



STRATEGIC PLAN

Lenawee Humane Society

2024-2026

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Letter from the Board President

I am pleased to present the Lenawee Humane Society 2023-2025 Strategic Plan. The Lenawee Humane Society (LHS) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit animal shelter dedicated to saving the lives of animals while enriching the lives of humans.

The goals, ideas, and plans set forth in this document are the culmination of previous Strategic Plans with updates from board members, the executive director, staff, volunteers, and community members. With the help of these folks, we have accomplished much and strive for more. LHS has existed for over 100 years and as we look to the future of the organization, our vision is one of hope and progress. This plan will give our supporters and the community a clear sense of our mission and goals.

The next three years will bring some exciting changes to the Lenawee Humane Society, including building then moving to a new facility, plus offering additional services. This document will serve as our roadmap.

Steve Krause
LHS 2023 Board President

LHS Board Members, Staff and Contributors to the Strategic Plan

Board of Directors

Stephen Krause, Board President
Todd Butler, First Vice President
Stephen Shehan, Secretary
Alex Beasecker, Treasurer
Jennifer Borton-Rupert, Past President
Angela Breakstone
Patty Clark
Heather Leisenring
Jessica Vasher
Danielle Ward

Staff

Marcie Cornell, Executive Director
Carol Wendelcke, Executive Assistant
Jamie Camburn, Director of Donor Development
Stephanie Curtis, Director of Operations
Sasha Wilkerson, Director of Communications & Marketing
Heather Hutcherson, Clinic Manager
Abigail Mull, Shelter Manager
Becki Nichols, Fundraising Manager
Danielle Grisham, Communications Manager
Cole Church, Volunteer Outreach Coordinator
Megan Donovan, Adoption Coordinator
Rylee Nuoffer, Store Associate
Elisabeth Dye, Store Associate
Rachel Grisham, Animal Care Specialist
Keelii Regalado, Animal Care Specialist
Kaitlyn Brinson, Animal Care Specialist
Alex Gruel, Animal Care Specialist
Savana Nash, Animal Care Specialist
Caidence Williams, Animal Care Specialist
Jennifer Wahl, Animal Care Specialist
Keith Burnett, Shelter Attendant

Section 1: Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

Our mission is to save the lives of animals while enriching the lives of humans.

Vision

We envision a community informed about animal welfare and humane education; animals matched with families that meet their needs and vice versa; services to provide low cost spay and neuter; resources to ensure animals can stay in their home when times get tough; and support for families when unexpected events occur in order to prevent animal overpopulation, abandonment, abuse and homelessness in the first place.

Values

- We do our work with passion, compassion, respect and kindness.
- We believe honesty, integrity and transparency are essential in everything we do.
- We are dedicated to reducing suffering and improving the lives of animals.
- We believe community engagement and education are the best ways to eliminate pet overpopulation.
- We are committed to the pursuit of successful pet adoptions.
- We believe euthanizing adoptable animals is unacceptable.
- We believe every dog and cat should be spayed/neutered until there are no homeless pets.
- We believe all animals should be provided with the 5 Basic Freedoms:
 1. Freedom from hunger and thirst
 2. Freedom from discomfort
 3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease
 4. Freedom to express normal behavior
 5. Freedom from fear and distress



What We Do

- Accept owned and stray animals that can no longer be cared for
- Match those animals with loving families
- Accept monetary donations and donated items to help care for homeless pets
- Invite our amazing donors to become annual members
- Host the **Hope Clinic**, Lenawee County's first low-cost spay/neuter clinic
- Operate a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program to help battle cat overpopulation
- Rent out humane live-traps to area residents
- Maintain a Lost and Found Network for missing pets
- Partner with Lenawee County Animal Control to provide housing for Lenawee County strays
- Welcome volunteers and community service members
- Operate a Foster Program and Adoption Ambassador Program
- Host a Pet Food Bank to help keep pets in their homes
- Offer indoor, animal-themed Birthday Parties for children
- Encourage and strengthen children's reading skills through our Reading Buddies program
- Host Summer Day Camps for young pet lovers
- Allow those who cannot adopt a pet to Adopt A Cage
- Offer nail trims, baths, microchipping, and other pet services
- Operate a wellness clinic to help pet owners keep up to date on vaccines and licensing
- Provide educational presentations for schools and daycare facilities
- Operate a ReTail Section in our Adoption Center
- Team up with YOU to fundraise for homeless animals
- Transfer animals in from other rescue organizations when space allows
- Provide Social Hour for Seniors to interact with pets at nursing homes



Section 2: History and Recent Accomplishments

History

As a young child, Hope Lowry was known for taking in stray animals off the streets. She was passionate about helping animals that had little hope of finding a home. She would push her mother's wheelchair door-to-door asking for donations to care for the animal before finding it a forever home. She was a trailblazer and a force to be reckoned with when she founded the Lenawee Humane Society in 1921.

