



2020 ANNUAL REPORT



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# FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The year 2020 will go down in the books as a year of uncertainty, loss, and heartache, but it has also been a turning point in so many ways. We discovered that our community exists regardless of whether we can physically be together. We learned that time is the biggest barrier to fostering for so many dog-loving NYC residents, and that when commutes and in-person working hours are eliminated, it's staggering and humbling how many of you want to fill that space by helping homeless dogs. We got to know our volunteers in new ways, and were constantly impressed by their dedication and willingness to dive into the unknown.

Letting go of expectations is not easy, and I'm so exceptionally proud of our community for turning an extremely challenging year into a chance for creativity, and thinking outside the box to not only save 936 lives, but to lay the groundwork to continue our growth and save many more in the years to come.

Thank you, Muddy Paws Pack, and I hope we'll see each other again soon!

Sincerely yours,

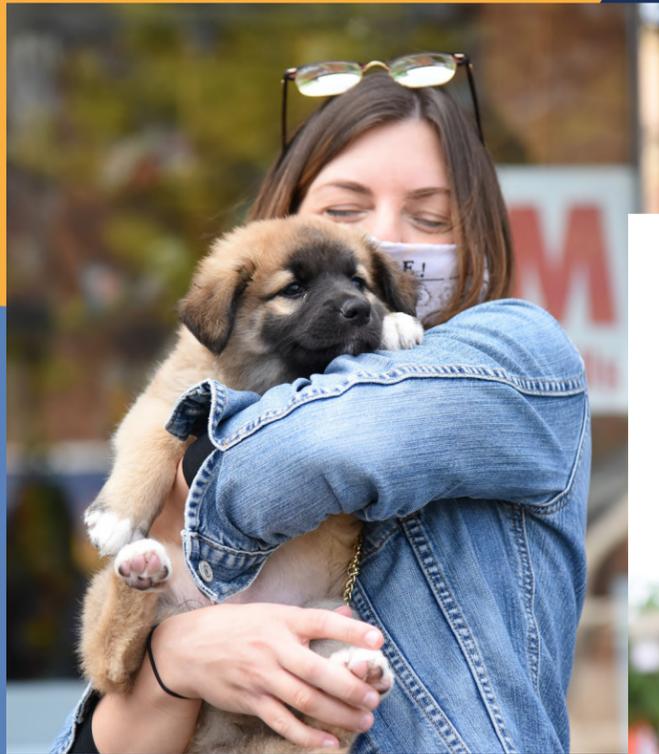


Rachael Ziering  
Founding Executive Director



# OUR MISSION

Our mission is to practice progressive, responsible, foster-based rescue and to actively support our team of animal welfare advocates while maintaining professional, transparent communication with the public.



# OUR 2020 LIFESAVING NUMBERS

**142**

Monthly  
Donors

**7,425**

Hours  
Volunteered

**11,375**

Applications  
Processed

**922**

Dogs  
Adopted

**630**

Foster  
Homes



## HAPPY TAILS: SPUD

Spud came to us from Kentucky back in September 2019, and his journey to finding his forever home would be longer than that of many human members of the Muddy Paws Pack.

When we first met Spud, he was an excited, adorable, lovable one-year-old pup, but he wasn't so sure about relocating to NYC. He loved to play, but was not a fan of walking on a leash, did not like to be left alone, and did not understand the concept of housetraining. After a few months and a few very dedicated foster homes, Spud mastered house and crate training, but was still wary of the big city.

We knew that with enough love and hard work, as well as the help of a dedicated trainer, Spud would become a more balanced and confident pup and the perfect sweet potato we all knew he could be.

After almost 280 days in foster care, Spud finally found his forever family. Olivia and Mark took one look at Spud and decided they wanted to be his parents, and after a short trial period, they quickly became one big happy family!

Since his adoption, Spud now enjoys going for hikes, playing in the dog park at least once a day (with proper manners, of course!), romping around in the water, and playing with his plushie toys. His family says, "He makes his own splashes in the water and tries to bite the droplets that fly into the air. He is a very happy dog, and he has really settled in."



# HAPPY TAILS: ZION



Zion is an 8-year-old Boroughbred who came to us from NYC Animal Care Centers in the early days of the COVID-19 lockdown.

