

Annual Impact Report



2025



Happy Tails

Penélope



Penélope (fka Rose) came to us from a commercial breeding facility in Lancaster County along with her siblings after not being able to be sold due to being born with microphthalmia (small/underdeveloped eyes).

This condition is caused by the poor and irresponsible breeding practices continually conducted in puppy mills. Every puppy in Penélope's litter had varying degrees of eye issues. This shows how little care these breeders put into both the long-term and short-term health of the dogs they are producing. At the end of the day, commercial breeding is all about money, and nothing more.

Penélope's forever mom had seen her while coming to meet another dog at our rescue, and it was truly love at first sight. We shared why Penélope ended up in our care, and after a discussion about the potential issues associated with this eye condition, Penélope's mom didn't hesitate to move forward with adoption. She had fallen in love with her personality and knew she was the dog for her! Penélope now spends her days greeting clients at her mom's office, working as a therapy dog, and being loved endlessly!



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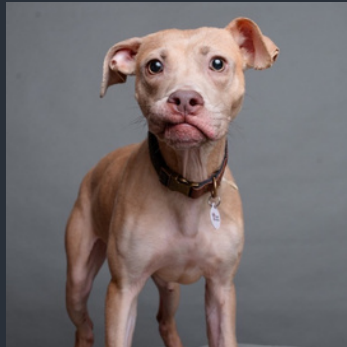
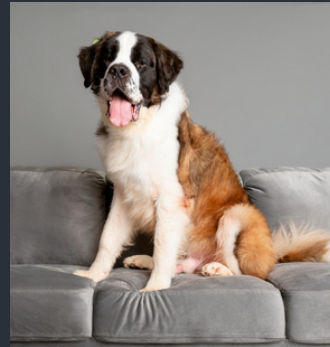
Supporters

Angel's Retreat:

a nonprofit, volunteer-run rescue dedicated to dogs

We focus our efforts on saving dogs who need us the most and are often overlooked due to their emotional or physical health. We give them the care and love they desperately need so they can find their forever homes or, if necessary, allow them to spend their remaining days at our retreat.

We began as a tiny rescue exclusively for hospice and senior dogs, but have grown into a retreat for dogs of all walks of life who need help. We are primarily foster-based to support our goal of helping dogs more easily recover from their pasts in a loving home environment rather than a shelter.

Parvo	Mill Mama	Hospice
		
Special Needs	Medical	Senior
		

Every dog deserves a place to feel safe

Our mission is to promote responsible ownership of companion animals, act as a resource to homeless animals and our rescue partners, encourage adoption, and provide hospice care for senior and special needs dogs.



Happy Tails

Wiley



Wiley is one very special boy who originally came to us as a stray transferred from another shelter with an unknown history. When he arrived, he was severely emaciated and missing nearly all of his fur; every bone in his body was visible and he was covered in wounds, both old and new.

One of our longtime fosters, who also happens to be a vet tech, welcomed Wiley into her home to help him gain weight, heal his skin, and give his coat time to grow back. Luckily for Wiley, his fur was slow to grow...because during that time, his foster family fell completely in love and Wiley's foster family became his forever family!

These days, this handsome guy spends his time trying on outfits, being styled by his mom, rocking the coolest collars around, and soaking up all the love and happiness he deserves. We may never know what his past looked like, but we do know his future is filled with nothing but joy.



Love me for who I am, not what I am!



Love me for who I am, not what I am, is quite a simple concept at its core. Don't we all want to be loved and judged only for our personality and what we have to offer the world, instead of what we look like or what people perceive when they see us?

The philosophy of love me for who I am, not what I am, is not only important for a successful life-long adoption, but isn't it also what we all deserve?

One of the biggest challenges our Adoption Team routinely faces is people who want to select a dog based on appearance rather than personality. We are passionate about finding adopters who want to adopt a dog not because of the way they look, but because of their silly or sweet personality, or the way they might play with their other dogs, or be able to go on hikes with them on the weekends, or be a part of their weekly gatherings with friends.



