



COMPASSION  
animal project

# 2022

## Impact Report



## Table of Contents

Founder Letter.....	3
What is Economic Euthanasia?.....	4
By the Numbers.....	5
Families Kept Together .....	6
Compassion Pet Food Pantry.....	9
Donor & Partner Recognition .....	10



# Dear Friends,

Growing up, I remember seeing Robert Kennedy campaigning for the Presidency in 1968.

He spoke of community and correspondence to **compassion**. He spoke of the wrongs in the world while offering us hope and a path forward. He had championed John F. Kennedy's civil rights movement in the early 1960s, made a stand against organized crime, and now it was his turn to shape the minds and win the hearts of Americans. **I've never forgotten the feeling of hope I experienced at that time.**

**As a nation, we needed to call on this hope again as COVID-19 ran rampant.**

More than ever, families are facing financial challenges threatening their ability to afford daily needs, not to mention unforeseen expenses. With inflation rising at rates we haven't seen in four decades, more pets are being euthanized solely because of a lack of finances. These pets would have otherwise gone on to live happy, healthy lives with their families for many years had they received the life-saving treatment they needed.

Over my nearly 40-year career in emergency veterinary medicine, I had witnessed too many loved and cherished pets lost for financial reasons. Still, the last 2+ years have told an even darker story for family pets lost to an inability to afford life-saving treatment. We must rewrite the narrative to create a future where finances aren't a determining factor in our pets' survival.

I am proud to share the impact our young nonprofit has had in communities across the nation since our first case in May 2022. Even more, it is humbling to see the hundreds of people who have already given their time, money, and expertise to help us successfully intervene in a pet's crisis. Despite any challenges, an unwavering commitment to our mission from organizations, individuals, and communities across the country marches on.

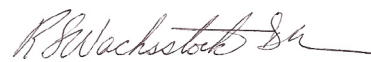
The Petco Foundation, individual donors, businesses, and philanthropic partners allowed us to provide financial assistance to families in need. [Holiday Barn Pet Resort](#) in Richmond, VA, helped us launch our first of many pop-up pet food pantries. We put pet food in the hands of loving pet owners and community organizations to deploy resources to ensure the most significant impact. Without these remarkable individuals and groups, we wouldn't be here today.

Below you'll read about our work from this past year. As you read through these pages, I invite you to celebrate our successes and collaborate with us as we tackle new and exciting challenges. It is through this collective commitment to Compassion Animal Project's mission that we will succeed in saving more pets.

We have all experienced moments of compassion in our personal or professional lives that have changed how we view the world. Genuine compassion means feeling another's pain, whether it be about a person or an animal, and taking action to help relieve it. It is empathy coupled with action. Whether it is sharing our mission, requesting our program in your local referral center, donating to a pet in need, or volunteering at one of our events, **we are deeply grateful for your support.**

Because of finances, no family should ever say goodbye to their beloved pet too soon. So we're working to build a nationwide network of referral centers where people in need of emergency, critical care, and/or specialized veterinary medicine can access our grant funding. Next year, we're expanding to twice as many states to help 5x more pets, families, and veterinary partners. I hope you will join me in "Keeping Families Together"!

**In compassion,**



Rand S. Wachsstock, DVM



Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope.

Robert F. Kennedy



# What is Economic Euthanasia?

According to [Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association](#), economic euthanasia occurs when:

1

An animal is euthanized as a **direct result of the projected cost** of veterinary medical care.

2

Veterinary care is initially sought, but minimal or none of the **suggested testing/treatment is elected based on the cost of care**, leading to eventual euthanasia.

3

Veterinary **care is bypassed altogether due to the anticipated cost** of care, and the progression of the illness/condition eventually leads to euthanasia.

As many as [two-thirds](#) of pets euthanized per week are for economic reasons. In these instances, 86% were likely to survive if they received medical treatment.

With around [70% of U.S. households](#) owning at least one pet, more families than ever are facing the heartbreaking reality of losing their pets too soon due to financial hardships.

According to surveys conducted by veterinarian and animal welfare advocate, Dr. Barry Kipperman, 75% of veterinarians believe that greater financial support would reduce the rate of economic euthanasia.

Economic euthanasia can lead to significant emotional distress to the veterinary professionals involved. Research shows [1 in 6 veterinarians](#) report they have contemplated suicide, and more than 1 in 10 report significant professional stress to a level they would describe as 'suffering'. Veterinary medicine faces one of the most severe professional shortages, with an estimate of [75 million pets](#) at risk of losing access to veterinary care by 2030.



# By the Numbers

## Life-saving Grants to Loving Pet Owners



**25 Cases**

8 cats, 17 dogs supporting 41 adults, 19 children, and 100 veterinary professionals



**42**

Veterinary Partner Hospitals



**18 States**



**3500+**

Volunteer Hours



Savings of over **\$108,000**

## Pet Food Pantry



**25,000 lbs**

of food valued at over \$130,000



**550+** dogs and **200+** cats fed



**18+** organizations



**120+** individuals/families





# Families Kept Together

## ♥ Cleo

For years, every step Cleo took was painful. She suffered from luxating patellas, a condition where her knee caps don't stay in place. Sadly, no one ever helped her or fixed them — that is, until Amy and Compassion Animal Project came into Cleo's life.

