



June 2025

Miami Vibes

A Night to Remember

Affordable Care

Keeping Pets in Loving Homes

Long-Term Residents

Social Media Helps Find Them Homes

CREATURE CHRONICLES

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Marlena, Cover Model Photo Credit: Michelle Tugman

Marlena was returned to the shelter after her previous owner passed away. During her time with us, she was so very sweet. Not long after her arrival, she was adopted and is now happily living with her new family.

Become a Loyal Lifesaver

Your monthly donation will provide dependable support to the more than 1,800 homeless animals cared for by the Virginia Beach SPCA each year.

vbspca.com/loyal-lifesaver



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Letter From Derby Brackett



Resilience isn't a solo achievement.

- Cory Edwards- photographer and mountaineer

I love this message for so many reasons. It applies to our mission; to our staff; to our community in need; to our supportive donors; but most of all to the animals, both in and outside the walls of our shelter or clinic. Adapting to change and overcoming challenges is a daily exercise in animal welfare but it is NEVER a

solo one. It takes all of us working together in many differing situations to find the best solutions for the greatest outcomes. I have said this in the past, but it resonates loudly with me over the past year of changes: we can't do this work alone. It involves open communication, willingness to listen, strong work ethic, empathy, passion for the animals, and compassion for each other. And it is only possible because of the incredible funding support from our community and our partners.

Over the past few months, we have settled into our newly renovated clinic- learning to work in expanded spaces with new equipment. We have been busier than ever as affordable veterinary care is so desperately needed. It is our goal to keep healthy pets in their homes- this issue has an article on our dedication to that vision and our gratitude for the support of PetSmart Charities to allow us to continue our work with an even greater impact. We realize the need to grow and we want to be of service to the community that needs us most.

Adoption trends are still decreasing throughout the nation and the owner relinquishments are increasing. This has been our story as well. We are working diligently with partner shelters to transfer in animals whenever we can to assist with managing the regional population. Even with the foot traffic that we are lucky

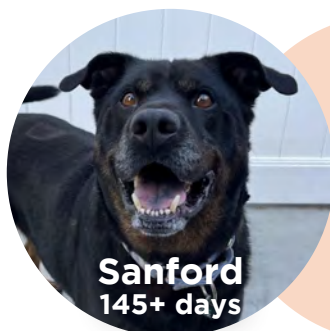
to have in Virginia Beach, we still have long term residents in our shelter, too. Luckily with help from our savvy marketing team, we are able to get these stories out to realize happy endings. It's a journey of resilience for the animal that comes through our doors, is loved and cared for so well by staff and volunteers, promoted through the magic of social media to find just the perfect forever home. This is also the pure joy of our days- watching bonds blossom between homeless animals and the humans who come to love them.

As we experienced recently, we are truly blessed to have such a large group of loyal supporters. The evening I spent enjoying the energy from the guests at our Miami Vibes Gala in April was magical. Even before the event, the support we received promised success, but the night surpassed our expectations! It was a lively, entertaining, and lifesaving night for the animals. I want to thank our teams, volunteers, Board members, and the community for showing up in great style to promote our mission of compassion.

As we move into the summer months, we will meet the challenges that the summer heat brings but also embrace the great traffic that will visit this time of year. Be sure to watch for updates on our Humane Education activities, our new programming with Business Buddies, or simply stop by to see our animals! We will be here- whether clinic or shelter related, we will work together to get the work done. Because as we know, resilience requires teamwork and we honor that tremendous privilege to serve. Not flying solo- my heartfelt gratitude-

Derby D. Brackett
CEO

LONGEST RESIDENTS



Sanford
145+ days



Autumn
95+ days



Noel
145+ days

Come meet them at the shelter today!

A Community That Cares

Social Media Helps Find Homes for Long-Term Residents

At the heart of every animal shelter is a simple hope: that each animal who comes through our doors will one day walk out into a loving forever home. For some, that journey takes a little longer but thanks to the support of our community, a few of our longest residents finally found their perfect match.

