



Our Mission

The mission of the Humane Society of Erie County is to educate residents on proper care, compassion, housing and support of animals as we work to connect them with their forever homes.

Our Animals

All animals at the shelter are spayed/neutered and receive necessary vaccinations prior to adoption. No animals are euthanized due to time spent at the shelter or lack of space.

Board Members

Jenine vonKrumreig, President
Alex Hanes, VP
Brennan Otto, Treasurer
Chrissy Wostmann, Secretary
Brian Rizzo, D.V.M.
Jennifer Kinney, D.V.M.
Paul Decker
Mark Smith
Kristy Roeder

HSEC Team Heroes

Melissa Gundlach, RVT,
Executive Director
Marissa Collingsworth, Manager
Schylar Resor, Manager
Kathleen Keller, Kennel Manager
Deb Hargrove
Cassandra Shuman
Trynity Mock
Aneesa McGregor
Grace Gardner

Shelter Hours

Donation drop off 8am-3pm
Mondays-Saturdays
Animal room walk-throughs
Noon-3pm Mondays-Saturdays

Adoptions by appointment –
weekend and evening
appointments available

Contact Us

1911 Superior Street
Sandusky, Ohio
(419) 626-6220
Fax: (419) 626-2061

Dear Friends,

When people think about an animal shelter, they often picture wagging tails, playful kittens, and families finding their newest best friend. While those moments are at the heart of what we do, our mission extends far beyond the walls of our shelter.

This year, we've continued investing in our community through education, outreach, and partnerships that help people and pets thrive together. We visited Safety Town programs in Huron and Sandusky to teach children how to safely approach unfamiliar dogs and become responsible pet owners. We also connected with families through "Yappy Hour," Vacation Bible Schools, community festivals, and educational events across Erie County.

Many of our fundraisers have become opportunities to educate as well as celebrate. Whether we met you at our 5K, Pup Crawl, Wine & Whiskers, Golf Scramble, Kitten Yoga, or another community event, those conversations help us promote responsible pet ownership and strengthen the bond between our shelter and the community we serve.

This year, we were also excited to partner with FIDO's Companion Rescue and the Lake Erie Crushers, bringing adoptable shelter dogs to the ballpark and reminding fans that their next best friend may be waiting at their local shelter.

Another exciting addition was our new Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Assistance Grant. Approved 501(c)(3) rescue organizations in Erie County can receive reimbursement for a portion of eligible feral cat spay/neuter surgeries. This program supports our rescue partners while helping create a more humane solution for community cats. Donations can also be designated to help this program continue to grow.

None of this would be possible without our village. To our staff, volunteers, Board of Directors, fosters, adopters, donors, sponsors, and every supporter who believes in our mission — thank you. Your kindness changes lives every day.

We know many families, businesses, and nonprofits are feeling the effects of today's economy. If you're able, we hope you'll remember the Humane Society of Erie County in your charitable giving. Your support provides not only food, shelter, and medical care, but also education, outreach, and programs that create a more compassionate community for years to come.

Whether you've volunteered, attended an event, adopted a pet, or made a donation, you are part of this story. Thank you for believing in our mission and helping us make a difference for animals and the people who love them.

With sincere gratitude,

Melissa





Stats for 2025:

-  Brought in 297 cats & 251 dogs
-  Adopted out 515 cats & dogs

THANKS!

Thank you...

Erie County Community Foundation,
Erie County Community Foundation Youth Advisory Council,
Nord Family Foundation Matching Gift Program, the Sidney
Frohman Foundation, Ohio Pet Fund, and the Endowment Fund
of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Union Corners.

ANNUAL EVENTS

Stay tuned to our website for these events:

Wine & Whiskers

A winter event: Small bites with perfectly matched wines, with adoptable kittens.

5K Run, Walk, Brew, Rescue

The first Saturday each April at Bait House Brewery.

Monthly Yappy Hour in the summer

The first Monday of each month at the Old Dutch in Sandusky.

PupCrawl

Downtown Sandusky each summer.

Golf Scramble

Each summer at Woussickett Golf Course.

FurFest

The first week in December at The Winerie on Hayes Ave.

SAVE THE DATE



HSEC Wish Lists

It takes a village to care for hundreds of rescue animals every year, and simple everyday supplies make all the difference. Take a peek at our wish lists below to see how you can help stock our shelves with much-needed pet care essentials.



