

Paw Prints



Published quarterly by Hilton Head Humane

Spring Edition 2026

New News is Good News

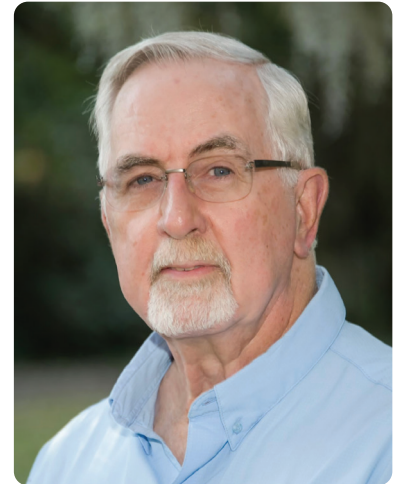
Chairman's Comments by Monte Leath:

As we welcome Spring, renewal is all around us — and that spirit is alive here at the Shelter as well. With this issue, you'll notice a fresh look and a new layout for our quarterly newsletter. I've chosen to keep my messages a bit shorter so we can share more of what truly brings our mission to life: the faces, stories, and everyday moments of the animals we care for and the dedicated staff who make our work possible.

Our goal is simple: we want you to know who we are, what we do, and the incredible team behind every rescue, every adoption, and every second chance. Together, we're ensuring that every animal has the best opportunity to find a forever home and live a happy, healthy life.

And good news — your newsletter will now arrive every quarter. More updates, more stories, more connection. 🐾

Monte Leath, Chairman



A Journey North:

How Collaboration and Compassion Moved Sixty-Three Lives Forward

Written by Kate Gaul

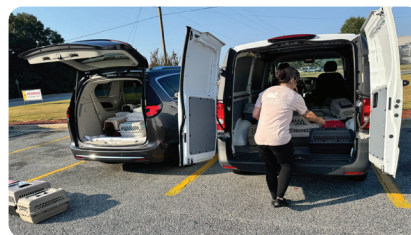
What began as a simple request for help turned into a shining example of what a dedicated community can accomplish together.

Earlier this month, our partners in Washington, DC reached out with a transport request: their dog space was tight, but they had room to welcome cats. Beaufort County Animal Services, who generously provides transportation for our northern transfers, stepped in immediately to coordinate the trip. The plan was set — a transport scheduled for Friday, January 23rd.

But rescue work rarely follows a straight line.

A staffing shortage at our partner rescue in DC forced us to delay the trip. At first, it felt like a setback, but as often happens in animal welfare, the unexpected opened a new door. With a few extra days, space for dogs began to open up in DC, and suddenly we had the opportunity to send even more animals on their way to new beginnings.

We rescheduled for Tuesday, January 27th... only to be met with a winter storm that pushed us back once again. And yet, even this delay worked in the animals' favor. The extra day allowed us to prepare and add even more dogs and cats to the transport list.



By the time the weather cleared and the wheels finally rolled north, our collaboration had grown into something truly special. Thanks to the combined efforts of Hilton Head Humane's dedicated staff, Beaufort County Animal Services and our incredible veterinary team, **25 dogs and 38 cats** were safely loaded for their journey toward brighter futures.

Sixty-three lives. Sixty-three chances at happiness. Sixty-three reminders of why this work matters.

Moments like this make me incredibly proud — proud of our team, proud of our partners, and proud of the community that stands behind us. I genuinely love my job, not just because of the animals we help, but because of the people who show up every day with compassion, grit, and a shared passion for bettering the lives of these wonderful shelter pets.

Every transport is a victory, but this one felt especially meaningful. It was a testament to resilience, teamwork, and the belief that every animal deserves a chance. And together, we made that happen. 🐾

Take Me Home!

See Page 6



Hester



Martha May



Vi



Brunswick



Horton



Sassafras



Litter Box Brief

A Note from Our New Sales Manager, Kimm Strausbaugh

For those of you who may not know me yet, I'd love to introduce myself. I was born in Virginia and grew up in Ohio, and I've been fortunate to call this area home for the past 8 years. I have a daughter, 3 beautiful granddaughters who keep me smiling, and an amazing dog, Luna — who is proudly a Hilton Head Humane alumna and very much part of our family.

