



## Impact Report / 2019







## Mission

We are dedicated to protecting and making life better for animals and connecting the communities that care about them in Oakville and Milton.

## Goals

The foundation of our 2019-2022 strategic plan is built on four pillars:

- **Quality of Care**
- **Financial Stability**
- **Community Engagement**
- **Suitable Facilities**

By giving voice to those who can't speak for themselves, the objective of the Oakville & Milton Humane Society (OMHS) is to continue to raise awareness of the challenges our animals face, to deliver services that meet those needs and to facilitate understanding of why support for animal welfare is so critical.

OMHS relies 100% on donations from the public and corporate partners to provide animal care and support within the shelter.

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## Message from our Board Chair



2019 was quite a year for our shelter! From front page stories about animal rescues to dealing with changes in animal welfare legislation, our staff and volunteers have responded with commitment, care, and compassion for the animals as they always do.

I continue to be so proud of the role OMHS plays in the community. The society balances many challenges; 24/7 coverage for animal welfare and animal protection, assisting in the return of lost pets to their owners, adoptions, foster care, animal education, and actively engaging with our supporters to help ensure we are always there for the animals that need us.

Among the many highlights, was our inaugural Prancing with the Stars event last November. It was a tremendous success thanks in large part to our event chair Cari MacLean and her volunteer team working closely with staff. The sold-out gala brought the community together to showcase what we do and raise much needed dollars for the shelter.

We also completed the first year of our three-year strategic plan and are making great strides in all aspects of the operation. You can readily see the progress when you visit the shelter and see our new signage and windows that were added, or attend an OMHS event like the new Speaker Series. Our Building and Property Committee has also been very engaged in examining what future needs will be for the development of a new facility to replace our existing 50-year-old facility. In addition, our Community Engagement Committee is working along with staff to better understand the needs of the community so that OMHS continues to be the central hub for animal welfare. For this, and much more, I am grateful to the ongoing commitment and effort of the Board, those serving on Board committees, and our staff, as we continue to implement the strategic plan.

On behalf of my colleagues on the Board, I extend heartfelt gratitude and thanks to the community for your support, which allows us to carry on our mission of protecting and making life better for animals and connecting the communities that care about them in Oakville and Milton.

Clayton Shold

Board Chair

### 2019 Board of Directors

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Director

**Steven Matos**  
Director

**Michael Spinelli**  
Director

**Karin Tomosky-Chambers**  
Director

**Ex-officio**  
**Frances Walker**  
Society Veterinarian



## Message from our Executive Director



This past year has been one of continued growth and enhanced community engagement. One of our main objectives was to help create a more positive experience for the public when they engage with the OMHS and to inform the community about the significant impact we make in Oakville and Milton.

To achieve this, we started internally first, with a modest facelift at the shelter to improve its physical appearance both inside and outside. We've made our lobby area more inviting for our guests and have created a room we fondly call "The Den" where adoptions, surrenders, and arrangement for animal cremations can be managed in a private and welcoming environment. Many thanks to Catherine Leblanc and her team at Ambiance Home Staging for helping to recreate this room and to our partners at Royal Canin for making our shelter more engaging with modern signage.

We've also undertaken some important structural upgrades, replacing grating in dog adoptions area and outdoor dog runs and painting and repairing our kennel handles and doors. We will continue to do everything we can to make this temporary home for animals as comfortable as possible until they find their forever homes.

In early 2019 the Society had to take prompt action when the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) suddenly announced it would no longer investigate and enforce animal cruelty laws. In response, OMHS, along with seven other humane societies and SPCAs in southern Ontario, successfully lobbied government to continue to fulfil our role in cruelty investigations and protection until a new model was adopted. Our commitment to protecting animals in our community continued until the new Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) program took effect January 1, 2020. The OMHS is grateful for the opportunity to have fulfilled this important role for many years and to ensure that no animal fell through the cracks during this period of transition.

