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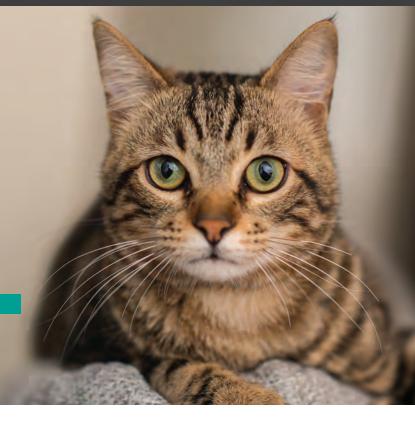
Dallas, Cover Model Photo Credit: Michelle Tugman

Dallas made his way to the VBSPCA from another local shelter. He was a senior suffering from heartworm disease and needed immediate medical attention. Thanks to our Miracle Medical Fund and the care of our team, Dallas has fully recovered and is now living in his forever home.

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



I have never been more proud of my team.

I have the undisputed privilege of claiming all of my staff as my team. And they truly are—from veterinary receptionist to medical director, animal care technician to shelter director, marketing coordinator to chief advancement officer- they are all part of my team. And what an incredible impactful team it is! The work that they do is hard, dedicated,

and nothing short of miraculous. I am simply a conduit for all that they do that is good.

That good begins with adoptions—successful, long term connections that work for the animals and the humans together. We create lasting relationships that reinforce bonds, add love, and build homes. Ask Sanford, Girl, Ellie, Meeko, Liam how that works for them. Because it sure works for us.

The good continues with care—affordable, accessible, quality veterinary care that provides solutions for the long term health of the animals in our community and the unbreakable bond with their loving owners. Jet, Maverick, Precious, Tripod will all happily share their stories of success and health...and their owners, the tales of worry but with great resolution.

And good extends to you—our caring, committed community. Without the support of our dedicated donors and the relationship of our shelter partners, our mission would be

stalled. As the need continues to increase—resources are scarce, shelters are overcrowded and veterinary care is limited—the call for action has never been stronger.

While we celebrate Meeko and Ellie and applaud our medical services, we still know the void that exists for the animals in Hampton Roads. It is vast and extends far beyond the walls of our shelter. Our mobile unit, the Neuter Scooter, helps to meet that need for underserved areas; but as it ages and is in constant need of repair, it limits our capacity to serve. We look to the future for a newer, advanced model that can travel the roads and continue to provide quality service and connections for wellness for all animals in need. Ending animal homelessness also means ensuring the continuum of care and instilling hope for the broader community. Our mission thrives in our physical boundaries but also reaches beyond when called. And today, the calling is loud, often, and urgent.

As we welcome the next season and the changes it brings- we will continue to focus on the joy of the successes of the animals we serve and all the good we can do, together with our community's support.

With gratitude and in service-

Celebrating Sanford's Adoption
After 249 Days in the Shelter



Enrichment at the VBSPCA

Helping Animals Thrive While They Wait for Homes

Life at the shelter can be stressful for animals, which is why the Virginia Beach SPCA prioritizes enrichment for every pet in our care. Enrichment provides opportunities for mental stimulation, physical exercise, and emotional well-being, all of which help our animals feel safe, engaged, and ready to meet their forever families. From interactive play to community outings, every activity is designed to improve quality of life while giving us valuable insight into each animal's personality.

Beach Buddies Program

The Beach Buddies program invites members of the community to take adoptable dogs out for a few hours of quality time away from the shelter. Outings may include walks, car rides, quiet time in a home, or trips to public locations. These breaks reduce stress for canine residents and provide helpful feedback to the kennel team as they work to find perfect homes. A suggested \$10 donation supports this program, but any amount is welcome.

Business Buddies Program

Business Buddies gives companies a unique way to support shelter animals while engaging employees. Businesses can host a dog for an office visit or include them in a team outing. These 'work days' give dogs a change of scenery and the chance to show off their personalities to potential adopters.

Humane Education Enrichment

Listening Ears and Tale for Two offer enrichment for the animals through calm, positive interaction and socialization, reducing stress and building comfort around children.