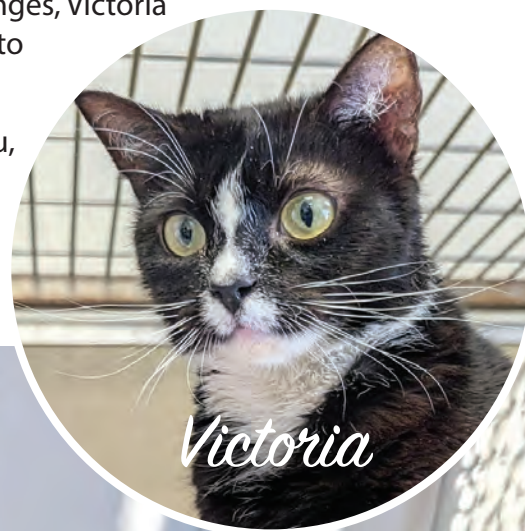
Through heartfelt posts on Facebook and Instagram, we shared the stories of animals who had been with us for extended periods—not because they lacked love to give, but because they just hadn't been seen by the right person. What followed was nothing short of inspiring.

Our community showed up. You shared. You commented. You encouraged. And most importantly, you helped these animals find their way into loving homes.

Among those adopted was Eddie Munster, a sweet soul who spent 140 days in our care. Eddie struggled with anxiety in the shelter environment; the constant noise, the unfamiliar routines, it was overwhelming. But thanks to the outpouring of support online, his story reached the right family, and Eddie now has a peaceful home where he can truly thrive.

And then there was Victoria, an 8-year-old cat who spent 206 days with us. During her time here, she received the medical and dental care she needed to feel her best. Despite the challenges, Victoria remained gentle and loving, winning hearts along the way. We're so happy to share that she has now found her forever home, where she'll be cherished.

These are just two of the many animals whose lives changed because of you, our community. Your engagement on social media didn't just boost posts; it opened doors, warmed hearts, and brought families together. At the VBSPCA, we believe in second chances and we believe in the power of community. Thank you for continuing to care – for us and the animals.



Follow us on social media
to join the mission and help
find them all homes!



Eddie

Empathy



ESPRESSO'S SECOND CHANCE

Overcoming Adversity with Strength and Love

Every animal's story is unique, but some stand out as powerful reminders of resilience and hope. Espresso has faced more than her share of hardships, but today she's a living testament to the healing power of love and care.

Espresso's story began under heartbreaking circumstances. After giving birth to six puppies, her owners, unwilling to care for the litter, took the puppies away from her and abandoned them in a cold, dark shed. Left behind, Espresso was heartbroken and confused. Some of her puppies did not survive the harsh conditions, but thankfully, compassionate neighbors noticed what was happening and stepped in. They brought Espresso and her surviving puppies to our care, and that's when her healing began.

But her struggles didn't end there. Espresso also suffered from a serious eye condition where her eyelid was not properly developed. The condition caused her pain, and after evaluation, our veterinary team determined that removing her affected eye was the best way to prevent further complications. The surgery was successful, and Espresso made a full recovery. But the emotional trauma from her past continued to affect her.

Understandably, Espresso developed anxiety from her experience of such trauma. Yet, despite her difficult past, she showed remarkable resilience. With the care she received, she slowly learned to adapt to life with one eye. Her anxiety is still something she's working through; but day by day, Espresso is becoming more confident, trusting, and content in her new surroundings.

Today, Espresso is discovering the simple pleasures in life. Her journey has been long and challenging, but she made incredible strides. Espresso's story is a powerful reminder that no matter how difficult the past may be, there is always hope for a brighter future. She is a true example of resilience with the greatest outcome—Espresso and all of her puppies have been adopted!



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Charles Barker &
Lexie Barker-Taplett



For the Barker family, a single night in 2022 marked the beginning of a heartfelt journey with the Virginia Beach SPCA; one that has since grown into a deep and lasting commitment to animal welfare and community compassion.

Introduced to the VBSPCA through their first-ever gala, the Barkers were moved by the stories they heard and the dedication they witnessed. That evening, encouraged by friends to attend, opened their eyes to the incredible impact the organization has on both animals and people. Since then, the Barkers have become integral members of the VBSPCA family, serving as presenting sponsors for the 2023 and 2024 Galas and offering steadfast support every step of the way. Even when unable to attend the 2025 Miami Vibes Gala in person, Lexie Barker remained hands-on, co-chairing the Gala Committee and ensuring the event's success.

