



2025 Annual Report



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From the Co-Presidents

Dear Friends of Whiskers,

2025 will be remembered as the year Whiskers took a long-held vision and made it real. It was a transformative year – one in which we took our biggest step forward in more than four decades of service to the cats of our community.

In May 2025, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of donors to our Shelter Kickstart campaign, Whiskers purchased a building on Albany Shaker Road in Latham—a 13,218-square-foot facility on 1.46 acres that will become our future home. This milestone was years in the making, and it represents not just a new address, but a new chapter in our mission to provide the highest quality of care for the cats entrusted to us.

The purchase of our new building was driven in part by the New York State Companion Animal Care Standards Act, which took effect on December 15, 2025. This legislation introduces new requirements for shelters statewide, including limits on the number of cats housed together and minimum space per cat. While our current building has served us for more than 25 years, it cannot meet these evolving standards. Our new facility, once renovated, will not only comply with the law but will set a new benchmark for cat care in our region.

The funds raised through our Shelter Kickstart campaign made this possible—covering the down payment, closing costs, architectural and engineering work, and even a new roof. We also secured a two-year lease with an existing tenant, and that rental income exceeds our mortgage payment—an important step toward long-term financial stability.

Meanwhile, our lifesaving work never slowed. In 2025, 407 cats entered our care, joining the 294 already with us, and 354 were placed into loving homes. Of those, 78 kittens were born in Whiskers' foster homes, highlighting the essential role foster families play in giving pregnant cats a safe place to deliver and raise their kittens.

Now, as the Building Hope Capital Campaign gains momentum, we are focused on the next phase: transforming this building into the shelter our cats deserve. With renovation estimated at more than \$2 million, every gift brings us closer to making this vision a reality. Not long ago, we had only a dream. Now, we have the building. Together, we will build the future.

None of this would be possible without you—our volunteers, donors, and supporters. Your compassion and commitment have sustained Whiskers for more than 43 years.

Thank you for building this future with us. Thank you for building hope.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Gretchen Zegger & Laura Conway
Co-Presidents, Whiskers Animal Benevolent League

Organization and Leadership

About Whiskers

Whiskers Animal Benevolent League is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and Registered Rescue #RR-304 with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. Founded in 1982 by Joan Duer, we are now in our 44th year of providing sanctuary and hope for abandoned, abused, and stray cats in the Capital Region.

Whiskers operates a no-kill, free-roaming cat shelter managed entirely by dedicated volunteers with no paid staff. This model ensures that every dollar donated goes directly toward supporting the cats in our care and advancing our mission.

Whiskers' work is made possible not only through our shelter, but also through a compassionate network of foster caregivers. Our foster program provides temporary homes for cats and kittens who need extra support—whether they are too young for adoption, recovering from illness or injury, or adjusting from difficult circumstances. Foster homes allow these cats to receive individualized care and socialization in a quieter, more nurturing environment.

This foster network is a vital part of our mission. By opening their homes, our volunteers help expand our capacity beyond the shelter walls, providing a safe space for cats to grow, heal, and prepare for their forever families. Their commitment reflects the heart of Whiskers: a community-driven effort to ensure every cat has the chance to thrive.



Our Mission

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. We seek to reduce the population of unwanted companion animals by arranging for their spaying and neutering prior to adoption, and to provide information to the public on how to better provide for and enjoy their companion animals.

Board of Directors

Name	Position
Laura Conway	Co-President
Gretchen Zegger	Co-President
Sandra Sidoti	Vice President & Secretary
Courtney Harrison	Treasurer (Jan-Jul)
Carrie Jackson	Treasurer (Aug-Dec)
Mary Lou Baker	Director of PetSmart Centers & Special Adoption Events
Mary Gardy	Director of Information Technology & Fundraising Chair
Mandi Loss	Director of Foster Program
Joanne Owens	Director of Shelter Facility
Alexis Stefanacci	Director of Shelter Medicine

Mission Support Leads

Name	Position
Judy LeComb	Volunteer Co-Coordinator
Keith Martens	Volunteer Co-Coordinator
Colleen Forlani	Vet Run Coordinator
Ashlee Garland	Whiskers Newsletter
Jennifer Kenna	Clifton Park PetSmart Coordinator
Lynnette Koch	Shelter Adoption Counselor/Communications
Mary Beth McCarthy	Medical Transportation
Maria Delorenzo	Field Rescue Specialist
Lisa Wilson	East Greenbush PetSmart Coordinator

Building Hope — Whiskers' New Shelter

For more than a quarter century, Whiskers has called a modest row house in Albany home. That building has been a place of hope and healing for thousands of cats. But with the passage of the New York State Companion Animal Care Standards Act in 2025, limiting occupancy to no more than 12 cats per room and a minimum of 18 square feet per cat, our beloved shelter would no longer be able to meet our needs.