I've worked in retail for over 30 years, and I've always loved the thrill of the treasure hunt that comes with thrifting. There's something special about finding that perfect piece and giving it a second life. So, when I saw the ad for the Sales Manager position at The Litter Box, I knew it was exactly what I had been looking for.

Coming to work at The Litter Box has truly been a blessing. No two days are ever the same — and I love that. From the incredible donations that come through our doors to the customers who share their stories, every day brings something new. But what makes this place so special is our volunteers. Their dedication, kindness, and love for the animals make all the difference.



When I'm not at the store, you can usually find me watching sports, playing chess, or spending time with my family. I am so grateful to be part of this community and to work alongside people who care so deeply about supporting the animals we serve.

Thank you for being part of our mission — whether you shop, donate, volunteer, or cheer us on. It truly takes all of us. 🐾

Mission Statement

To improve the lives of homeless dogs and cats while also working to substantially lower the number of animals reproduced or relinquished.

Join Our Information Highway

Want to know about shelter special events and upcoming activities? Call us at **(843) 681-8686** and give us your email address or email us the information at membership@hhhumane.org. We'll speed the news out to you. Be sure to check out our Facebook and Instagram pages [@hiltonheadhumane](https://www.facebook.com/hiltonheadhumane) and our web site at hhhumane.org.

Notice

Hilton Head Humane does not employ or contract with any professional fundraisers. HHH creates all mailings and fundraising efforts. All money received comes directly to the shelter where it is used for the benefit of the animals. HHH mailing lists are held in strict confidence. Lists are neither sold nor used for public consumption.

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Mickey Goodman, Vice Chairman

Sandy Leath, Secretary

Rick Saba, Treasurer

Hilton Head Humane Board Members

Sandy Benson

Michael Casuccio

Katiana Chapman

Franny Gerthoffer, Executive Director

Mark Keffer



WE NEED YOU!

We're looking for caring volunteers.

Giving just a little of your time can make a huge difference in the lives of animals waiting for safe, loving homes.

Whether it's volunteering at the **Litter Box Thrift Shop**, helping out at the **Shelter**, being a part of **Upcoming Events**, or simply giving them attention and comfort, your time and kindness truly matter.

843.681.8686 www.hhhumane.org

WE ACCEPT VENMO!

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@HiltonHeadHumane

venmo

SCAN THIS CODE TO MAKE A DONATION TODAY!

HILTON HEAD HUMANE

Every wag, every purr:
see it first on our socials!

Facebook
Instagram

@hiltonheadhumane

Spare Change Creates Real Change!

Host a donation canister at your checkout and turn spare coins into second chances!

Call (843) 681-8686 to host a canister at your business!

Leave A Legacy

Ways to help sustain the HHH's work now and into the future:

Unrestricted Donation: Your gift of cash or securities will be used for shelter operating costs or an area of greatest need.

Restricted Donation: Your gift will be used only as you specify.

Endowment Donation: Your contribution goes directly to the endowment fund.

Will: Your legacy will continue after you are gone. Sample Bequest Language:

I give, devise, and bequeath to the HHH, federal tax i.d. No. 57-0630156, P.O. Box 21790, Hilton Head Island, SC 29925, the sum of \$____ (or describe the real or personal property or estate portion) to be used for its general purposes.

Life Insurance and Retirement Beneficiary Forms: Simply list "charity" as relationship to beneficiary, plus name, address, and tax i.d. no. of the HHH.

Charitable Remainder Trust: Your planned gift will enhance your income and offer significant tax benefits.

We recommend that you consult with your attorney or financial advisor.

Contact Franny Gerthoffer at 843.681.8686 if you have questions.

Support our Business Members:

- HHH Business Members • Animal Care Clinic
- Atlantic Personnel • Beach Properties of Hilton Head
- Beth DeAngelis Real Estate, LLC • Bill and Betsy Sauter
- Billy Wood Appliances • Binka, LLC
- Bryan Weathersbee – Prudential Advisors
- Burnt Church Distillery • Captain Woody's Bar & Grill
- CAV Integrated Home • Coastal Pools and Fountains, Inc.
- Coco's on the Beach • Crescent Moon Pictures, LLC
- Curry Printing • Dr. Bonnie J. Rothwell, DMD, AAACD, OHP, Inc.
- Elegant Bloom Designs • Ferguson Home
- Heritage Fine Jewelry • Hilton Head Island Motor Coach Resort
- Innovative Pool and Spa
- Luna Therapy Health and Wellness Spa
- Piper Plumbing, LLC • San Miguel's Mexican on the Marina
- SeaPinesVilla • SERG Restaurant Group • The Salty Dog

