



**VERMONT  
HUMANE  
FEDERATION**

# 2014 Annual Report

*The Vermont Humane Federation (VHF) is a strong, unified network of organizations and individuals dedicated to promoting the welfare of animals.*

## ADOPTIONS

Inspired by one family's love for a Miniature Schnauzer, **Maddie's® Pet Adoption Days** has found homes for more than 30,000 homeless dogs and cats since 2010. In June, 2014, twelve Vermont organizations



*This family provided a forever home to Diamond from the Humane Society of Chittenden County during the adoption event.*

were invited to participate in the first statewide effort in Maddie's Fund history. The Vermont partners were: All Breed Rescue (*South Burlington*); Central Vermont Humane Society (*E. Montpelier*); Franklin County Humane Society (*St. Albans*); Good Karma Rescue (*Montpelier*); Homeward Bound, Addison County's Humane Society (*Middlebury*); Humane Society of Chittenden County (Lead Agency, *South Burlington*); Lucy Mackenzie Humane Society (*West Windsor*); North Country Animal League (*Morrisville*); Rutland County Humane Society (*Pittsford*); Second Chance Animal Center (*Shaftsbury*); Springfield Humane Society (*Springfield*); and Windham County Humane Society (*Brattleboro*).

Together, Vermont shelters and rescue groups adopted out 709 dogs and cats in two days. For each pet adopted, Maddie's Fund gives participating shelters from \$500 to \$2,000 to cover the true costs of those adoptions. The

Vermont partners received a check for more than \$500,000 from Maddie's Fund for all to save and treat more animals throughout the year. The lessons learned were invaluable: we can work even more collaboratively to save animal lives; "free" pet adoption does not mean that people are unprepared to become responsible animal caretakers; and the community really will adopt older, sicker animals if we give them the chance.

## ANIMAL CRUELTY RESPONSE

### Animal Cruelty Response Summit

Thanks to a generous grant from the ASPCA, the VHF brought together members of our Animal Cruelty Response Coalition for a day-long Summit to identify the most critical and achievable actions that Vermont can take to improve and strengthen its response to animal cruelty. This action-based work session was designed by and for participants, which included close to 50 attendees representing the Department of Public Safety, local police departments, Sheriffs' Departments, the state prosecutor's association, shelter & rescue groups, small- and large-animal veterinarians, the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, the Town Clerks Association, and municipal ACOs. Participants broke into 3 groups to tackle the areas that were identified as priorities moving forward: Enforcement, Training, and Legislation.



*Law enforcement officers, veterinarians, shelter and rescue groups and municipal officials discuss ways to improve the enforcement of Vermont's existing animal cruelty laws.*

We look forward to working with our partners to continue to make improvements to our system, with the overall goal of integrating law enforcement, local & state municipal agencies, and the private sector to better manage complaints, handle cases, and ultimately lead to better case outcomes for the animals and agencies involved.

## Training

We had a full house once again for the four, day-long animal cruelty investigation trainings (Levels I, II, III & IV) in September, organized by the VHF and hosted by the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council. In



*Participants in the Level III Animal CSI workshop practice their equine body scoring skills with instructor Dr. Janet Carini (R).*

addition, the ASPCA conducted a special training on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, “The Problem of Dog-Related Incidents/Encounters and Combat Animal Fighting in Your Community.” Dr. Pamela Reid, vice president of the ASPCA’s Anti-Cruelty Behavior Team, educated police officers and ACOs on interpreting dog behavior, evaluating the likelihood of an attack, and diffusing potentially volatile encounters.



*Terry Mills discusses the elements of a dog fighting investigation with attendees at the VT Police Academy.*

The animal fighting workshop was taught by Terry Mills, a 32-year veteran of the Missouri State Highway Patrol and head of the ASPCA’s Blood Sports division.

## EQUINE WELFARE COALITION

This past year the VHF’s equine welfare coalition was able to administer \$2,825 in hay bank grants to 6 needy horse owners and 1 horse rescue organization. We also provided a \$500 grant to assist with the gelding of 2 owned horses, and a \$250 grant to assist with the gelding of a stallion rescued in a cruelty case. VHF members assisted police with 2 large cruelty cases in Lyndonville and Woodstock, each involving the seizure of more than 20 horses.



*One of 21 horses seized in Lyndonville, VT. The owner was convicted on 17 counts of misdemeanor animal cruelty.*

Vermont Dressage Days once again chose the VHF as one of 2 charities to receive proceeds from their annual event, which netted a \$1,000 donation for our life-saving work. Thank you, Vermont Dressage Days!!

## PUBLIC POLICY

Animal advocates had lots to “howl” about in 2014 with the passage of S. 237, *An Act Related to Civil Forfeiture Proceedings in Cases of Animal Cruelty*, which won unanimous support in the House and the Senate before being signed by the Governor in June. This new law, which was actively supported by the VHF, the Department of Public Safety, and the State Prosecutors Association, will make significant improvements to Vermont’s cruelty law so that animals seized from cruel situations can be adopted as quickly as possible into loving homes. This change will encourage the enforcement of Vermont’s animal cruelty law, and save municipal and shelter resources, and animal lives.