Enrichment Inside the Shelter

Hands-on Support & Mental Stimulation: Puzzle feeders, soothing music, and interactive toys keep animals' minds sharp. Volunteers and youth also create snuffle mats, no-sew catnip toys, and other crafts that show the animals they're cared for and loved.

Socialization & Emotional Support: Dogs benefit from consistent schedules, outdoor time, and natural enrichment like sniffing and exploring. The kennel team pairs dogs for play, while volunteers provide one-on-one time, leash walks, and pack walks that help them feel safe.

Visiting Paws Program: Trained volunteers bring animals to visit local care facilities, offering companionship to people in the community while giving pets the chance to socialize in a new environment.

Cat Enrichment: The cattery team alleviates shelter stress through environmental enhancements such as climbing structures, cozy spaces, toys, and gentle human interaction all designed to make the shelter feel a little more like home.



At the VBSPCA, enrichment is more than an activity, it's a promise to provide compassionate, individualized care to every animal who comes through our doors. Whether it's a walk on the beach, a puzzle toy in the kennel, or a day in the office, each experience helps prepare pets for the loving homes they deserve.

Empathy



When a tiny kitten was found tucked away inside a car engine, no one expected the joy he would bring into the world. After being brought to the shelter, the kitten was quiet but curious, already showing a personality for which he'd become known.

After a veterinary exam, the team discovered his front leg hadn't developed properly. Unfortunately, it wasn't something that could be fixed, and the best option for his health and mobility was to remove it. With help from the shelter's Miracle Medical Fund, which supports animals with medical needs, Meeko received the surgery and care he needed to heal and adjust.

Becoming a "tripod" didn't slow him down. Meeko quickly learned to walk, play, and climb. What really made him stand out, though, was his gentle, affectionate nature. He loved curling up beside people, purring softly as he drifted off to sleep.

As he recovered, Meeko's sweet personality stole the hearts of everyone around him, especially one VBSPCA employee, who found herself completely smitten. The bond they formed was undeniable, and before long, she made it official: Meeko wasn't just a shelter cat anymore, he was family.

Today, Meeko is thriving. He's still getting used to life on three legs, but you'd never know it from the way he zooms around or perches at the window to bird-watch. He's a happy cat who loves attention, cozy naps, and being wherever his people are.

Meeko's journey is a reminder that every animal deserves a chance, no matter the challenges they face early in life. Thanks to the care he received, and an employee who saw just how special he is, Meeko now has exactly what he needs: a forever home, a sunny spot by the window, and all the cuddles he could ever want.







The DeCroix Family Foundation was built on the belief that generosity and compassion shape communities for the better.

Guided by Daryl DeCroix and Brittany Nunnally, and strengthened by the involvement of their children and grandchildren, the foundation reflects a family-wide commitment to helping others and supporting causes that matter deeply to them.

Their connection to the Virginia Beach SPCA grew from a shared appreciation for its mission of second chances. Brittany was especially moved by the adoption program, explaining, "Seeing animals come from difficult situations and then find their forever homes reminds me how powerful love and second chances can be." For Daryl, it was the organization's broader role in both animal welfare and community impact that resonated. "I was first drawn to the VBSPCA because their impact goes far beyond adoption, it's about connection and compassion. Their transfer program especially inspires me because every new step forward means lives saved and stories rewritten."

Animals have always been a central part of the DeCroix family's life. Brittany describes pets as her greatest comfort, teaching her patience and unconditional love.

Daryl reflects on the ways animals have shown him loyalty, responsibility, and the importance of living in the moment. These lessons have naturally extended to their children and grandchildren, who have grown up surrounded by the same love and respect for animals. That generational influence has become part of the foundation's purpose, carrying forward a tradition of kindness and care.

Philanthropy, for the DeCroix family, is more than giving back, it is a way of living out their values together. Brittany explains, "Helping others, whether people or animals, has always been a core value of mine." Daryl adds, "Generosity has influenced my career, my relationships, and my desire to give back to causes that truly matter, like animal welfare." Through the foundation, these values are passed down and shared among the entire family.