I'm extremely pleased with our efforts this past year to help protect wildlife in our community. Coyotes are often a concern for residents in our community and this past year we were successful in helping these animals in many ways. For example, when a mother and her newborn pups made a den in a residential drainage gully, the OMHS helped provide around the clock surveillance to protect these animals until the family could safely move to another location. Our Animal Protective Services team made national headlines in the late fall when it rescued a coyote during a snowstorm and safely removed a jar from its head and ensured its eventual safe return to the wild. To help our community learn more about these amazing animals, we piloted our first-ever community information series with Coyote Watch Canada. At the event, residents learned how to successfully cohabitate with coyotes. Together, these efforts continue to demonstrate the vital role the OMHS plays in our community.

None of these success stories and new services would be possible if it weren't for the outstanding commitment of our 450 volunteers, a passionate and innovative team of staff and a visionary and dedicated Board of Directors leading our way. Collectively we should be immensely proud of what we've accomplished in 2019 and how we continue to positively impact the lives of almost 4000 animals annually.

In the end, all of our good work is due in large part to the support of our donors, corporate partners, sponsors and friends of the OMHS. With your unwavering commitment to the OMHS, we surpassed our revenue target in 2019 and are eternally grateful for your generosity. Thank you all for your support of our mission and belief in the important work we do to help the animals in our community!

Rick Perciante

Executive Director





# Making life better for animals and connecting our community

2019: The year in numbers

OUR SUPPORTERS MADE THIS ALL POSSIBLE!

**528** animals found their  
forever homes



**65%**  
of all animals  
(300 in total)  
reunited with  
their families\*



**950**  
animals admitted  
and provided  
life-saving care  
(not including wildlife)



Total of  
**256**  
animals fostered



**380**  
animals spayed/  
neutered



\* OMHS continues to have one of the highest return-to-owner rates in Canada



**3,497**  
people reached  
through our  
education programs<sup>†</sup>



Investigated a total of  
**337**  
cases of alleged  
cruelty and neglect  
(a 10% increase from 2018)



Issued a total of  
**53**  
compliance  
orders<sup>‡</sup>

**2,559** sick and injured wild  
animals rescued  
**229** animals released into  
the wild<sup>§</sup>



**26,930**  
volunteer hours  
(and 176 new volunteers)<sup>¶</sup>



<sup>†</sup> Education programs include school presentations, class and community shelter

<sup>‡</sup> Under the OSPCA Act, OMHS inspectors investigate allegations of animal abuse and neglect under both federal and provincial legislation. Our officers also actively investigate animal protection general welfare concerns under Oakville's Animal Control By-law.

<sup>§</sup> Either released by OMHS or sent to a rehabilitation facility • <sup>¶</sup> We are supported by more than 470 volunteers who take on more than 30 different jobs!

OUR SUPPORTERS MADE THIS ALL POSSIBLE!





# Providing the best care for animals and a great adoption experience

Our animal care team does everything possible to help and provide comfort to injured, sick, or stray dogs, cats, rabbits, birds and other small animals to prepare them for their journey home. They provide life-saving care for the thousands of animals that come to our shelter every year. Once the animals are ready for adoption our customer care team works to ensure the animals are matched up with their ideal forever home.



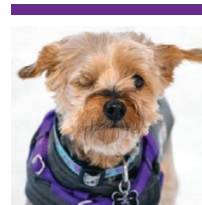
## No pet left behind



Pets are often a huge concern for people experiencing personal crisis. OMHS began a Violence Prevention Program in 2002 to help victims of domestic violence by caring for their pets on a short-term basis. Due to increased needs in our community, the program expanded into the Families in Transition (FIT) program. It helps residents who are temporarily homeless due to financial crisis, mental or physical health issues or are temporarily hospitalized.

The FIT program provides temporary boarding, medical care, food and support for vulnerable pets – ensuring the family unit can be kept together. FIT is made possible by a partnership between Halton Region, Oakville Community Foundation's Give Oakville Campaign and OMHS.

## Charlie Fund makes for a “Happy Tail” for Elsa



We love to hear back from our alumni and we know that Roxy (aka Elsa) has a large fan club at OMHS. Elsa was part of the OMHS family for eight months until she was adopted. During the time that Elsa lived at the shelter she was fostered in the home of one of our incredibly caring and dedicated volunteers so she could ‘learn’ about living in a home and with a family.

