

A HOPE MEWSWORTHY

January 2022 Edition



Biscuits

We started off last year by working with a neighboring county and taking in *one hundred* of their neediest felines. We even spent some time giving lime sulfur dips and assisting with intake. This experience all began on our annual Foster Field Trip when we met the tiniest kitten with the biggest personality....Biscuits!

We LOVE working with other animal organizations to make an even bigger impact. We were so honored they allowed us to help!

WHAT ARE WE UP TO?

Happy new year! As we continue to save lives and educate our community in 2022, we want to take a moment to look back at some of the incredible things we were able to do in 2021 thanks to our amazing volunteers, donors, and supporters.



Botkin



Combo, the Janus Kitten

Maybe the most amazing yet also saddest interactions we had this past year was with our little kitten named Combo. Combo was found with his three siblings, Burger, Fries, and Drink, outside in the dirt with no mother around. Combo was a "Janus" kitten which means they are born with two faces. Sadly Janus kittens don't live more than 24hrs in most cases. We were lucky enough to get 48hrs with this little guy while him and his siblings stayed clean, warm, and loved in a foster home. We love and celebrate every life.



***Puttin' Fore Paws
Annual Golf Tournament***

Speaking of our low-cost spay/neuter clinic, we made a lot of progress in 2021! We were able to complete the initial clearing of the land where the clinic will be (off Pine Blossom Rd in Milton). That may not sound like much, but it's a huge step forward! Now, we're working on finalizing the site plan and submitting the development order. Exciting news: If all goes according to plan, we expect to order the building by the end of this year! We are getting closer and closer to achieving this dream, but there's still a long road and a LOT of fundraising ahead of us. Follow the clinic's progress and find out how you can help at www.ahope4src.com/cliniccomingsoon.

Then, in June 2021, we held our first annual Puttin' Fore Paws Charity Golf Tournament to raise money for the low-cost spay/neuter clinic we're building in Santa Rosa County. We were able to raise \$28,000 with help from our generous sponsors and everyone who participated! We'll hold the event again this year, so keep an eye on our website at www.ahope4src.com/golf for updates and information on how you can get involved.



***Future Site of the A HOPE
Spay/Neuter Clinic***



A New Leash on Love 2021

Another very special event from last year was our fourth annual A New Leash on Love adoption event in November! We were joined by many vendors and rescue organizations from the community, all of whom contributed to the event's success! 14 animals from various rescues found their forever homes that day. Now, we're preparing and looking forward to this year's A New Leash on Love, which is being planned for November 12, 2022! Check our website at www.ahope4src.com/annualevent later in the year for information on how to join us as a sponsor, vendor, or rescue.



Our "Targeted Trapping" Signs

We finished off 2021 with another huge undertaking, Project Hallelujah. During this project, we trapped, fixed, vaccinated, and supplied prevention to 83 cats in one neighborhood!

The project started when we found out how badly the cats in this neighborhood were suffering. They were sick and dying, and they kept producing more and more kittens who were also sick and dying. Their human caretakers did everything they could to help, including trapping several of the cats for TNR themselves. But cats multiply quickly, and soon the numbers were greater than these dedicated community members could handle on their own.

That's when we stepped in to provide reinforcement. We decided it was time for a "Targeted TNR" case, which means trapping and spaying or neutering every single community cat in a certain vicinity. Our volunteers spent two months visiting this property then every single day for the last week, setting traps and collecting the cats. During this time, our team cared for all the collected cats at our facility, where each and every one received specialized care and treatment awaiting their vet visit.



Bill, Tina, and Bre safely cleaning cat towers



Brenda, Brandi, Jebbye, Heather, & Kat working intake

Then, we transported all the cats to Operation Spay Bay, where they were fixed and ear-tipped. From there, 60 of the cats were returned to their original outdoor homes where we had trapped them. The other 23 were adopted into new homes, either as barn cats or indoor pets, to help ease the burden on the caretakers and the surrounding neighborhood.

A huge THANK YOU to our supporters for donating, sharing, and inspiring our work.

You can learn more, see photos of all the cats we helped, and donate on our website at www.ahope4src.com/ph2021.