As soon as she entered our care, it became clear that Zion had several medical issues including breathing difficulties, allergies, a bladder infection, and severe anxiety. After many diagnostic tests and seemingly never-ending vet visits, it was determined that Zion required palate surgery to help her breathe properly. With the support of the Pack community, Muddy Paws Rescue was able to cover the cost of every single treatment that Zion needed.

After her recovery and with some generous TLC, Zion revealed her true self—the most loving, polite, smart-as-a-whip, gentle pup her foster had ever known. Once Zion became available for adoption, her foster mom Rachel found that she just couldn't say goodbye!

Since adopting Zion, the two now split their time between Prospect Park in Brooklyn and Lake Cochichuate outside of Boston. Rachel says that adopting Zion was, by far, the best thing to happen to her in 2020. She now enjoys spoiling Zion with all the toys, coats, and gear that an active pup like Zion needs to live her best life!



# OPERATING DURING COVID-19

**In March of 2020, we found ourselves searching for new ways to operate so that we could continue to save lives while also prioritizing the health and safety of our staff and volunteers.**

## **Transport**

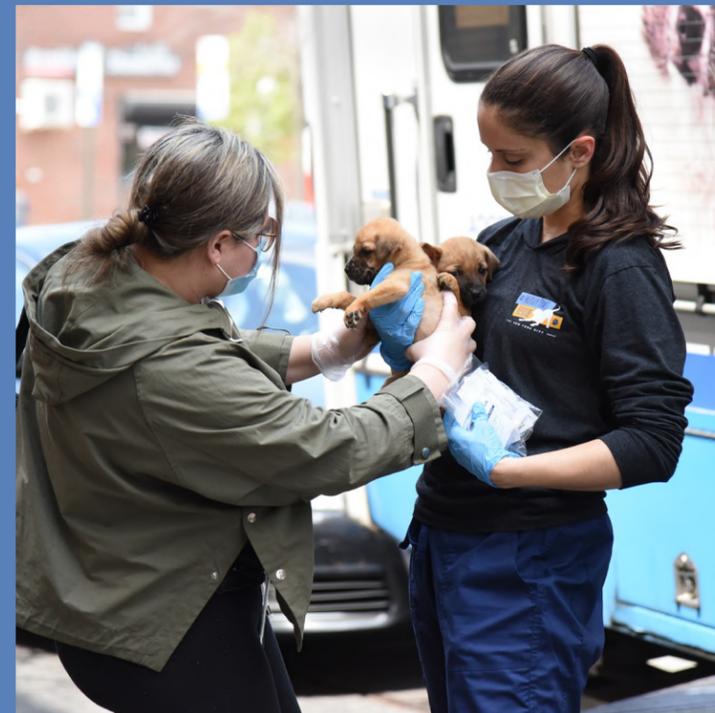
The statewide PAUSE order that went into effect in March initially brought our interstate transports to a halt. At the same time, the effects of COVID-19 also removed some roadblocks to rescue, allowing otherwise busy New Yorkers to foster and adopt for the first time as they worked from home.

With transports on hold, we increased our intake from local partners so that we could continue to get animals out of the shelter and into foster homes.

Once we were able to safely resume operations, we adjusted our procedures to minimize in-person interaction and built in new sanitization protocols. We also began to utilize our mobile adoption unit to transport animals into the city and across the boroughs to their foster homes.

## **Adoption Events**

We shifted from in-person events to virtual meet & greets and adoption facilitation. With the support of our community, we were able to offer responsible, virtual support during COVID-19 without compromising our commitment to professionalism and high-quality care.



# INCREASING SUPPORT FOR AT-RISK POPULATIONS

With an expanded foster network and larger pool of adopters due to COVID-19, we brought added support to our NYC shelter partners by increasing our intake of their most at-risk populations—senior dogs, large dogs, and bully breeds.