Rescued from a puppy mill environment, Elsa suffered from a damaged eye, dental disease and mammary tumors. These days she is discovering how amazing and loving the world can be with her new owner.

Thanks to OMHS’ Charlie Fund, Elsa received the urgent medical care she needed and for the first time in her life she was pain-free. Thanks to the support of our donors the Charlie Fund provides emergency and specialized veterinary care to homeless animals currently in the care of our shelter.

## Providing a place of comfort



Many thanks to Catherine LeBlanc and her team at Ambiance Home Staging for their time and effort in transforming our former retail store at the shelter into an engaging and warm comfort/adoption room. Ambiance created the design plan for the room, provided furniture, accessories and artwork and leveraged several of their suppliers.

A big paws up to Metin Moustafa of Moustafa Painting for painting the Comfort room and to John Spear and his team at Big Imaging who provided the window decals for the shelter. Together they have created a far more private space for our staff and clients to have important conversations around adoptions, surrendering of animals, or discussing cremation of a beloved pet.



## Forever home found for 18 pot-bellied pigs taken from Milton residence

Last January, in -30C temperatures, OMHS staff were urgently dispatched to assist 18 Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs from a property in Milton thanks to a phone call tip.

Over a seven-day period, OMHS officers and Registered Veterinary technicians (RVTs) made numerous trips to safely transport all the pigs for immediate treatment and care.

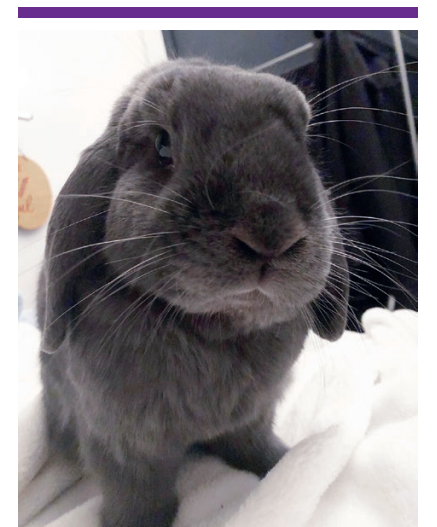
The first three pigs moved from the property were sent directly to the urgent care veterinary hospital at the University of Guelph to address their health. All of the pigs were provided with a vet exam, vaccination and deworming. Piglets were provided with foster homes until they could be spayed and neutered. Thanks to the quick action of OMHS staff and our veterinary partners all 18 pigs made a full recovery.

Pigs have complex family structures, so we were especially grateful that we could find a forever home where they could remain together. Our thanks to our supporters who donated the \$15,000 needed to care for and treat the pigs.



## New look, new food supplier!

In 2019 we updated our signage for our front reception desk and interior windows, hallway windows, dog adoption room and our meeting room. The signage highlights our new partnership with Royal Canin, our official food supplier. With every purchase of food made at the shelter, you help financially support our mission to help the animals in our community.



“

Jerome has been an amazing addition to my little family and I adore him. He loves to cuddle and give us lots of kisses and actually greets me when I get home from work! My experience with you guys was great and I am grateful you allowed me to give Jerome his forever home.

Sydney





## To the rescue!

At OMHS our Animal Protective Services (APS) officers are our first responders who work 24/7 to rescue lost and injured animals and give them a second chance for a better life. In 2019 they responded to **11,446** total calls for service.

### New animal welfare legislation



In 2019 the Ontario SPCA stopped conducting investigations under the OSPCA Act. The Government of Ontario also proposed new legislation to better protect animals from abuse and neglect; however the period immediately following required interim measures.

Through our affiliate status with the OSPCA, the OMHS had always employed investigators to conduct investigations under the OSPCA Act. In order to ensure no animal fell through the cracks in the transition period, the OMHS agreed to work

with the government. This required expansion of its coverage area for animal cruelty investigations from Oakville/Milton to include Halton Hills from July 2019 until the end of the year. To take on the expanded geography, OMHS added two additional inspectors to support the work of carrying out investigations.

