



# OMHS Impact Report 2024



As we reflect on 2024, we're filled with gratitude and hope for the future of the Oakville & Milton Humane Society (OMHS). This past year has brought growth, resilience, and real impact, made possible by the incredible support of our donors, volunteers, staff, and community partners.

Remaining accountable, innovative, and engaged in our communities, we have continued to grow our programs, strengthen relationships, and reach more people and pets in need. None of this would have been possible without your trust and generosity.

The stories in this report show just how much we have achieved together. They're full of heart, and each one reflects the compassion that drives OMHS and the strength of a community that cares.

Every animal helped and each family supported reminds us of why we are here—to ensure that pets are safe, healthy, and loved.

Thank you for being a part of this journey. Together, we're building a more compassionate world, one pawprint at a time.

With heartfelt thanks,



**Eileen McCormack**  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Oakville & Milton Humane Society



**Jeff Vallentin**  
Executive Director  
Oakville & Milton Humane Society

# 2024 Year in Review

2,293

wildlife animals



3,297

total animals supported



1,004

domestic animals



308

wildlife animals sent to rehab



OAKVILLE & MILTON HUMANE SOCIETY

244

pets returned to families



3,266

Animal Protective Services calls responded to



485



animals found their forever home

5,077

people reached



through education programs

140,000



meals provided by our pet food bank



213

animals fostered

## The Heart of OMHS: Our Volunteers

At OMHS, volunteers are more than helpers, they're the heart of our shelter. Every day, you'll find them quietly doing work that makes all the difference: washing bedding, walking dogs, socializing cats, driving animals to veterinary appointments, or delivering pet food to local food banks. Their compassion and consistency keep our shelter running and ensure every animal feels safe and loved.

In 2024, we were proud to honour Susan Ehrichs with one of two Outstanding Volunteer of the Year awards. A retired educator who joined OMHS in 2020, Susan gives not just her time, but her heart. She teaches empathy to young people through our education programs, helps shy cats build confidence and trust, and plays matchmaker by connecting future pet parents with their perfect feline companions. Her warmth, patience, and care have left a lasting imprint on our shelter community.



Volunteers and foster families are essential to our mission. Their time and dedication help animals learn to trust again, give the overlooked a second chance, and ensure OMHS can continue providing care and shelter to animals in need.

## OMHS Pet Food Bank: Keeping Pets and Families Together

At the front of the OMHS parking lot sit two plain shipping trailers, easily overlooked. But inside is something powerful: stacks of pet food and supplies, carefully packed by volunteers to be delivered to community food banks. These are more than just deliveries. They are lifelines meant to keep families together.

In 2024, OMHS distributed over 140,000 meals to pets in need through a network of 16 local food bank partners. For many pet owners, these meals arrive at a time of crisis, after job loss, illness, or housing instability, when they're at risk of losing the pet they love most.

Sammy, a young King Shepherd, lives with a veteran who is unable to work. His owner told us that without the support of the OMHS Pet Food Bank, he would not have been able to afford to keep Sammy at home.

Tanya shared a similar story. After losing her job due to an injury, she faced the unthinkable: having no food for herself or her dog, Archie. She turned to OMHS, and thanks to a local food bank partner, Archie stayed by her side.

These are not rare stories: they are the reason this program exists. By providing food and support in times of need, the OMHS Pet Food Bank helps prevent the heartbreak of surrender. It helps pets stay with the people who love them which is where they belong.



**16** food bank partners  
**20** community programs  
**400+** pets supported monthly



## Rescue in the Cold: A Tale of Teamwork and Compassion

On a chilly December morning, OMHS received a call about a fox limping through a local car lot. For more than a week, he had been spotted by concerned residents, his leg clearly injured, but his spirit undeterred as he continued to evade capture.

Our Animal Protection Officers, who respond to emergency calls involving injured or sick animals, sprang into action. The fox—quickly dubbed Mr. Fox—disappeared into a drainage culvert just as they arrived.

What followed was an extraordinary show of teamwork and compassion. The OMHS team was joined by Healing Hearts Lost Pet Search & Recovery and Oakville Fire Department's Station #1 crew. Together, they devised a creative capture plan complete with duct tape, a cardboard box, and quick reflexes. Against the odds, it worked. Mr. Fox was finally safe in OMHS care.

He was transferred to a wildlife rehabilitation centre, where he underwent surgery to repair his leg. After recovering, he was released back into the wild, where he belongs.

This rescue was more than just a feel-good story: it was a powerful reminder that when a community comes together, amazing things can happen.



**297** by-law cases

**7,279** dog licences sold

**308** wildlife animals transported to rehabilitation services

OMHS Return-to-Home rates:

**62%**  
of dogs

**29%**  
of cats

reunited with their families

## A Lasting Legacy of Compassion

Lisa Studnicki Hunt's connection to OMHS is deeply personal, shaped by a lifetime of compassion and her cherished relationship with her beloved cat Oliver. For over a decade, Lisa has supported OMHS as a donor, monthly contributor, and advocate. Her dedication grew even stronger following the loss of Oliver in 2024 to chronic kidney disease. "He was my little guy," Lisa reflects. "I was blessed to be his mom for more than ten years."

During Oliver's illness and after his passing, Lisa found comfort in the support OMHS provided. She donated his special food to help other cats and was touched by the empathy our team showed her. Motivated by this experience, Lisa chose to leave a legacy gift to ensure future generations of animals receive the same care and compassion. "It brings me peace to know that even after I'm gone, I'll still be helping animals in need."