We welcomed 63 dogs from the NYC ASPCA and NYC Animal Care Centers, a 186% increase from 2019



We placed 50 senior dogs in foster care, a 4% increase from 2019



Of the dogs transferred from our NYC partners, 78% were large dogs or bully breeds



We welcomed 2 heartworm-positive dogs from NYC shelters into our care





# FOSTER PROGRAM GROWTH

**In 2020, we grew our foster network to upwards of 2,100 foster homes—a 74% increase from 2019.**

**With the COVID-19 lockdowns came an increased interest in dog rescue from the general public. Now, more than half of our placements are with first-time fosters. We also enhanced many aspects of the program to offer more virtual support to a growing network of fosters.**

**New-and-improved foster starter kits:** We expanded our network of industry partners to help provide every foster with a starter kit full of enrichment toys, supplies, and high-quality food and treats. We are now better equipped to provide support to every new foster parent, and most importantly, to help our pups adjust to their new environment.

**Enhanced mama-and-litter fostering protocols:** Our new formalized protocols allows us to provide every four-legged mama with the best medical care within the first few days of arriving into the city. We also offer new enrichment items and specialized training for every mama-and-litter foster.

**Online tools and resources for fosters:** Our new “Preparing for Your Foster” page went live on our website in 2020 to provide a comprehensive library of tools, virtual trainings, and FAQs. We also launched our foster blog, offering peer-to-peer advice from our very own foster parents. Foster parents can now easily access support topics ranging from tips for fostering with kids, roommates, or resident dogs to dealing with those post-foster blues.

# ADOPTIONS GO VIRTUAL

**Out of necessity and in response to COVID-19, we shifted from in-person events to facilitating our adoptions virtually on Zoom.**

## **An increased focus on adopter experience**

To successfully navigate the changes and challenges of 2020, it became even more critical than usual to maintain a positive, professional experience. We restructured our adoption volunteer role to provide virtual support and expand our matchmaking ability, enhancing the adopter experience from start to finish. According to Maddie's Pet Assistant, 97% of our adopters rated their adoption experience as "good" or "excellent" in 2020 (up from 95% in 2019) and 98% reported having received excellent customer service (up from 94% in 2019).

## **Adoptions Newsletter**

With more adopters waiting to adopt than ever before, we launched a monthly newsletter to keep pre-approved adopters updated on changes to our adoption process as well as to offer tips and resources on what to expect and how to prepare for adopting a dog. The newsletter also supports a newly-formalized organizational priority to provide increased support to our adopters as part of our return/surrender prevention work. In 2020, we reduced our return rate to 7% from 9% in 2019.



7,425 HOURS  
VOLUNTEERED

As a community that in “normal” times relies almost entirely on public transit, we needed to dramatically expand our efforts to secure safe and reliable private vehicle transportation for our dogs during COVID-19.

In 2020, our network of volunteer drivers grew from a group of 8 to 24 volunteers who help transport our animals from arrival to their foster homes, to vet appointments and back home to foster care, as well as to adoption meetings. This incredible group also helped us get medications and supplies to our fosters across the city.

Our volunteer drivers provided 195 rides in 2020. **This is 6x the number of rides required in 2019.**





## EXPANDING OUR DIGITAL REACH

In 2020, we leveraged our growing digital community to promote our adoptable dogs and partners and to steward volunteers, donors, and foster parents.



82,000+ Followers  
22+ Million Total Impressions



12,000+ Followers  
1.6+ Million Total Impressions



25,000+ general mailing list subscribers  
Twice the size of our 2019 list

# FUNDRAISING IN 2020

With the support of local artists, partners such as Tito's Handmade Vodka, and the support of our entire pack community, our digital fundraising efforts raised over \$143,000 for Muddy Paws pups in 2020.



**Best Friend  
Animal Society's  
Strut Your Mutt**

**\$71,400**

**A Pawtrait for Good  
Campaigns  
\$24,000**

**GivingTuesday  
\$14,700**

**I Love My Muddy Mutt  
2021 Calendar Contest  
\$23,200**

**GivingTuesdayNow  
\$10,000**

# SPONSOR-A-RESCUE

Launched in 2020, our new Sponsor-a-Rescue program offers donors the opportunity to sponsor the transportation of pups from our shelter partners in the south to foster care in NYC. To date, we've celebrated four sponsored rescue operations, which allowed us to welcome 115 pups into the Muddy Paws Pack.