When reflecting on what makes the VBSPCA so meaningful, Brittany and Daryl both point to the compassion at the heart of the organization. Brittany says, "The VBSPCA is more than a shelter, it's a place of hope. It's special because of the dedication, compassion, and community it builds." Daryl agrees, noting, "Every animal is treated with dignity, and every effort is made to strengthen the bond between people and pets. That's what makes the VBSPCA worthy of our support."

The DeCroix Family Foundation represents not only the generosity of today but also a legacy for the future. With children and grandchildren already a part of its mission, the foundation continues to grow as a family effort to make lasting change, ensuring that compassion, kindness, and second chances will always remain at the center of their work.

















CREATURE CHRONICLES | 6

Collaboration



At the Virginia Beach SPCA, every adoption story begins with a chance — and sometimes, that chance starts far from our own backyard. While most animals are from Hampton Roads, the VBSPCA also serves as a safe harbor for pets transferred from across the Mid-Atlantic and beyond. From rural shelters struggling with overcrowding to disaster zones where shelters have lost everything, our doors are open because of the care we can provide — including veterinary and dental treatment that many shelters don't have available.

This work is especially important at a time when shelters nationwide are operating at or beyond capacity. Higher intake, fewer adoptions, and a shortage of veterinary staff have created a bottleneck across the system, making it harder for animals to move into homes. The VBSPCA's ability to accept transfers, provide medical care, and prepare pets for adoption reflects both the strength of our community and the commitment to ensuring every animal gets a real chance at a healthier future.

Meeting the Need Close to Home

The VBSPCA works with shelters across Hampton Roads and the wider Mid-Atlantic to accept animals when space runs out elsewhere. Approximately 65% of the animals we transfer come from local shelter partners, and the remaining 35% arrive from regional partners. In 2024, that balance shifted, with 73% of transfers coming from right here at home — showing the need is increasing locally.

Rural shelters also frequently request transfer support. Animals in these communities often have a stronger chance of adoption when they come to Virginia Beach, where more families are actively seeking a new companion.



National Partnerships, Shared Goals

The VBSPCA is also part of a broader effort to address animal welfare needs nationwide. We partner with organizations such as Humane World for Animals, BISSELL Pet Foundation, Animal Rescue Corp, and PETA to help animals impacted by emergencies or criminal cases. For example, through Humane World for Animals, the VBSPCA recently welcomed dogs from an alleged fighting ring, a dog displaced by the Los Angeles wildfires, and cats rescued from a large-scale hoarding case. Many of these animals arrived with urgent medical or behavioral needs, but here they found the care and preparation necessary for adoption.

Medical Care That Opens Doors

A major reason animals are transferred here is due to available clinic resources. The VBSPCA's full-service veterinary facility provides medical and dental care that many shelters cannot offer. Dental disease and heartworm are among the most common issues we see in transferred animals, both of which can complicate adoption if untreated.

Thanks to support from our community and grantors like PetSmart Charities, the VBSPCA's clinic is well-staffed with a talented team and equipped to ensure each animal receives the treatment they need before finding a forever family. This is what makes the VBSPCA a trusted transfer destination for shelters across the region and beyond.

Ellie's Adoption Story

Ellie came to the VBSPCA as a transfer from Los Angeles, where shelters were working to make space for animals displaced by recent wildfires. Thanks to our transfer partnership, Ellie made her way here, where her perfect family was waiting.

That family had already adopted Ari, one of our long-term residents, and when Ellie joined their home, the connection was instant. Now, Ellie and Ari are inseparable. They love visiting their friend Luca, racing through the backyard, and winding down with cartoons in the evening.

We are so thankful we can welcome transfers like Ellie, giving animals in need the chance to find their forever homes. Today, Ellie's story isn't about where she came from - it's about the love and joy she has found in Virginia Beach.

Second Chances in Action

Every transfer tells a story. Among the most memorable are the dogs rescued from cruelty cases who arrived timid and shut down, but with medical care and patient attention, learned to trust again. Or the animals evacuated from wildfire zones, who now curl up safely in homes across Hampton Roads. These stories remind us that even in the most difficult circumstances, animals can recover when given the opportunity.