Shopper's Adoption Day

BY THE NUMBERS

2021 wasn't all about special projects. We also impacted the community through the life-saving programs we run all year long, including our low-cost spay/neuter transportation service, our rescue and rehabilitation program, our monthly pet food pantry, and our Bowl Fillers program.

Here's a look at everything our regular programs accomplished last year by the numbers.

In 2021, we...

Accepted **389 needy cats and kittens** and **47 fancy rats** into our foster program.

Guided **402 animals** to their forever families (not including those who found new homes through Project Hallelujah). Yay!!!

Transported **1,331 cats and 101 dogs** to get fixed and vaccinated, for a grand total of **1,432 spayed or neutered animals!**

Served an average of **15 dogs and 24 cats** every month at our pet food pantry, held on the second Sunday of each month.

Fed an average of **7 dogs and 9 cats** belonging to senior citizens every month through the Bowl Fillers program, which we run in partnership with the Council on Aging. Thanks to everyone who sponsored a month of Bowl Fillers last year, including our December sponsor, Your Pace Yoga!



Shopper enjoying a meal

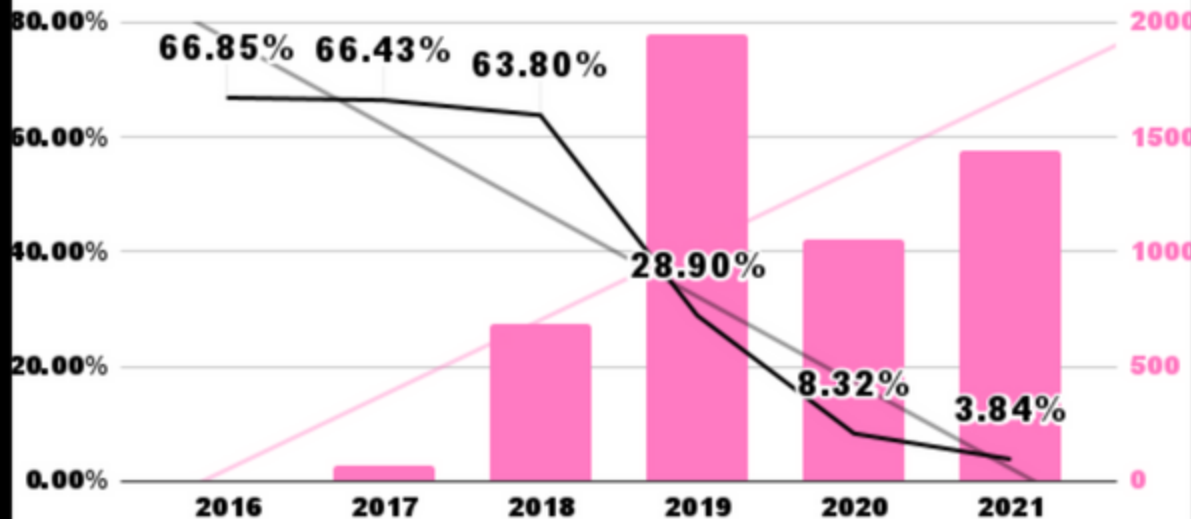
While we're talking about numbers, we wanted to take this opportunity to share some annual statistics from our local shelter, Santa Rosa County Animal Services. In case you didn't know, A HOPE was originally founded in 2017 to reduce the rates of unnecessary euthanasia in Santa Rosa County. At the time, we had the third highest euthanasia rate in the entire state of Florida - not a title to be proud of. At all. But things are much different now, thanks in large part to our community, the supporters, and the responsible pet owners and cat caretakers who really stepped up.

Let's begin by talking about those euthanasia rates. In 2016, 66.33% of the animals who came to the shelter were euthanized. In 2021, that number was down to 3.75%! That's a HUGE difference in the number of animals who get help and homes after walking in those shelter doors. For reference as to how that relates to our mission, the shelter's euthanasia rates had their first significant drop in 2019 (from 63.84% to 27.88%). 2019 was also the biggest year for our spay/neuter transportation service to date. That year, we helped 1,943 animals get spayed or neutered (as opposed to just 685 the previous year).

