

Whiskers 2023 Annual Report



From the Co-presidents

Dear Friends,

We are excited to bring you the Whiskers 2023 Annual Report and share an overview of the past year.

Through the hard work of more than 100 dedicated volunteers, Whiskers touched the lives of more than 500 cats and kittens in 2023. We provided sanctuary to cats and kittens, helped them heal, nurtured and loved them, and prepared them for adoption into loving homes.

What makes Whiskers different - and what we love so much about Whiskers - is our mission of welcoming all cats and kittens. We take in older and sick cats, cats who have been injured or abused, FIV+ or FeLV+ cats, and every sort of homeless, abandoned or stray cat. Many of our rescued cats would not be considered adoptable by other shelters, but Whiskers is proud to give these cats sanctuary for as long as needed. We always are so delighted when these cats, too, eventually find their forever homes.

Last year was not without its challenges. First and foremost, we lost our beloved President, Carol Hall, who has been the standard-bearer of Whiskers' mission for so many years. Carol's dedication to saving the lives of cats and kittens was unparalleled, and she inspired and mentored so many others in the rescue world who will strive to carry on her good work. Please read more about Carol's life in the pages that follow.

The other major challenge facing Whiskers stems from a new law known as the Companion Animal Care Standards Act for Shelters and Rescues that takes effect in December 2025. To comply with the Act's new standards for animal shelters, including a limit of 12 cats per room, Whiskers needs a larger and more modern shelter facility. This is a very costly initiative, but one that is essential for Whiskers to continue its vital mission of providing sanctuary to cats and kittens in our community. Whiskers has started a Shelter Kickstart campaign to raise money, and we ask each of you to consider what you can do to help advance this important initiative. To donate, please visit www.ewhiskers.com/shelterkickstart .

We are deeply thankful for, and appreciative of, our dedicated volunteers, supporters and donors for everything they do.

With gratitude,

Gretchen Zegger & Laura Conway, Co-presidents

About Whiskers

Whiskers Animal Benevolent League is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization registered with the New York State Charities Registration Bureau. We are Registered Rescue #RR-304 with New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. We are a small, all volunteer-run, no-kill animal shelter in Albany, New York. Here at Whiskers we believe every life is meaningful and worth saving. We go the extra mile to do whatever it takes to make each cat and kitten's life we commit to, be the best it can be. Every cat and kitten we take in gets Whiskers' lifetime pledge to be there for them for their entire lives if need be.



Our mission is to provide abandoned, abused, and stray animals with a place of comfort, safety, and health and ultimately find them loving, responsible, permanent homes. We specialize in helping animals that have no advocate, those that have been abandoned on the streets or who have been abused. Secondly, we seek to reduce the population of unwanted companion animals by arranging for their spay/neutering prior to their adoption. Finally, we seek to provide information to the public on how to better provide for and enjoy their companion animals.

Meet The Board Members

Gretchen Zegger

Position: Co-President

Tenure on Board: 20+ years

Sandra Sidoti

Positions: Vice President & Secretary

Tenure on Board: 20+ years

Courtney Harrison

Position: Treasurer

Tenure on Board: New Member!

Mary Lou Baker

Position: Director of Clifton Park Adoption Center and Special Adoption Events

Tenure on Board: 15+ years

Laura Conway

Position: Co-President

Tenure on Board: 10+ years

Mary Gardy

Position: Director of Information Technology & Fundraising Chair

Tenure on Board: 20+ years

Alexis Stefanacci

Position: Director of Shelter Medicine

Tenure on Board: 10+ years

Joanne Owens

Position: Director of Shelter Facility

Tenure on Board: 5+ years

Mandi Loss

Position: Director of Foster Program

Tenure on Board: New Member!

2023 Board Departures

Carol Hall, President for over 20 year crossed the Rainbow Bridge on September 15, 2023.

Former Vice President, Carol Bessette retired from the Board after service for over 30 years! Carol continues to foster and to help handle the many calls for assistance that Whiskers receives from the public.

Barbara McConkey's resignation from her role as Treasurer hasn't diminished her commitment to her beloved friends in the Senior Room where she volunteers three shifts a week.

Lynnette Koch, a Board Member since 2015, stepped down, however, she continues her vital role as an adoption counselor, overseeing all shelter adoptions. Lynnette promotes our cats for adoption through her compelling profiles and is a valued member of our social media team.