A Shared Mission

The transfer program reflects the VBSPCA mission: to create a more humane and responsible community by eliminating animal suffering while increasing human compassion. With every transfer, the VBSPCA helps ease the burden on overcrowded shelters, ensures animals with medical needs receive treatment, and opens the door to adoption.

"When other shelters run out of space, we can step in. That one 'yes' often means an animal's only chance at survival."

— VBSPCA Director Shelter Operations Jennifer Fly



Humane Education

Compassion In The Classroom

Across our region, many families, educators, and community partners share a common goal: ensuring children succeed in core subjects like math and reading while also helping them to develop into caring and responsible members of their communities. That's the philosophy behind Compassion Classroom, the VBSPCA's unique character education program for elementary schools designed to nurture empathy and positive actions in young students.

Rooted in education, supported by community

With lessons aligned to Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL), Compassion Classroom complements the essential work of our teachers by blending academic goals with social-emotional growth. As part of VBSPCA's broader humane education efforts, the program integrates respect, empathy, and compassion into everyday learning. Currently offered to 2nd and 4th grade classrooms, it equips children with real-life tools to consider different perspectives, respond thoughtfully to others, and take ownership of their actions—skills that extend well beyond the school day.

A highlight of every lesson is a special visit from an animal ambassador. These friendly and gentle animals spark excitement and help students experience firsthand how values like empathy and care apply to both people and animals.

What teachers are seeing in the classroom

In the last school year, Compassion Classroom reached 158 students, helping young learners across Virginia Beach grow not only as students, but as compassionate members of their community.

We are proud to share that Compassion Classroom is in the process of expanding to reach all elementary grade levels. As the program grows, so does its potential to make a lasting impact on the emotional well-being and character development of students across our region.

By investing in the hearts as well as the minds of children, Compassion Classroom is helping to shape a kinder, more respectful future— one lesson at a time.





Meet Bryel

She graduated from the College of Saint Rose with a degree in Childhood and Special Education and spent several years teaching 4th grade in Virginia Beach. Bryel was eager to join the mission to combine her love for teaching with her dedication to fostering compassion for animals in the community. She strives to inspire the next generation to be kind, responsible pet owners and advocates for animal welfare.

Teachers who have participated in the program consistently report positive changes in their students' behavior and emotional awareness: "The students loved her and were very engaged...She was able to give the lesson in a fun way. My students loved it!"

- New Castle 2nd Grade Teacher

Dedication

Volunteering is a work of heart

For the past three years, the Virginia Beach SPCA has been lucky to have Marlene as part of its volunteer family. A nurse by profession and a devoted mom, Marlene recently found herself with a bit more free time after her son left for college; she's been excited to fill this new found time with even more volunteering (and a little adult gymnastics on the side)!

"I literally cannot get enough of dogs," she says with a smile. "Volunteering is kind of a win-win, for me and for them. After long shifts at work, I didn't want to commit to having a dog of my own, and this way, I get to spend time with dogs who really need the attention and exercise."

Marlene's main role is dog walking, and she takes it seriously. "I usually try to make sure everyone that can walk gets out, which is easier if there's another dog walker at the same time." But the walks don't stop at just physical activity - she takes time afterward to cuddle, pet, and give the dogs some much-needed affection.

In addition to walking dogs, Marlene has played a key role in some of the VBSPCA's biggest events, including the annual gala and golf tournament, serving as an animal ambassador. And if that wasn't enough, she's also been granted the special opportunity to help socialize the puppies in the nursery - something she says might be "the coolest thing I get to do."

When asked what keeps her coming back week after week, her answer is simple: "I just can't get enough of dogs. We definitely have a symbiotic relationship."

To anyone considering volunteering, she offers this advice: "Just get started. You only need to do four hours a month to stay active, and there are so many ways to get involved."

We're so grateful for Marlene's continued dedication, compassion, and enthusiasm. Volunteers like her are the heart of the VBSPCA, and we can't thank her enough for the love and care she gives the animals.

Become a volunteer by visiting vbspca.com/volunteer





Healthy Pets

LEPTO IS OUT THERE.