Just a few months before the COVID-19 pandemic, Amy adopted Cleo from the SPCA following the loss of her sister to a five year battle with ALS. Cleo became a source of joy and warmth for Amy during a very dark time and has been that for her ever since.

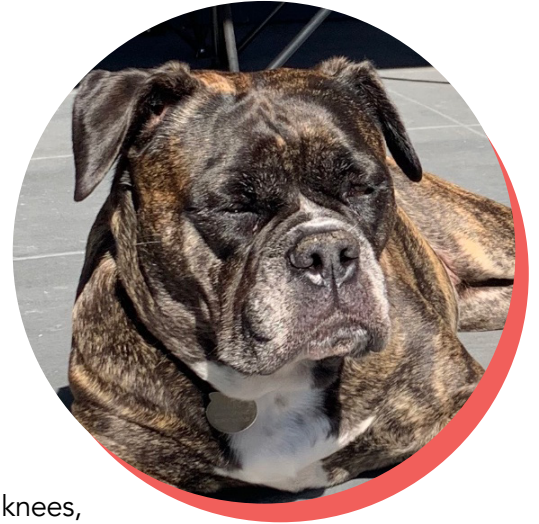
From the time she adopted Cleo, Amy worked tirelessly to help Cleo's knees, even trying regenerative therapy treatments. Unfortunately, Cleo's condition worsened, and she tore both of her cranial cruciate ligaments, requiring Cleo to undertake three surgeries in order to reach a point of comfort.

Amy spent thousands of dollars on Cleo's first two surgeries, and by the time they realized that she would require a third, Amy had already gone through her savings entirely. She was heartbroken knowing that Cleo may not be able to gain the quality of life that Amy had hoped for.

But then, her veterinarian told her about Compassion Animal Project.

After consulting with Amy's veterinarian, OakVet, Compassion Animal Project determined that they would be able to provide Amy the funding she needed to pay for Cleo's final surgery. According to Amy, **"We were lucky (and incredibly grateful!) to hear of Compassion Animal Project, who made it possible for us to afford this last surgery."**

The love Amy and Cleo have for one another is unbreakable, and we are touched by the lengths Amy has gone to give Cleo the quality of life she deserves!



“

We were  
lucky and  
incredibly  
grateful!



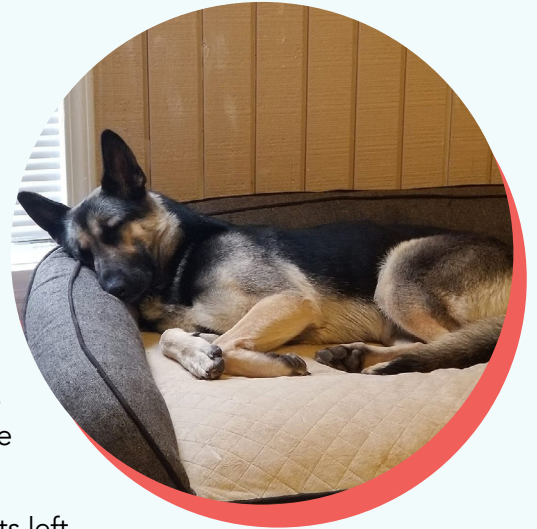
## ♥ Rosie

Rosie, a 3-year-old German Shepherd, has been a cherished member of her family since 2019. She is just as crazy about her family as they are for her, having been described as protecting, loving, and more patient than a machine.

One day, Rosie suffered from a sudden and severe allergic reaction. As the runt of her litter, her body struggled to fight against it. She stopped eating and drinking and was suddenly drained of all energy. Her family quickly recognized this as a state of emergency and took her to Memphis Veterinary Specialists to receive overnight care. Between many appointments and hospital stays, Rosie spent about two weeks recovering from this sudden condition.

To no surprise, such a quick and in-depth level of veterinary treatments left Rosie's family facing a heap of expenses. This scenario easily could have forced her family to have to elect euthanasia, a devastating outcome they never would have expected for such a young and energetic dog. However, thanks to Compassion Animal Project, Rosie's family was able to move forward with the care she required without the burden of unaffordable expenses.

