



Crisis doesn't build character; it reveals it.

—Actor/Comedian Denis Leary

Bruce Roney, President & CEO

The COVID-19 public health crisis is not yet over. Life has not returned to normal, and it might never be quite the same. A second wave in the fall is all but assured. The story of this crisis cannot yet be fully written, but here is the story so far at the Ottawa Humane Society.

In the early weeks of the crisis, as we watched the public health crisis play out in Italy and New York, hospitals were quickly becoming overwhelmed and horrible decisions had to be made — essentially who would live and who wouldn't survive. Public services were barely coping. It appeared, if the curve could not be flattened, one day soon, the systems we all rely on might collapse in Ottawa, as they were in these and other places.

The OHS is an essential service. We had to continue to be here for animals in distress, either because their owners



OHS employee, Kelly Hume, cares for a cat named Jack on his way into surgery.

were too sick to care for them or just because they had the misfortune of being hit by a car or being the victim of another mishap during the crisis.

So the OHS's overriding preoccupations since March have been maintaining the OHS's ability to care for animals in distress and the safety of our staff.

Fortunately, the OHS has a very good emergency plan. Though very helpful, it did not contemplate all the issues that would arise. There have been hundreds of details that needed to be



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 Humane Education 235
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If you have a story idea or comment, please contact ohs@ottawahumane.ca via email or by mail to the OHS Newsletter Editor. Submissions of pictures and articles are welcome; however, they may not necessarily be used. Articles may be edited for length and content.

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To lead Ottawa in building a humane and compassionate community for all animals.



OHS Veterinarian Dr. Mary Thompson cares for a cat named Pinky after surgery.

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considered. Never in my life would I have thought I would have to write letters for staff and foster volunteers just so they could cross the Ontario/Quebec border to help animals.

Frankly the early days were arduous and exhausting because we made plans, and with each new announcement, we had to tear up the plans and make new ones. New information led us to new infection control measures, weekly, if not daily.

To protect staff and our ability to care for animals, animal care staff were divided into teams—an A and a B team—and these teams alternated shifts, so that they would not come into contact with one another. Not only would this help protect the staff themselves by limiting their contact with one another, if someone on a team fell ill, the second team could be called in to feed and care for the animals.

When the province closed retail in the early stages of COVID-19, keeping the adoptions centre open did not seem responsible or in keeping with the advice we

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all were receiving. So, we closed the Shirley Kearns Memorial Adoption Centre and all animals that did not require regular or immediate medical care by our staff were sent to the loving homes of our amazing foster volunteers. We asked our community to hold off on surrendering animals, and to leave healthy safe cats in the community.

Like hospitals, we had to preserve space and our ability to help those in distress.

We began to read stories of animals rejected, even killed, by their owners in some more highly impacted communities. Information was changing daily, and some of it was reliable, but some was half-baked or misleading. Some was outright false. Would Ottawa pet owners react to the false or misleading information? Would they reject their pets? How many rejected pets would end up here at the OHS, with nowhere else to go? These questions and the scary possibilities became another preoccupation. We needed to get good information — and the clear fact that pets do not play a significant role in transmission — out to our community to avoid disaster. And so we rolled out a communications plan to do just this.

As the OHS is funded overwhelmingly by our donors. Our contract with the city to provide municipal animal sheltering accounts for about 15 per cent of our revenue, and adoption and other fees another 15 per cent. The remaining 70 per cent comes from gifts from the community of people who care about animals: you.

The city contract funds are stable, but with the closure of adoptions and our other programming, 15 per cent of revenue instantly evaporated. Other humane societies were laying off large numbers of staff. We needed our staff. We needed donors to stick with us or the OHS and the animals could be in trouble. And you know what? They did; YOU did.



OHS staff hand out food to community members in need at its Emergency Pet Food Bank.

You stood by us and by the animals. A couple stepped up and offered to match community donations. PAW monthly donors maintained their monthly giving. Some increased it. One gift came with a note, “I don’t want our furry friends to be forgotten in this.” This was a tremendous relief, and we pray it continues.

