stryker and Mileena are able to overcome hardships and know the joy of being a treasured family member. We are grateful for your dedication to saving lives.



Stryker & Mileena before

Kittens/Puppies Helped by Moms Fixed Free

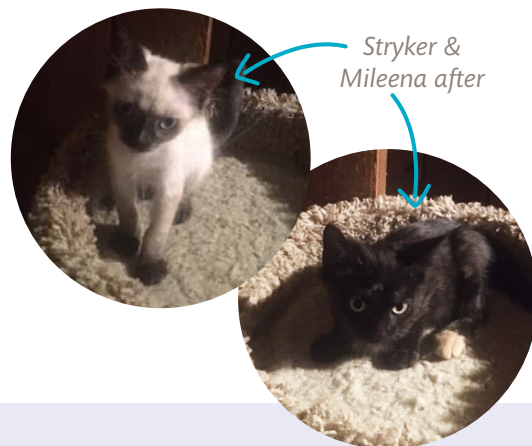
25 in 2020

76 in 2021

124 in 2022

276 in 2023*

*YTD



Stryker & Mileena after

Why I'm here



Dakin staff offer an inside perspective of the impactful work your support makes possible

Name: Jennifer Toole **Title:** Associate Manager of the Pet Health Center (PHC)

Jennifer began working at Dakin in 2019, and was a volunteer here for four years prior to that. She can be found at the front desk of the Pet Health Center (PHC) where she oversees appointment confirmations, handles technological concerns, provides Spanish language translation and conducts financial discussions with clients, among other duties. She feels fulfilled that the PHC can offer "amazing services, and make them accessible and as low-barrier as possible for the people who need them. We're serving people of the community, and it's amazing."

According to Jennifer, "The PHC is working with Dakin's mission of keeping pets with people. Donors are sustaining their community by helping keep pets in homes who would otherwise be surrendered, so their support is truly stabilizing our animal population, and allowing our clients to experience the joy of keeping their pets by their side." It also allows Dakin to remain competitive by attracting top veterinarians from around the country to work here, and enables us to bridge the gap between the client's financial capabilities, and the level of care their pet needs.

"I feel honored to walk in this building every day and serve our clients," said Jennifer. "They teach me every day about kindness, compassion and love for their animals. That's why I'm here."

THE RACE TO SAVE CALI

On a hot Wednesday afternoon in July, a frantic woman appeared at Dakin's front door, cradling her dog, Cali. Unable to get emergency help elsewhere, Theresa had bundled up the tiny Chihuahua and raced from her home to Dakin's front door – on foot. Eight-month-old Cali, a new mother, had tremors and could not stand up.

Dakin's medical team evaluated her while Theresa waited in the lobby, trying to hold back tears at the thought of saying goodbye to a pet who had stolen her heart. Unwanted by her original family, Cali had found love with Theresa and her husband, Fernando.

“We basically rescued her, and we’re so attached. She’s the baby of our family, and I thought we were going to lose her.”

Cali was diagnosed with eclampsia, a life-threatening drop in blood calcium brought on by nursing puppies. If left untreated, eclampsia is often fatal. She had arrived in the nick of time.



(above) Cali's visit to Dakin to say thank you (right) Cali's treatment begins (bottom) A joyful reunion with her people

The pup began receiving fluids and calcium supplementation, and was regaining strength. Because her home was nearby, Theresa was told she could return there and await word on when she could pick up Cali later that afternoon, but she politely declined, saying, “I have to stay here with her, I don't want Cali to feel like we left her.” It was clear that Cali and her people have a deep family bond.

Fernando joined Theresa in the waiting area, and after a couple of hours, they were brought back to visit Cali. “She heard my husband's voice and got excited,” recalled Theresa. “Then she saw me coming toward her and she was just so happy. We were crying...happy tears!”

Because Cali's condition was likely to return if she nursed the pups again, the family was provided with puppy formula to ensure that they would receive proper nutrition. Then Cali and her people went home.