In September 2023, Whiskers launched the Shelter Kickstart initiative to raise funds for a new home. By the end of 2024, the campaign had raised \$376,487. An additional \$147,000 poured in during the first quarter of 2025, bringing the total to over \$500,000. With that incredible foundation of support, Whiskers purchased property on Albany Shaker Road in Latham for \$749,000.

Our new home is a 13,218-square-foot building on 1.46 acres in Latham's Airport Business Area, just 2.8 miles from I-87 Exit 6. Built in the 1980s, the property features a two-story office wing and a one-story medical wing, with 44 parking spaces plus overflow parking in the rear.



The one-story wing is currently occupied by an existing medical tenant under a two-year lease. This was a strategic decision: the rental income exceeds our mortgage payment, providing financial stability while we prepare for renovation. The tenant also contributes toward common building expenses.

The Renovation Vision

The architectural plans, designed by LEAP Architecture with MEP engineering by Fusion Systems Engineering and structural engineering by Milovia Design, call for a complete gut renovation of the two-story wing. Whiskers engaged Barbara Carr as a shelter design consultant through the NYS Animal Protection Federation. Barbara served as Executive Director of the Erie County SPCA for 23 years and oversaw construction of their 52,000-square-foot shelter. Her expertise has been invaluable in ensuring our facility will be fully compliant with new state regulations and reflect best practices in modern shelter design. The plans call for transforming 9,566 square feet into purpose-built, state-of-the-art cat shelter space with materials and designs optimized for feline health and well-being, including:

- Bright Atrium & Lobby: A welcoming entrance with reception area, retail displays, donor recognition plaques, and an interactive information kiosk.
- Cat Suites: Free-roaming living spaces on two floors for general and special-needs cats, including seniors and FIV/FelV-positive cats, grouped by compatibility and care needs. Equipped with vinyl cat trees, cubbies, scratching posts, window perches, flat-screen TVs, and air purifiers.
- Complete Medical Suite: Dedicated surgery room, laboratory, quarantine area, and intake room—giving every cat the best chance for a healthy life.
- Enclosed Catos: Outdoor spaces where cats can safely enjoy fresh air, sunlight, and enrichment.
- Community & Education Center: A multi-purpose room with event space and seating for fundraisers, classes, and community outreach.
- Wet Pantries: Food preparation areas with food storage, supplies, sinks, and service carts.
- Volunteer Lounge: A space where volunteers can recharge and connect.
- Visiting & Adoption Rooms: Quiet spaces where potential adopters can meet cats.
- Laundry & Janitorial: Professional-grade facilities including a mixing station for shelter disinfectant.
- Dumbwaiter Lift: Connecting both floors for ease of moving food, litter, and other heavy items.
- New and Upgraded Systems: Complete replacement of HVAC and all windows—designed specifically for healthy air quality and modern shelter operations. Upgrades to electrical and plumbing systems.



The Building Hope Capital Campaign

Building Hope is the successor to Shelter Kickstart—and the next chapter in securing Whiskers' future. Before, we just had the dream. Now, we have the building. With contractor estimates coming in at over \$2 million for the renovation, we need our community's support more than ever to bring this vision to life. To date, Building Hope has raised approximately \$240,000.



Your gift will directly fund the transformation of the property into a state-of-the-art cat shelter. Naming opportunities are available for donors who wish to honor a loved one, a cherished pet, or their own commitment to animal welfare.



Rescue Spotlight – Stories of Hope

Every cat who comes through our doors has a story. Some arrive frightened and alone. Others are sick or injured. Some are simply looking for a second chance. These are some of the cats Whiskers rescued in 2025 whose journeys remind us why this work matters.