Once we were assured that we could continue to care for animals in distress, the safety of our staff, had a modicum of financial stability and a community not panicked by false or misleading information, we began to move beyond these immediate preoccupations and looked into our community. Our community was suffering, animals were suffering and we wanted to help.

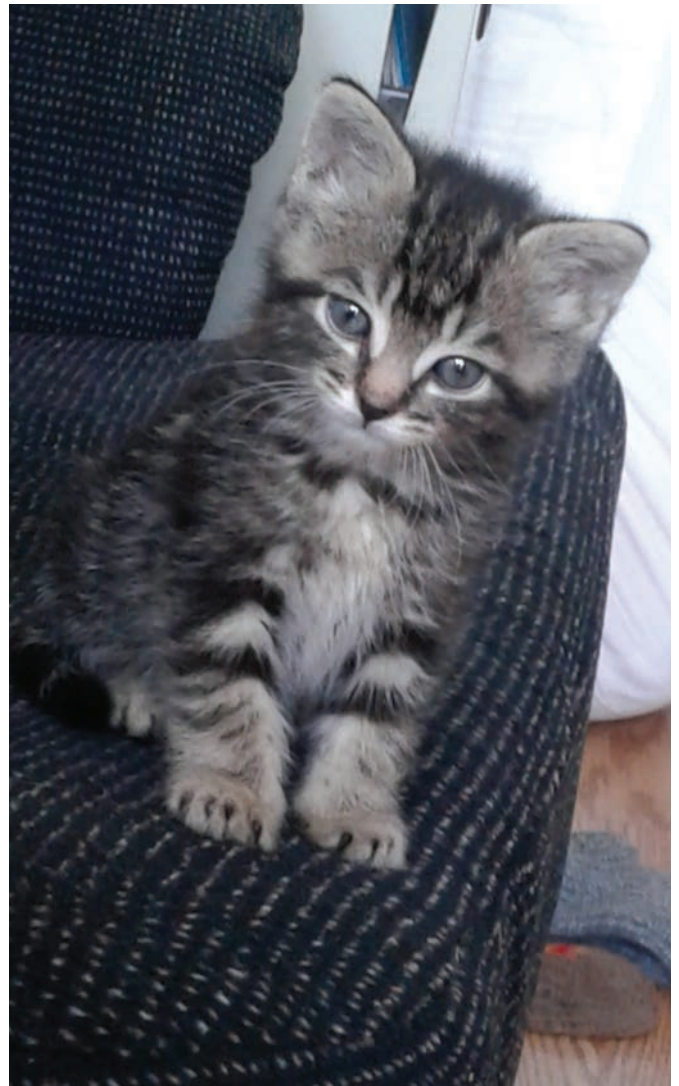
So the OHS opened its first ever emergency pet food program to help pets in families struggling to get by during the crisis. Staff redeployed from shuttered programs began distributing food at the shelter and shipped pet food to community food banks who did not have access to pet food and litter.

With warmer weather approaching, we knew that the numbers of stray and surrendered animals could skyrocket, as it has every year. A typical day in the warmer months could require intake of 30 or more animals. Most are not in distress. We simply could not sustain this and remain available to animals that required care in the shelter. A creative plan from another humane society led us to create our own plan for the kittens that were expected

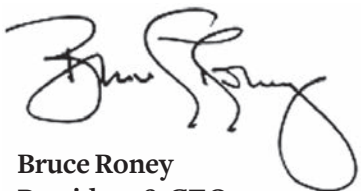
The happiest moment here at the OHS is when we find a forever home for an animal, a home that is the perfect match, one where she will be loved and cared for and we are delighted to once again live these happy moments.

to arrive by the box load in late spring. We would quickly train finders and owners to care for the healthy ones outside the shelter until the kittens are ready for adoption. We essentially created a new foster volunteer program on the fly.