Through the Holiday Wishes Grant Campaign by the Petco Foundation, over 140 of our adopters submitted stories about how their pets have changed their lives, earning Muddy Paws Rescue \$40,000 in grant funding.

In addition to winning an award for the most stories submitted nationally, Zachary Podbela's heartwarming story about his adopted dog, Colt, and Cristy Vo's equally uplifting story about her adopted dog, Beth, were selected as national winners from among thousands of submissions.



# HOLIDAY WISHES

# OUR FINANCIALS

Thanks to the support of our corporate partners, individual donors, and institutional funders, we were able to avoid any adoption fee increases, ensuring that adoption remains accessible to adopters from all walks of life.

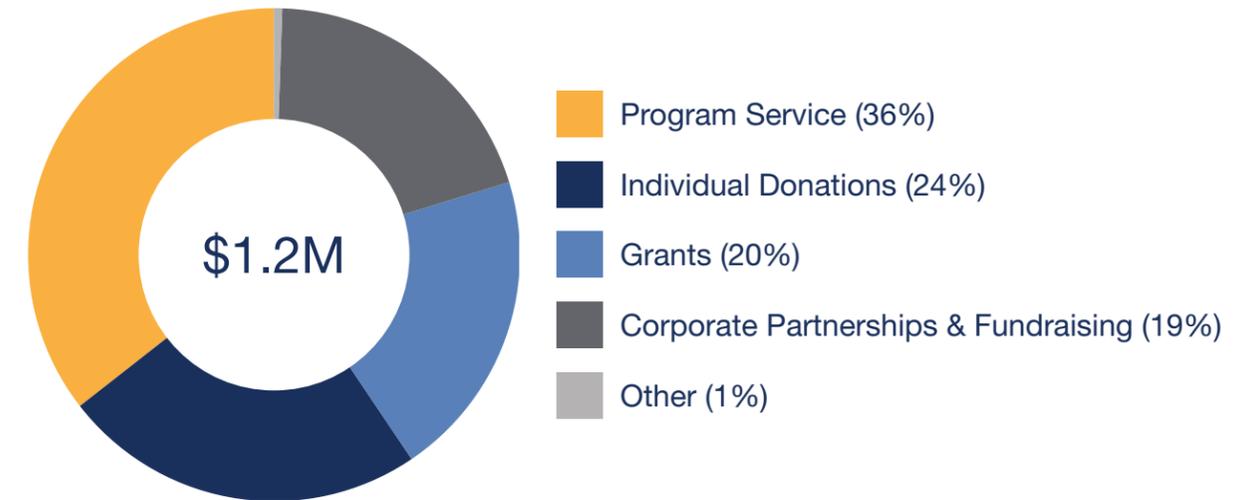
With 76% of our spending allocated to direct animal care and our adoption, foster, and volunteer programs, our donors can feel confident about their investment in our lifesaving mission.



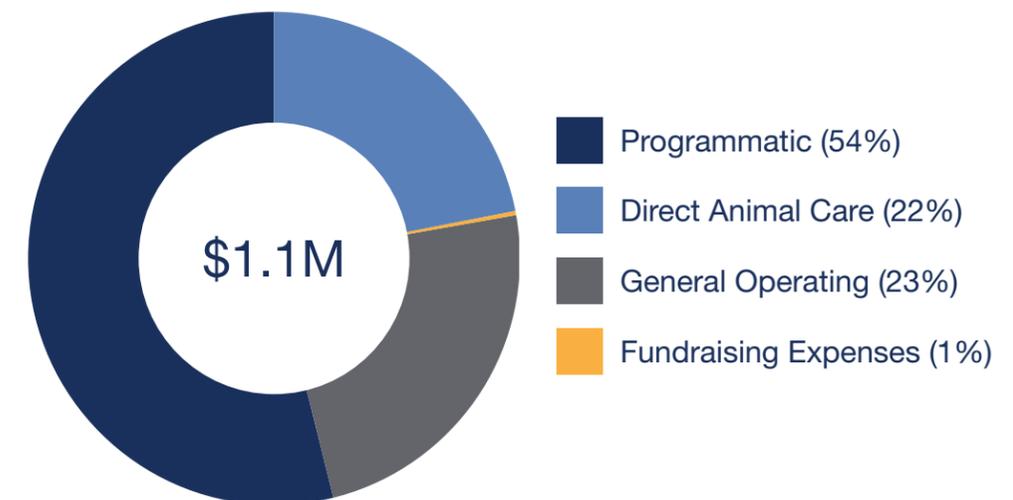
“Just an amazing organization. Incredibly organized, kind, and caring. I’ve been fostering with them for a year and just recently adopted one of my foster pups. Both experiences of fostering and adopting were amazing. Trust that every penny of any donation you give them is well spent.”