Two days later, grateful for the tender care Cali received at Dakin, Theresa and



Fernando returned for a visit to thank our medical team with a bright-eyed, tail-wagging Cali in their arms. They wanted us to see how thrilled they were to be together again, and how much that meant to them. The team that worked so hard to save her was deeply touched by the gratitude of Cali's family.

While Dakin is not staffed or equipped to offer emergency services, we are grateful to our talented and dedicated team for moments like this when an animal - and a person - in crisis can be given the help they need.

Thanks to you and your commitment to keeping people and pets together, Cali is fully recovered and delights her family every day with her silly demeanor, non-stop playfulness, and unconditional love.

CHALLENGE *continued from front*

- High cost of living
- Housing evictions/foreclosures
- Lack of access to vet services, and cost involved
- Result of closed spay/neuter clinics during the pandemic

People in crisis bring pets to our adoption center and tearfully surrender them because life's circumstances can become unmanageable. One couple, who had recently started living in their car when they became homeless, brought their dog to us for rehoming because the summer temperature had begun to spike, and they didn't want her to suffer. They had tried a number of ways to stay together despite their hardships, but none worked. They were anguished but needed the peace of mind in knowing their pet would be cared for and placed with a family, which we were able to arrange.

This is why Dakin exists. We're here when people and pets have no other place to go. With your support, we are able to meet these challenges and help these animals. Because

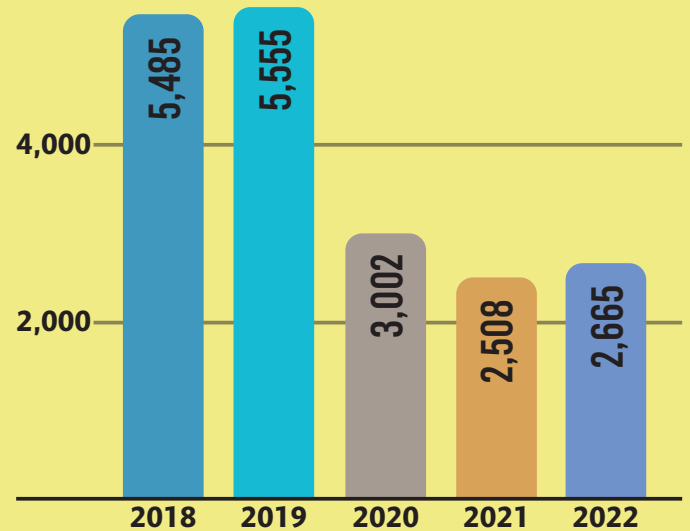
of you, we are prepared and able to handle the abundance of animals in crisis we've seen this year, and particularly this summer.

Because you believe in our mission and want animals to know safety, comfort and love, we were able to step up and assist when two different residences, overcrowded with cats, needed help during the same week in August. Between the two rescues, we brought more than 40 additional cats into our shelter, which was already tending to a substantial number of pets.

Oh, and that prediction that we'd take in 500 kittens this summer? The total came to 592.

2023 has indeed been a challenging year, with so many pets coming to our door in crisis. While there's no reason to think things will become much easier in the days and years ahead, we are all able to face whatever circumstances come our way because we know you stand by our side. You make every triumph - large and small - come to life.

ANIMAL INTAKES PER YEAR



Kitten Street Team's Busy Year Cats/Kittens Assisted:

268 in Jan-Aug 2022

429 in Jan-Aug 2023

(97 in August alone!)

Pet Loss and Healing Support Group

If you or someone you know is struggling with the grief of losing a pet, join Dakin's free Pet Loss & Healing Support Group, which meets online once a month. Family therapist and author Ken Dolan-Del Vecchio leads the group and offers the opportunity for healing that comes with sharing the loss with others who are grieving.

Date: Second Tuesday of each month

Time: 6:00-7:30 pm

RSVP required, limited seats available.
Visit dakinhumane.org/petloss

Special thanks to our sponsor, Gwen D. Gannon Inc. (gwendgannoninc.com)

THE JOY OF VOLUNTEERING

Our volunteers are the backbone of Dakin's every effort and success. We're grateful for their many contributions, and the care they give to our animal friends. We want to share these moments with you.