A Day in the Life of Dr. Dixon

At Hilton Head Humane Association, every life changed begins with compassionate care—and few people embody that mission more fully than **Dr. Matthew Dixon**. As the dedicated veterinarian behind our high-volume spay/neuter clinic, Dr. Dixon performs nearly 7,000 surgeries each year, helping to prevent suffering before it begins and strengthening animal welfare across our community. In this interview, he shares how his rural Missouri roots inspired his path to veterinary medicine, what a day in the clinic really looks like, and why, even after tens of thousands of procedures, every single animal still reminds him why this work matters.

What first inspired you to pursue veterinary medicine, and how has your journey shaped the way you practice today? I grew up in a rural area in southeast Missouri. Animals have always been an important part of my life. I understand how important the bond between people and their pets can be, and I have always tried to foster it. I like that my work at Hilton Head Humane can help bring together animals who need care with people who can provide it.

How did you find your way to Hilton Head Humane, and what made you feel this was the right place for you? My start with Hilton Head Humane began when they took over operations from the previous nonprofit I was working for at the time in 2012. Since then, through my work at Hilton Head Humane, I have been able to help serve the animals in the area in a more substantive way than I would have thought possible.

Walk us through a typical day in your role — what does your work look like from the moment you arrive to the moment you head home? My workday starts at 7AM, I get started setting up the clinic for the day, and if necessary, check on animals from the previous day. By 8AM, I start looking at the animals scheduled for surgery that day. Surgeries start around 9AM and continue until about 3PM. After surgery, I typically catch up with exams and routine care for animals in the shelter. When finished with exams, etc., I find time to work on record keeping, leaving for home about 5:30PM.

On an average day, how many surgeries or medical procedures do you perform, and how do you balance that with other responsibilities? On average, about 35 surgeries are performed daily. Once surgeries are finished, there are always a variety of other tasks to care for resident animals who are up for adoption. Also, as needed, I have to handle emergencies involving animals that come through the county shelter.

You complete nearly 7,000 spay/neuter surgeries each year. When you think about that number, what does the impact mean to you personally and professionally? At the end of the year, it's always a bit surprising when I reflect on the number of procedures that have been performed. But I am also gratified to know that my work prevents unwanted animals from suffering because they lack the resources to care for them.



What aspects of your job are the most challenging, whether medically, emotionally, or logistically?

Logistically, this work can be challenging, given that so many patients are seen on any given day. On paper, sterilizing a dog or cat is fairly straightforward. However, every animal is unique in its physical makeup, and I must address the specific aspects of each to ensure the surgery is successful. Efficient time use is crucial to getting everything done each day.

The work is also physically and emotionally draining. There is a lot of stress on my body from the repetitive nature of the work. Consistent concentration is needed throughout the entire surgery to help avoid problems and to deal with problems quickly and effectively when they occur, which can be very tiring.

What part of your work brings you the most joy or sense of accomplishment? I like to think that my work will prevent untold numbers of unwanted animals from suffering needlessly. Over the last 17 years of doing this type of work, I calculated that I performed around 85,000 surgeries. I also like nothing better than being part of a group that helps so many animals find a new home.

Is there a particular animal or moment that stands out as a reminder of why this work matters? Every animal I provide care for is a reminder that this work is significant.

From your perspective, how does spay/neuter work strengthen animal welfare in our community

and beyond? High populations of homeless animals can strain a community's heart and its resources. By providing accessible spay and neuter services, we aren't just performing surgeries; we're creating a manageable environment where every pet has a better chance at a high-quality life, and every shelter resource can be used more effectively.

When you're not caring for animals at the shelter, how do you recharge or spend your time outside of work? When I am not working, I relax in various ways. I like to spend time enjoying the outdoors. Though I am not married or have any children, I do have a close group of friends with whom I like to travel and spend time. Also, I spend time serving the community in other ways, such as teaching Sunday school at my church, helping out with the kids at CAPA in Beaufort, and supporting Family Promise. 🐾



Honor your family members and friends by making a donation to HHHHA in their names. Your honoree will be sent a prompt acknowledgement of your generosity. And reminder: Birthdays, Anniversaries, Weddings, and Memorial donations are other great gift ideas too.