Sweet Pea – A Tiny Fighter’s Big Comeback

When Sweet Pea appeared on a family's doorstep in early April, she was barely hanging on—weighing just 3½ pounds, covered in ticks, and so frail that volunteers initially thought she was a kitten. In reality, Sweet Pea was about a year old and had been on her own for far too long, barely able to stand. She spent days in emergency care fighting a dangerously high fever caused by anaplasmosis, a serious tick-borne disease, along with severe anemia that required a life-saving plasma transfusion. Bloodwork confirmed the diagnoses, and her condition was so dire that her survival was uncertain.

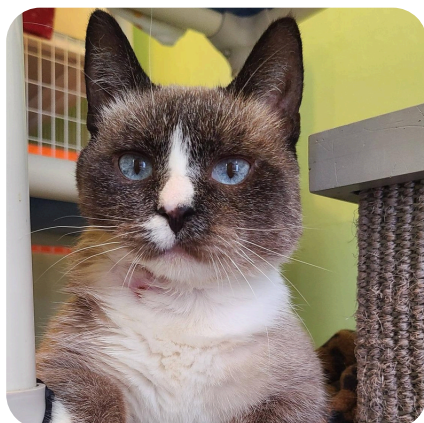


Sweet Pea refused to give up—and Whiskers refused to give up on her. With intensive treatment, the plasma transfusion, close monitoring, and months of medication and follow-up care,

Sweet Pea slowly turned the corner—her fever broke, and her appetite and health returned. Today, she is thriving in her forever home alongside two other Whiskers kitties—playful, full of love, and a testament to the power of compassion, expert veterinary care, and the incredible will to live.

Diamond Jack – A Diagnosis is Not a Deadline

Diamond Jack, a beautiful blue-eyed Snowshoe, arrived at Whiskers positive for feline leukemia and suffering from severe burns covering his chin, neck, and chest. These injuries required extensive medical treatment and careful wound management under veterinary supervision. While many shelters might have chosen euthanasia for an FeLV-positive cat with such significant



medical needs, at Whiskers, we know that an FeLV diagnosis is not a death sentence. Today, only a slight reminder of his injury remains visible on his neck.

Diamond Jack is one of the sweetest cats at Whiskers’ shelter—a soft, gentle soul who thrives on calm, patient interactions and leans into affection once he feels safe. Now about three years old, he is waiting for a forever home with another FeLV-positive companion and a person who values quiet connection and the reward of building trust with a sensitive, loving cat.

Suki - Hope for Cats with Special Needs

Suki came to Whiskers after surviving severe trauma to her pelvis and spine that left her permanently disabled with limited use of her back legs and ongoing incontinence. Her injuries mean she will never walk normally, but Whiskers is committed to giving her the best possible quality of life.

She was fitted with a custom mobility cart designed to support her back legs and prevent further injury, and her living space has been carefully adapted with pee pads and regular hands-on care to keep her clean and comfortable. While Suki is still learning to use her cart, she hasn't let anything slow down her love for life. Suki loves to play with toys and look out the window at the birds. Her story reminds everyone who meets her that healing doesn't always look the same—but it is no less extraordinary.



Angel - Finding Comfort in her Golden Years

Angel's world shattered when her beloved owner passed away, leaving her alone in the only home she had ever known. For months, family members who were unwilling to take her in left food at the empty house, abandoning the 15-year-old cat to grieve in isolation.

When Whiskers volunteers were alerted to her situation and arrived to help, they found Angel cowering in a closet with flies swarming around her in the filthy, neglected home. She was so withdrawn and traumatized that they initially feared she might be blind. A veterinary examination revealed she wasn't blind at all, but rather frozen with fear, and further testing showed that Angel is diabetic.

After spending nearly 15 years in one home without ever receiving veterinary care, Angel is now in an experienced foster home where she receives the consistent, knowledgeable care she needs. Today she is bright, healthy, and feels safe again.

Angel



Before



After

Bellagio - From Street Cat to Safe

Bellagio's story is one of resilience, healing, and a whole lot of attitude. This stunning flame point Siamese came to Whiskers after a kind Albany resident reached out about an injured cat in her backyard. One of our volunteers responded and safely trapped him, quickly realizing just how badly he needed help.