Happy Tails

Gus

Gus (fka McKee) is a very handsome boy who came to us from a commercial breeding facility in Lancaster County after being given up for not being sold and quickly outgrowing the cage he was living in.



This particular puppy mill has consistently been on the Humane World for Animals' "Horrible 100" list of the worst puppy mills in the country for multiple years in a row. Despite this, they legally run a massive breeding operation that used to include "doodles", goldens, and huskies, but recently has become exclusively Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs (GSMD). We always have and continue to report this breeder to the state but sadly, until legislation changes there is nothing we can do other than help the dogs they are willing to give up, like Gus.

Gus' forever mom was ready to add a new member to her family, and applied for one of our older available swissies, however, that particular dog was not a good match for her lifestyle. Instead, we suggested a better match: Gus! After she was given the opportunity to speak to his foster and learn more about his individual personality, she knew that she had found the dog she had been looking for. Gus has left behind the rural farm life that he was born into, and now is a big city boy living in Washington, DC!



Letter from our Founder



"I found me when I was rescued by dogs." – Anonymous

2025 was a hard year for our animals in Pennsylvania. Intake increased 4.2% across the state and euthanasia rates increased 13.2% when compared to 2024. Bottom line: in 2025, intakes increased and adoptions decreased, meaning our animals faced riskier outcomes and had longer stays in shelters.

While Angel's Retreat did feel the same pressure with more animals than homes available, we were able to serve our community and grow our capabilities.

Our foster program grew 35% compared to the prior year and our volunteer program grew 75%. While animals stayed with us longer, they got better care and more attention.

Angel's Retreat continues to be the primary non-profit facility for treating parvo dogs who enter the shelter system. Our medical capabilities grow each year and we are able to help the ones in most desperate need.

While the quantity of the animals we treat may have declined, the quality of care is unmatched. Angel's Retreat is lucky to be partnered with Brandywine Valley Veterinary Hospital in Coatesville, PA. The excellent doctors there go above and beyond every day. Our dogs are lucky to also benefit from the generosity of Dr. Scott Roberts and Dr. Caroline Monk at Blue Pearl Malvern. And, both Pinnacle and Metropolitan Veterinary Associates provide lifesaving emergency care whenever it is needed.

While it is easy to find the negatives in animal welfare, it is so important to recognize the wins. Angel's Retreat would not be here without the devotion of our volunteers, fosters, donors and adopters. Angel's Retreat is defined by our vets who make house calls and stay late to treat emergencies, the volunteers who drop everything and run to help an animal in need, and the donors who provide the resources to make sure we never have to say no.

Many thanks to all who are a part of the AR Family! Here's to more lives in 2026!

Melissa Heisey, Founder

Happy Tails

Milo



Milo (fka Zudo) came to us, along with his entire litter, at just 8 weeks old after being dumped at a high-kill shelter in North Philadelphia. Milo and his siblings had all contracted the deadly puppy disease, Parvovirus.

These puppies likely came from a backyard breeder who didn't understand what it means to be responsible and to protect the health of the mother and her puppies. Sadly, the breeder hesitated to surrender them until they were already very sick. Parvo treatment is most effective when started early, and one of the litter didn't survive—but we gave everything we had to save the rest. The first two weeks were touch-and-go, with our dedicated team spending countless sleepless nights providing supportive care and love. Thanks to their efforts, the puppies recovered and were given back their lives.

Huskies can be a challenging breed due to their intelligence and high energy, and puppies recovering from parvo are especially in need of foster homes where they can catch up on life, build confidence, receive proper socialization, and begin training. In Milo's case, his wonderful foster parents, along with their older husky, Juneau, fell in love with him, and he found his forever home where he gets all the love, walks, and adventure he needs!