Gift donation forms are available at www.hhhumane.org.

Beyond the Backseat:

Inside a Dog Volunteer's Trunk

Since January 2019, **Marcia Mallard** has been a driving force behind the scenes at Hilton Head Humane. From scrubbing kennels and walking shy newcomers to mentoring fellow volunteers and leading the dog obedience class team, she has done just about every dog volunteer role imaginable. If there's a pup who needs a little extra time, patience, or a well-packed trunk full of supplies, Marcia is ready to roll.

Her "dog trunk" has become something of a legend, because she knows every dog is different and every day brings a new opportunity to say yes. In this interview, Marcia shares what first inspired her to volunteer, the unforgettable dogs who have left pawprints on her heart, and why giving just a few hours a week can change lives—both theirs and yours.

What inspired you to volunteer with Hilton Head Humane? I like being outdoors and always loved being with animals.

How does having a "dog trunk" make it easier to say yes to helping? Each pup is different, so there are plenty of leashes, treats, shoes, and grooming devices to choose from.

What's the most memorable dog you've worked with? Cleopatra, who stayed at the shelter from April 2022 to November 2023 due to complex health issues and was repeatedly overlooked for adoption through no fault of her own.

How has this volunteer work changed you? I have brought home two wonderful pups and have made so many amazing friends. It's like I have an extended family, both two- and four-legged. I have learned so much from the pups about resilience and unconditional love.



What would you tell someone thinking about volunteering? If you can spare a few hours a week, you can make a difference in the lives of the animals. It's a win-win. You both get exercise and love. You can make their time at the shelter so much better if it's a long walk, a clean kennel, a warm bath, a car ride, snuggle time on the bench, or a game of fetch. There are so many options but seeing them happy is the best reward.

Most slobbered-on item? Pants!

Most borrowed item? Harnesses and leashes

One luxury item you spoil the dogs with? Pupperoni or Dentastix

Can't live without item? Good boots!

If you would like to learn more about Hilton Head Humane's volunteer opportunities, please call the shelter at (843) 681-8686. 🐾

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dog Adoption Event

Saturday, April 18th
12:30PM to 2:30PM
Sea Island Animal Hospital,
Beaufort

Hounds on the Harbour

Saturday, October 3rd
10AM to 12PM
Harbour Town,
Sea Pines, HHI

Dog Walk on the Beach

Saturday, April 25th
8:30AM • Coligny Beach, HHI
Register at hhumane.org

Shelter Halloween Party

Sunday, October 25th
12PM to 2PM
HHH's Hilton Head Campus

Yappy Hour

Wednesday, May 6th
4PM to 6PM
Nectar Farm Kitchen
Old Town, Bluffton

The Four-Legged Frolic

Sunday, November 8th
5:30PM to 9:30PM
The Westin Resort
and Spa, HHI

**More events to be announced
on our web site!**

HILTON HEAD HUMANE'S
DOG WALK
SATURDAY, APRIL 25TH
8:30AM
COLIGNY BEACH,
HILTON HEAD
REGISTER AT
HHHUMANE.ORG

Angels for Heroes

At Hilton Head Humane, every wagging tail and gentle purr carries a story of resilience—and sometimes, that story includes a second chance hundreds of miles away. Here are 3 dogs and 3 cats that found their fresh start thanks to a lifesaving transport to one of our trusted rescue partner shelters.

For these six animals, the journey marked more than just a change in scenery. It meant new opportunities, expanded adoption networks, and the promise of families ready to welcome them home.

Transport partnerships play a critical role in modern animal welfare, helping shelters like ours create space for incoming pets while ensuring adoptable animals reach communities where demand is high.

Their safe arrival is a powerful reminder that collaboration saves lives—and that sometimes, the road “home” begins with a ride to a new horizon. 🐾



ROVER, a senior male Catahoula mix, quickly stole hearts with his gentle soul. This healthy, active dog was treated for Heartworm and was admired by all who met him — but his age caused him to be overlooked. After **498 DAYS**, Rover transported to Ohio, where he was adopted almost immediately.



