



**GATEWAY PET  
GUARDIANS  
2023  
IMPACT REPORT**



Creating a community of healthy pets and empowered pet owners by investing in the East Side Pet District.

# Celebrating love, laughter, & companionship!

As we look back at 2023, I have been reflecting on the incredible journey we've shared over the past 12 months. It has been a year of challenges, triumphs, and heartwarming moments and we have so much to look forward to now in 2024, which is our 20th year in operation!

While 2023 brought heartbreak - from pet owners losing their housing, a large increase in stray and roaming pets, and the shelter consistently being filled to the brim with adult dogs - we also had many victories. We saw almost 60% more lost pets returned to their families and we began hosting walk-in, sponsored adoptions for the first time ever, which increased our adoptions to our service area by 70%.



We received many awards and accolades including being named in the top three St. Louis area charities in the STL Post Dispatch Headliner Awards as well as receiving the national honor of being named the Best Medium-Sized Charity in the Charity Navigator Community Choice Awards!

This year is an incredibly exciting time for GPG as we celebrate our 20th anniversary! We have so many exciting plans for this special year including expanding our low-cost veterinary clinic through the PetSmart Charities Accelerator Program, hosting many wonderful events and fundraising campaigns, and unveiling a beautiful new pet memorial wall to celebrate those who have left paw prints on our hearts.

I hope you will join us this year in celebrating 20 years of helping pets and the people who love them. We would not have been able to help thousands of pets every year for 20 years without our incredible staff, volunteers, fosters and donors. We are so excited to look towards the future with you!

Alisha Vianello, Executive Director



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Jenny Dolce, President
- Kristen Burger, Vice President of Development
- Laura Placio, Treasurer
- Angie Schaefer, Vice President of Governance
- Kate Lyford, Board Member
- Cheryl Smith, Board Member
- Jessica Spatola, Board Member



## STAFF

- Katie Anderson, Community Support & Volunteer Manager
- Shaun Case, Clinic Specialist
- Sara Cordevant, Intake, Networking & Diversion Manager
- Kristen Crady, Shelter Manager
- Cara Dambach, Cat Coordinator & Office Manager
- Chelsea Donaldson, Animal Care Specialist
- Melissa Donaldson, Animal Care Specialist
- Alison Erazmus, Development & Marketing Manager
- Dr. Sarah Frei, Veterinarian
- Mackenzie Groothius, Outcome Specialist
- Jill Henke, Operations Director
- Tanoshia Johnson, Groomer

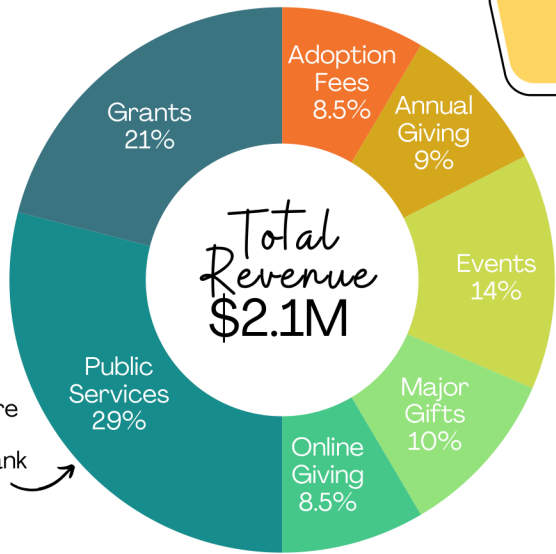
- Anna Kerr, Animal Care Specialist
- Lori Klingbeil, Animal Care Specialist
- Amanda Loellke, Adoption & Foster Manager
- Rhianna Louis, Lead Vet Technician
- \*Dr. Ed Migneco, Veterinarian
- Kristi Parker, Customer Service Manager
- Lauren Pietrangelo, Retail Inventory Associate
- Diana Pupillo, Development Director
- Rin Robinson, Clinic Manager
- Alisha Vianello, Executive Director
- Keyshawn White, Facilities Specialist
- Danielle Williams, Animal Care Specialist
- Mandi Williams, Customer Service Specialist