SCAN ME TO HELP!



humanesocietyoferiecounty.org/Wishlist

SCAN ME TO HELP!



chewy

chewy.com

SCAN ME TO HELP!



shelterbeds.org/donate/39184

SCAN ME TO HELP!



amazon

amazon.com

Quin Was Worth the Wait

Some dogs walk into the shelter and immediately capture the hearts of everyone they meet. Quin was one of those dogs.

Quin, a 2½-year-old shepherd mix, came to the Humane Society of Erie County as a transfer from one of our rescue partners. Staff fell in love with him almost immediately. He was friendly, outgoing, playful, and happy to greet everyone he met. He loved going for walks, enjoyed playing with other dogs, and seemed to genuinely enjoy being part of whatever was happening around him.

But we quickly noticed that Quin walked differently.

Veterinary examinations and X-rays revealed that at some point in his past, Quin had suffered significant trauma to both of his hind legs. It appeared that he had sustained fractures around the growth plates of both legs — possibly the result of being hit by a car — and that he never received the medical care he needed at the time. His legs had healed naturally, the best way they could.

Despite everything his body had been through, Quin didn't let it define him.

He was mobile, active, playful, and full of personality. He could run, play, go for walks, and enjoy life just like any other dog. He simply needed to take more breaks than some of the other dogs. He would sit or lie down more frequently, and we knew that his mobility challenges could mean his future might be shorter than that of other dogs his size.

That didn't make him any less deserving of a family. So we made sure Quin's face was everywhere we could put it.

During his 97 days with us, Quin went on public outings and attended events. He participated in play groups with other shelter dogs. He went for walks with countless volunteers and spent time sitting with people who wanted to give him some extra attention. We took photo after photo and video after video, sharing his story and hoping that the right person would see what we saw in him.

Quin was wonderful with people. He was friendly and outgoing. He was good with other dogs. He was good with cats. He was playful, affectionate, and eager to be part of a family.

And still, he waited.

Day after day, Quin watched people come and go. He would hope that maybe today would be the day someone chose him. For the staff who had grown so attached to him, watching him wait was one of the hardest parts.

But then, after 97 days, someone saw his posts. And they didn't just stop by to look at the dogs.

They came for Quin.

And when they met him, it was clear almost immediately that this was the family we had been waiting for, too.

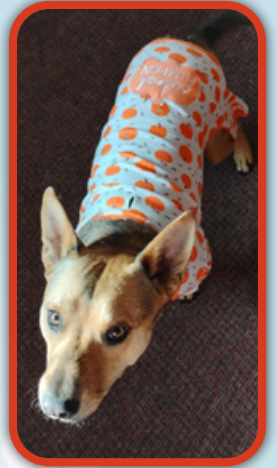
The fit was perfect. They saw Quin for exactly who he was — not as a dog with limitations, but as a wonderful dog who had so much love and life left to give. And they loved him as much as he loved them. Sometimes the dogs who wait the longest aren't being overlooked. They're simply waiting for the right person to find them.

Quin reminds us why we keep sharing the photos, making the videos, taking the dogs on outings, introducing them to volunteers, and telling their stories over and over again.