Animals Spayed/Neutered vs Euthanized

Data From Santa Rosa County Animal Services

Animals Sterilized (A HOPE) — Percent Euthanized



Our mission includes sterilization of dogs and cats so unwanted litters being born will be a thing of the past. This high volume, low cost service directly impacts the number of animals who end up at the shelter. In 2016, the shelter took in a total of 6,011 animals. Flash forward just five years and only 3,202 animals ended up at the shelter in 2021! The proof of the work we do is obvious. The proof that a community can come together to save lives, is remarkable! We will continue working hard in 2022 and far into the future to make sure these numbers keep dropping!

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

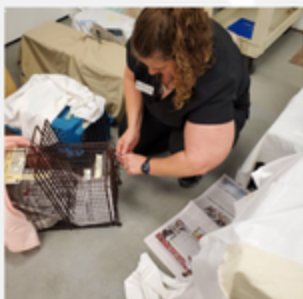
Volunteering at A HOPE looks like this...



And also this...



And this...



Special projects like Project Hallelujah and our programs that save lives all year long are only possible because of our hard-working volunteers! We are beyond lucky to have a team of passionate people by our side who are willing to do the dirty work to make the animals in our community happier and healthier (and sometimes...it's really dirty). In December, we logged 1,224 volunteer hours! That's 1,224 hours of love, sweat, purrs, and cat poop. Thank you to everyone who made Project Hallelujah and all of 2021 a success for us!

Volunteering at A HOPE means being a part of something much bigger than yourself. It means saving lives and making a tangible difference for animals and pet owners in your community. If you care about the future of animals in Santa Rosa County, now is the time to turn your passion into action! We have a place and a job for you, whether you want to work with animals hands-on or handle behind-the-scenes tasks from the comfort of your home. Come and join our family!

Where we need people most right now:

- Help Desk Operators on the phone, from your home, to assist the community with their pets
- Visiting and caring for our adoptable felines at PetSmart
- Online marketing via our website and social media
- Planning or assisting with our events and fundraisers
- Cleaning and preparing equipment at our facility
- And much more!



**Congratulations to our
December Volunteer of the Month:
Jordan Ardoin**

Bring your passion and skills to save lives with us!

www.ahope4src.com/volunteer

BEFORE AND AFTER.....

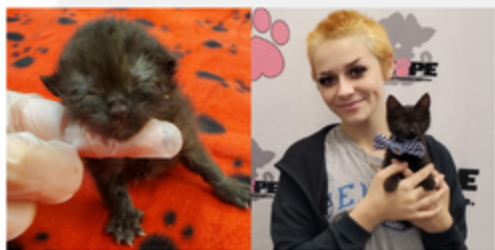
With 402 total adoptions, 2021 was a busy year for our rescue and rehabilitation program! Let's look back at some of the most memorable transformations from sick and dying.... to happy, healthy, and **LOVED** from the past year.



Maggie came to us after being abandoned at the shelter full of maggots. After a few months of TLC in a foster home, she found her forever home as a therapy cat helping trauma victims, known as a advocat!



Machine Gun Kelly was found with her leg wrapped in insulation, the bone crushed. Just 10 days of foster care later, she was running and playing, as good as new! She's living happily ever after in her new home, with all four legs intact.



Mindy was in the middle of the road in a storm, covered with fly eggs (maggots). They were in her eyes, ears, and rectum...when her eyes weren't even open yet. She lost one eye to the ordeal, but she's otherwise healthy and thriving with her loving family!



Fracture had a life-threatening infection in one leg and had to go to the vet for an emergency amputation. Our amazing community rallied together to cover the cost! Losing a leg didn't slow him down at all - he can still zoom with the best of them!



Shopper (left) and **Small Business Saturday** (right) were two of the first kittens we saved during Project Hallelujah. They were so gross when we first found them - caked in mud, with coccidia (an intestinal tract infection), and full of hookworms, roundworms, and ear mites. After hard work from fosters to get them well and gaining weight, they're two of the sweetest, most adorable kittens around!



WHAT DO WE NEED?

These are some items we can always use to help take care of our foster animals:

- IAMS wet kitten food
- IAMS dry kitten food
- Yesterday's News pellet litter
- 8 inch and 11 inch Black Zipties
- <15lbs Cat Carriers

If you can donate any of these items, please drop them off or have them sent to our office at 5755 Washington St, Milton, FL 32570.

Find our wishlist at
www.ahope4src.com/wishlist.