**96%**  
retention  
rate for  
staff

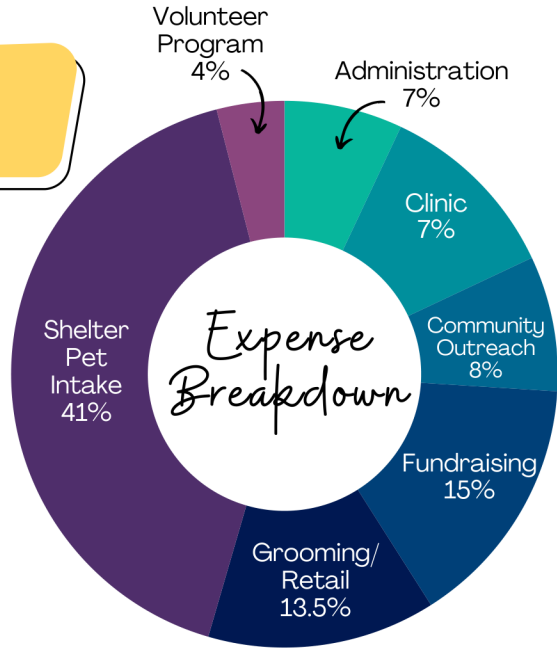


Look at these wonderful hoomans!

### 2023 Financials



- Clinic
- Retail Store
- Grooming
- Rescue Bank





**937** community outreach visits

average of 78 household visits per month



**182** families visited the pet food pantry

72% more families compared to 2022



**1,076** adoptions



583 dogs

493 cats

more adoptions in 2023 than in 2022!

**26** unicorn adoptions

100% more compared to 2022



**92** pets returned to owner

59% more compared to 2022

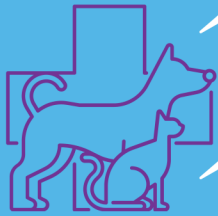


**1,198** intakes



Length of stay at time of adoption | 44 days

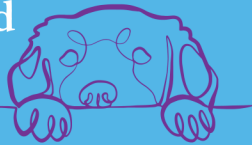
**Clinic - Community pets**



- 453 Medically treated
- 620 Microchips
- 383 Spay/Neuter
- 368 Trap Neuter Return
- 1,445 Vaccinations

**1,504** Pets groomed

174% increase compared to 2022



**73** tons

Food and litter distributed through in-house pet food pantry/other pet food partnerships

**119** tons

Low-cost, bulk self-service pet food sold at GPG pet supply retail store



**609** tons

Pet food, litter and supplies distributed to other rescues



**GREATER  
GOOD  
CHARITIES** | **GOODS**



**14,400** Volunteer Hours providing \$370,000 of in-kind services

**58,000** Foster Hours

Active volunteers | 348

Active fosters | 535

**164** average number of fosters every month



# A Record Year for Strays

Gateway staff responded to more roaming pets in the East Side District than ever before. Gateway took in 87% of all strays and handled 98% of owner surrenders in the District. The expiration of the federal eviction moratorium, rising rental prices, and a lack of pet-inclusive housing caused families in the East Side Pet District to make the excruciating choice between keeping their home or keeping their pets. In late summer, property managers at a nearby apartment complex suddenly demanded tenants give up their pets - dogs and cats they had for years - or face eviction. We stepped up to provide emergency intakes until new lease agreements could be resolved.

Gateway Outreach staff also visited more households and provided more diversions (dog houses, tie-outs, food, free spay/neuter) than ever before! The outreach team is a first responder in the region, partnering with local law enforcement and animal control to help pets and people in crises. Our ability to find pets a new home and help pet-loving families facing all the effects of poverty - housing insecurity, job loss, and costly health care emergencies - is possible because of individuals like you.



