

# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

20  
23



# OUR CORE VALUES

- **Welcoming** of all cats. None are too old or ill to be valued, loved and treated with dignity. We are compassionate of the cats in our care and the people whose lives we touch.
- **Committed** to excellence in operations, ensuring the highest quality of care for cats and delivering trusted services for people who love cats.
- **Unique** in our approach, offering free-roaming and enriching spaces for cats, embracing cats that need specialized support, and providing superior medical care.
- **Connected** to our community as a regional leader, inspirational model and educational resource in cat welfare.
- **Inclusive** of the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of the people we welcome through our doors and engage within our community.

## Mission

To be a safe and enriching place for all cats on their journey to a loving home. We do this by providing compassionate care, shelter, adoption services and community engagement.

## Vision

Our vision is a committed and collaborative community where all cats have the opportunity to thrive.





# Letter From the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Putting together this annual report provided an amazing opportunity to reflect on the past year. As I have completed my first full year as executive director of this dynamic organization, I am struck by overwhelming gratitude above everything else.

Not only has Cat Care Society been able to increase our reach, expand partnerships and bring on talented new team members, but we've helped more cats than ever before. Our length of stay

has decreased to 41 days — which is pretty incredible considering we increased our intakes and transfers, and consistently welcome many special needs cats whom others would deem hard to adopt.

I realize that the CCS many of you have known and loved for years is beginning to look a little different. I want to assure you that every change that has been implemented has been done with much intention, care and concern for the cats and people we've served throughout our rich history. In fact, I see it less of change and more as adapting. The pandemic turned the world on its head and shifted many ways of thinking. In our world, trends continue to shift and new research offers new opportunities. We must be agile and know when to pivot. I am forever grateful to every single staff member, volunteer, donor and partner who has stuck by our side as Cat Care Society has evolved. We are building on our storied 40-plus year history and setting the foundation for so many more good things to come. In the last year alone, we've unveiled a new website and strategic plan and are still working on more structured pathways to achieve our goals. We are investing in our people and our metro community. This solidified identity and mission ultimately allows us to help more cats!

CCS is and always will be an organization that is committed to the goal of finding cats loving homes. We will never rush this process and have put steps in place to ensure that each cat is truly ready. We are focused on providing the best medical care and support for each animal that comes through our doors by understanding his or her unique medical and/or behavioral needs. We consistently ask what a cat needs to live its best life and offer transparent information to potential adopters about what to expect and how to support that animal. We don't just diagnose conditions; we go a step further to dig into the root cause of what a cat needs to truly thrive.

The fact that we always go the extra mile is one the things that makes CCS so special. Just one example is a cat named Amaryllis, who came in in April, was underweight with a heart murmur, alopecia and in need of a dental. At first, she seemed to be in decent shape considering, but then we found lingering medical issues from an old surgery that needed treatment. Because we took extra steps, we found something that easily could have been missed, and are confident her outlook is now even more positive in her new adoptive home.

Our most recent Clear the Shelters adoption event proved that our region is ready to support our cats and say yes to the tougher cases. We celebrated our most adoptions in a single day ever last August! And now we want to bring this energy to the larger community. When I look at the stories shared over the last few months, I'm blown away by the dedication of our team and ecstatic at the support we have for this work. The words thank you will never be enough, but I will say them anyway. THANK YOU!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "EC Michaels".

EC MICHAELS



# CAT CARE SOCIETY LEADERSHIP

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
EC Michaels

**DIRECTOR OF PHILANTHROPY**  
Kellie Johnson

**DIRECTOR OF PLANNED GIVING**  
Ashleigh Leader

**DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS  
& ENGAGEMENT**  
Amanda Huggett

**VOLUNTEER & EVENTS MANAGER**  
Mandy Babb

**SHELTER OPERATIONS MANAGER**  
Jake Confer

**VETERINARY SERVICES MANAGER**  
Crystal Hoelter

**LEAD VETERINARIAN**  
Dr. Cecily Palamara

**ART DIRECTOR**  
Jane Dorsey

**MARKETING &  
DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR**  
Ariana Jenks

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cindy Adams  
Mark Colman  
Ken Dobrovolny  
Stephanie Gilmore  
Kay Higgins  
Davis Linden  
Kathy McChesney  
Suzannah Sage  
Michaela Sullivan  
Lisa VanRaemdonck