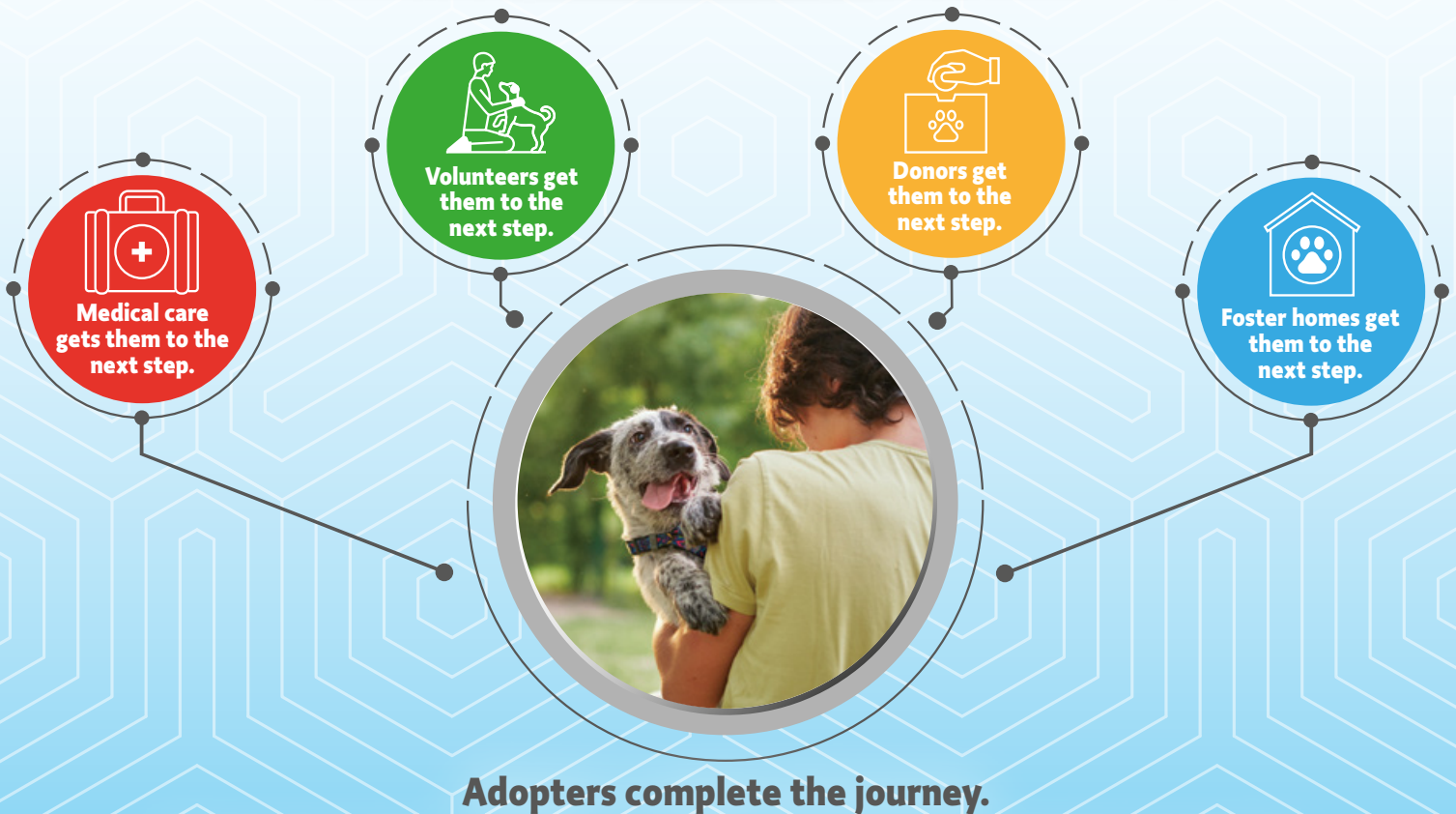
Because sometimes it takes 97 days. Sometimes it takes longer. But when the right family finally walks through the door, you realize it was all worth the wait.

Quin was worth the wait. And his family was worth waiting for.

We couldn't be happier for this very special boy and his new family.



Every Animal Has a Next Step



Whatever role you play, you're helping an animal reach its next step. You don't have to do everything to make an impact — everyone plays a role, and **together we can make a difference!**

Community Cats: Why Trap/Neuter/Return Works

If you've noticed groups of outdoor cats in your neighborhood, you're not alone. These "community cats" often live outdoors with little or no human socialization. While many people want to help, simply removing the cats rarely solves the problem. In fact, new cats often move into the same territory, and the cycle begins again.

That's why animal welfare organizations across the country support **Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)**.

TNR is a humane approach that involves safely trapping community cats, having them spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and ear-tipped (the universal sign that a cat has been sterilized), then returning them to the area where they live. Because the cats can no longer reproduce, colonies gradually become smaller over time through natural attrition.

TNR offers many benefits:

- Prevents thousands of unwanted kittens from being born.
- Reduces nuisance behaviors such as fighting, spraying, and loud mating calls.
- Improves the overall health of community cat colonies through vaccination and sterilization.
- Helps reduce overcrowding in animal shelters.

This year, the Humane Society of Erie County is proud to launch a **Trap-Neuter-Return Assistance Grant** for approved 501(c)(3) rescue organizations serving Erie County (subject to availability of grant funds). Eligible partners can receive reimbursement for a portion of qualifying feral cat spay/neuter surgeries, allowing more cats to receive care while helping our rescue partners stretch their limited resources.

Community members can also support this important work. Donations designated for the TNR Assistance Grant go directly toward helping local rescue organizations continue this lifesaving effort.

Together, we can make a lasting difference- not only for community cats, but for the neighborhoods they call home. *If your organization would like more information about the TNR Assistance Grant or if you'd like to support the program, please contact the Humane Society of Erie County.*





DONATE TODAY!