Lisa's decision to include OMHS in her estate planning is a testament to her lifelong commitment to animal welfare. Her generous gift will have a lasting impact, ensuring that no animal is left without the care and support they deserve.



*"It brings me peace to know that even after I'm gone, I'll still be helping animals in need."*

## Teaching Compassion to the Next Generation

At OMHS, the legacy of one small dog continues to inspire kindness in classrooms and communities.

In 2001, Frank Apa, retired owner of Lexus of Oakville, partnered with OMHS to create the PATCH (People and Animals Together Create Harmony) Program. Inspired by his beloved dog Patch, Frank wanted to honour the joy Patch brought to everyone he met.

Patch, a sweet-natured black and white dog, quickly became the heart of Frank's dealership. His outgoing personality and gentle spirit lifted the moods of customers and staff alike. When Patch passed away, his legacy lived on through the PATCH Program.

Since its creation, PATCH has raised over \$333,000 to support OMHS's humane education initiatives. Through programs like Kindness Club and Humane Heroes, children learn about empathy, responsible pet care, and animal safety. These lessons help build a more compassionate community one child at a time.

Each year, the PATCH Challenge carries that legacy forward. A portion of every car sold at Lexus of Oakville supports OMHS programs, and each year, the dealership honours a child who has shown exceptional kindness toward animals and others.

In 2024, we proudly presented the PATCH Award to Max and Jack Lawton, two young changemakers who embody the values Patch inspired. More than two decades later, his spirit continues to shine, reminding us that even the smallest acts of kindness can make a lasting impact.



**Max and Jack Lawton, winners of the Patch Challenge Award 2024**

## Celebrating 40 Years of Compassion: The Charlie Fund at Work

The Charlie Fund has been at the heart of the Oakville & Milton Humane Society for 40 years, offering hope and healing to animals with urgent and complex medical needs.

The fund's story began in 1985, when a Border Collie arrived at OMHS with a leg too badly damaged to save. A community fundraising campaign helped cover the cost of life-saving surgery. That dog, Charlie, recovered, was adopted into a loving home, and lived a long, joyful life. His story inspired the creation of a permanent emergency medical fund in his name.

What began as a way to save one dog has since grown into a lifeline for more than 100 animals every year.

In 2024, Coco, a three-and-a-half-month-old puppy, was surrendered after breaking her leg in an accident. Thanks to the Charlie Fund, she received surgery and dental care. She recovered beautifully in foster care and was adopted just in time for Christmas.



Audrey, a five-year-old Himalayan cat, came to OMHS underweight, matted, and suffering from an infected eye. The Charlie Fund covered her eye removal surgery and dental work. After months of care in the shelter and in foster, Audrey made a full recovery and was adopted.



Today, both Coco and Audrey are thriving in their forever homes because of the Charlie Fund and the donors who make it possible.

## Barkin' Bin: Volunteers Transform Bargains into Lifesaving Funds

The OMHS Barkin' Bin Thrift Shop is more than just a place to find a good bargain—it's where compassion and community come together. In 2024, 13 incredible volunteers donated more than 2,000 hours of their time, helping raise more than \$84,500. Every dollar directly supports OMHS programs, providing animals with the care, shelter, and second chances they deserve.

But the Barkin' Bin's impact goes far beyond dollars and cents. It's a space where community gathers, whether it's a volunteer sorting donations with a smile or a shopper finding a cozy winter coat. The shop gives gently used treasures a new purpose, while supporting the work of OMHS.

When people donate or shop at the Barkin' Bin, located at 511 Pinegrove Road in Oakville, they're doing more than supporting a thrift store. They're standing behind the animals at OMHS and proving that even small acts, like buying a mug, can make a big difference.



**\$84,500** raised for OMHS in 2024

Over 2,000 volunteer hours logged

Bringing affordable items  
to our community



## Finding Family for Ducky

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Ducky, a sweet senior tabby cat, found her forever home after a long journey with OMHS. Originally adopted from OMHS as a kitten, Ducky was returned to the shelter years later when her owner became ill and could no longer care for her.

At first, Ducky was shy, but her personality soon began to shine. With gentle head nudges and her signature “quacking” meow, she won over the hearts of staff, volunteers, and her foster family.

After more than 750 days in care, Ducky was adopted by a new, loving family. Though her first home wasn’t forever, she was surrounded by love every step of the way, and now, she’s finally where she belongs. Because at OMHS, we believe every animal deserves a second chance no matter how long it takes.



## Sunny's Happy Tail

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Nine-year-old Sunny, this year's *OMHS Impact Report* cover star, was found wandering alone in Oakville in May 2023. It was clear she'd been through a lot. She was blind in one eye, severely underweight, and diagnosed with diabetes.

Thanks to the unwavering support of OMHS staff, volunteers, and community, Sunny received the medical care and love she needed to heal. After 567 days in care, she finally went home with her new family.

Now an Instagram star, Sunny's sweet and silly personality shines through every day. She's living up to her name and enjoying a bright new chapter filled with joy.

Follow her at [@the\\_senior\\_sisters\\_and\\_nyx](https://www.instagram.com/the_senior_sisters_and_nyx)



[omhs.ca](https://www.omhs.ca)

445 Cornwall Rd, Oakville, ON L6J 3S8 • 905-845-1551

Charitable Registration No. 11906 4350 RR0001