The new legislation went into effect in January of 2020. The new Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) Act introduced a new enforcement model, including inspectors hired by the province, intended to provide province-wide coverage for those investigations. Inspectors hired include those specialized with expertise in livestock, zoos, and aquariums.

### Animal enforcement contract renewed

At the end of 2019, the Town of Oakville renewed its animal control agreement with the OMHS for another three years. This will include the pickup of stray domestic animals, enforcement of the Animal Control Bylaw and the rescue of sick and injured animals in the community of Oakville.



Photo: Aous Poules, AousPhoto.com



### Rescue of trapped coyote heard around the world

In November the APS team led a round-the-clock search for a female coyote that had its head trapped in a plastic container, which led to its safe rescue during a snowstorm in November. The dramatic nighttime rescue, captured on video, and posted on OMHS's Facebook page, reached more than 700,000 people and drew media coverage from across Canada and internationally.

Once rescued, the object was safely removed from the coyote's head by APS staff and the alert, but obviously dehydrated coyote was transferred to a nearby wildlife rehabilitator for further examination and treatment. The coyote quickly recovered and was successfully released back into the wild just a week later.



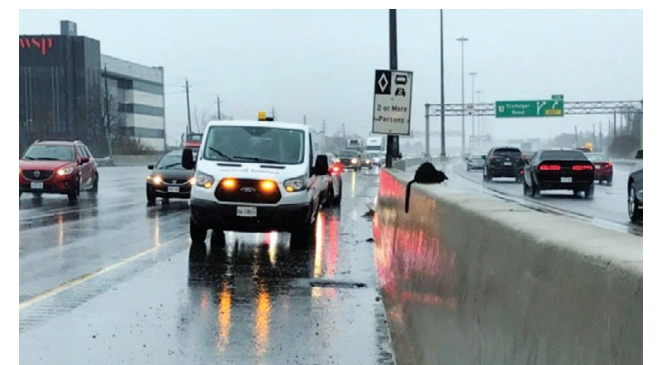
### Swan rescued from busy street

APS officers used a net and towel to capture and rescue an adult mute swan from traffic along a busy downtown street in Oakville. Officers arrived soon after receiving reports from residents that the swan was wandering in and out of traffic. The swan eventually made a full recovery and was released back into the wild.



### Gracie's highway rescue

With the assistance of the OPP, OMHS officers rescued Gracie after the cat had hitched a ride in the undercarriage of a car and fell out onto the QEW. While her tail could not be saved, Gracie did make a full recovery and was returned to her owner.



### 36 cats surrendered from one house.

In April, a couple who had become overwhelmed by caring for their 36 cats surrendered them to OMHS. The cats were suffering from giardia and tapeworm, parasites which are commonly found in overcrowded situations. They required antibiotics, medication, fluids and diagnostic tests. With extra care, they all recovered from their ordeal and have found new, loving homes.

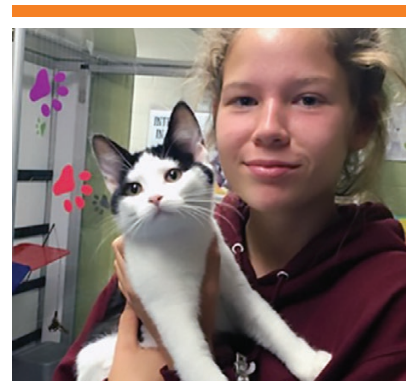




## Building humane communities

As a community-minded organization, OMHS focuses not only on helping animals, but also the people who care for them. That is why our Community Outreach and Education team is dedicated to providing programs and events that teach lessons of compassion, respect, responsibility and empathy to children and people of all ages in Oakville and Milton.

In 2019, our after-school Kindness Clubs, Kids & Critters Camps (held in the summer and over the March break) taught children about how to care for and protect animals through games, crafts, and animal interaction. Our Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP) provides 13-16-year-olds the opportunity to learn about animal behaviour, care and safe handling practices in a shelter setting. YAP complements the Ontario education program and students enrolled earn up to 25.5 hours of community service in accordance with Ontario high school requirements. We are thrilled to report demand for our programs continues to increase every year and last year we had a total of 292 participants in our programs (not including shelter tours).