Ways to Help

- **Schedule a monthly or one-time donation through our secure website:** No fuss and no forgetting! Every donation helps!
- **Kroger Community Rewards:** Link your Kroger card to an organization for a FREE way to donate funds to your favorite charity.
- **Ongoing aluminum can drive:** Save your aluminum and drop it off 24/7 at the shelter in our collection bin. We recycle it, and put the funds into our gas tank to get our animals to the veterinarian!
- **Chewy.com:** Check out our wish list for items, shop from home and have it shipped directly to us!
- **Amazon.com:** Check out our wish list for items, shop from home and have it shipped directly to us!
- **Ohio Pets License Plate**
- **Target Community Rewards**
- **Walmart Spark Good:** Donate change by rounding up your purchase at checkout on Walmart.com by selecting us as your charity of choice!
- **Volunteer:** We love our volunteers, and the more hands we have helping, the more animals we can help! Get more information for volunteers aged 10+ on our website!
- **Foster:** Through short-term fosters, we give our rescue animals the prep and TLC they need before they head to our adoption facility to meet their future families. Best of all, we provide every single supply along the way—all you need to bring is the love!
- **IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution:** If you're 70½ or older, you can make a tax-free donation of up to \$100,000 per year directly from your IRA through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). It's a powerful win-win: you satisfy your Required Minimum Distribution and lower your taxable income while directly fueling our mission. Ready to make a bigger impact tax-free? Reach out to your IRA custodian today, or contact us at 419-626-6220 or hsec.1911@gmail.com to learn more!
- **Our Wishlist:** Check out our wish list for items we are need of!

Dogs Are Always Talking... Are We Listening?

Have you ever heard someone say, “The dog bit without warning”?

The truth is, dogs almost always communicate how they’re feeling before they resort to growling or biting. The problem is that many of us don’t recognize the signs. Learning to read canine body language can prevent misunderstandings, reduce bites, and help dogs feel safer and more confident.

Signs a dog is comfortable and relaxed:

- Loose, wiggly body
- Soft eyes
- Relaxed ears
- Tail wagging naturally (remember, not every wag means a dog is happy!)
- Choosing to approach you



Soft eyes



Play bow

Signs a dog is uncomfortable or stressed:

- Lip licking when no food is present
- Yawning when not tired
- Turning their head or body away
- “Whale eye,” where the white of the eye becomes visible
- Tucked tail or lowered body posture
- Pacing or repeatedly shaking off
- Ears pinned back
- Displacement behaviors (normal behaviors but out of context)



Relaxed posture



Whale eyes

These behaviors are a dog’s way of saying, “I’m uncomfortable,” or “Please give me some space.” If those signals are ignored, a dog may escalate to growling or snapping — not because they’re “mean,” but because their earlier communication wasn’t understood.



Lip lick



Tail tuck

One of the most important lessons we teach children during our Safety Town visits and other community outreach is to **always ask permission before petting a dog**. Even friendly

dogs can become frightened when approached unexpectedly. We also encourage children to let the dog come to them, avoid hugging unfamiliar dogs, and never disturb a dog that is eating, sleeping, or enjoying a high value treat or toy.

Adults can benefit from these reminders, too. Every dog is an individual with its own personality, history, and comfort level. Respecting those boundaries helps build trust and keeps everyone safe.

If you have a dog at home, spend a few minutes each day observing their body language. You’ll begin to notice how they communicate excitement, uncertainty, stress, and affection without saying a word. The better we understand our dogs, the better companions we become.

At the Humane Society of Erie County, we believe education is one of the most powerful tools we have. By helping children and adults better understand animal behavior, we’re creating a safer, more compassionate community for both people and pets.

Because dogs are always talking — we just have to learn their language.



Staff “Favorites”

Every animal that comes through our doors is special, and it is truly an honor to be part of their journey. Working in animal welfare is incredibly rewarding, but it can also be physically demanding and emotionally challenging. We celebrate every adoption, every recovery, and every second chance, while also carrying the weight of the difficult days.

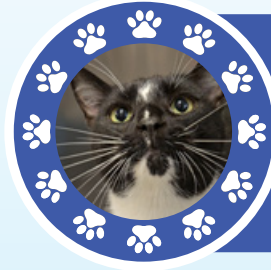
Although we care deeply for every animal, some leave a lasting impression on our hearts for reasons we never expect. Whether it's a remarkable recovery, a unique personality, or a bond that formed along the way, these are the animals we continue to remember long after they've found their homes.