Because Memphis Veterinary Specialists is a Compassion Animal Project partner, her treating veterinarian was able to refer her family to our organization once they realized that the projected expenses were likely too high for the family to take on alone. CAP awarded Rosie's family a life-saving grant of \$2,336 to cover her medical expenses, and because her veterinarian is a CAP partner, they agreed to discount the cost of her care by 25%. According to Rosie's family, **"Rosie is here today because of the great work of our vet, the compassion of CAP, and the blessings of God. We are so grateful."**



## ♥ Casper

Whenever Casper's owner, Dani, is cooking, 3-year-old Casper will meow at her until she picks him up. He is a vocal cat with an opinion to share, but one night instead of talking, he started yowling and refusing to play. Dani knew something was seriously wrong, but it was closing time at her veterinarian's office. She put Casper into the carrier and quickly drove to the emergency clinic, Veterinary Referral Associates in Gaithersburg, MD. Once there, Casper's cries signaled to the staff the severity of his illness and instead of the posted three hour wait, Casper was brought right in for treatment. [The veterinarian diagnosed a complete blockage in his urinary tract.](#) Casper would need emergency surgery. It would be expensive but there was no doubt that Casper was worth it. Dani needed to use two credit cards in order to pay for the ensuing surgery.

Once home from the surgery, Casper was cuddly and happy to be reunited with his brother. However, within three days, Dani found him hiding under the bed, unable to be coaxed out. **"I had this mother's feeling of something that is wrong in your chest. I've never felt that feeling before but I was**





**holding him after giving him his medicine. I just got the feeling you need to go back to the vet.**

Take him now, don't wait until tomorrow. There was this feeling of he's going to die if I don't take him," Dani explained. She rushed Casper back to the emergency clinic and explained that his behavior wasn't normal.

After an examination, the vet confirmed that his urinary tract was again blocked, and that surgery was necessary. However, the vet recommended that a Perineal Urethrostomy (PU) be performed otherwise the blockage would likely reappear. The urethra (the tube through which urine flows) narrows as it enters the penis and a Perineal Urethrostomy "decreases the length of the urethra and allows urine to bypass this narrowed region."

"The vet told me how much it cost, and I started crying. If he wasn't able to get the surgery, she said she would consider euthanasia. That was devastating to consider. **His littermate would be devastated, and I'd bonded with him during Covid and getting a divorce. I told him I'd make it be okay and I had to figure something out,**" Dani explained.

Dani had no place to turn until the veterinarian spoke with her about her finances and recommended Compassion Animal Project as a means of paying for the needed procedure. Dani was immensely relieved to find a way to keep her promise to Casper to make it all better. Since it was the middle of the night, she had to wait until the next day for her application to be processed. She was able to

find the money to pay for an emergency surgery to unblock his urinary tract so that Casper would survive until the PU surgery was funded.

Dani put in her application the next day with the help of a Compassion Animal Project staff member who walked her through the process. Casper was a good candidate for a grant as he was otherwise healthy, and surgery would fix the problem. Her application was approved within two hours and the veterinarian began to stabilize Casper for surgery. The PU procedure was successful, and Casper came home to recuperate using the bathroom as his recovery suite.

Dani said **"We bonded a lot through that. I would spend hours cuddling him in the bathroom and grooming him.** I was so shocked by how well he recovered. I took one day off work but then I started using my lunch break. It was just enough time to give him his meds, groom him a little bit, and then drive back. I would do that the entire time he was on the medication. The doctors were impressed by how well he had done at his follow-up."

These days, four months post-surgery, Casper has gotten back into his parkour — getting the zoomies and chasing his littermate around. Things are back to normal — with one change — instead of sleeping at Dani's feet which he did pre-surgery, Casper now sleeps curled against her heart.



“

I told him  
I'd make it  
be ok.



# Compassion Pet Food Pantry

## Pop Up Pet Food Pantry

On Saturday, December 3rd, we hosted our inaugural pop up pet food pantry at [Holiday Barn Pet Resorts](#). **We'd like to say a GIANT "thank you" to Michael Hughes and the Holiday Barn Pet Resorts Midlothian team**, our compassionate volunteers who lugged bags of food to hundreds of cars, **Madison+Main** who helped to make sure everyone knew we were there, and the more than 18 Virginia-based animal welfare organizations we were able to meet.

With the holiday season putting an even bigger financial strain on individuals and families, providing loving pet owners with a way to feed their fur babies is just one more way we're keeping families together.



# Donor & Partner Recognition

## Board of Directors

We'd like to thank our board members for giving their time and expertise to drive our mission forward!



**Ben Bergon**  
Board Chair



**Dr. David Herring**



**Oggi Kashi**



**Dr. Bob Murtaugh, DVM, MS**



**Shelby Nace, Esq.**



**Dr. Kathleen Olsen**



**Christina Tosi**



**Aaron Wachsstock**

---

## Thank You to Our Generous Donors



The Robert Rockfeld  
Family Foundation

And a special thank you to the hundreds of individuals that donated to save pets with us in 2022!

**Donations \$0-499**

Our Friends of Compassion Animal Project

**Donations \$500-999**

Our Compassion Champions

**Donations \$1,000+**

Our High Flyers



**COMPASSION**  
animal project

1601 Willow Lawn Dr Ste. 304  
The Shops at Willow Lawn #1276  
Richmond, VA 23230