# Letter From the BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear friends,

What a year! As you flip through the pages of this year's Cat Care Society annual report, we hope you are as impressed as we are with the work this organization is doing for the cats in our community. Inside, you'll find stories of the people and cats who have been affected by this work. Behind it all is a team of dedicated staff members, volunteers, fosters, donors, adopters and more. It is each of you – and of course, the cats – who make this all possible.

So many special cats came through the shelter in the last year, and each was a testament to the work of an incredible team. Our board was delighted during one meeting last year when one – Boo Radley – decided to join our meeting and remind us of why we each gather at the table. It never ceases to put a smile on our faces when one of our special needs cats or kittens gets adopted. This continuing part of our mission is so meaningful.

Over this past year, we were thrilled to put together and unveil CCS' new strategic plan. To see each of our board members in agreement about who we are and where we want to go brought on a renewed sense of pride. Our willingness to innovate and adapt is what will get us through any hurdles yet to come!

As a board, we are so excited and energized about what is yet to come for Cat Care Society. Sharing our skills, being a part of the successes and being hands-on in this phenomenal organization, means so much. We're eager to get to work and see what we can continue to do as a collective community of cat lovers. Thank you for all of your support!

Wishing you a safe, happy and healthy 2024. Until next time!

– Your CCS Board  
of Directors



Board president Mark Colman  
and Boo Radley at a meeting



# CCS PROGRAMS

## Adoptions

Our bread and butter at CCS is connecting cats with people who love them. We believe *all* cats are worthy of love, and always go the extra mile to provide medical care, enrichment and socialization to every animal that comes through our doors – even, and maybe especially – seniors and cats with special needs. We work with many partners to accept cats who may not have a chance anywhere else and accept owner surrenders without judgement.

## Foster Care

We believe that temporary homes lead to forever ones. Fostering helps change animals' lives by opening up more space in the shelter. Cats in foster homes receive loving care in an environment that is less stressful and provides a healthy and safe place for kittens to develop and grow, or special needs cats receive the time and dedicated TLC for the enrichment they need.

## Temporary Care Program (TCP)

The TCP helps people who are unable to care for their own cats for a short time due to unexpected circumstances. We know that in times of crisis, a pet can feel like someone's only lifeline, so this ensures that people's beloved cats are taken care of and ready to reunite with their owners when they're ready.

# 614

**cats and kittens  
were fostered  
in loving homes  
provided by  
volunteers last year**

“It was an extremely rewarding experience with the cats I fostered, to help nurse them back to health, show them how to trust people again, and give them the love and care they deserve.

– Michelle, CCS foster



## Nibbles & Kibbles

The Nibbles & Kibbles food bank offers free cat food and supplies to people experiencing temporary financial challenges. This helps owners continue to care for their cats, who may be one of their few comforts during times of hardship. The pantry is open for free to community members in need the first or third Saturday of every month between 10 a.m. and noon.

## Nine Lives Legacy Society

The Nine Lives Legacy Society gives individuals and families the opportunity to partner with Cat Care Society to provide a promise for the future of the organization and to secure care for their cats whom are so deeply loved.

All members of the Nine Lives Legacy Society are invited to enroll their cat(s) in the Guardianship Program. Should their cat(s) survive them, CCS will serve as temporary guardian until they are adopted into their next loving home, offering valuable peace of mind.



Charity   
Navigator



★ FOUR-STAR ★

In September 2023, Cat Care Society's strong financial health and ongoing accountability and transparency earned a Four-Star Rating and 96% from Charity Navigator.

Charity Navigator analyzes non-profit performance based on four key indicators: Impact & Results, Accountability & Finance, Culture & Community, and Leadership & Adaptability.

This rating designates Cat Care Society as an official "Give with Confidence" charity, indicating that our organization is using donations effectively based on Charity Navigator's criteria.