In Memory of Carol Hall

Whiskers volunteers were saddened by the sudden, unexpected death of our long-time Whiskers President, Carol Hall, in 2023.

For more than two decades, Carol Hall was the face, heart and soul of Whiskers Animal Benevolent League. She dedicated herself to everything from feeding kittens that needed to be bottle-fed every few hours to the intensive care needed by the oldest and most fragile cats that found their way to Whiskers.

Carol came to Whiskers to heal her heart, by working with cats, after one of her own cherished cats passed away. At that time, Whiskers was based in a series of thrift shops throughout Albany. She was part of the effort to move the rescue into a house on Second St. in Albany, and later into its current building in Albany, in 2000. Over time, with Carol's efforts, Whiskers extended its reach and was able to help thousands of cats more efficiently.

While it is hard for most of us to imagine Carol as anything other than a devoted Whiskers volunteer and inspiring rescue leader, she attended Albany College of Pharmacy, worked as a programmer for New York State Police, and raised a family. She was a voracious reader and a lover of all things Gaelic. Carol was a quilter, and many times she donated her exquisite quilts to Whiskers fundraising auctions, to raise money to help save abandoned and injured cats, and kittens, and pay the ensuing bills.



Working from her home, Carol wrote fundraising letters and fielded thousands of phone calls and emails from volunteers and people in need of counsel and assistance. She came up with creative themes for big Whiskers events. A favorite of many, during a presidential election year, was the "Purresidential Election." Shelter cats were nominated for president and vice president, and then battled it out with votes from fundraiser attendees to claim the titles. The campaign was fun to follow through email, Facebook, and posters at the shelter.

The energy of Carol Hall will live on through Whiskers for many years to come. Her work will be carried on by many volunteers. Carol, we thank you for your time, your spirit, your creativity, and skills. Whiskers would not be the organization it is today, without your work.

A Note to Our Generous Donors

We would like to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude for your generous support of Whiskers. Your donations are instrumental in providing vital care and resources to our furry friends in need. It is because of YOUR kindness, we can continue to live out our mission of providing a safe haven for our cats and finding them loving forever homes.

Whiskers not only provides a roof over our cats heads, it provides them warmth from the cold, protection from the dangers of the streets, and comfort when they absolutely need it the most. It is a safe haven for them filled with toys, treats, cozy beds, and friends by their side to nestle up to for a nap! Your contributions not only help with the day-to-day operations of keeping the shelter running but also ensures that each kitty receives the attention, medical care and the love they deserve. Your philanthropy truly makes a difference in the lives of these animals, and we are incredibly grateful for your ongoing support.

Without you, none of this would be possible. We are honored to have you as a valued member of our community. Your kindness brightens the lives of so many cats and brings hope to their journey.

With Warmest Regards,
The Whiskers Board

Grants from Local Foundations

Whiskers is pleased to acknowledge two important foundations that showed generous support to Whiskers in 2023: The Seymour Fox Foundation for their \$15,000 grant for adoption preparation (animal care, vaccinations, necessary medical treatment, and spay/neuter), and River Farm America Foundation for their grant of \$10,000 to be used for general purposes.

Legacy Gifts

We express our heartfelt gratitude to Barbara Levine for her compassionate bequest of \$71,904. Such legacy gifts are a testament to the enduring impact of generosity, as they continue to save lives and support our mission long into the future.