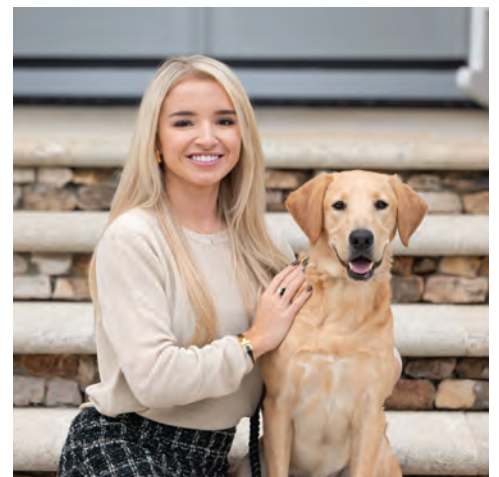
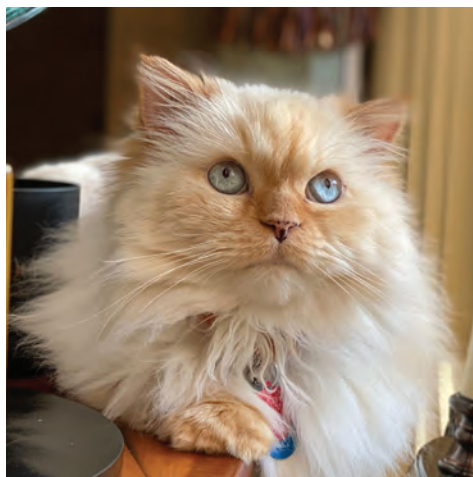
The appeal of the VBSPCA for the Barkers is the organization's unwavering dedication to giving animals a second chance. From providing critical care and safe shelter to fostering education and community outreach, the VBSPCA's commitment to animal welfare resonates deeply with their values. "It's not just about the animals, it's about creating a more humane and empathetic community," Lexie shares.

The bright future of the VBSPCA continues to excite them. The Barkers are inspired by the leadership's forward-thinking vision, expanding services, improving infrastructure, and creating long-term, sustainable solutions to uplift both animals and the people who love them. "We truly believe the best is yet to come for the VBSPCA," they say, "and we're honored to support that vision."

For the Barker family their love for animals runs deep. Their home has always been full of furry companions, from four Himalayan cats: Harlie, Herbie, Joey, and Emmy, to a sweet, spunky rescue mutt named Milkdud, and most recently, Koda, a Labrador Retriever adopted by Lexie and her husband, Logan. These animals have been more than pets, they've been cherished family members, enriching their lives with loyalty, joy, and unconditional love.

The Barkers' commitment to giving back extends beyond the VBSPCA. A lifelong philanthropist, Charles Barker founded Champions for Kids in 1994 to support youth across Hampton Roads. "Cars are my business, but children are our future," he says, a mantra that reflects the family's belief in using every opportunity to make a difference.

To the Barker family, supporting the VBSPCA isn't just a cause, it's a calling. Whether through financial support, volunteerism, or advocacy, they are passionate about building a kinder, more compassionate world for animals and humans alike. And for that, we are endlessly grateful.



Celebrating The Mission



MIAMI VIBES WAGS & WHISKERS GALA

We are thrilled to share that our Miami Vibes themed Wags & Whiskers Gala was a resounding success! With hearts full of gratitude, we want to thank everyone who helped make this event one of the best we've ever had.

From the moment we kicked off the night, the energy was electric. Guests danced the night away to lively tunes, enjoyed delicious food and drinks, and got lost in the excitement of our games and entertainment. The atmosphere was truly Miami vibrant, very fashionable and full of fun! And of course, no Wags & Whiskers Gala is complete without the stars of the evening, our wonderful animals. It was a night filled with plenty of tail wags!

A special thank you to all those who also participated in our live and silent auctions. Your generosity made a great impact, and the funds raised will provide care to the animals who will need us in the days ahead.

It was a night to remember, and we're so honored to be part of a community that cares so deeply about our mission and the animals. Together, we raised funds, celebrated the animals, and had a blast-all at the same time!



