



**Centre County PAWS
Strategic Plan
September 2016 – August 2019**

2016 Strategic Planning Committee:

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1. Summary

This is PAWS' third formal strategic plan, and will guide the future accomplishments that our non-profit organization has generated, over more than three decades, through the dedication of our volunteers and support from the community.

2. PAWS in Brief

The core of PAWS' vitality and continuing success lies in its focus on three areas: placing animal welfare first, valuing its staff and volunteers, and supporting the principle of non-euthanasia. Centre County PAWS is committed to finding homes for homeless cats and dogs, educating citizens on responsible pet ownership, providing spay/neuter assistance, and ending pet overpopulation. We are a non-euthanasia, member-supported, volunteer enabled organization dedicated to the **Promotion of Animal Welfare and Safety**. [See Appendix A for the complete Mission Statement.]

3. Goals

For the next three years, we will be guided by goals parallel to those from the 2013-2016 plan since they effectively represent the spirit of PAWS and continue to incorporate our target aspirations and values.

1. PAWS will enhance programs directed at reducing companion animal overpopulation through spay/neuter programs and education.
2. PAWS will continue as a regional leader in animal sheltering best practices.
3. PAWS will successfully place homeless dogs and cats in forever homes, promote responsible pet ownership, and be a visible presence throughout Centre County.
4. PAWS will present a welcoming environment, supportive climate, and accurate information for volunteers, donors, members, potential adopters, and other visitors at our facility and events.
5. PAWS will continue to cultivate robust, enduring financial health and stability for the organization.

PAWS Board, staff, committees, and many other volunteers provided input for this Plan.

4. Top Level Three Year Priorities

Overall Three Year Priorities	Responsible Group	Product	Goal
Continue to focus efforts toward long-term financial stability	Finance	Document fiscal plan with quarterly financial targets versus success	5
Develop an emergency	New committee or	Emergency plan,	5

Overall Three Year Priorities	Responsible Group	Product	Goal
preparedness plan both internally and as part of the larger community planning.	consultant under the direction of the Director of Operations	associated training documentation and signage	
Develop a longitudinal plan that includes annual checking and maintenance of the infrastructure during year 1, year 2, year 3, etc. Ongoing facilities maintenance and upgrading will be increasingly important as the building ages.	Facilities Committee	Multi-year maintenance plan and log for facility maintenance and planning.	2, 4
Fundraising must continue as a strategic goal. Develop considerations for when a new capital campaign might be needed and undertaken.	Finance and Facilities Committees		5
Consider current committee structure and descriptions of expectations and activities periodically and provide for volunteers; clarify roles and responsibilities.	Each committee with reviews by the Board of Directors or their designate.	Document in a consistent format the expectations and procedures of the respective committee.	2, 4
Develop a business plan to complement the strategic plan. Explore outsourcing this one.	Consultant to the Board of Directors	A formal business plan	5
Provide an annual report that gives a thumbnail picture of PAWS. (Particularly applicable for marketing, donor relations, grantsmanship.	Director of Marketing and Executive Director	An annual State of the Organization report to include top level financials, facility and staffing changes, and intake, adoption and application data.	5
Continue to pursue grant opportunities available to animal welfare organizations.	Director of Marketing	Develop and maintain a list of contacts and status	5
Provide educational materials to the community regarding dog and cat ownership responsibilities.	Director of Marketing, Director of Operations	Educational handouts, position papers regarding legislation.	3

5. Goals Implementation

The five goals listed in section 3 are broken down in section 6, to prioritize significant efforts and assign a responsible group and expected products. Additionally, section 6 identifies specific

tactics required to achieve them. Each group assigned to a task is expected to develop metrics which will assist in determining the success or weak points in achieving the goal.

6. Goal Implementation Tactics

6.1. Goal 1

PAWS will enhance programs directed at reducing companion animal overpopulation through spay/neuter programs, education, and collaborations

- Continue to benchmark and communicate with similar organizations and employ effective ideas from the animal welfare community in our operations.
- Provide sufficient financial and volunteer support for the spay-neuter program. Explore broadening the base for financial contributions to the spay/neuter program to preserve its viability and success.
- Continue to explore options for additional professional medical assistance on staff, based on current and past experience with internal animal care needs and the spay-neuter program operations.
- Forge additional partnerships with organizations such as food banks and housing assistance agencies to potentially share information on companion animal needs and provide resources.
- Identify and employ the most effective communication venues for reaching various populations via multi-county advertising. Assess voucher program accomplishments, using data to target possible areas of highest priority and need.

6.2. Goal 2

PAWS will continue as a regional leader in animal sheltering best practices.

- Develop and implement emergency preparedness plan and train volunteers. Assign to Planning Committee
- Develop, maintain, and actively use a facilities inventory that includes checks and repairs that should be done periodically [in year 1, year 2, annually, etc.] Assign to Facilities Committee
- Continue to assess use of current space for effectiveness. Assign to Facilities Committee
- During this three year Plan, develop one or more scenarios to explore building and services expansion possibilities in order to be prepared for future change. Board to do as part of business or assign to others
- Refine programs such as Pet Partners to employ best practices in providing individual enrichment for the animals in our care. Assign to Director of Operations

6.3. Goal 3

PAWS will promote responsible pet ownership and continue to expand its visible presence, impact, and contributions throughout Centre County.

- Assess current and potential audiences for PAWS activities and events, and use the results to choose where our efforts can make the most impact.