*"Without an open admission shelter in the county, we saw many dogs and cats 'dumped' at our shelter or in public places. Dogs like Beetlejuice (pictured) did eventually find a new home but it takes time, staff, and resources to give pets a second chance, which is why we are grateful to our supporters." - Alisha Vianello*

# Total Raised in 2023 🐾 \$1.3 MILLION

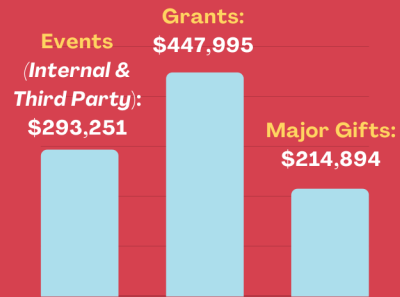
**Online Campaigns**  
TOTAL RAISED  
**\$385,000**

- Beyond Rescue
- Facebook Fundraisers
- Give STL Day
- GivingTuesday
- Slumber Pawty

\$173,000 raised from Beyond Rescue & Slumber Pawty!



+ One-off Facebook posts with a donate button & link!



**Gateway's Development Programs**

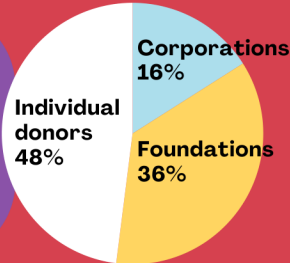


**\$43,000**  
from Giving Guardians, our monthly donor giving program

Over 2.6K donors gave!

### Giving by Donor Type

- 16% - Corporations
- 36% - Foundations
- 48% - Individuals



Thank you to our pawsome event sponsors + partners!



Presented by **PURINA**  
Your Pet, Our Passion.

-MATCH PARTNER-

**Metro East Industries, LLC**

-SPONSER-

**Tito's Handmade Vodka**



- Gayle L. Ortyl
- Cindy and Mark Tampow
- Jenny and Brandt Dolce
- Burger Law
- Nestle Purina
- Clean + Unifirst
- DraftKings at Casino Queen
- Tim Weber
- Air Land & Sea Express
- Kip Crandall
- Black Dog Fitness
- Granite City Art and Design District

**GIVINGTUESDAY**

Year End Giving Campaign



Match Partner

# Bessie and Birdie

Right before the cold snap before Christmas 2022, we received a call from a concerned community member about a beagle who either had a prolapse or a puppy stuck in her vagina. Fast forward two weeks, and we get a call from another kind family about an injured beagle who had taken up residence with their dog inside of his doghouse.

Upon arrival, Bessie's medical situation was unbelievably complex. Bessie was estimated to be 11 years old, heartworm positive, had a tick-borne disease, a giant cancerous mammary tumor, and she was PREGNANT! Initially, we assumed the babies weren't viable, but her ultrasound indicated otherwise. To increase her chances of survival, veterinarians wanted to spay her right away and remove the tumor while she was under anesthesia, but her hematocrit levels were too low. At that time, she wouldn't survive surgery. Another option was to humanely euthanize her.

The plan was to allow Bessie to give birth. Two puppies were deceased but one miraculously survived and we named her Birdie. Once Bessie gained strength, she continued to have life-saving surgeries like the mammary tumor removal. Today, Bessie and Birdie are happy, healthy, and thriving Beagles with their best years ahead of them.



Bessie before and after giving birth and her tumor removal surgery.