Bellagio arrived with severe injuries—a badly damaged tail and a deep, open wound on his front leg. His tail was amputated shortly after rescue, but his recovery was anything but



straightforward. Over the following weeks, he required multiple procedures. His tail incision had setbacks and needed to be re-closed more than once, and his leg wound—once down to exposed tissue—needed careful management before it could finally be sutured closed.

Now thriving in foster care, Bellagio is playful, energetic, and full of personality, with a bit of a tough-guy edge. With his adorable bobtail and big presence, he's ready for a home that understands him and will give him the patience and love he deserves.

Otis - Leaving the Pain Behind

On Christmas Eve, a good Samaritan who had been feeding Otis for months noticed something was seriously wrong and reached out to Whiskers for help. What initially appeared to be an injury turned out to be a very large, infected mass on his hind paw that had caused severe bone damage—Otis had likely been living in excruciating pain for more than six months. Testing, X-rays, and a biopsy revealed extensive inflammation and bone destruction, and while cancer could not be fully ruled out, his clear chest X-rays showed no signs of metastasis, giving Whiskers hope to move forward.



Otis underwent a right hind leg amputation and came through surgery like a champ. Despite everything he has endured at such a young age, Otis continues to show his gentle nature in his foster home—eating well, offering slow blinks, and quietly building trust as he recovers and prepares for his next chapter.

Shoutout to Our Volunteers

At Whiskers, volunteers aren't just helpers—they are the heartbeat of our shelter. As an organization with no paid staff, everything we accomplish is because someone chose to show up, roll up their sleeves, and give their time and love to the cats who need it most. From the earliest morning feeding to the last evening meds, our volunteers are there. They clean litter boxes and wash food bowls, administer medications, and comfort cats recovering from surgery. They fold laundry, scrub floors, organize supplies, staff adoption events, answer emails, manage social media, plan fundraisers, and keep our operations running smoothly. They do it all—not for recognition or reward, but because they believe in Whiskers' mission and in the cats who depend on us.

In 2025, our volunteers continued their tireless daily work at the shelter while also sharing in the excitement of our new building project.

thank you

Volunteer Open House – June 1, 2025

On June 1, Whiskers hosted a special Volunteer Open House at the new facility. The turnout was incredible! Volunteers toured the "before" version of the space, enjoyed refreshments, and imagined what's ahead. Many signed up to help with building projects, and a suggestion box collected ideas for making the new shelter even better for our cats. The energy and enthusiasm in the room was a powerful reminder that this community is ready to build something extraordinary together.



Thanks to Our Supporters

Whiskers' lifesaving work is made possible by the generosity of our donors, foundation partners, and community supporters. Every gift—large or small—directly impacts the lives of the cats in our care. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has invested in our mission.

Foundations & Grants

In 2025 we were honored to receive the support of foundations whose generosity fuels our programs and makes our vision for the future possible. We extend special gratitude to:

- Buddy Tiger Rescue Fund
- Edwin and Eveline Ward-Sells Foundation
- Justice Family Foundation
- McCree Family Fund
- Moonflower Fund
- PetSmart Charities
- River Farm America Foundation
- Seymour Fox Memorial Foundation

To Our Generous Donors

In 2025, your donations helped us care for over 700 cats—funding shelter operations, adoption preparation, emergency veterinary care, life-saving surgeries, months of medication, and custom mobility equipment for cats who had nowhere else to turn. Your generosity also helped us achieve something historic: the purchase of a building that will become our new shelter. Whether you contributed to the Building Hope Campaign, gave through our website, supported a fundraiser, sponsored a cat, honored a loved one with a memorial gift, included Whiskers in your estate plans, or quietly gave without wanting recognition—please know that your gift mattered. Every dollar. Every time.

We never give up on a cat—and that is only possible because you never give up on us. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for building hope alongside us.