# IMPACT OVERVIEW

## Fiscal Year Stats

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

**1,158**

cats and kittens  
came into our care

**611**

spays and neuters  
were performed

**41**

days, on average, a cat  
stayed at the shelter

**29,528**

hours of care were provided  
by 221 fosters for 614 cats

**1,360**

vaccines were given  
upon intake exams

**42**

cats were supported through  
the Temporary Care Program

# Sources of SUPPORT

3.81%

Adoption Fees & Animal-Related Services

1.32%

Grants

1.95%

Events

\$2,112,916.75

43.84%

Donor Contributions

49.08%

Nine Lives Legacy Society

# Shelter EXPENSES

44.92%

Cat Welfare, Care & Sheltering

12.53%

Philanthropy & Community Engagement

21.01%

Veterinary Care

\$1,867,911.12

21.55%

Support Services



# 891 cats were adopted into loving homes in 2023

## ADOPTION SUCCESS STORY: YURI

A gorgeous Lynx point Siamese mix found on the streets named Yuri came to CCS in rough shape in April 2023. He was covered in fleas and ticks, had a severe upper respiratory infection and feline stomatitis. Fearful and in pain, he howled and growled when he moved his mouth. Yuri tolerated his pre-op exam, but was uncomfortable and scared. Our medical team ended up extracting most of his teeth and discovered a large ulcer on his tongue — one worse than nearly any other we had seen in the shelter.

Just two days after the biopsy, Yuri was already showing signs of relief, leaning into pets and rolling over for love. He had lingering inflammation on his tongue and was still showing signs of stomatitis, though his URI was already improved. Once his biopsy results came back, we were relieved to learn it was non-cancerous. He was responding well to early immunosuppressive medications and antibiotics, so we kept our hopes up. A week after landing at CCS, he was noticeably more comfortable and happier, eating and drinking well, albeit still a little shy.



In another recheck just a few days later, Yuri was affectionate and interactive ... until we tried to look inside his mouth. His URI was completely resolved, and his fearfulness and ulcer was much improved. However, he now had anemia, as well as inflammation in his mouth that was no better than before his dental surgery.

While we continued to treat Yuri, we cleared him for our Foster to Adopt (FTA) program, in which someone can “foster” a cat in their home with the intent of adopting them. Lucky for Yuri, Michelle was interested in this Siamese stunner. In her home, he became brighter, snugglier and exhibited less pain, but his ulcer persisted. We switched up his medication, and taught Michelle how to administer it. Finally, we began seeing more progress!

**“He is such a snuggly cat and loves to sleep with us (or on us!) every night.”**

Michelle officially adopted Yuri in September, and today he is doing great, with no further health issues. Michelle even adopted another CCS cat, Coconut, to keep Yuri company. These two are often vying for attention and love from their new owners, and we are so happy to see two CCS alumni living the dream together!



# WHY I DONATE

Kathy McChesney doesn't do anything lightly. This Cat Care Society supporter extraordinaire serves on the board of directors, multiple committees, volunteers at events, transports cats to specialty medical appointments, writes for our blog, and contributes financially through a donor-advised fund (DAF) and the Nine Lives Legacy Society.

Kathy appreciates the variety of ways she can give. The DAF provides so many tax benefits and is easy to set up, and the Nine Lives Legacy Society provides reassurance that her pets will always be taken care of. Why does she go so "all in" for CCS? "Because everything is about the cats!" she proudly exclaims.

Originally from Texas, Kathy moved to Denver in 2018 after years of running her own cat rescue. After relocating for work as an airline pilot, she was on the hunt for a new shelter to help. Thanks to the suggestion of her financial advisor, she chose Cat Care Society. "I donate because I know how hard it is, and I understand the need," she said. "Cats are the most important thing in my life, and I've been fortunate in my career, so I'd rather help cats than anything else."

Another innovative idea that Kathy helped facilitate was a relationship between CCS and Colorado State University, where a program called Saving Animals in Shelters by Teaching accepts animals who need complex surgeries that go beyond a shelter's capacity. The first CCS cat, Mouse, just had a successful internal hernia surgery there thanks to her connections!