**Text "AHF" to 89871
to donate today!**

HOPE'S HEROES

A huge THANK YOU to our December donors:

Robin Gilmore
Jebbye Lemons
Donna Fite
Lynn Melton
Katherine Lyons
Holly & Jay Shands
Lona Thrasher

Deborah Lewis
Virginia Bowman
Kerry Anne Schultz
Bridget Knight
Jon & Tricia Green
Christy Carlson
Katie Johnson

Maureen Brescia
Mary Causey
Karan Llewellyn
Paige Cary
Linda Maguire
Cynthia Fulford
Kelly Leigh Clymer

Don't see your name on this list?
Add it by becoming a monthly donor here:
www.ahope4src.com/hopesheroes

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 22nd: Volunteer Orientation

- Time: 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- About: Training for new and returning volunteers. This is a great opportunity to jump in if you've never volunteered with us before, but want to see what it's like! Email volunteer@ahope4src.com to sign up for orientation.

January 25th: Spay/Neuter Registration Day

- Time: 12:00 PM (Noon)
- Location: Online at www.ahope4src.com/reserveaspot

February 8th: Spay/Neuter Registration Day

- Time: 12:00 PM (Noon)
- Location: Online at www.ahope4src.com/reserveaspot

February 13th: Pet Food Pantry

- Time: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
- Location: 5755 Washington St, Milton
- Learn more: www.ahope4src.com/petpantry

February 19th: Volunteer Orientation

- Time 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- About: Another session of training for volunteers. We'll cover the same information, so there's no need to attend both sessions. Email volunteer@ahope4src.com to sign up.



Countess & Duchess



Dodger & Biscuits

**Find our calendar and subscribe at
www.ahope4src.com/events!**

TAIL ME ABOUT IT!

Lisa asks: Some of the mama kitties you guys get look so young. How early can a cat get pregnant?

We agree! Many female cats have their first litter of kittens at a very young age. That's because they reach sexual maturity and go into heat for the first time at around 4 months old in our area (this is mostly related to outside temperatures). Though some may think it's cute, they're still kittens themselves and growing, so it's not healthy for their bodies to go through the stress of pregnancy. It's so important to get your cat spayed as soon as she's old enough and big enough for the procedure so you can avoid an early (or any) pregnancy. Kittens can get fixed as young as 8 weeks old at some clinics. Per the American Veterinary Medical Association, it is NOT always best to wait for dogs or cats to go into their first heat. They also recommend getting animals fixed before they're five months old. This is especially true in overpopulated areas, like where we are!



December & Her Litter

You should also know your cat can get pregnant again as soon as a few weeks after giving birth. Yes, they can go right back into heat right after delivery. If one pregnancy is too much for her growing body, two back-to-back pregnancies would be downright cruel and dangerous! If your cat is currently pregnant and you have a plan for the kittens to get the vet services they need and rehomed, she can be fixed when the kittens are eating solids at about 5 to 6 weeks old (she can go back to nursing afterwards). If you don't have a plan for them, please get them fixed asap. We offer low cost services with no extra charge for in heat or pregnant animals.

We love responsible pet parents!

**Do you have questions?
We want to answer them!**

Send any inquiries to
ahopenews@gmail.com, and maybe
we'll answer yours in next month's
Tail Me About It!



7 Month Old Mama & 5 Babies

#BettyWhiteChallenge

On December 2021 we said goodbye to an animal advocate icon. Betty White was active around the world to help animals find their voice by speaking for them. She regularly volunteered at her local animal shelter and gave time and money anywhere else animals needed it. She was always kind and compassionate to those animals, as well as the humans who needed them.

#BettyWhiteChallenge

"I LEARNED IT FROM MY ANIMAL FRIENDS. KINDNESS AND CONSIDERATION FOR SOMEBODY BESIDES YOURSELF. I THINK THAT KEEPS YOU FEELING REALLY YOUNG. I REALLY DO. -BETTY WHITE-



January 17, 2022 we will celebrate this beautiful woman by honoring her work in animal welfare. If an animal has ever come into your life and never left your heart, we challenge you to donate 5 hours to the local animal shelter, 5 days of saying nothing but kind words, or simply \$5 to help animals in need. Happy Birthday, Betty.

Text AHF to 89871 to donate today!