In September 1921, the Lenawee Humane Society filed its Articles of Incorporation. The organization was operated from the person's residence until September 1978 when the facility opened on Academy Road in Adrian, Michigan. In April 1982, the old Maumee Company building on West Beecher was purchased and renovated to become the shelter we know today.

Hope Lowry served as founder, then Executive Director, and finally President of the Board before passing on her legacy. During that time, she became a mentor and a role model for her young friend, Hildreth Spencer, who carried on her legacy and dedication to the welfare of homeless animals. We like to think we share Hope's zeal and commitment more than 100 years later. We believe Hope and Hildreth would be proud of all that we have accomplished and all we hope to achieve in the future to help *"Save the lives of animals while enriching the lives of humans."*

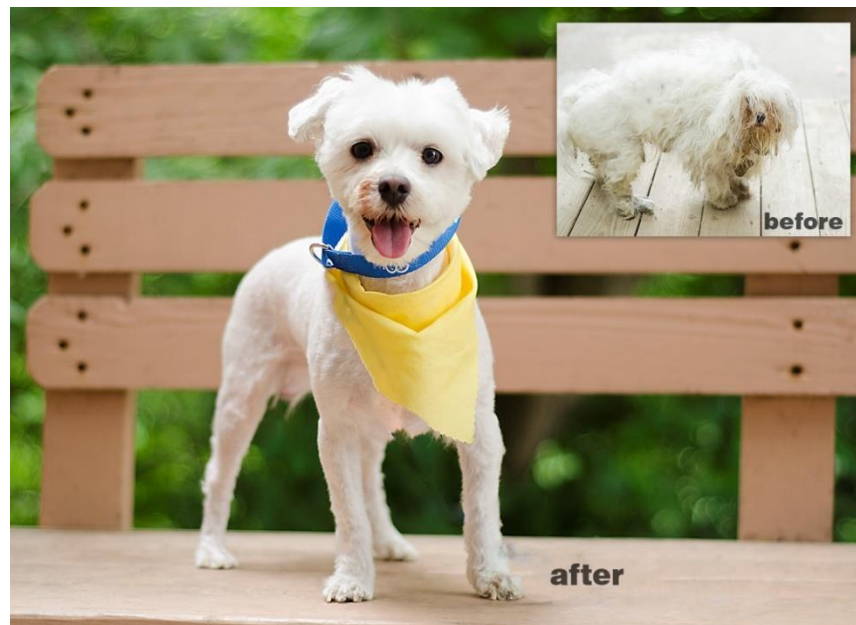
Funding for the Lenawee Humane Society comes from membership dues, store sales, donations, grants, and fundraising events. In 2023, the annual budget of LHS is \$1,200,000.

Recent Accomplishments

The Lenawee Humane Society is committed to continuous improvements to improve the lives of all impacted by our organization, including not only those in our care, but also our team members, volunteers and community.

- We have learned how to save and adopt out FIV and FELV positive cats which are euthanized in most shelters.
- We have secured grant funding and community donations to add a much-needed X-ray machine to our Hope Clinic, saving both time and money.
- We are a certified through Michigan Pet Fund Alliance as a Stress-free shelter.
- Our shelter and our staff are certified in Humane Shelter Canine Handling.
- We created a coalition of humane societies, rescues and shelters throughout southern Michigan to network, share best practices, strengthen processes and procedures, and create better resources for both animals and those who care for them throughout our state.
- We have partnered with Bissell Pet Foundation to make adoption affordable for everyone, increase animal adoptions and save more lives.
- We created programs for kids, such as Rescue Rangers Summer Camp and Reading Buddies, to help educate them about animal welfare and behavior, increase reading skills for children while providing enrichment for cats and create a better future for all animals and people.

- We developed a Leadership team to handle unexpected issues and crisis situations in a timely manner and keep the community informed of any changes as a result of the emergency.
- We have strengthened our foster program to include day trips, over-night stays, weekend visits and trial adoptions in an effort to increase adoption rates, decrease return rates, decrease length of stay and provide additional shelter space to save more lives.
- We have reduced barriers to adoption by focusing more on individual needs and match-making through an engaging conversation-style adoption process.
- We have reduced staff and animal stress through enrichment, play groups and updating protocols.
- We dedicated our pet food bank to its founder, Dave Percy.



