

FUR THE RECORD

2021 Spring Newsletter

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF SARASOTA COUNTY HAS EXISTED FOR NEARLY 70 YEARS. In that time, we have celebrated many milestones, but none quite as momentous as the completion of our new facility. The building is the culmination of years of planning and construction. To be occupying and using it is a dream come true. We are not quite finished—the final phase will be complete by early summer—but the life-changing impact is already apparent.

The building itself is a beautiful, hyper-modern design that still manages to feel warm and inviting. As spectacular as it is, though, it's just a building. It's what happens inside that matters.

Every day brings a new favorite moment. There's Sible, a gentle dog with scars on her face and body from a tragic past, who was the first animal adopted in the new adoption center. Or our 69th birthday in February, where we celebrated with pupcakes and kitty hors d'oeuvres for the animals and tacos for the humans. Another great moment was the opening of our new sensory garden, a previously under-used patch of our backyard that was transformed into an oasis of wonder by several hardworking staffers and volunteers. And Luke Skywhisker, pictured here, who was part of the first litter of kittens to claim my office as a kitten nursery.

Walking in the doors each day, I see the many lives and stories of the animals we have helped over the years. I feel the challenge to help the thousands of people and pets that will pass through this space over the next several decades. There is a sense of urgency beating through HSSC now. An urgency to save the ones we can—today—and to build better programs to save the ones we can't—tomorrow.

Of course, our mission is not possible without you. At our core, we are a community organization, founded by a group of 70 people. Through the decades, it was you who adopted, volunteered, and donated. You who said "yes, we believe that every animal deserves a second chance." And now, it is you who will help us continue to write stories of hope, healing, and happiness.

We are entering what promises to be the most joy-filled and important chapter of our storied existence. And we know that you will be right there with us to celebrate the individual triumphs that add up to incredible milestones.

With gratitude and joy,



Anna Gonce
Executive Director

P.S. We invite you to join us on Friday, September 24, for our grand opening celebration. We'll have a ribbon cutting, followed by tours and refreshments.



*Luke Skywhisker,
future HSSC alum*





1952

1952: THE YEAR THAT STARTED IT ALL.

Technically, our story begins in the fall of 1951. That's when a man named Donald Evans lost his beloved dog. The dog was picked up by the "dog catcher," but no one contacted Mr. Evans. The dog was euthanized. Mr. Evans was so distraught that he vowed to start a humane society to prevent this from happening to others.

On January 15, 1952, 70 people met at the Sunshine Kitchen and formed the Humane Society of Sarasota County. HSSC was incorporated on February 8, 1952, the date we now consider HSSC's birthday.

We settled on 15th Street in a converted house with room for just 6 cats and outdoor kennels for 48 dogs. The origins of Sarasota's first nonprofit animal welfare organization were humble, but the declaration to "do everything and anything which is legal to prevent cruelty and harsh treatment to animals" set the tone for what HSSC would become.



2009

2009: THE YEAR HSSC BECAME NO-KILL.

Being a no-kill shelter is so closely intertwined with HSSC's identity that it may be surprising to learn we have only been one for slightly more than a decade. In the early 2000s, the no-kill movement was gaining momentum across the country, and HSSC's Board of Directors had taken notice. They spearheaded an operational change that would transform HSSC from an open-admission shelter where, sadly, we had to set time and space limits, to a managed-admission shelter where no animal is ever euthanized for time or space. It was a change that impacted every facet of our organization.

We knew we wanted to be the kind of shelter that helped all animals, not just the young, healthy ones. To this day, we have lived up to that expectation.

It was also in this time frame that we upgraded our dog pods and created our first free-roaming cat rooms, improving the standard of care across the shelter.





2021

2021: THE YEAR IT ALL COMES TOGETHER.

After 67 years, our facility was cramped and outdated. Thus, in 2019, we began the most ambitious renovation and expansion project in our history, adding 20,000ft² to our 15th Street homestead.

We will now be able to help 900 more animals each year—a lifesaving increase of 50%. We will be able to better serve our community too. Our 3,000ft² education and training center will host obedience courses, seminars, camps, and events, all helping to educate the public to be responsible pet owners and serving as a hub for animal welfare organizations. While HSSC is no-kill, the state of Florida is still one of the worst in the nation. HSSC will always prioritize our community, but now we will be poised to help our state improve as well—because a rising tide lifts all boats.

Our new building represents our commitment to saving thousands more animals for decades to come and building a more humane society.



Lifesaving **MILESTONES**



PAVE THE WAY

Our \$8.5M shelter renovation is almost complete, but there's still time to buy a personalized paver and be part of HSSC forever. Each paver will be inlaid in the walkway of our beautiful memorial courtyard. Customize your paver with the name of your pet, your family, your business, or a tribute of your choosing. You'll not only be a permanent part of the shelter, you'll be helping HSSC realize our vision of a community where all animals are cared for and loved. **Pavers are \$500 each. Purchase yours at hssc.org/pavers.**

Inside LOOK

STEP INSIDE THE NEW HSSC. After years of planning and construction, we moved into our new adoption center on January 11, 2021. The last phase of the project, the receiving wing, will wrap up in June. Enjoy this photographic stroll through our new home.

WELCOME CENTER: Adopters and visitors enter the natural-light-filled lobby and walk down the "Happy Tails Hallway" to the cat and dog housing. **CAT WING:** A space for 75 cats, with three matchmaking rooms, two free-roaming indoor/outdoor "catios," single-occupancy condos, a kitten room, plus separate holding rooms for sick and healthy cats. **DOG WING:** The four dog wings (Pods) are the temporary homes for 104 dogs. Each dog has a private, spacious kennel complete with outdoor access and automated water bowls. Adoptable dogs and potential adopters get to know each other in the four matchmaking rooms. Multiple green spaces, including four covered yards and a sensory garden, provide ample opportunity for enrichment and exercise. **MEDICAL WING:** Every animal receives a comprehensive exam, diagnostics, vaccines, preventatives, spay/neuter, and microchipping. With our in-house clinic, we can perform everything from routine surgeries and dental cleanings to complicated procedures. **EDUCATION & TRAINING CENTER:** A versatile 3,000ft² space for obedience courses, summer camps, special events, workshops, seminars, and more. **MEMORIAL COURTYARD:** A tranquil, reflective space to honor people and pets, complete with a permanent resting place for pets that have crossed the Rainbow Bridge.

Naming opportunities are still available! To learn more or to schedule a private tour, please contact Autumn Steiner at 941.955.4131 x121 or asteiner@hssc.org.



Indoor/Outdoor Catio



Memorial Courtyard



Surgery Suite



Education & Training Center



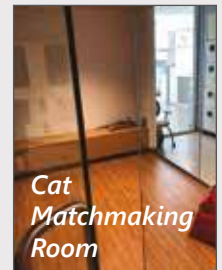
Cat Condos



Adoption Center Lobby



Covered Play Yards



Cat Matchmaking Room

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