Community Partners

Our community partners play a vital role in extending Whiskers' reach and supporting our cats through adoptions, events, discounts, and donations. We are grateful for the partnership of:

- Capitaland Subaru
- Capital District Regional Market
- Curtis Lumber
- Hannaford Clynk Program
- Mohawk Honda
- PetSupplies Plus
- PetSmart
- Steve Caporizzo's Pet Connection
- Target

2025 By the Numbers

Intake & Outcomes

2025

January through December

Abandoned/Stray	
Up to 5 Months	128
Adult	129
Age Unknown	7
Total Abandoned/Stray	264

Adoptions	
Up to 5 Months	156
Adult	196
Age Unknown	2
Total Adoptions	354

Owner Surrendered/Died	
Up to 5 Months	13
Adult	37
Age Unknown	1
Total Owner Surrendered/Died	51

Returned to Owner	
Up to 5 Months	0
Adult	0
Age Unknown	0
Total Returned to Owner	0

Incoming Transfers	
Up to 5 Months	1
Adult	12
Age Unknown	1
Total Incoming Transfers	14

Died in Care	
Up to 5 Months	0
Adult	2
Age Unknown	2
Total Died in Care	4

Born in Whiskers Care	
Up to 5 Months	78
Adult	0
Age Unknown	0
Total Born in Whiskers Care	78

Euthanized	
Up to 5 Months	2
Adult	14
Age Unknown	3
Total Euthanized	19

Revenue

Category	Amount
Donations (General & Restricted)	\$509,199
Fundraisers & Special Events	\$144,416
Adoption Fees	\$47,269
Grants, Foundations & Estates	\$52,161
Investment Income	\$16,062
Rental Income (Albany Shaker Rd)	\$16,500
Other Revenue	\$4,374
TOTAL REVENUE	\$789,981

Expenditures

Category	Amount
Shelter Program (Vet, Meds, Food, Supplies, Utilities)	\$182,542
Foster Program	\$172,531
Fundraising Expenses	\$36,991
Administrative & General	\$20,368
Other Expenditures	\$5,676
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	\$418,108
Capital Investment (Albany Shaker Rd)	\$340,404
New Shelter - Architecture, Engineering, Taxes, Operations	\$153,199
Capital Subtotal	\$493,603
TOTAL EXPENDITURES (incl. Capital)	\$911,711

Net Revenue (after Capital Investment): **-\$121,730**

This figure reflects Whiskers' investment in the organization's future. Whiskers demonstrated exceptional financial health in 2025 with revenue exceeding operating expenses by \$371,873. This strong operating surplus was applied directly to the capital investment in 951 Albany Shaker Road, which includes the purchase of the building, a new roof, architectural design, engineering, property taxes, and fees. Importantly, rental income from the building's tenant offsets the mortgage. Whiskers' core programs remained strong and well-funded throughout 2025, proving that the organization can simultaneously serve cats in need today while investing in the infrastructure to serve many more tomorrow.

Save the Date!

Includes:
Hors d'oeuvres
Buffet
Live Auction
Raffles
Door Prizes
50/50
Complimentary Drink
Caricatures by Phil Singer
and More!

SPONSOR

TICKETS

2026 THE SOUND OF MEWSIC Gala

Thursday, May 7, 2026, 5:00 PM
Italian American Community Center
257 Washington Ave. Ext.
Albany, NY 12205

The Sound of Mewsic – Whiskers 2026 Gala

"Raindrops on Roses and Whiskers Saves Kittens"

Date: Thursday, May 7, 2026, 5:00 PM

Venue: Italian American Community Center

Address: 257 Washington Ave. Ext., Albany, NY 12205

Guest Speaker: Pet Connection's own Steve Caporizzo

*Hors d'oeuvres • Buffet • Live Auction • Raffles • Door Prizes • 50/50 • Complimentary Drink •
Caricatures by Phil Singer • and More!*

For tickets and sponsorship opportunities, visit ewhiskers.com/2026gala

WHISKERS

Animal Benevolent League

Making a Difference. One Life at a Time.

Adoption Centers

PetSmart - Clifton Park

Thursday 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Saturday 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Sunday 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

PetSmart - East Greenbush

Mon, Wed & Fri 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Saturday 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Sunday 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

How You Can Help

DONATE to Building Hope: ewhiskers.com/building-hope

ADOPT a cat and change a life

FOSTER a cat in need

VOLUNTEER your time and talents

Whiskers Animal Benevolent League

PO Box 11190, Albany, NY 12211

(518) 458-CATS (2287)

www.ewhiskers.com

Whiskers Animal Benevolent League is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.