“

*Thank you for everything you do to make this program happen. For the quiet kids, who don't always find the loudness of the world easy, you are providing a wonderful experience.*

Parent of a YAP participant



## Speaker series

We were thrilled to have Lesley Sampson, founding Executive Director of Coyote Watch, join us for our new Speaker Series. On November 26 Lesley provided a detailed presentation entitled “Understanding Our Wildlife Neighbours” at the Trafalgar Park Community Centre. Thanks to Lesley for providing an informative presentation on how we can safely co-exist with coyotes and taking questions from the audience.



*“All OMHS staff members we’ve encountered have been very helpful and friendly, the facility was clean, calm and just felt very comfortable for both human and the animals when we visited, and we felt very well-informed and supported throughout the process”*

Phoebe

## PATCH:

### Challenging students to be kind to people and animals

Frank Apa, President of Lexus of Oakville, adopted Patch, a Shih Tzu puppy. Patch was a sweet endearing little dog and when he began coming to work, he quickly became the company companion, mascot and spokes-dog. As a canine ambassador, he exemplified all the reasons why having animals in our lives has a positive impact.

Sadly, in August of 2002, Patch passed away. To honour his long-time companion, Frank dedicated the month of September at the dealership. Over the month, a donation was made from each car sale and the dealership raised \$13,300!

The money was generously donated to the Oakville & Milton Humane Society (OMHS) in Patch's memory. This donation enabled the shelter to create the PATCH Challenge – a program which highlights the human-animal bond.

Through the PATCH program, we challenge students in our community to be kind to people and animals. We challenge teachers to bring OMHS into their classrooms. We will continue to recognize children in our community who demonstrate kindness to all living things.

Patch, the little dog's name, has come to stand for **People and Animals Together Create Harmony**. Since then, Frank has continued to dedicate the month of August to support the kindness initiative and makes a substantial donation every year. Since inception, this program has raised \$218,113.25. Thank you for helping to make real and long lasting changes that benefit animals by creating a kinder, more compassionate world for all living things.







## Our volunteers: Making a difference together

By dedicating their time, love, and talents, our volunteers make a huge impact on the lives of the abandoned, neglected, and abused animals that enter our shelter every day. Whether they're taking our shelter dogs for regular walks all through the day, bottle-feeding a newborn kitten, socializing a rescued animal, or helping us raise much needed funds (or one of about 30 other jobs), our team of nearly 450 volunteers enables us to provide the very best of care for our animals and help us provide support to the people and animals in our community. Since we rely 100% on donations to help our animals, we simply could not do the work we do without our volunteers. Thank you!

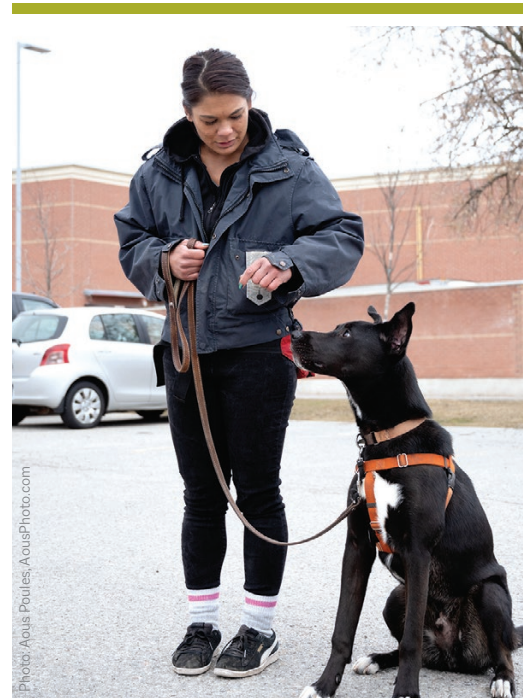


Photo: Aous Poules, AousPhoto.com

“

*I originally thought it might be upsetting to spend time at an animal shelter. But I've found it's the opposite. The animals here are being taken care of so well, it truly is the best place they could be until they find their forever families. Everyone's first priority is the health, safety and happiness of the animals and it's inspiring!*

**Jenifer Boyce, Volunteer**  
(Dog walker, front desk and much more!)



### Music for the soul



Johannes Linstead, the internationally renowned virtuoso guitarist, performed for the animals at Giving Tuesday in December. Acoustically friendly music has been proven to be a useful therapeutic tool for calming and promoting feelings of safety and security.