The Challenge

The Lenawee Humane Society moved to the Beecher Street location in 1982 and had the facility renovated to accommodate the shelter needs at that time. The new shelter was a great improvement and provided all the space needed for many years. However, a lot has changed in animal welfare, and at LHS, in 40 years. Since 2013, we have steadily expanded our programs and services to meet the growing needs of the community. These programs include a low-cost spay/neuter clinic, a trap-neuter-return program, an expanded foster program and a pet food bank. These improvements have led to an increase in intakes and adoptions, additional support for our community, a more robust foster program, and cut our average length of stay in half. This means shelter pets are finding forever homes faster than ever before. Along with all the positive impacts these changes have had on our organization and our community, they have also created additional challenges to our operations.

Behind the scenes, it has been challenging to operate our organization at its full potential in this confined space. The increase in people and animals has drawn attention to the lack of proper air flow throughout the facility. The older furnaces and air conditioner are working extra hard, but it is difficult to keep a consistent temperature in critical areas of the building such as the clinic. Additionally, our appliances are not energy efficient, resulting in unnecessary spending.

With our tiny shelter trapped between a busy road and the River Raisin wrapping around our property, there are no options to expand our current building. Staff and dedicated volunteers park off site to keep parking available for adopters, clinic patients and donors in our tiny parking lot. The limited parking has caused people to keep driving rather than visit our organization simply because there is nowhere to park.

To prevent the potential spread of disease and to understand each animal's behavior, all new animals must reside in our intake areas for up to 5 days before being evaluated and transferred to our adoption floor. The dog isolation area has only 8 kennels and once full, we cannot take in additional dogs until space in that area becomes available. This creates a bottleneck in the flow of animals through the shelter and leaves homeless animals without anywhere to go. Turning away homeless animals is never desired, but as a no-kill facility with limited intake space, sometimes it is our only answer.

The operations within our lobby can also be a challenge. All activities happen within the small space of our lobby. These include adoptions, surrenders, and surgery drop-off / pick-up to name just a few. While some people are elated, finding their new best friend and looking forward to beginning their new relationship, others are saddened by the ending of their relationship as they surrender their animals for a variety of reasons. Or a pet owner picking up their pet from surgery struggles to hear post-surgical instructions, while someone else may be bringing in an injured animal they found on the street. The lack of privacy along with the array of emotions in a small space creates stress for visitors, staff and the animals, making it difficult to conduct business professionally and privately.

The outside of the building brings additional challenges. The proximity of the building to the road, makes it dangerous for every animal that enters / exits facility. It also poses a danger to those trying to back out of the small parking space and persons who may be walking on the sidewalk. Additionally, with limited parking, it is difficult to attract volunteers and donors. This decreases revenue and makes it difficult to provide competitive wages, offer benefits and retain employees.

A new shelter offers us flexibility with a larger intake area and a smaller adoption area, plenty of parking, outdoor space, a safe place to pick up and drop off animals, and most importantly, confidential areas for our visitors to share their stories with us, such that we can provide comfort when losing a pet, celebrating the addition of a new best friend, or simply making a donation without interruptions. Additionally, a new shelter allows us the opportunity to continue to grow and improve our lifesaving services for the next 100 years.

Section 3: Organizational Strengths and Emerging Trends

For more than 100 years, the Lenawee Humane Society has addressed the needs of homeless animals in Lenawee County. Our greatest strength is a dedicated and passionate team of staff and volunteers who support all aspects of the organization's services and programs. The LHS Board of Directors is committed to creating a transparent and sustainable organization that will be the resource our community needs for years to come.

Animal welfare has changed a lot in 100 years. The shelters of yesterday, often thought of as "the pound", are no longer the shelters of today. Today, our companion animals are our family members, and shelters serve as a temporary home while these animals await their second chance to become a family member again.

As new trends emerge in animal welfare, LHS is embracing these initiatives including:

- 1) Enrichment programs intended to increase social interaction, mental stimulation and exercise;
- 2) Retention programs to ensure pets don't enter the shelter in the first place: LHS offers a food bank to help those in need when buying pet food may be a hardship;
- 3) Foster programs that extend our space and allow pets who are recovering from surgery, or are stressed in the shelter environment, to recover and / or destress in a home environment;
- 4) Children's programs including Reading Buddies and Rescue Rangers camp intended to involve children at an early age;
- 5) Partnerships with shelters in high-kill regions where animals are transported to shelters like LHS where space is available, and a second chance is more certain;
- 6) Awareness of the positive impact animals have on mental health;
- 7) Shelter Medicine as a specialty: At LHS we are fortunate to have a full-time vet on staff serving in our Hope Clinic. Our vet takes care of our residents in addition to offering services to the public at a reduced cost.