With Our Annual Gala

Thank you to the following sponsors, donors,
and volunteers who helped make the gala a success



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2025 PLANNING COMMITTEE

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Lexie Barker-Tablett & Peyton Hoffler

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Angie Lombardi, Mario Lorello, Amy Mallett, Danielle Nance, Brittany Nunnally, Glenda Prentiss,
Whitney Prentiss, Joy Towler, Paul Towler, and Amanda Wells

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RAISE THE WOOF!

Because every business
deserves a roof as loyal
as man's best friend!

*PROUD SUPPORTER OF **VBSPCA**



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Dedication

Keeping Healthy Pets in Loving Homes with Affordable Care

At the Virginia Beach SPCA, our mission is rooted in compassion, quality care, and community. Every day, we work to ensure that animals not only find loving homes but stay in them—healthy, happy, and supported.

According to the recent PetSmart Charities-Gallup State of Pet Care Study released in April, **“97% of pet parents consider their pets as family.”** Yet, despite this deep bond, the study also revealed a troubling gap: **more than half of U.S. pet owners (52%) skipped needed veterinary care in the past year,** and 7 in 10 who did so cited financial barriers as the reason.

These statistics reflect what we see in our communities. Pet ownership is a source of joy and emotional connection, but for many, the rising costs of care create difficult choices. That’s why the Virginia Beach SPCA remains steadfast in our commitment to keeping pets healthy and in their homes, which we believe is essential to reducing shelter intake numbers and promoting humane communities.

The VBSPCA operates the only full-service, low-cost veterinary clinic in the region, offering essential pet care to the public and to the animals in our shelter. From spay/neuter procedures to preventative care and treatment for illness or injury, we work hard to remove the financial barrier that can sometimes stand in the way of responsible pet ownership.

Our mobile clinic extends this reach even further, meeting pet owners where they are—especially those in underserved areas and rural communities like the Eastern Shore.

Last year, thanks to the PetSmart Charities Accelerator Grant, we expanded our clinic spaces and services to serve even more pet owners and shelter animals.

This generous funding allowed us to increase appointment availability, add critical equipment, expand treatment areas, and continue serving our community partners in animal welfare.

As we look ahead, our dedication only grows stronger. With continued support from organizations like PetSmart Charities, our generous community of donors, and the growing network of local partners, the VBSPCA continues to seek solutions that address the root causes of pet relinquishment—starting with access to care.

Keeping pets with the families who love them is not just a wish; it’s a reality we’re building every day, one appointment, one animal, and one owner at a time.

“Our goal has always been to remove barriers to veterinary care and help pets remain in the homes where they are loved. Affordable, accessible veterinary care for the lifetime of a pet is crucial to making pet ownership achievable for all.” -Dr. Ann Marie Woyma, VBSPCA Medical Director



Business Buddies



CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PETS AT WORK

If you're looking for a unique way to boost team morale, give back to the community, and brighten the day of a shelter dog, the Business Buddies program from the Virginia Beach SPCA is just what you need. This heartwarming initiative offers your team the chance to enjoy the company of a lovable shelter dog during the workday, all while supporting a great cause. Whether you're planning a casual afternoon in the office or heading out for a fun team outing, bringing a four-legged friend along makes it all the more memorable.

Your work team gets the joy of spending quality time with a friendly shelter dog, and the experience also gives the dog a much-needed break from the kennel, allowing them to relax, explore, and soak up some loving! It's a win-win for everyone involved—your employees enjoy a refreshing and meaningful team-building opportunity, and a shelter animal gets a piece of the good life.

Choose from one of our Business Buddies program levels and receive up to three hours of cuddle time and a social media shout-out on the Virginia Beach SPCA's Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn pages. Plus, your company's logo will be featured on the official Business Buddies webpage, showing your support to our community of animal lovers.

This is more than just a team event—it's a chance to create lasting memories, inspire compassion, and contribute directly to the well-being of animals in need. Whether your team is full of dog lovers or simply looking for a refreshing and joyful workplace activity, the Business Buddies program is sure to leave everyone with full hearts and wagging tails. You can learn more by visiting vbspca.com/business-buddies.