Other Giving Tuesday activities at OMHS included a gift matching challenge of up to \$10,000 by a loving supporter to fulfill the most urgent needs for the homeless and abandoned, and a Toy Workshop that provided enrichment toys for the animals.



### Barkin Bin thrift store

Hundreds of people attended our annual yard sale in July at our Barkin Bin thrift store searching for great deals and supporting the shelter in the process. Later in the year we also launched our first festive pop up store, Ye Olde Christmas Shoppe. Many thanks to Carole, Irene (in the Santa hat), Lynn, Erin, Claire and all our dedicated volunteers for making our stores a big hit with shoppers.



### Celebrating over 200 of Oakville's canine champions

Thanks to the hundreds of people who purchased the 5th book in the Dogs of Oakville series entitled: Champions and who also joined our book launch celebration in October.

Since 2011, Maria Bell has been capturing the dogs and cats of Oakville and their unique personalities through her beautiful series of books. In this edition of "The Dogs of Oakville, Champions", Maria Bell, Patricia Toth and Russell Gonsalves photographed Oakville dogs while their families provided videos of their dogs that capture how they are truly champions of our hearts. Together, the book's photographs and links to videos highlight the unique personalities of more than 200 of Oakville's canine residents.

The first, second, third and fourth editions of The Dogs of Oakville as well as The Cats of Oakville Special completely sold out and raised more than \$100,000 in support of OMHS.



“

*To truly help the dogs there has to be an understanding of where they came from and what their needs are to prepare them for a happy life in their forever home. The staff at OMHS understand what each dog's needs are and they communicate the plan for each dog with the volunteers.*

**Bob Brennan,**  
**Dog walker**







## Funded by the community for the community

There are so many ways our community showed they care in 2019. From our monthly (PAW) donors, to those who purchased lottery tickets and calendars, the hundreds who attended our events as well as those who hosted their own events in support of the OMHS. Your generosity makes what we do possible. We are grateful to our sponsors and partners whose support gives the animals a chance for a better life. Every dollar raised has an immediate impact on our efforts to protect animals, relieve their suffering, advance their health and welfare, prevent cruelty, and work for a just and compassionate society.

### Youngest animal sponsor

With a love of animals, ten-year-old Matthew recently became a cat sponsor, which is one of the most meaningful ways to help an animal in need. Matthew is doing chores to earn enough to pay for his monthly gift and he checks the website daily to follow the progress of 'his' cat. Matthew, you are an inspiration to all of us!



### PAW members: There for the animals all year long!



Thank you to the loyal members of our PAW program, whose monthly gifts have been crucial to helping us provide urgent care, shelter and other life-saving services during 2019. OMHS relies entirely on donations to care for the animals and we could not do this without you! PAW members are among our most loyal supporters, and are making a long-term commitment to the animals. Their generosity is the reason we are able to continue to provide life-saving medical care and find loving new homes for our most vulnerable animals.

### Mulch thanks

Thanks to Storybook Tree Services in Oakville for donating mulch for our dog pen. And a big paws up to our amazing volunteers, Sue, Kim and Lisa, our Dog Trainer, Robin and Volunteer Coordinator, Jackie for shoveling and raking mulch to create the perfect outdoor play space for the pups!



### Baking a difference

Fifteen-year-old Julianna loves animals – especially dogs. It's for this reason that Julianna and her mother Eva (*pictured here*) have been baking and selling cupcakes to support OMHS. It's a team effort. Eva bakes the cupcakes from scratch, Julianna decorates, and dad, John, helps with promotion and delivery.