- Continue to refine and enrich current information materials, including effective take-aways that can be distributed at PAWS events and community events. Assign to Publicity
- Develop and communicate the proposed annual marketing plan for PAWS as much in advance as possible so others could contribute time and ideas.
- Educate the public in Centre County about government legislation affecting companion animal welfare. Any current legislative actions regarding companion animals could be reported in the newsletter.
- Continue to assess “open hours” and phone referral services.
- Consider developing official position statements on issues important to our community such as declawing, housing animals outdoors, and trap/neuter/return programs to create a consistent message.

6.4. Goal 4

PAWS will present a welcoming environment, supportive climate, and accurate information for volunteers, donors, members, potential adopters, and other visitors at our facility.

- Explore ways to increase membership in our non-profit. [Insure that all current members receive renewal notices; small giveaway for members such as Sierra Club & ASPCA do?]
- Continue to explore partner opportunities, such as appropriate Penn State University departments or classes.
- Increase education on PAWS policies and make the information readily available.
- Be conscious of ongoing needs of staff and volunteers. (e.g. civility standards, ways to combat compassion fatigue; continue to assess activities in order to develop ways to recruit and retain volunteers with varying interests and backgrounds.
- Continue a variety of occasional social events for volunteers.
- Consider sponsoring a series of informational or practical programs and include the community. (E.g. have local dog club members come and talk about their activities, demo Canine Good Citizen program, dealing with a serious illness or loss of a pet, more pet photo opportunities.)
- Continue to provide an up-to-date, informative website.
- Explore ideas for PAWS merchandise.

6.5. Goal 5

PAWS will continue to cultivate robust, enduring financial health and stability for the organization.

- Frame and use a business plan to inform financial and operations decisions.
- Develop an aspirational organization-wide staffing plan for PAWS to complement parallel development of facilities scenarios that address depreciation and future capital improvements.
- Consider current committee structure and descriptions of expectations and activities periodically and share with volunteers; clarify roles and responsibilities.
- Continue to provide and fund staff development opportunities.
- Continue impartial auditing of financial operations.

- Regularly communicate results of PAWS programs - e.g. fundraising efforts, media recognition, and adoptions - so volunteers feel they have accurate information on accomplishments.
- Review past and existing PAWS events (develop plans for potentially increasing income from these events; investigate the possibility of a new annual event that could replace an existing event)
- Produce a “Year in Review” for PAWS that documents our accomplishments and financial stewardship.
- Track in-kind and special events donations to PAWS and make sure they are entered in Giftworks.
- Explore more partnerships with local businesses, including businesses willing to sponsor PAWS events.

7. Conclusion

Centre County PAWS has grown significantly since our beginning 35 years ago. From the dedication and hard work of a few people back in the beginning to the hundreds of volunteers, staff, Board members, and donors of today, PAWS has sought to provide forever homes for thousands of cats and dog. Our past and current have been impressive but we must continue to look to the future to assure we will always improve and be available to provide food, shelter, and safety to these animals until they find their forever homes.

To prepare for the future, this strategic plan has defined five major goals and assigned objectives within each goal to the various committees within the PAWS organization. The committees have been tasked to further define how to achieve these goals and to verify the progress along the way. The result of the different committee responses will become an addendum to this document.

Appendix A - Mission Statement

Centre County PAWS, Inc. is committed to:

- Placing homeless cats and dogs into loving forever homes and making a lifetime commitment to each of these companion animals
- Reducing companion animal overpopulation through spay/neuter programs and education
- Promoting responsible pet care through education and by example
- Acting as an advocate on behalf of companion animals
- Building, nurturing, and respecting the human-animal bond, and
- Proactively seeking new approaches in the effort to end the suffering of companion animals in our society caused by cruelty, neglect, or human apathy.

We will make decisions, enact policies, and implement programs in accordance with our three core principles:

We are a non-euthanasia organization. We believe that every animal has value and deserves a high quality of life and a permanent home, and that every animal must receive individual consideration, regardless of how many animals we take in. We believe that the life of an animal must always take precedence and that euthanasia is only an option when needed to provide a merciful end to either a state of irresolvable acute suffering, severe aggression, or severe self-destructive behavior.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of PAWS. We are committed to ongoing education, training and communications so that all of our volunteers are well-informed about organizational matters, day-to-day operations and volunteer expectations. We believe that each of our volunteers should be treated with professionalism, warmth, respect, and compassion. We value the time and energy that each volunteer gives to PAWS and to the animals in our care. We encourage the open expression of ideas and suggestions, and we wish to cultivate the creativity and enthusiasm of each volunteer. We work to create a safe, happy, enjoyable atmosphere in which each volunteer can contribute in his or her own way and receive fulfillment and satisfaction from this contribution.

We are a community organization. Members of PAWS, donors, and the general public are essential to the success of PAWS. We are committed to treating our members, donors, and the general public with dignity and respect. We strive to create cooperative relationships with other community organizations in order to further our mission.

Appendix B - Accomplishments Toward Issues Identified in the Two Prior Plans

- Increased number of spay-neuter clinics and expansion into neighboring counties.
- Assistance provided to other animal welfare organizations through dog transport and adoptions, Orphan Kitten Program alignment, etc.
- Marked increase in hospitable, welcoming atmosphere for volunteers and visitors.
- Full time Director of Development and Marketing was hired to provide guidance, oversight, and leadership for donor initiatives.
- Hiring of additional part-time salaried staff to assist with daily operations. Need for additional trained medical personnel are still desirable as funds are identified.
- PAWS has expanded its reach and is no longer perceived as State College-centric.
- External and internal spaces have been modified to accommodate needs, e.g. winter dog showing and outside exercise areas
- Additional volunteer events have been popular and are building a stronger sense of community.
- PAWS now has a Facilities Planning Committee to monitor need and evaluate recommendations for improvements prior to Board discussions.
- Mortgage has been paid off and a program to build reserves for building maintenance and capital improvements was initiated.