The team at LHS continues to creatively search for ways to embrace trends in animal welfare and expand our services to reach a larger population in Lenawee County. We strive to be the resource our community needs.

Section 4: Process Used to Create / Revise Strategic Plan



Alice: "Cheshire Puss, would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

Cheshire Cat: "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to."

Alice: "I don't much care where ---"

Cheshire Cat: "Then it doesn't matter which way you go."

Alice: "--- so long as I get somewhere."

Cheshire Cat: "Oh, you're sure to do that, if only you walk long enough."

(JPR: "--- and if you don't exhaust your resources while you're wandering around trying to figure it all out.")

The Message Summarized

Lewis Carroll (paraphrased): "If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there."

Yogi Berra: "If you don't know where you're going, you might end up somewhere else."

The essence of planning is to not end up somewhere, but to arrive at our destination stronger for the journey. At the Lenawee Humane Society, we see planning as an integral component to organizational effectiveness. The directors, members and volunteers are dedicated to planning for a strong future. Our services will not be successful without adequate thought and planning that must go into each step.

When we created our first strategic plan, we conducted a **SWOT Analysis** (**S**trengths/**W**eaknesses/**O**pportunities/**T**hreats) to determine what we are skilled at and what we have to be better at. Participants were the LHS Board members, Staff, Volunteers and community leaders and residents. Numerous work sessions focused solely on strategic planning were held to consider the findings and to develop specific goals and initiatives.

To develop our strategy for 2023-2025, we celebrated the goals we have accomplished, we re-prioritized actions that are still relevant, we eliminated what is no longer needed and we added new items that will carry us forward for the next three years. Similar to our first strategic plan, this one was also developed with input from our Board, Executive Director, leadership team and volunteers.

Going forward, we will review our strategy at the beginning of the third year of scope to ensure continued forward thinking.

Section 5: Strategic Goals and Associated Action Items

Strategic Goal 1: Reduce the Average Length of Stay

It is the goal of the Lenawee Humane Society (LHS) to help the greatest number of animals possible both within and outside of the organization. The organization has limited resources and therefore efficient use and wise planning is necessary to accomplish this goal. Not only does LHS desire to help animals by caring for them at the shelter and finding homes with responsible pet owners, but also through educational outreach and advocacy. In this manner, both animals coming to the shelter and those in the community can be helped.

Actions

- Strengthen Foster Program through one-on-one training and training videos.
- Increase spay/neuter services to the community
- Improve the functionality and visibility of our facility
- Expanded Clinic and intake space would allow for “fast tracking’ of animals
- Create and implement Capacity of Care plan policies and procedures in an effort to further reduce stress and length of stay.
- Create Care Plan for each animal upon intake.
- Implement *Dog Playing for Life* program to provide enrichment and understand behavioral needs of each animal.

Anticipated Result: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ANIMAL LIVES SAVED



Strategic Goal 2: Be the Resource the Community Needs

It is the goal of LHS to be a responsible resource to the Lenawee County area and the surrounding communities of southeastern Michigan. Community members regularly turn to the organization when seeking help with animal welfare related issues. The organization desires to provide quality assistance and utilization of organizational and community resources. Developing strong partnerships with governmental, community organizations and high-volume kill shelters are key to accomplishing this goal.

Actions

- Provide excellent customer service, hospitality and awareness of services offered.
 - Everyone who comes through the door will be greeted promptly and cordially
- Upgrade computers throughout shelter
- Provide humane education programs for the community.
- Expand public veterinary services to include additional offerings, e.g., vaccinations, wellness
- Strengthen relationship with Animal Control
 - Work with Animal Control to coordinate the safe sheltering of all stray dogs
 - Work with Sheriff's Office and government officials to enforce animal welfare laws
- Improve the functionality and visibility of our facility
 - Secure property for new shelter
 - Begin Capital Campaign to raise funding needed for new shelter
 - Identify and address the needs of the underserved communities in our county
 - Provide access to Animal Control Officer during off-hours
 - Ensure design includes space for training and humane education programs
 - Increase parking spaces for volunteers and visitors
- Expand pet socialization and stress relief programs by offering these services to additional assisted living facilities, schools, and local businesses.