Over the past three years the family has raised close to \$3,000 for the animals at the shelter.



### New Ambassador for the Charlie Fund!



Anne Smith was appointed as the new Ambassador for the Charlie Fund, taking over from Jacqui Gerrard, who headed the Fund for two years. The Charlie Fund provides emergency and specialized veterinary treatment for animals in our care. "Charlie" is near and dear to Anne's heart, as she has served as Chair of the Fund in the past. Joining the shelter as a volunteer in 1991, Anne went on to serve six years on the Board of Directors, including time as President. A dedicated fundraiser, Anne is responsible for, among other projects, raising the funds for our sprinkler system and our two cat socializing rooms. Welcome back, Anne!

### Mission accomplished!

Thanks to our 18 amazing, adorable humans who embarked on a mission that had them trading places with the adoptable animals at our shelter for the afternoon. For the fundraiser, Centre Court in Oakville Place was transformed into a makeshift kennel for Mission Pawsible and each participant was responsible for raising a minimum of \$1,000 (their adoption fee) so they could be adopted into their forever home.

Together they helped raise over \$27,000 so that the OMHS can continue to provide top-notch care to the few thousand animals who are helped by the shelter each year. To the relief of their families, all of our adorable humans were adopted back into their forever homes by the end of the day.

Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor, PetSmart and to our two hour sponsors, Bone & Biscuit Oakville South and Oak-land Ford Lincoln for their financial support of this event. Events like these are not possible without the support of our community, the dedication of our volunteers and of course our adorable humans. Mission accomplished!



### First ever Prancing with the Stars raises over \$143,000



In November we hosted our first-ever Prancing with the Stars event presented by Royal Canin. Five community leaders from across the GTA spent six months perfecting their performances with their professional dance partners, while raising funds for the animals in our care.



Congratulations to Lana Hockey and Jone Lam (*pictured here*) for winning the *Best in Dance* Show trophy at Prancing with the Stars. Lana also won the trophy for top fundraiser. But it was the animals that were the biggest winners, as the event raised more than \$143,000 in support of their care!

The tremendous success of the event would not have happened without the support of our event committee, chaired by Cari MacLean, our sponsors: Royal Canin, Virox Technologies, Ren's Pets, P3 Veterinary Partners and Starshot Marketing; our dedicated community stars: Lana Hockey, Oliver Matas, Clayton Shold, Elissa Lansdell and Che Marville, and everyone who purchased a ticket.





# 2019 Financial results



Financials		
For the year ended December 31, 2019		
Revenue		2019
Fundraising	\$	1,753,590
Animal Protective Services	\$	1,161,722
Community Engagement	\$	236,089
Other Income	\$	178,155
Total Revenue	\$	3,329,556

Expenses		2019
Program and Services	\$	2,278,104
Finance and Administration	\$	558,313
Fundraising	\$	426,281
Total Expenses	\$	3,262,698
Net Income - Including Charlie Fund	\$	66,858

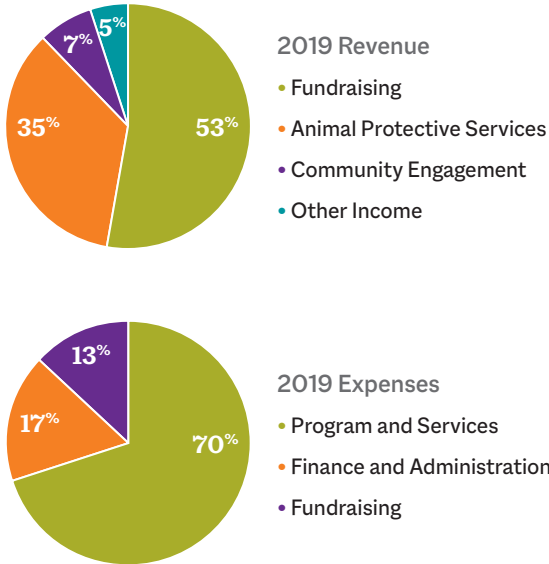






Photo: Aous Poules, AousPhoto.com

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