Puttin' For Paws

Charity Golf Tournament

Red Wing Lake Golf Course
Virginia Beach



VBSPCA

- **Adoptable Animals**
- **Sponsorship Opportunities**
- **Lunch, Dinner & Beverages**
- **Prizes & Awards**

FRIDAY
October 3rd, 2025

12PM SHOTGUN START

Our annual golf tournament is back!

We invite you to join us for 18 holes of golf, games, and fun, all in support of the homeless animals of the Virginia Beach SPCA.

As valued supporters of our community, your participation helps us care for over 1,800 animals who will come to us this year in desperate need of second chances.

VISIT [VBSPCA.COM/GOLF](https://vbspca.com/golf) FOR MORE INFORMATION



VBSPCA LEGACY SOCIETY

leave love behind

At the Virginia Beach SPCA, we believe that every act of kindness creates a ripple that touches countless lives—none more powerful than the legacies left by those whose passion for animals continues long after they are gone.

The Legacy Society is a special group of dedicated supporters who have made a future financial commitment to the VBSPCA. There are a variety of options, and one is likely to provide you with the flexibility you desire along with confidence in knowing that you have provided critical support to the Virginia Beach SPCA.

We are grateful for all of our legacy donors and for two extraordinary individuals, **Monroe Nash Jr.** and **Roy E. Hendrix**, whose recent passing left a profound absence in our community, but whose generosity will forever impact the lives of homeless animals.

Monroe Nash Jr. was a devoted Virginian and U.S. Navy Veteran known for his love of community and for animals, especially the animals in need. U.S. Army Veteran **Roy Hendrix** was also a dedicated member of the community and committed to the welfare of the animals.

Both Hendrix and Nash were longtime, loyal donors of the VBSPCA and chose to include meaningful gifts in their estate plans to provide lasting resources for animals that reach our doors in the months and years to come. Their legacies reflect a life of kindness and the powerful belief in doing good beyond a lifetime by ensuring that vulnerable pets will receive the shelter, care, and second chances they deserve. We are incredibly grateful for their generosity and their foresight.

We are humbled to be part of their stories and honored to carry their compassion forward in our work every day. If you are inspired by Monroe and Roy's extraordinary impact, we invite you to consider joining our Legacy Society and creating a future where every animal is safe, loved, and in a caring home. To discuss a planned gift or to learn more, please contact our Development Office at (757) 427-0070 ext. 142.

Collaboration



FOSTERING SAVES LIVES



We are endlessly grateful for our amazing fosters, the heart and soul of the Virginia Beach SPCA. Without their dedication, compassion, and tireless care, we simply could not do what we do. Hundreds of animals get a second chance at life thanks to the safe, loving homes our fosters provide. Fosters are true heroes. They open their homes to animals who are not yet ready for adoption. Whether due to age, medical needs, or socialization challenges, they offer them the individualized care and nurturing they need to thrive. It takes a special kind of person to care so deeply for an animal to which they will eventually have to say goodbye, and our fosters do it over and over again. The foster experience is not only life-changing for the animals, it's deeply rewarding for the people involved. Our fosters are an essential part of our mission, and we are honored to work alongside such selfless individuals.

Because of kind-hearted fosters, animals like Coco are given a second chance at life. Coco was found living under a trailer, doing her best to care for her seven newborn puppies that were just six days old and completely vulnerable. She was scared, exhausted, and in desperate need of help. Thankfully, a team of incredible fosters stepped in. They opened their homes and hearts, ensuring that Coco and each of her babies received the love, warmth, and medical care they needed to grow strong and healthy. These selfless individuals gave this little family the stability they needed and helped prepare them for adoption into loving forever homes. Every foster plays a vital role in saving lives. Whether it's bottle-feeding newborns, giving a scared animal a quiet space to heal, or simply offering a warm bed, fostering makes the difference. When you foster, you're not just caring for an animal, you're giving them hope and a doorway to their future.

If you'd like to become a foster, visit vbspca.com/foster.



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VBSPCA ANNUAL SPONSORS



We are grateful for the philanthropic businesses and individuals who partner in our mission to create a more compassionate community. For more information, visit vbspca.com.

