Changing our lives by saving theirs
Companionship, Compassion, and Community

Not long ago, we pledged to raise the roof to save more animals’ lives. We shared our dream that an enlarged community education center would touch more children and adults, and reach out to our senior citizens. We promised that dogs and cats would receive expanded enrichment and go home faster than ever before. We envisioned building support for our barn program and being able to hire our first barn manager. Rescue Village has always embraced the notion of “if you can dream it, you can plan it, and if you can plan it, you can achieve your visions.” YOUR support — offering tens of thousands of volunteer hours, enormous philanthropic giving, and countless donations of everything from food to blankets — fueled our efforts.

By the end of 2017, you helped us realize just about every single commitment and promise we made. More dogs, cats, horses, and farm animals were saved than in any year of Rescue Village’s history. They found homes at record speed and, in turn, changed people’s lives. The humane education program became the largest in-house and outreach program of its type in the state of Ohio. The barn became “Billie’s Barn,” honoring the life and spirit of Billie Howard Steffee with a game-changing gift from her Family Fund at The Cleveland Foundation. And, yes, we hired our first full-time barn manager.

The lives of animals and people are woven together in a unique cloth that brings us companionship, compassion, and community. This tapestry keeps expanding with each success story. Past ... Present ... and Future, like marching bands, are always in motion. Keeping pets and people together will require and inspire new life-changing programs and services. The needs of homeless animals in both urban and rural areas are on our agenda. Advocacy — becoming involved in strengthening the laws and statutes that prevent cruelty and neglect — is a responsibility. Investing in education, especially for our children, is forward looking and will make a real difference in our society. The road ahead is so exciting, and we cannot wait to partner with you to impact lives with the special stamp that Rescue Village brings to our shared mission.

Warmly,
Kathy and Hope
Kathy Leavenworth
President, Board of Trustees
Hope Brustein
Executive Director

A cat, a kid and a book ... like peas in a pod.

2017 Spay/Neuter Surgeries
2,092

Spay/Neuter Surgeries (including on-site surgery, TNR, and Fix It In The Farmland)

The RV shelter medicine clinic serves the unique needs of vulnerable animals in a shelter setting. From spay/neuter surgeries, to full dental services for cats in acute need, to administering core vaccines, our state-of-the-art clinic embodies the veterinary principle, “do no harm.”
So many of the cats that come to Rescue Village are found as strays, either abandoned or lost and living outside. In October 2017, as the temperatures started to dip, we found a stray cat and named her Lois. She hated the tight quarters at RV and disliked being near other cats. Very few staff members or volunteers could even touch her. We gave Lois the room and freedom she craved. Days were spent in our Cat Behaviorist’s office and in the cat community room. Lois showed us her potential and we determined she would be a terrific “working cat.” Soon a family stopped by the shelter looking for a cat to help with “rodent control” in their shop. Lois went to work and is an expert in her field! Just as there is a lid for every pot there is a home or career for every cat.

We Know Extraordinary When We See It

Along the journey from homelessness to adoption, the thing that changes everything is love. We rescued 1,025 dogs in 2017. They arrived by car, plane, van, and truck. They came from 10 shelters as close by as the Cleveland City Kennel and as far away as Vieques, Puerto Rico. Dogs needed rescue when their lives were displaced by hurricanes, overcrowding in shelters, divorce, aging or the passing of beloved owners, or abandonment. We welcomed them all with open arms.

At Rescue Village, ordinary dogs became extraordinary. Baby Boy looked like a run of the mill mutt with over-sized ears and a long funny pink snout. Week after week adopters passed him by. On average, it takes only ten days for our dogs to go home. But we never lost faith that Baby Boy would meet his match. Staff and volunteers made sure he got extra love, enrichment, and training — they were his cheerleaders. After 108 days, Baby Boy was adopted by a friendly veterinary technician who saw his wonderfulness. We crossed our fingers the adoption would stick — and it did!

Massive spay and neuter efforts (for dogs and cats) have changed the face of animal welfare in many parts of the country. Yet, the work of saving hundreds of thousands of homeless dogs is not over. Not by a long shot. In our own region and far beyond, transfers as well as spay and neuter services, must continue. Rescue Village is holding firm to finding the “extraordinary” in every “ordinary” adoptable animal, like Baby Boy, and not giving up until they are surrounded by love.

NEIGHbors Helping NEIGHbors through Billie’s Barn Program

Our barn program rescued and saved 145 animals in 2017, ranging from horses to goats and ducks. Most of our barn animals are removed from cruelty and neglect situations by our law enforcement department. We also encourage community members to let us know they need help BEFORE animals suffer. We learned about Noah, a beautiful but skinny and ill Standardbred horse, when his owner called asking for help. We decided to come to their aid. Noah was losing weight and deteriorating despite his owner’s efforts with limited resources. Noah was brought to Billie’s Barn.

Our equine vet ran multiple tests, tried various feeding solutions, and took him to the OSU Veterinary Hospital in Columbus. Over time Noah began to improve and was placed up for adoption. It was not long before someone fell in love with his spirit and personality. His days are now spent grazing, hanging out with horse pals, and being loved. This “good neighbor” approach includes offering practical assistance and education, like the Help A Horse Day programs, before animal seizures and prosecutions become a necessity. The RV barn, Billie’s Barn, is a small but mighty program that models a humane and compassionate appreciation for the well-being of horses and farm animals. Just ask Noah.

There’s a Career for Every Cat

Noah’s adoption day with a carrot bouquet.