As the community began to open up and our confidence in our infection-control measures increased, we felt comfortable to open adoptions in a safe manner. The interest in adopting had not waned in our community and we were mindful of the growing number of healthy adoptable animals occupying foster homes. We created a plan for physical-distanced, appointment-based adoptions. Though slow to find its footing, the new system is beginning to relieve our animal population concerns. The happiest moment here at the OHS is when we find a forever home for an animal, a home that is the perfect match, one where she will be loved and cared for and we are delighted to once again live these happy moments.



The past few months have been exceedingly difficult for everyone in our community and around the world. We have come to realize how fragile some of our systems really are and how dependent we are on other people. I am so grateful that everyone the animals depend on: our staff, our volunteers, and especially, you, our kind and generous supporters. You have not forgotten our furry friends. During this crisis, you have revealed your character.


Bruce Roney
President & CEO



The OHS adoptions team works on booking physically-distanced adoption appointments.

No Animal Deserves to be Left Behind

Randall came into our care earlier this year after being found severely emaciated and alone in the cold. He had been lost and left behind, too small to fend for himself. Randall needed to spend an extended period in our care in order to regain his weight and for our Veterinarian to ensure he was healthy, and you made that possible.



Generous donors like yourself provided shelter for Randall as he regained weight, and now he's living with a loving forever family. Randall's second chance is thanks to your generosity, so thank you.

Remember Sweet Minnie?

Sweet little Minnie came into our care in November 2019 after being found in the country all alone. She arrived with an eye infection and lots of sneezes. After her veterinary visit where she was prescribed medication for her eyes, Minnie recovered with a loving foster family.



Look at Minnie now! Thanks to your support, Minnie was able to recover in OHS care and now she's living happily with her forever family. Thank you for being there for Minnie when she needed you most.

Helping the Animals When They Need it Most

Bill and Joy Olders have been loyal OHS supporters for seven years. They answered our call for help during the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19 by becoming PAW monthly donors.

The Olderses felt that a steady gift each month would allow immediate care for the animals in need, and in this time of crisis, that is truly a blessing. Bill has said they are very impressed with the work and dedication of the OHS and feels a deep connection to our cause in light of their many animals at home: "I have a lot of respect for people who take care of animals, it reflects their care for everyone."

They have a Quaker Parakeet with an extensive vocabulary who says "Go bye-bye" when he wants to be put to bed. The Olders' overarching wish is to help animals and they invite you to join them in becoming a PAW monthly donor as well. On behalf of the Olderses and all of the animals in our care – thank you! You are making a big difference and we are grateful for your support.



Changing on the Fly

As a result of COVID-19, the Outreach team preventatively cancelled and/or suspended all in-person programs/events. These cancellations have resulted in a significant loss in planned revenue for the OHS. Thanks to your support – we've been able to quickly modify a number of our existing programs and expand our online programming opportunities for the community. Here are a few of exciting initiatives we've launched during the public health crisis so far:

Online Lesson Plans for Teachers and Parents

We're offering curriculum-linked online lesson plans for Kindergarten through Grade 6 classes. All lesson plans are available in English and French, and include an educational lesson, a craft and an interactive activity. Learn more at ottawahumane.ca/youth-programs/teacher-resources/lesson-plans-for-teachers/.

Humane Education Activities for Kids

Our creative Outreach team quickly launched a new webpage ottawahumane.ca/youth-programs/activities-for-kids-during-covid-19/ which features a ton of fun activities for kids to do at home during Covid-19, such as, writing letters to foster animals, a creative writing competition, DIY crafts and so much more.

Online Private Obedience Training

The demand for behavioural support from dog owners has not diminished as a result of the crisis. Many dog owners are spending more time at home and are looking to work with a qualified trainer to address their urgent training needs. We're now offering customizable online private sessions through Zoom for clients on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Learn more at ottawahumane.ca/your-pet/online-private-obedience-classes-during-covid-19/.