*Department of Public Safety Commissioner Keith Flynn (R) actively lobbied in support of the civil forfeiture bill.*

In other good news, we were able to stop attempts to lift Vermont’s long-standing ban on the use of cruel snares to capture wildlife, as well as the “Ag Gag” bill aimed at stopping undercover investigations involving farm animals, punishing courageous whistleblowers who expose animal abuse on farms and slaughterhouses.

Unfortunately, the extreme confinement of breeding pigs in gestation crates, cages so cramped they can’t even turn around, remains legal in Vermont, as does the docking of dairy cows’ tails.



## DISASTER RESPONSE

The VHF provided a \$500 grant to the Vermont Disaster Animal Response Team (VDART), which was established in 2007 in order to strengthen and support the state's capacity to respond to animal needs in the event of a disaster. VDART offers a wide array of resources and recommendations in this area to organizations, individuals, communities, and state agencies on its website, [www.vermontdart.org](http://www.vermontdart.org). Teams in Windham and Chittenden Counties are forming to supplement the existing Upper Valley and Rutland Area DART Teams.

## SPAY/NEUTER

VT-CAN! received its second PetSmart Charities grant installment to alter another 1,000 cats from the Northeast Kingdom and received a Best Friends grant to alter 125 cats from Orange and Washington Counties for just \$30. VT-CAN! was also awarded a grant to alter female cats in February of 2015 for \$20 as part of their Beat the Heat Blitz, and funding to alter 50 free-roaming cats for free in April of 2015 as part of their new Community Catch Blitz.

Spay ASAP continues to serve the Connecticut River Valley and parts of the Northeast Kingdom. Dr. Sara White has done over 33,000 Spay/neuter surgeries for cats, dogs, rabbits and even some pigs, to date.

Dr. Peggy Larson announced that she is closing the Cat Spay and Neuter Clinic in Colchester at the end of December 2014. Dr. Larson has done over 78,000 cat spay/neuter surgeries and has been a pioneer in the field. Peggy's dedication, skills and compassion are unparalleled and she will be missed.



Photo Margaret Michniewicz

Dr. Peggy Larson

## SHELTER STATISTICS

Here are some highlights from the 2014 Membership survey (data collected in 2013):

### INTAKE

- Combined, respondents **took in a total of 6,637 cats, dogs, and small animals** – representing a 4.4% increase (or 280 animals) over the data collected in 2012.
- Feline intake again outnumbered canine intake, but by a lower ratio than in year's past – with **2,112 total dogs/puppies (up 125 from 2013)** entering the care of respondents and **4,207 cats/kittens (down by 13)**.
- **The single greatest source of puppies (67% or 343 – up from 216 in 2012)** was out-of-state transfer while the **single greatest source of adult dogs (38% or 610)** were owners surrendering to responding organizations. **598 adult dogs were taken in as strays** (from both citizens and municipal entities) while **352 (up from 283 in 2012)** were transferred from out of state.
- **47% (or 865) kittens** were taken in as **owner surrenders** while **36% (or 656)** were strays; **50% of adult cats (or 1,203)** were received as owner surrenders and **37% (or 881)** were received as strays.
- The single most frequently reported reason for canine surrender was due to **moving or housing issues (20% or 110)** while an additional **34% (or 186)** cited **financial concerns, health of the dog, or not enough time** as a reason for surrender. **22% (or 120)** surrender-ers reported **behavior issues - including dog and/or people aggression, lack of housetraining, and other - as their reason for surrender**.
- Similarly, the single most frequently reported reason for feline surrender was due to **moving or housing issues (19% or 237)** while an additional **23% (or 297)** cited **financial concerns, health of the cat, or not enough time**. Of the total responses, **26% (or 439)** cited **"Other"** as a reason for feline surrender.



## **ADOPTION/PLACEMENT**

- Combined, respondents reported conducting **5,102 adoptions (down 3.6% or 190)** – 1,517 of which were canines and **3,241** of which were felines.
- **373 canines** were returned to/successfully reunited with their owners (**58% of the total stray canine intake**); however, only **119 felines (or about 8% of the total stray feline intake,)** were returned to/successfully reunited with their owners.

## **EUTHANASIA**

- Combined, respondents reported **euthanizing 13% of cats and dogs that they took in – or 9% of the total reported intake for dogs and 15% for cats.** Most commonly reported reason for euthanasia (%/# of total euthanized by species): **63% (or 119 of 188) of dogs** were euthanized for behavior while **42% of those cats (or 259 out of 617)** were euthanized for health reasons that were beyond the capacity of the organization to treat.

## **SPAY/NEUTER**

- Combined, respondents reported conducting **2, 876 S/N surgeries – a 12% increase over 2012** (in addition to the TNR surgeries reported.)

## **FERAL CATS/TNR**

- **38%** of respondents accept feral cats and **54%** operate TNR (Trap Neuter Return) programs.
- **62%** of organizations conduct not only TNR but **public S/N surgeries** as well. Combined (all orgs., TNR and public surgeries,) they reported **conducting 2,020 surgeries.**

## **ANIMAL CRUELTY STATISTICS (2008 – 2013)**