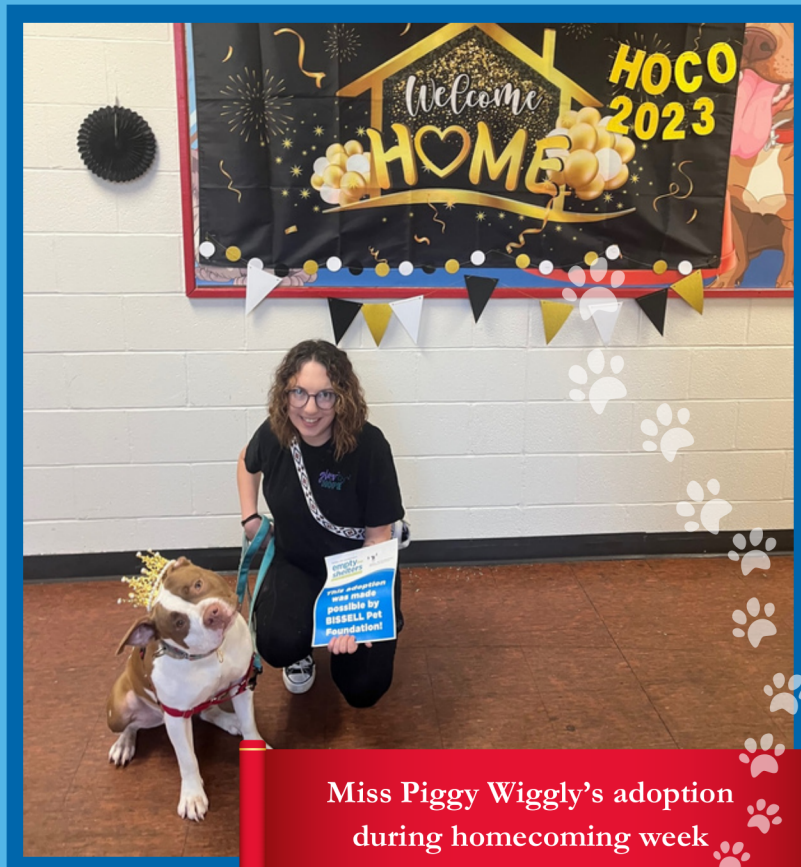


Bessie and Birdie are safe and sound in their adopted homes. Bessie lives with Jill Henke, our Director of Operations!

# All Hail the Kings & Queens - Homecoming Weekend



In 2023, Gateway staff held weekly walk-in adoption events at our Pet Resource Center, including a special homecoming adoption week in October! Adopted cats and dogs were crowned homecoming kings and queens and Gateway staff had their own Spirit Week. To celebrate they wore clothes for pajama day, decades day, and more!



Miss Piggy Wiggly's adoption during homecoming week

## Awards & Recognition

Gateway Pet Guardians received these awards



- Charity Navigator 'Best Medium-Sized Nonprofit' Award
- STL Headliner 'Favorite' Non-Profit in Community category
- GrantStation and The Grant Professionals Association 'Sector Award'

Candy Cane says, "The President's Award was presented to 40 volunteers for 100+ hours in 2023! Nice job!"

The President's Volunteer Service Award is an opportunity to honor our most outstanding volunteers and recognize the impact they make. Thank you, volunteers!



# Liger's Story

Liger came from an overwhelmed caregiver and was semi-feral. Understandably, he wasn't the most comfortable with people and absolutely hated the shelter. While trying to take his adoption photo, Liger refused and an all out cat search in the photo room ensued, which involved no less than two volunteers and four staff members who valiantly attempted to corral the wayward feline. We didn't know what Liger's chances were of being adopted given his lack of socialization. But we saw that Liger really loved other cats. Fortunately, one of our most dedicated volunteers, Norm, adopted Liger. Norm had other cats but none of them wanted to befriend Liger. Norm decided that Liger needed another friend, someone with whom Liger could relate and 'cat.'

Enter another timid Gateway cat named Justin, now known as Buddy. Sensing they would be compatible, Norm adopted Buddy for Liger and now the two are inseparable. They play, nap together on the cat tree, and share food. Thanks to their bond, both cats are living comfortably in their adoptive home.