Coming Soon!

We're not finished yet – stay tuned by visiting ottawahumane.ca to learn more about some new initiatives that we're planning this summer, including the launch of online seminars, online pet loss support groups and YouTube videos for kids! For more information about Outreach programs, email programs@ottawahumane.ca.



Community Kudos



Meet Isaac and Marcus! These two brothers earn an allowance monthly and for their birthdays this year, they both set aside a portion for a donation to help the animals. Marcus chose to donate to the OHS in the fall of 2019 and was able to deliver the donation in person.

This spring, Isaac followed suit with another generous donation, but has been unable to drop it off in person due to the new physical distancing rules. We want to thank these brothers so much for their support and for Isaac's recent electronic donation – you are both such loyal friends of the animals!

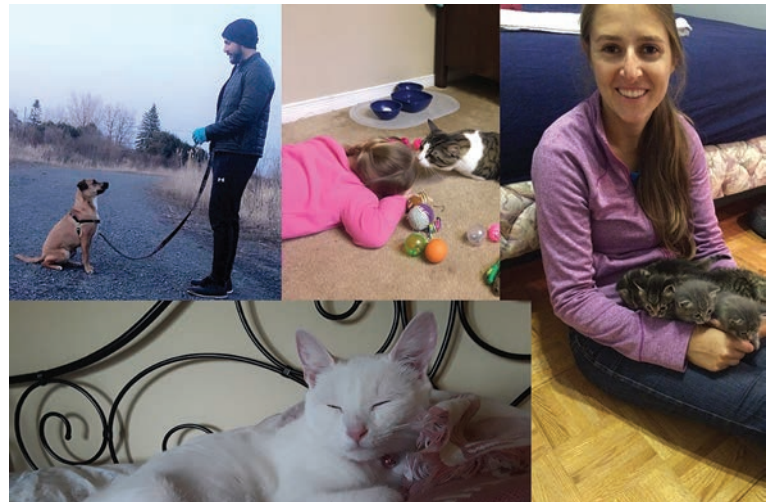


The ongoing public health crisis has presented a number of challenges – one being preserving the safety of our staff. We would like to thank Canada Sews – Ontario East, along with some generous community members, for donating masks and gowns to keep our staff safe as they continue to care for the animals in our care.

To see other OHS heroes, visit ottawahumane.ca/communitykudos.

Our Volunteers Stepped Up When the Animals Needed Them Most

COVID-19 has taught us many lessons as an organization—many of which we need to be grateful for. One lesson that we've learned time and time again, is how amazing OHS volunteers are. One volunteer team that deserves particular thanks and recognition are our foster volunteers. Thanks to this caring and compassionate group of people, 162 animals were placed into foster care in the first four weeks of the pandemic, which ensured essential space was available in the shelter for animals in distress.



Foster volunteers not only immediately rose to action when the animals needed them most, - their kind gift of time is consistent, and one we strongly rely on. *"Only a life lived for others is worth living (Albert Einstein)"* and foster volunteers embody this message with each animal they rehabilitate, love and return for adoptions to find their forever family.



Animals like Jack are counting on you to provide them with a new start at life and get them into loving forever homes, despite the ongoing public health crisis.

Jack is just one of the many animals currently in the care of the Ottawa Humane Society. This sweet six-year-old Brittany spaniel, was suffering from severe hip dysplasia, and a dislocated left hip. Thanks to PAW monthly donors like you, Jack had somewhere safe to go while an OHS veterinarian corrected the problem on his left hip.

Can we count on you to help us save more animals by **increasing your already generous monthly gift?**

ottawahumane.ca/paw

PAW 

monthly giving saves lives

In response to the Government of Ontario's emergency declaration, and in order to protect you and other participants from COVID-19, we have made the difficult but necessary decision to cancel our annual Wiggle Walk and Run for the animals.

To learn more about how you can help us overcome any financial shortfalls, visit our website:

ottawahumane.ca/walkrun



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