We gave our HSEC staff one of the toughest assignments of the year: choose just one animal that made a lasting impact and share a favorite memory. As you'll see, narrowing it down to a single pet wasn't easy — but each story is a reminder of why we do what we do.



My favorite animal this year was **Ritz!** This big man just had the cutest, biggest cheeks and all he wanted was love. This picture just perfect shows his goofy personality!

Schyler Resor



My favorite memory of **Asner** would be from when this sweet timid boy first started to show affection and he was finally demanding head scratches and he threw his head into my chest so hard he got a loose whisker stuck into my shirt and I somehow managed to work my full shift with the whisker stuck in place and even managed to get all the way home before I realized it was still there.

Cassie Shuman



Evie ... such a sweet girl! I loved the afternoons where we would just sit in the grass and take in our surroundings! I know we both really enjoyed how quiet it was without all the noise of the kennel. She was just so gentle and so smart! What a sweet girl!

Anessa Grace



This is why we do what we do. To make our dogs feel as loved as possible why they are with us. And they return it ten-fold.

Kathy Keller



My favorite shelter animal this year was **Waz**. I loved opening her kennel and being greeted by her gentle head rubs every day. Watching her grow into a happy, confident cat was so special to me.

Grace



I gave in and brought my work home with me and the endless joy that comes from something so simple is priceless! I rescued her but she saved us!

Trynity

All of the animals we care for are special, and it's an honor to be part of their journey to their forever home. **Quinn** was our special needs guy and he was a tremendous dog.... favorite memory, the day he went home!

Vanessa Sowards



My favorite shelter animal is **Minnie** from cat room 1. While she's a little shy at first, when she opens up, she's the sweetest girl. She's the most patient and loving girl you'll ever meet!

Katie Scherley



I choose **Scott** for my animal because he was an advocate. He went with me to educational programs to teach people about shelter animals, adoption and about having compassion for animals.

Melissa Gundlach

Sir Charms, the coolest black cat I have ever met who would ride around on your shoulder like a parrot! He will always hold a special place in my heart!

Marissa Collingsworth



Ask the Shelter

Why do I have to fill out an adoption application?

Our goal is to make the best possible match for both the pet and the adopter. The application isn't a "test"—it's a conversation starter that helps us learn about your home, lifestyle, and expectations. Every animal is different, and we want each adoption to be a lifelong success.

Why are some animals in foster homes instead of the shelter?

Foster homes provide a quieter, less stressful environment for animals who need extra time or care. Some are too young for adoption, recovering from illness or surgery, nursing puppies or kittens, or simply need a break from the shelter. Foster families play an essential role in preparing these pets for successful adoptions.

Why do adoption fees vary from pet to pet?

Adoption fees are based on several factors, including an animal's age, species, medical care, and current adoption promotions. Fees help offset a portion of the cost of vaccinations, spay/neuter surgery, microchipping, testing, and daily care—but they rarely cover the full cost of preparing an animal for adoption. We lose money on every adoption.

Why doesn't the shelter hold animals?

Our goal is to find homes for animals as quickly as possible while giving every approved adopter a fair opportunity. Holding animals for extended periods often means turning away other interested families and can delay an animal's chance to begin its new life.

Why are some animals available immediately while others aren't?

Some pets need additional medical treatment, behavior evaluations, or time before they can be adopted. We know waiting can be difficult, but these steps help ensure every animal is healthy, safe, and as ready as possible for a successful transition into a new home.

Why doesn't the shelter always know an animal's history?

Many of the animals that come to us were originally found as strays or are surrendered with very little background information. We do our best to learn about each pet through veterinary exams, behavioral observations, and the time we spend caring for them. We'll always share what we know honestly, but sometimes we're getting to know them right alongside you.

What happens before an animal is ready for adoption?

Before joining a new family, each animal receives a thorough health examination, age-appropriate vaccinations, parasite prevention or treatment, and spay/neuter surgery. Staff and volunteers also spend time getting to know each pet's personality so we can help make the best possible match with a new family.

What if I can't adopt but still want to help?

There are so many ways to make a difference! You can volunteer, foster animals, make a financial donation, donate supplies from our wish list, participate in fundraisers, or support us through programs like Kroger Community Rewards, Walmart Spark Good, and our aluminum can recycling drive. Every act of kindness helps provide care for the animals who need us.