Whiskers Financials: 2022 vs 2023

2022 Expenses: \$310,956

Shelter Program: \$131,256

Foster Programs: \$168,517

Administrative/Other: \$11,183

2022 Revenue: \$313,275

Grants & Donations: \$190,329

Adoption Fees: \$36,395

Fundraising: \$83,050

Misc.: \$3,501

2023 Expenses: \$253,550

Shelter Program: \$126,637

Foster Programs: \$110,257

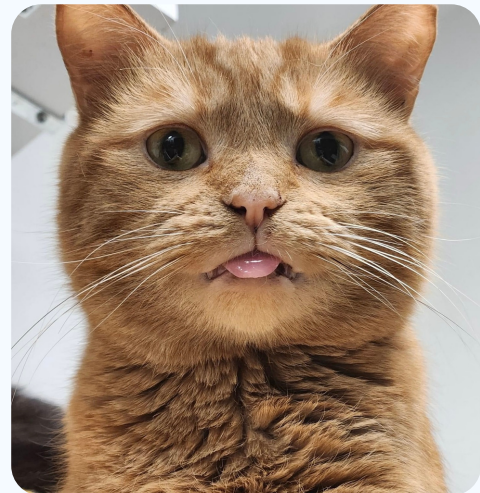
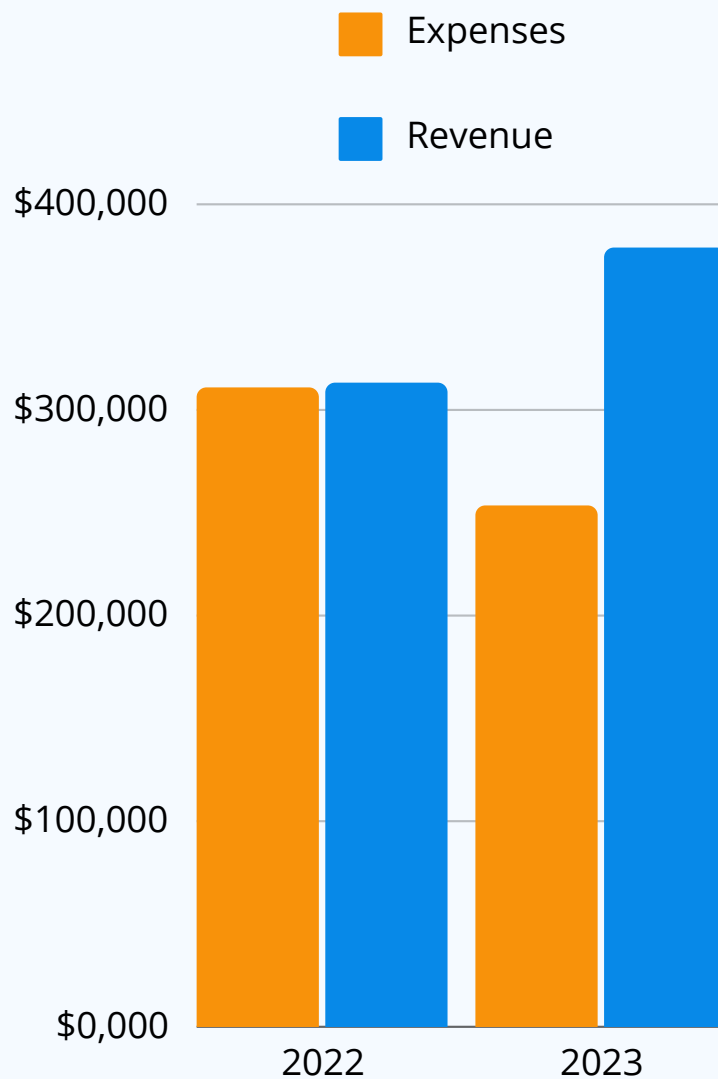
Administrative/Other: \$16,656

2023 Revenue: \$378,975

Grants & Donations: \$250,782

Adoption Fees: \$32,185

Fundraising: \$96,018



Kitty Korner

Cats In Care on Jan 1 , 2023 -- 297

Cats taken in during 2023 -- 230

Cats Adopted in 2023 -- 252



Stop into **Pet Supplies Plus** on Western Ave. in Albany! We have two modular cat condos inside the store to showcase adoptable cats and raise public awareness about Whiskers.

Cat introductions are by appointment.

Whiskers is pleased to be the in-store adoption partner for **PetSmart** in Clifton Park.

We bring a variety of cats and kittens to PetSmart's adoption center where they are on display for up to two weeks at a time.

Our adoption clinics are:
Thursday 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
Saturday 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Sunday 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Or by appointment





Whiskers *in Bloom*

SPRING GALA

Thursday, May 2nd

Starts at 6pm

**Italian American
Community Center**

257 Washington Avenue Extension,
Albany NY



Buffet Dinner

Chicken Marsala
Stuffed Sole,
Eggplant Parmesan,
Vegetarian and
Gluten Free Options



*We are proud to announce that this event takes place on **May 2nd** at the Italian American Community Center and all funds raised go to help us continue our mission, providing cats and kittens with food, medical care and love before being adopted.*

For more information please visit <https://ewhiskers.com/galatickets2024>