The reason Kathy keeps coming back to CCS is because of the cats themselves and our policies. "It's everything, the open concept, the way we take in animals that would be put down somewhere else, the Temporary Care Program and how it helps people, and that we always go the extra mile for every single cat," she said. "I've never seen a shelter that does that. It is so unique, and the cats are so happy. I feel comfortable walking into CCS not feeling like I *need* to bring every cat home."



*Kathy McChesney and her cat Panther*

“I give to CCS because I know that the money is used for the right reasons. It all goes to the cats. Cat Care Society is the best place I can imagine for a cat in need to be.”  
-Kathy McChesney

## HOW YOUR DONATION HELPS

- \$500** pays for 20 days of care for a shelter cat.
- \$300** covers a dental procedure and bloodwork for a senior cat.
- \$100** covers a year's worth of arthritis medication for 6 cats.
- \$50** pays for two week's worth of diabetic food for one cat.



# WHY I VOLUNTEER

Melissa Colman began volunteering for CCS in 2014, originally drawn to spend time here after she first visited when looking to adopt a new kitty. It was the atmosphere of all of the cats roaming, playing and lounging that drew her in. Since her first introduction, Melissa has adopted three CCS cats, and her parents adopted two. "The love and care for all of the cats is apparent in everything, from the shelter design to the adoption policies to the focus on housing cats who have more needs," she said. "I love being able to go to the shelter and interact with cats so readily. You can feel the love at CCS!"

Melissa has served as an adoption assistant, helping greet visitors, orienting them to the shelter, providing information about adoption and linking them to staff to start the adoption process. She now works with another volunteer, Erin, to assist with our on-site store, Meow Mart. Together, the two keep it stocked, price new items and keep up with inventory – while making plenty of time to snuggle the kitties. Melissa also helps at various events like Santa Paws and the golf tournament.

"With each job, I've been able to help staff and clients have a good experience at the shelter," Melissa said. "It's gratifying to be able to help, even if it's just keeping wand toys stocked so cat owners have ways to engage with their fur babies. It's one thing to provide funding, which is incredibly important! But it is also personally satisfying to be able to give my time, energy and love directly to the shelter."

"We love having Melissa's help around the shelter!" added CCS' Volunteer & Events Manager Mandy Babb. "She is consistently reliable and has played such a crucial role in keeping things running for many years. I know that when Melissa is on hand at an event, or when she's managing Meow Mart, that we can count on everything running smoothly. Her history here is invaluable, and her passion is evident in the work she does for the cats, and we couldn't thank her more!"



*Volunteer Melissa Colman*

“It feels good to help an organization that you believe in.”

-Melissa Colman

**2,757**  
**volunteer hours**  
**were put in by 198**  
**individuals in our**  
**last fiscal year!**



# LOOKING AHEAD

As CCS continues its forward motion in a changing landscape, we are as dedicated as ever to our core values, positively transforming our staff, systems, people, processes and visibility for a bright future, as guided by our strategic plan. To ensure this long-term success, we will remain adaptable and invested in the well-being of our cats, our people, our facility, our partnerships and our community. As we navigate rising costs and increased need, we're also opening our doors to more partners across the state, bringing in more animals and broadening our outreach. Our team is excited about continuing to build a beautiful foundation based on trust, transparency and the most loving care for cats in our region. We will continue learning, growing and striving to be a place where no cat is left behind.

We hope we can count on you as an ambassador to this work as we think critically about our future. The world of cats is ever-changing, and we've demonstrated we can be successful while also keeping our values and identity at the heart of our every day. As we celebrate this special community and each cat who finds a home, please, join us.



EC MICHAELS



**We are:**  
**Learning**  
**Growing**  
**Transforming**





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# Want to get involved?

There are plenty of ways to support Cat Care Society! We are always in need of fosters, volunteers and cat supplies. For more information, visit [www.catcaresociety.org/how-to-help](http://www.catcaresociety.org/how-to-help)