**Brian S.**  
Donor, Foster, Adopter

## TOTAL REVENUE



## TOTAL EXPENSES



Muddy Paws Rescue is a 501(c)(3) non-profit rescue dedicated to fiscal responsibility and sustainable growth. The organization is governed by an 8 person Board of Directors and Founding Executive Director, Rachael Ziering.

# TESTIMONIALS

“ I have worked with [MPR] as a foster and volunteer alongside my mother for the past year now. It has honestly been one of the best experiences of my life. They are so organized, professional, and all filled with so much love for this community and the dogs that we are all striving to save! Could not even imagine a world without working with Muddy Paws Rescue!”

*Zoe K.  
Volunteer*

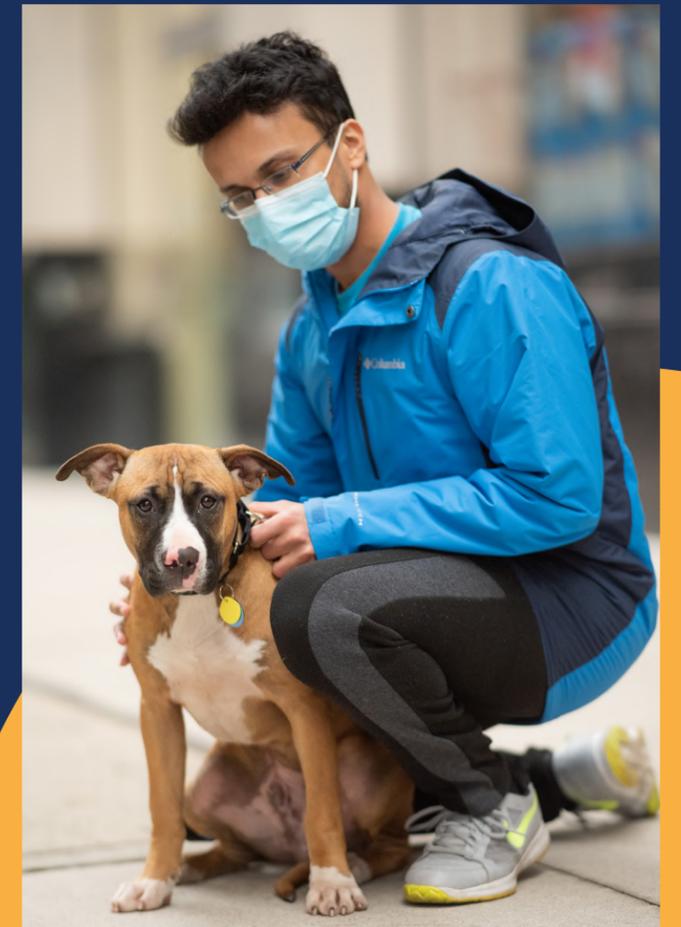


“ We’ve adopted two senior dogs through Muddy Paws, once pre-COVID and again recently, and they are wonderful. They manage the screening and pairing process professionally and take very good care of the dogs. Our recent adoptee had medical issues, and they gave her very rigorous care and made sure we knew everything we needed to know and were still okay adopting her.”

*Glen S.  
Adopter*

“ As always you guys did a great job on your livestream, and we absolutely loved all the pictures of the Tito’s swag on the puppies. Thank you for always being so great to work with.”

*Tito’s Handmade Vodka  
Corporate Partner*





# INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Our partners are central to our lifesaving mission. We strive to set up our pups for success in their foster and forever homes, and we are grateful to these industry experts who provide our dogs with the best behavior training, all around care, promotional assets, medical resources, and post-adoption support. Thank you!