Finances

REVENUE

Adoption Fees	\$111,035
Donations	\$290,779
Grants	\$29,194

<u>Total Funding</u>	\$431,728
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EXPENSES

Medical Care	\$56,941
Surgery Costs	\$41,482
Emergency Room Costs	\$35,615
Pharmaceuticals	\$11,368
Marketing	\$30,057
Dog Supplies	\$22,295
Improvements	\$66,569



Funding summary

\$111,035

Adoption Fees

\$290,779

Private Donations

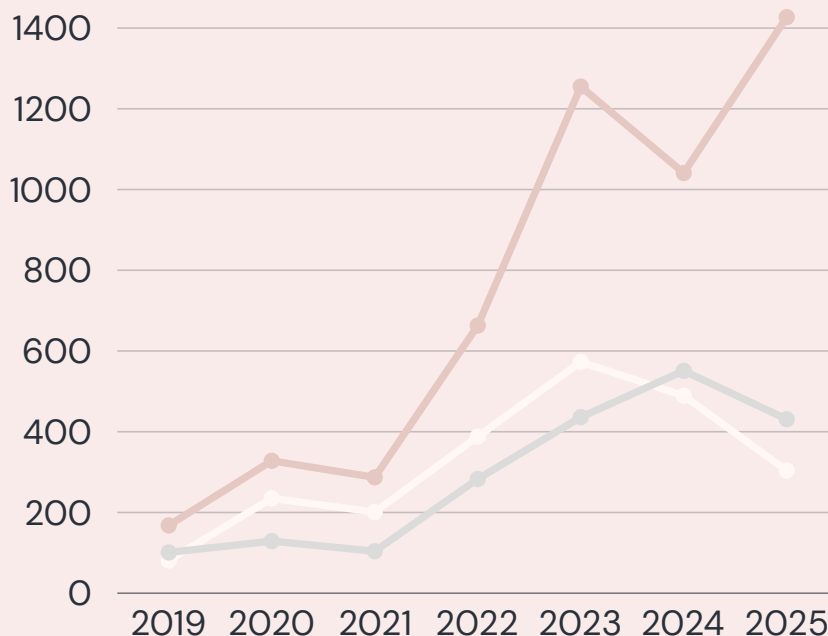
\$29,194

Grants

Growth



Our goal is always to help as many dogs as possible. We adopt out dogs who will make wonderful and loving family members despite their background. The Angel's Retreat Adoption Team works hard to ensure the best matches for both our families and our dogs.



FY 2025

\$431k

Funding raised to
serve homeless
animals

304

Number of
animals adopted

1,427

Number of
individual financial
supporters

Funding summary

\$111,035

Adoption Fees

\$290,779

Private Donations

\$29,194

Grants

"A dog is not a thing.
A thing is replaceable.
A dog is not. A thing
is disposable. A dog
is not. A thing doesn't
have a heart. A dog's
heart is bigger than
any 'thing' you can
ever own."

-Elizabeth Parker

364

Lives Saved

96

Commercial Breeding
Dogs Rescued

145

ACCT Dogs Rescued



Projects

Details

Outcome

Mill Mamas

Provide medical care
and rehabilitation for
breeder dogs

- 67 mill mommas saved
- 29 males and unsold puppies saved

ACCTs of Love

Give high-risk dogs a
chance at life

- 145 shelter dogs saved from ACCT Philly
- 65 parvo-positive dogs treated

Community Engagement

Deliver low cost
vaccines, microchips,
and exams to
community pets

- 494 dogs and cats served
- 12 clinics held

Happy Tails

Roberts Family

Clover (fka Everglades) was a puppy that could not be sold, due to her not having a traditional "doodle" look, and Cheddar and Biscuit (fka Tracy and Stacy) were retired mill mamas.



"Clover joined our home last summer and has brought our home an unmeasurable amount of joy. She became fast friends with our golden retriever, Charlie, who we sadly lost to cancer. We knew that in honor of his memory we wanted to open our home to older dogs who need a loving family. Imagine our joy when we saw Biscuit and Cheddar on the Angel's Retreat website. We knew immediately that they would complete our family. Since adopting Biscuit and Cheddar in June, they have become inseparable with Clover and we have gone on many adventures- including frequent hikes at Crum Creek and visits to the Delaware seashore!

