A Message from DAP Director, Melanie Sobel

Denver Animal Shelter (DAS) continues to be our community’s full-service, open-admission animal shelter, accepting every animal that comes through our doors. Our city has an animal shelter to be proud of thanks to the dedication of a talented and compassionate team, commitment from our wonderful volunteers, and support from city leadership and the community.

2022 was a challenging year for DAS: we received 51% more owner-surrendered animals this year compared to 2019, animal cruelty and neglect calls increased, and we experienced severe short-staffing. However, we continued to push through. Adoptions increased by 20% compared to 2019 and we had an amazing 192% increase in the number of animals entering foster homes. All the while, we never closed our doors to the most vulnerable animals in our community.

I want to thank DAS staff, volunteers and supporters for their hard work and commitment to animal rescue and care. We will continue to be a safe haven for the thousands of lost, unwanted, mistreated, sick and injured pets in our community every year.

Sincerely,

Melanie Sobel, DAP Director
Two New Vets Join DAP

Hiring workers was a pain point in virtually every field across the country last year. DAS was no exception. In 2022, we welcomed Dr. Patricia Crystal and Dr. Devon Wochele.

These two doctors will rotate schedules, ensuring our clinic is staffed with a veterinarian seven days a week.

Together, they'll help care for over 6,000 shelter animals and more than 7,500 community pets at our low-cost vaccine clinics each year. They'll also provide spay and neuter services, emergency medical care and specialty medical care.

DAS Offers Community Low-Cost Vaccinations

Denver Animal Shelter is proud to provide reduced-cost vaccinations for our wider metro Denver community. In 2022, DAS vaccinated 7,774 community pets.

These low-cost clinics are vital to the health of our community’s pets and their people by providing preventative wellness. They may also be the only medical care some pets receive due to the expense of seeing a veterinarian and the challenges of getting an appointment. And since these clinics are held on weekends, it helps owners come in on their days off from work.

DAS offers public vaccination clinics for dogs, cats and ferrets every Saturday and Sunday, from 9-11 a.m. at the shelter. Clinic services are first-come, first-served and frequently “sell out.”

Costs include: $35 for rabies, distemper/parvo and a one-year pet license; $55 for rabies, distemper/parvo and a three-year pet license; and $20 for a microchip. Also, rabies and distemper/parvo vaccines can be purchased for $15 each.

City ordinance requires any dog or cat, 6 months or older, to be vaccinated for rabies by a licensed Colorado veterinarian.
Safe Haven Program Keeps Pets with Their Owners

Hard times don’t mean an animal owner has to give their pet away thanks to DAP’s Safe Haven Program. The program offers up to four weeks of shelter and care for pets of families experiencing temporary homelessness because of fire, domestic violence or hospitalization. DAP also provides this service to pet owners experiencing homelessness during severe cold weather (under 15 degrees).

DAP is our community’s full service, open-admission shelter accepting animals in extreme emergency situations like the dangerous arctic blast in December 2022. Last year, DAP helped 27 families with this program.

Many pet owners don’t want to give up their animals but need short-term help so they can focus on getting into a new home. The Safe Haven Program makes it possible for these people to get the resources they need to improve their situations so they can welcome their pets home again. Animals provide companionship, comfort and unconditional love to these families. Preserving the bond between families and their animals is vitally important.

DAP Increases Permitted Pit Bulls in Denver Through Marketing Campaign

Voters overturned a decades-old ban on pit bulls in 2020. But owners of the breed had to permit their pups to make it count. Few did. So, DAP launched a marketing effort to get more pit bull owners to legalize their pets for free.

The Show Us Your Pitties campaign led to 127 pit bull permits, 142 evaluations, 67 pet licenses and 24 rabies vaccinations.

Special thanks to Petco Love for providing a $10,000 grant to help us increase this permitting requirement in Denver.
In 2022, DAS faced an ongoing capacity crisis. With more stray and surrendered animals coming into the shelter than going out, there was little room left for additional homeless pets. But the shelter’s foster program helped save the day—and no doubt, the lives of vulnerable animals.

The program grew exponentially in 2022. The number of animals fostered in homes jumped from 247 pets in 2019 to 722 last year. That’s a nearly 200% increase. The shelter also streamlined the foster process, making it easier for people to open their homes to a shelter pet.

Foster volunteers take in animals that would otherwise stay at the shelter. Volunteers temporarily provide a safe environment until pets find their forever homes. Animals feel the love and support of their foster pet parents, overcoming fears, recovering from trauma and fully expressing their personalities—all critical factors in increasing adoption rates. Foster volunteers are provided with pet supplies, including food, bedding, kennels and veterinary care for their foster animals.
DAP Deals with Hoarding Cases

When residents have more pets than allowed by city ordinance, it can be an unsafe and unhealthy situation. In 2022, Denver Animal Protection dealt with 23 hoarding cases.

Our DAP officers rescued dozens of turtles, roosters, mastiffs and other animals from inhumane living conditions.

Hoarding animals can lead to an inability for owners to provide the most minimal standards of nutrition, sanitation, shelter, and vet care. It can also lead to over-breeding of animals, starvation, illness and even death.

We’re grateful to our officers who saved these animals from horrible conditions that no living creature should have to endure.

DAP Delivers Pet Supplies to Owners in Need

DAP’s Community Engagement team continued to fill an important community need for free or low-cost services for pets. The team is attuned to providing resources and helping find solutions to ensure people can keep and properly care for their pets. The team hand-delivered cat and dog food, beds, kennels, coats, litter, leashes, collars and more, to pet owners in under-resourced areas of Denver affected by social, health, and racial inequities.

Since the program’s inception in 2020, the Community Engagement team has delivered over 13,000 pounds of food and/or litter to over 6,500 pets in 4,000 Denver households. Additionally, DAS has provided free veterinary care, spay/neuter, specialized medical procedures and grooming to our community’s pets in need.
Animals at DAS

6,016 Animals (2022)

Total represents dogs, cats, birds, guinea pigs, rabbits, pigs, chickens, snakes, even goats and more.

Adoptions: 2,748
- Pets returned to owners: 1,818
- Pets transferred to partners: 718
- Foster volunteers: 123
- Animals fostered: 722
- Volunteers: 425

Volunteer hours: 18,302
- Animals receiving medical care: 9,205
- Pets spayed/neutered: 1,158
- Animal Protection Officer (APO) service calls: 20,434
- APO cruelty calls: 1,296
- APO neglect calls: 2,313

In 2022, DAP raised the most money in its history: $761,753. This funding came from donations, grants, and events and was critical for the progressive programs and exceptional care we provide to our community’s neediest animals. While we receive taxpayer funding for much of our operations, donations allow us to go above and beyond in providing invaluable programs and services, including emergency medical care, specialty veterinary equipment, free spay/neuter services, foster care, humane education, community outreach and engagement, and animal care in enrichment.

Total, including grants, bequest, and cash: $761,753

We thank our generous community for opening their hearts and wallets for homeless animals. Also, this work could not be done without our incredible grantors. Thank you to Animal Assistance Foundation, Colorado Pet Overpopulation Fund (CPOF), Petco Love, PetSmart Charities, and Maddie's Fund.