The one photo taken of Liger at the shelter.



Liger at home looking much more relaxed.



Taking much deserved cat naps, Liger spends his days with Buddy!



Buddy making himself at home in Norm's chair.



Clancey's reunion



Jayden's reunion



Maverick's reunion

# Return to Owners: Another Record Breaking Year!

Mircochips work!



Mocha's reunion

Families helping each other!



Benji's reunion

Thanks to our community partners, we saw **92 pets returned to their families in 2023!**

# Hairbrush's Story

While trying to catch another stray dog, volunteers for Gateway Pet Guardians heard a high-pitched woof from inside an abandoned building. Following the sound, they discovered a little dog with overgrown fur so filthy, they could hardly see her among the trash-littered floor. Upon examination, Dr. Sarah Frei found a hairbrush stuck in her fur and a name was born. Hairbrush's fur was severely matted. Matted fur cut into her back leg, causing deep lacerations that were infected with maggots. The vet staff predicted they would need to amputate the leg but decided to treat the wounds first.

To heal, Hairbrush moved in with a foster mom who works at a hair salon. Hairbrush's foster mom quickly fell in love and adopted her, renaming her Harriet Brush! Harriet goes to the salon with her mom every day now and everyone at the salon adores her. Her traumatic experience on the streets never dimmed Harriet's sweet and outgoing spirit. The best part is that Harriet's back leg healed completely - no amputation needed! Harriet Brush - the beautiful and sweet hair salon dog who had a hair brush stuck in her fur - will never know a day of suffering again!



The vet team found an old hairbrush stuck in Harriet's matted fur coat.



Harriet's glow-up/after photo and Harriet working at the salon entertaining clients!



*Thank you to our family of contributors, funders and volunteers, both big and small, who help us move on up year after year!*

Kevin Beckmann  
Charitable Trust



**METRO EAST INDUSTRIES INC.**  
P.O. Box 3220 Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208

**PETSMART**  
Charities

**PURINA**  
Your Pet, Our Passion.®

**RON RYTL**  
Memorial

**AIR LAND & SEA**  
EXPRESS

**Ameren**  
ILLINOIS



**Auffenberg**  
DEALER GROUP

Aya's Auto Sales

**Bell Bank**  
Mortgage

**BERNSTEIN**  
Family Foundation

**Best Friends**

**BISSELL PET FOUNDATION**  
Until every pet has a home.

**BLACK DOG**  
FITNESS

**BOEING**

**BURGER**  
LAW  
INJURY TRIAL ATTORNEYS

**Busey BANK**

**CAROL HOUSE** Furniture  
BECAUSE YOU LIKE NICE THINGS

**CLEAN**

**Colton's Cause**

Coupler to Coupler

**Dental Wellness Center**  
OF MISSOURI

**DRAFT KINGS** AT **CASINO QUEEN**

**Global Brew**  
TAP HOUSE



**GrantStation**  
Your Fast Track To Funding

**GG**  
GreaterGood.org  
GIVE WHERE IT MATTERS

**JDHF**  
**NAMASTE**  
Spay & Neuter Initiative

**Maddie's Fund**



**MORRISON**  
PLUMBING - HEATING  
AIR - ELECTRICAL

**petco love**  
A NONPROFIT CHANGING LIVES

**petfinder**  
FOUNDATION

**PROJECT bella**

**SAFETY NATIONAL**  
Since 1940

**SOLLERTIA**  
TECHNOLOGY CONSULTING

**ST. LOUIS**  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

Stephen & Mary  
Birch Foundation

**SYBERG'S**  
EATING & DRINKING COMPANY

**SYNCHRONY**



**THE GIVING BRANCH**

**the honest kitchen**

**THOMPSON COBURN LLP**

Tripp Farms Venue

**Vaughn Investments**  
Sheila Vaughn



William W. and  
Betty Halliday  
Foundation

**World Wide Technology**