Biscuit, Cheddar, and Clover love to be with us all the time, and we take them everywhere we can! They love to ride in the car which makes adventure easy. And they are very patient and tolerant of new situations, such as being around a power wheelchair (our older daughter is in a wheelchair). They truly complete us as a family! Thank you, Angel's Retreat, for making it possible for Clover, Biscuit, and Cheddar to complete our family and bring so much joy to our lives." -Carolyn



2026 goals & intentions



Goal	Purpose	Planning
Ensure Animal Welfare	Provide an enriching and comfortable space to animals waiting for their homes	• Provide safe housing, nutrition, and medical care • Minimize stress, fear, and disease • Support both physical and behavioral health
Parvo Treatment	Offer low-cost Parvo treatment options to save lives	• Continue to act as the only resource for parvo-positive shelter dogs in our area • Act as a leader in Canine Parvovirus research and influence the greater animal welfare movement
Community Engagement	Slow the spread of deadly viruses and keep dogs out of shelters	• Hold monthly low cost vet clinics • Be a resource for ACCT Philly, the only open admission shelter in our region

Happy Tails

EZ



EZ (fka Squirt) originally came from a commercial breeding facility in Lancaster county, but was then given up by his family at six months of age due to being too energetic.

There are a lot of dogs, especially dogs that are bred for jobs such as herding and hunting, that need lifelong active families in order to live a fulfilled life. This is one of the many tasks that we take very seriously when matching potential adopters to dogs. Luckily, we had an applicant who had been waiting to adopt a dog that could keep up with his highly active lifestyle. We asked him to meet EZ and the rest was history!

EZ is now an avid runner joining his dad on his daily runs and a skilled outdoorsman getting to go on weekly camping, hunting, kayaking, and fishing trips. He lives a life full of daily time running in the woods, swimming in water, and getting to do what he loves to do. EZ and his dad are best buddies and update us regularly on all their adventures. His dad describes him as the perfect gentleman, and cannot believe someone else gave up such a sweet and easy going dog. This shows the importance of matching lifestyles in adoptions and we are now confident we found a perfect match that will last a lifetime!



Low Cost ParvoTreatment

Canine Parvovirus (CPV) is one of the deadliest and most contagious diseases affecting unvaccinated dogs. Approximately 300,000 dogs are diagnosed with CPV in the United States each year. Left untreated, 90% of these dogs will die a slow and painful death.

In 2024, Angel's Retreat expanded our parvo isolation area in order to be able to treat more dogs. This past year 56 dogs got the lifesaving care they required.



Every parvo positive or exposed dog receives the lifesaving canine parvovirus monoclonal antibody upon intake.

In addition to providing lifesaving care for those in need, Angel's Retreat is proud to be providing data as our Director, Melissa Heisey, leads research in conjunction with PennVet. This research is providing guidance to other shelters who currently treat or would like to begin treating CPV dogs by analyzing the cost/benefit analysis of treatment options in the low-cost space.

*Much gratitude to the McKee Foundation
for funding this program.*

Education

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
— Nelson Mandela

Our goal is not only to save lives today, but to help build a world where fewer lives need saving tomorrow.

Through our social media platform and adoption counseling process, we've worked to spread education as a central component of our work.

Informed communities are powerful and are the foundation of a future where fewer animals enter the rescue system in the first place.

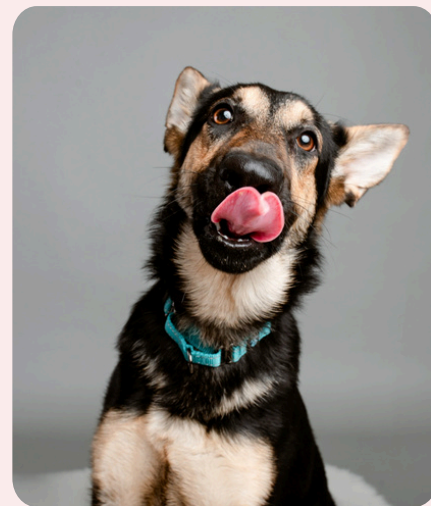


<i>Issue</i>	<i>Education</i>
Parvo cases rising	Vaccination & prevention
Breed stereotypes in adopters	Myth vs. fact education
Early post-adoption returns	Decompression guidance
Puppy mill surrender requests	Puppy mill awareness & laws
Poor veterinary care	Preventative care education
Lifestyle mismatch surrenders	Breed & lifestyle fit