Anticipated Result: A COMMUNITY EDUCATED AND DEDICATED TO ANIMAL WELFARE





Strategic Goal 3: Achieve Organizational Sustainability

Corporate sustainability is an approach aiming to create long-term stakeholder value through the implementation of a business strategy that focuses on the ethical, social, environmental, cultural and economic dimensions of doing business. The strategies created are intended to foster longevity, transparency and proper employee development within LHS.

It is the goal of LHS to sustain business practices that drive profitability, attract customers and highly talented employees, reduce costs and boost morale. Sustainable business practices have also been known to increase efficiency, all while doing good for the local environment.

Actions

- Achieve and maintain financial health and stability
 - Expand and diversify funding sources
 - Retain / expand the number of donors annually as measured through Donor Perfect
 - Maintain donor-centric fundraising, creating mutually beneficial partnerships
 - Develop an Employee Giving Program to help expand monthly and corporate giving
 - Expand and promote “Leave a Legacy” program
 - Create an Endowment Fund through a Capital Campaign
 - Review all fundraising activities to ensure return is greater than effort
 - Update technology and computers throughout the organization
 - Expand clinic services and add vaccine clinic
- Build a strong volunteer program
 - Actively recruit new volunteers
 - Develop and implement a volunteer appreciation program

- Create / distribute monthly Volunteer Newsletter to keep volunteers engaged / informed
- Create Thankful Thursday, where we spotlight one volunteer every Thursday
- Develop a strong volunteer orientation program
- Provide opportunities for volunteer feedback
- Improve the functionality and visibility of our building
 - Install environmentally friendly air-flow systems to support the health of our animals
 - Build a shelter in a more visible area where we can be on the minds of residents daily
 - Create attractive signage for our new shelter
- Strengthen the Board of Directors
 - Increase knowledge and awareness of board members by providing training opportunities such as,
 - Use of Nonprofit Network and Nonprofit Leadership training and webinars through membership
 - Regular staff presentations to board members regarding policies, procedures and programs
 - Annual walk-through of the shelter during Board meeting
 - Utilize Cloud-based communication tools to upload and store all LHS documents and board minutes for easy access and information sharing among board members
 - Create quarterly stress buster events off-site for all staff members
 - Create mentorship program for new members
 - Build strong pipeline of future board members
- Create succession plan for all management staff and board members.

Anticipated Result: FINANCIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY THAT SEES US THROUGH THE NEXT 100 YEARS



Strategic Goal 4: Recruit and Retain Talented Team Members

LHS must recruit, train and retain qualified staff members to achieve our mid-term and long-term objectives. A strong core team ensures quality care of our resident animals, as well as helps us achieve our mission of saving the lives of animals while enriching the lives of humans. In order to recruit and retain top talent, LHS must provide a competitive compensation package in addition to providing a culture where team member input is valued, and good performance is acknowledged and rewarded.

Actions

- Offer competitive compensation package
- Review benefit package options to determine cost to provide to all full-time employees
- Seek grant funding for training programs to allow for additional opportunity
- Survey staff for input around training needs to create culture of inclusion
- Provide a designated number of training hours for each employee annually
- Implement a compassion fatigue relief program and incorporate monthly in staff meetings.

Anticipated Result: INCREASED EMPLOYEE RETENTION



Strategic Goal 5: Create a Culture of Gratitude

The Lenawee Humane Society is committed to create a culture of gratitude that encompasses our donors, our volunteers and our employees. The benefits of gratitude go beyond a sense of self-worth, self-efficacy and trust among employees. Building a culture of gratitude at work starts at the top with Board members and the Executive Director and includes thanking the people who rarely or never get thanked, aiming for quality, not quantity, providing many opportunities for gratitude, and in the wake of crisis, taking time for giving thanks.

Actions

- Donors
 - Begin cultivation and appreciation immediately (e.g., at time of adoption)
 - Establish guidelines for board acknowledgement of donation (\$5K)
 - Vary the communication style of Thank You letters
 - Develop process to reach out to donors to understand their preferred communication methods.
- Volunteers
 - Develop and implement volunteer appreciation program
 - Establish Thankful Thursday to spotlight a volunteer
 - Provide free designated Volunteer tables at the “HOWL-O-WEEN Ball”
 - Recognize Volunteer accomplishments and milestones.
- Employees
 - Establish compassion fatigue and team bonding/building events quarterly
- Train all staff on the difference between good customer service and hospitality so that we may always strive to provide both.

Anticipated Result: BECOME THE ORGANIZATION OF CHOICE FOR ANIMAL SERVICES, ADOPTION, VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS.