## Dog Training

Amanda Gagnon Dog Training  
Behavior Vets of NYC  
Calm Canine Academy  
Canine Cohen  
Kapooch Dog Training  
Well Mannered Mutts

## Pet Care

Animal Loving Care  
Bark N' Bones  
Bark Place NYC  
Camp Canine  
Doggystyle  
Dozo Dogs  
Happy Pups  
Metro Pets  
Mobile Mutts

## Rescue & Shelter Partners

Animal Care Centers of NYC  
ASPCA  
Bowling Green Warren County  
Humane Society  
Doggie Harmony  
Hearts & Bones Rescue

## Health & Vet Care

Animal Medical Center  
BluePearl Veterinary Partners  
Firefly Animal Hospital  
Pure Paws Veterinary Care

## Photographers

Alex Lloyd  
Chelsea Schizzano  
Joe Jenkins  
Colleen Randolph

## Graphic Designers

Donica Ida  
Sarah Darivoff  
Molly Sugarman  
Emily Park  
Chelsea Schizzano

## Annual Report Design

Allen Aguilar

# SUPPORTERS

In a year full of unexpected challenges, we are especially grateful to our generous supporters for allowing us to continue our lifesaving work.



## \$75,000 & Above

PetSmart Charities

## \$50,000 - \$74,999

Anonymous

Petco Foundation

## \$25,000 - \$49,999

DJ McManus Family Foundation

South Fork Foundation

## \$10,000 - \$24,999

Jason Alfano

Carrie Denning

Credit Suisse Americas Foundation

Lina Kempner

Microsoft

Patrick and Theresa Hancock

PEDIGREE Foundation

Samuel Freeman Charitable Trust

STAUD

Stephen Wall

## \$5,000 - \$9,999

ASPCA

Courtney Fog Henritze

Meghan Danaher

Laura Hallett

William Alan Koenigsberg &

Jessica Koenigsberg

Ethan Lustig-Elgrably

Steven Meisel

Eric P. & Evelyn E. Newman Foundation

Robert Panariello & Family

Tito's Handmade Vodka

Under the Weather Pet

Collin Yip

## \$2,500-\$4,999

AmazonSmile Foundation

Discovery, Inc.

Angela Finlay & Family

Elise Kirban

MuttNation Foundation

Walkee Paws

# OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Logan Mikhly**  
Boris & Horton



**Jason Alfano**  
Credit Suisse



**Rachael Ziering**  
Founding Executive Director



**Amanda Russo**  
Director of Programs



**Lisa Blum**  
Development Director



**Meghan Danaher**  
Avenue Capital Group



**Teddy McBride**  
Schulte, Roth & Zabel LLP



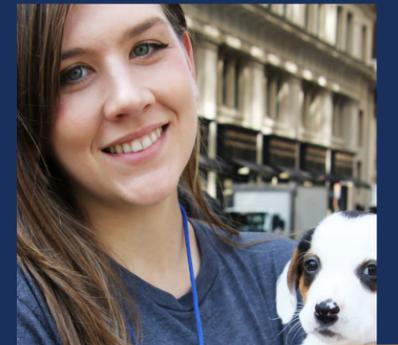
**Stephanie Liff, D.V.M.**  
Pure Paws Veterinary Care



**Mallory Kerley**  
Marketing Director



**Juliette Mazza**  
Foster Program Manager



**Erika Maher**  
Volunteer Program & Operations Project Manager



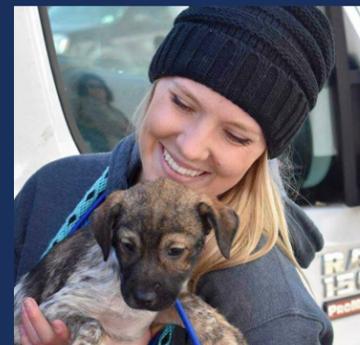
**Courtney (Fog) Henritze**  
Marketing Consultant



**Liz Remington**  
Microsoft



**Mike Wimsatt**  
Independent Consultant



**Emily Trost**  
Adoption Program Manager



**Brittany Lee**  
Foster Program Coordinator



**Fabio Vitolla**  
Adoption Program Coordinator

# OUR STAFF