Follow us on Social Media: Angel's Retreat on Facebook and @angelsretreatpa on Instagram

ACCT Partnership

ACCT Philly is the only open-intake shelter serving the entire city of Philadelphia. That means they are legally required to take in every single dog that comes through their doors — 20,000 in 2025.



We are honored to partner with ACCT to help save as many lives as possible — saving Parvo puppies, supporting critical medical cases, and providing senior dogs a safe place to live out their days.

145 Total Dogs Pulled in 2025

65

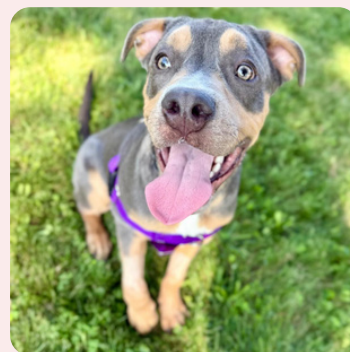
Parvo Puppies
Treated

13

Senior/
Hospice Dog

20

Medical Cases
Treated



We truly believe that rescue work is best accomplished when we support one another — and anyone fighting this never-ending battle for the dogs who need us most.

Get Involved & save lives



Foster



Fostering saves lives! We rely on foster parents so we can rescue more dogs. Fostering provides a safe and healthy environment for animals who need to heal, grow, or get some extra love while waiting for their permanent home.

Volunteer



Angel's Retreat is 100% volunteer run. This organization wouldn't exist without the generosity, dedication and commitment of others. We are a family and hope you'll consider joining us to help continue this important work.

Donate



Our donors support our dogs in so many ways: life-altering medical care, preventative wellness care, food, shelter, and training. We are so thankful for all they have contributed. Lives would be lost without their generosity.

Adopt



2.7 million animals are euthanized every year in the United States. Adopting a dog literally saves a life!

Sponsor



Our sponsors provide venues for our adoption and fundraising events, donate fundraising items, and promote our mission.

Shop



Looking for a unique and meaningful gift that helps save lives? Want to be the envy of your fashionable friends? Shop our online store!

We'd like to thank all our donors for their *generous support*

Community & Corporate Sponsors

BarkHop Studio
Boates Brothers General Contracting
Brandywine Ace Hardware
Brandywine Festival of the Arts
Brandywine Valley Veterinary Hospital
Chester County Community Foundation
Elanco Pharmaceuticals
Ellie Diagnostics
FreshPet
Gerhard's Appliances
Greater Good Charities
Jen's Grooming
Landhope Farms
Levante Brewing Company
Metropolitan Veterinary Associates
Morgan Stanley
NIC + ZOE
Northbrook MarketPlace
Oxford Feed & Lumber
PetSmart
Pickering Valley Feed and Farm
Playa Bowls
Providence Animal Center
Target
The Kitchen Workshop

Angel's Heroes Club

Bartholomeo, Annmarie
Bell, Colleen
Calbick, Emilie
Calloway, Rene
Caplan, Ben
Cone, Shawn
Cote, Colette
D'Angelo-Smith, Rosemarie
Hansen, Donna
Howard, Harry
Hug, Brigitte
Hunter, Melissa
Kane, Kathy
Keller, Joyce
Kuhn, Karen
LeBolt, Jodi
McGuire, Lisa
McKee, Deborah & Michael
McNeil, Jennifer
Munir, Asma
O'Keefe, Shannon
Patel, Bhamini
Pilgrim, Betsy
Polizzi, Angie
Reese, Lisa
Rogers, Sherry
Sheron, Amanda
Sherwood, Patricia
Voss, Kelly