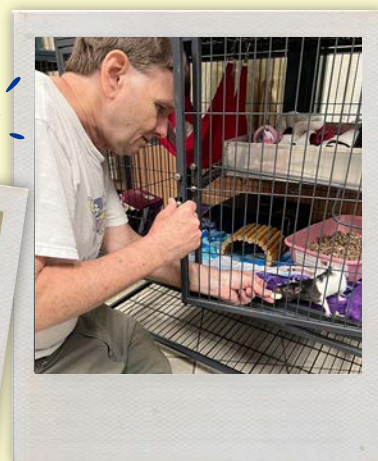
Sharon (joined 2023), a new volunteer, was trying to find the hiding cats at breakfast time. When they saw why she was there, they began to appear.



Multitasking at its finest! Jill (joined 2021) was volunteering at the thrift shop while caring for her foster bottle baby kitten at the same time.



Canine wrangler Tom (joined 2014) helped out at a Puppy Pop Up event. Happiness really IS a warm puppy!



Ed (joined 2013) offered a treat to a rat who kept his cage especially tidy.



Lasagna was feeling the love from Carole (joined 2014) during their enrichment visit.



Karen (joined 2009) taught grandson Quinn about portion control while feeding guinea pigs.



It's not easy to explain lobby manners to Zeus, a Cane Corso, but Rachel (joined 2015) gave it her best shot.

Pop, a sweet-natured dog, waited a long time to find his new family. Maria (joined 2023) gave him some affection and attention to brighten his day.



Mary Lasota's Loving Legacy

Mary Lasota found her dearest friend, inspiration and confidant at Dakin Humane Society when she adopted a white cat named Kitty Piper. Mary doted on her pet for 19 years, sharing the joys and sorrows of her life with her beloved companion. Her adoration was evident in a series of books she wrote in which Kitty Piper was the main character, and their mutual devotion was a testament to the powerful connection between humans and their pets. As her nephew John Lasota, Jr. noted, "I could not quantify the amount

of joy Kitty Piper brought to Mary, she was a lifesaver."

When Mary peacefully passed away earlier this year, Kitty Piper passed away the following week, underscoring the unbreakable bond the two shared.

Mary and Kitty Piper are just one example of why we work so hard at Dakin to keep people and pets together. Mary's legacy lives on not only in her work and in the memories of her loved ones, but also in her devotion to animals and generous estate plans. Her

decision to include Dakin Humane Society reflects the enduring impact of our work and the profound role Kitty Piper played in her life.

Dakin expresses deep gratitude for her thoughtful gift, and invites others to follow Mary's example of making a lasting impact. By weaving her love for Kitty Piper into her legacy, Mary continues to bring happiness and hope to countless lives and sustainability to Dakin's future.

Mary and
her forever
friend,
Kitty Piper



Dakin's Forever Friends Legacy Society was established to recognize and thank those who have chosen to support the work and future of Dakin Humane Society. If you would like more information on how to become a Legacy Society member, please email development@dakinhumane.org

MEG'S NOTE *continued from front*

it has been wonderful for our staff to welcome adopters back to Dakin where we can share the energy and excitement of those "love at first sight" moments.

Across the building, our Pet Health Center and Community Spay/Neuter Clinic teams continue to serve high numbers of pets and people with exceptional compassion, and care. The demand for their services reminds us how vital their work is and how important it is for people to have access to veterinary care

for their beloved pets. We are profoundly grateful for your continued support and the positive impact it has on the lives of animals and the community. Your kindness inspires us daily, and we look forward to creating more success stories with you in the future.

With gratitude,

Meg Talbert
Executive Director

whisker WONDERLAND

Date: Saturday, November 4

Time: 10am - 3pm

Location: Dakin Humane Society

Enjoy local vendors and their pet-centric crafts. Pet lovers will find unique gifts inspired by our animal friends. For more information, visit dakinhumane.org



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