DON'T LEAVE YOUR

DOG UNPROTECTED.



Leptospirosis is a dangerous bacterial disease that can affect your dog's kidneys, liver, and overall well-being, and even spread to humans. Dogs can become infected through contact with contaminated water, soil, or urine from wildlife such as rats and raccoons. Even something as simple as sniffing a puddle in your backyard could be enough for exposure.

Because leptospirosis can cause severe illness or even death, early diagnosis and treatment are critical. However, prevention is far more effective and easier than treatment.

Why Vaccination Matters

The most reliable protection against leptospirosis is vaccination. Modern vaccines are safe and effective, protecting against the four most common strains of the bacteria that dogs are likely to encounter. Vaccination helps your dog build immunity before they're exposed, drastically reducing their risk of serious illness. It also plays a vital role in protecting your family and community, since leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can spread from animals to humans. Some dogs may require annual boosters, especially if they are active outdoors or live in areas with standing water, frequent rainfall, or wildlife presence. But even indoor dogs aren't risk-free: urban and suburban environments can still harbor wildlife that contaminates public spaces, parks, or even apartment complexes.

A Public Health Responsibility

Many veterinary professionals now consider the leptospirosis vaccine to be a core part of routine canine healthcare, not just an optional addition. By vaccinating your dog, you're not just protecting their health, you're also playing a critical role in preventing the spread of disease in the broader community.

Talk to your veterinarian today about adding or updating your dog's leptospirosis vaccination. It's a simple step that saves lives. For local pet parents, the VBSPCA Clinic offers the leptospirosis vaccine as part of our routine care services.

Where To Get The Vaccine

The VBSPCA In-House Vaccine Clinics are offered on most Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. Hours do vary so please refer to the schedule on our website for hte most up-to-date information. New dates are added each month. The leptospirosis vaccine can also be administered on the Neuter Scooter. Those dates and locations can also be found on our website.

Indoor dogs aren't risk-free: urban and suburban environments can still harbor wildlife that contaminates public spaces, parks, or even apartment complexes.



It might look like a bus, but inside the VBSPCA Neuter Scooter, lives change every day. Access to affordable veterinary care can be a challenge for many families, even in a community with such strong and dedicated veterinary professionals. The Neuter Scooter helps fill that gap by traveling across Southeastern Virginia to provide low-cost spay/neuter surgeries as well as vaccine clinics, making essential care more accessible to the pets who need it most.

Each year, this clinic on wheels brings much-needed care to hundreds of families, helping pets stay healthier and keeping more of them in loving homes. The need is clear: last year alone, more than 27,000* animals entered shelters in Hampton Roads— a reminder of how critical access to veterinary care is for our community.

"The Neuter Scooter has been and continues to be an integral part of our community by providing low-cost spay/neuter services as well as important preventative care," said Kindra Haymaker, Director of Clinical Operations. "The impact for our shelter and rescue partners remains strong as we work together to save lives through spay/neuter initiatives."

For many families, the Neuter Scooter is more than a clinic— it's a lifeline that keeps pets healthy, safe, and at home. As demand grows, so does the importance of keeping this vital service on the road.





Take advantage of affordable spay/neuter services at a location near you.

Oct 16- ESSPCA Oct 23- Suffolk Humane Society

OCt 18- RK Subaru Oct 24- Anderson's (VB)
Oct 20- VBSPCA Oct 29- Pet Suites

Oct 22- Moose Lodge Oct 31- VBSPCA

For a full schedule and to make an appointment, visit **vbspca.com/spay-neuter-services.**

Community Leaders

Welcome New Board Members



Greystone Financial Group

Dubreuil



Frantz

Galderma Aesthetics



Nicol Roberts

Nicol joins the VBSPCA as the Director of Marketing and Communications. An experienced communications leader in both healthcare and nonprofit sectors, Nicol has guided brand strategy, executive messaging, and community engagement at a senior level. She is eager to bring that expertise to the VBSPCA, strengthening the VBSPCA voice and amplifying the impact of the mission.

"Ym excited to bring my experience to a team that values thoughtful strategy, bold storytelling, and real community impact." - Nicol Roberts



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