FOREST, a gregarious, sweet, cuddly cat, arrived at the shelter with severely matted fur after he had been found abandoned, surviving in unclean living conditions. Due to this difficulty, Forest had recurring skin issues that required periodic treatment. A loving family from Ohio saw past these challenges and made Forest a part of their family, **379 DAYS** after his arrival at the shelter.



BAXLEY, a beautiful female Pinscher mix, arrived at the shelter at just 2 months old. Though she was sweet, smart, and absolutely gorgeous, her large puppy size was daunting for potential adopters. After waiting for **301 DAYS**, Baxley finally traveled to Pennsylvania on transport and began her happy new life.



GRACIE came to the shelter after her owners could no longer care for her. Despite spending 7 years in a home, she acclimated to the shelter easily and made a lot of friends, both human and feline. Gracie spent **12 DAYS** at the shelter before she was transported to one of our rescue partners in Washington, D.C. and was adopted shortly afterward.



RICKY, a handsome, young Black Mouth Cur mix, came to the shelter after being found as a stray. He was the kind of dog people sought out: playful, affectionate, friendly, and the perfect medium size. Somehow, despite his charm, all his kennel mates found homes while he continued to wait. After **419 DAYS**, Ricky had a loving family to call his own—in Massachusetts.



PANTHER arrived at the shelter at just 2.5 months old and quickly charmed staff and volunteers. Sleek, playful, and true to his name, he loved to jump and explore. Sadly, black cats are often overlooked, and Panther grew up waiting at the shelter. After patiently waiting **407 DAYS**, Panther was picked to go to Washington, D.C., where he met the family that brought him home.

Stay tuned for adoption updates in the next issue!

Please consider becoming a member of an organization that helps the animals and the community!

By joining Hilton Head Humane, you are helping to save thousands of animals who will pass through our gates this year. In 2025, through its many services, HHH had a positive effect on over 10,000 animals in the Lowcountry.

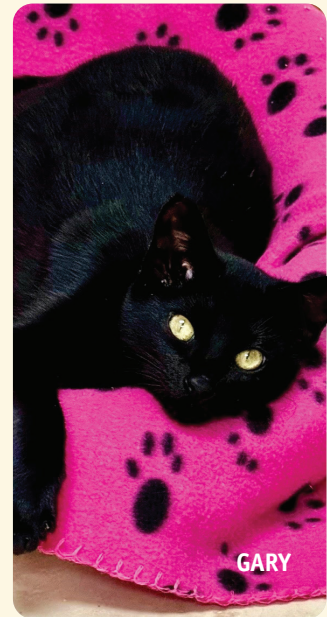


BETTY, a sweet Foxhound mix, came to us from Jasper County with healing fractures and wounds that suggested she may have been hit by a car. Frightened and painfully shy, she needed time, patience, and care.

At Hilton Head Humane, Betty received the medical treatment and compassion she deserved. While this 2-year-old can still be a little timid at times, she has blossomed into a gentle, loving girl who is thriving and ready to find a loving home filled with kindness and security.

At just 6½ months old, **GARY**'s story could have ended before it began. Found on the side of the road by a Good Samaritan during a walk, he was suffering from a fractured back leg and desperately needed help.

As soon as he arrived at the shelter, our team sprang into action, providing the surgery and expert medical care Gary needed. Today, he's fully recovered and living life at full speed: a high-octane, playful, endlessly friendly kitten who's ready to race straight into his very own home.



Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Enclosed is my check made payable to HHH in the amount of _____

VISA MC Dis AmEx # _____ Exp. _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Bronze \$50 Silver \$150 Gold \$500 Platinum \$1,000 Lifetime \$2,500

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP

Guardian \$250 Defender \$500

I do not wish to join, but I want to make a donation at this time \$ _____

Membership benefits include:

Mailings of the HHH Newsletter and email notification of Shelter and Litter Box events

10% Discounts on adoptions and logo merchandise

Business members are recognized in our newsletter and website

Most importantly, you'll have the reward of knowing you are helping Lowcountry animals

All gifts are tax deductible. The HHH is a nonprofit organization under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Mail to Hilton Head Humane, P.O. Box 21790, Hilton Head, SC 29925