

# DOG'S BEST FRIEND

*Animal House Shelter Founder and  
President Lesley Irwin and Her Team  
Are Ready to Help More Dogs and  
Cats Find Forever Homes through  
Rescue and Adoption*

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# ABOUT ANIMAL HOUSE SHELTER

ON ANY GIVEN DAY, the team at Animal House Shelter in Huntley, Illinois, receives 300 requests to save animals, mostly dogs, and about 25% cats. There's great difficulty in knowing that they can only save about 50 animals a week, and that it is conditional for them to take puppies and kittens—there has to be a foster home lined up first, before they take them in, so that the animal's weak immune systems are not in a community population setting, and therefore are not compromised. Fostered puppies or kittens stay on average in a home for 2-4 weeks. About 30% of the families who foster the animals end up adopting them.

Inquiries come from across the country regarding adoptable animals, volunteering, fostering, relinquishing a pet, and companies wanting to partner. Calls to take in rescued animals arrive from Oklahoma, Texas, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Southern Illinois. May of the dogs and cats are homeless or abandoned, and about 5% of the rescue calls are for pregnant animals, newly born litters, or new litters without a mother.

Calls from adopters come in from Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, California, and Alaska. Animal House Shelter is not a "walk-through" shelter. "We require that potential adopters fill out an application to begin so that we can learn as much about them, their family, and their home as possible," Irwin said. "We check past and present veterinary references to ensure the animals have been cared for." The shelter staff partners with Animal Care Clinic, which performs surgeries and offers veterinary services. Wonder Lake Animal Hospital also performs surgeries. There are regional partners including Best Friends, Humane Society of the United States, Chicago Animal Control, Illinois Animal Rescue, and rural partners in many states. The organization recently rescued dogs from a dog meat farm in South Korea, with help from Humane Society International.

The need is great and does not seem to slow down. But with Animal House Shelter and its extended network and "family" of volunteers and supporters, there is significant impact. The shelter's goal of a new, expanded, and strategically-designed shelter—to be built next to the current one—will offer greater help to the operation, community outreach, in-facility education for students, and will result in a lot of happy, wagging tails.



Ashley Feck

Animal House Shelter's Director of Development, Ashley Feck, holds June at Citizens Park. Feck oversees fundraising and development for the shelter. Her focus includes increasing funding, partnerships, sponsors, donors, volunteers, fosters, adopters, media opportunities, and opportunities to save animals, making as broad of an impact as possible, both nationally and internationally.

"My day-to-day goals are to advance and develop the shelter in every way I can, including funding, partnerships, sponsors, donors, volunteers, fosters, adopters, media, and opportunities to save animals making as broad of an impact as possible," Feck said. "Of the animals that get sent to me every single day that we cannot save," she continued. "I want to save them all. There is no time to waste in any day of the week, month, or year. Every day that I am not doing all that I can to expand the shelter's resources are moments that may mean the life or death of an animal in need. Watching the animals go home every day to forever families is the daily reminder that the work that we do is making a difference in the lives of these animals and the people who rescue them."

## GREATEST NEEDS FOR SUPPORT

- Financial support for the new facility and ongoing operations.
- Material donations for building the new shelter. Anyone that can provide material donations makes one less expense that the staff need to raise for expansion.
- Volunteers to help with all aspects of daily operations including answering phones, data entry, walking dogs, help with laundry, vet transport, etc.
- The shelter staff goes through a huge amount of canned cat and dog food, canned chicken, paper towels, bleach, laundry detergent, dish soap, and blankets.





# DASH FOR THE DOGS 2019

EACH SPRING, ANIMAL HOUSE SHELTER hosts its Dash for the Dogs fundraiser at Barrington's Citizens Park. On May 19, a large crowd lined up behind the race's start-finish line, many with dogs by their side. People of all ages participated in either of two events—first, a 5K Run or Walk, and then some opted for the 1 Mile Family Fun Walk after the 5K.

Animal House Shelter has a variety of fun events all year long with something for everyone. There are opportunities to volunteer, sponsor, and participate. Proceeds help support the shelter. Learn more at [www.animalhouseshelter.com](http://www.animalhouseshelter.com).







Lesley Irwin with Charmin, a rescue from the Oklahoma floods this year.

# A LETTER FROM LESLEY IRWIN

THE STORY OF ANIMAL HOUSE SHELTER AND ITS AMBITIOUS FUTURE

I GREW UP IN BARRINGTON and graduated from Barrington High School in 1993. I then continued my education at the University of Illinois in Champaign with a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Sciences.

On a summer break when I was home from college, I received a frantic phone call from a friend from high school, that she had just seen a dog thrown out of a moving car on Lake Cook Road in Barrington. The dog was terrified, emaciated, and all cut up

from being thrown from the car. I ended up adopting that dog after I got her treated for injuries at a local vet, and she spent my senior year of college with me. I had always thought my college degree would lead me on to graduate school for veterinary medicine. Once I took in Kiley, I started researching opening my own rescue, completed the 501c3 paperwork, and got started by helping other nonprofit, no-kill rescues.

I started the shelter when I was 25 years old in Barrington, moved to Huntley in 2005 in order to have more space as we were growing rapidly, and in 18 years we have now rescued, rehabilitated physically and mentally, and placed in loving homes over 48,000 homeless dogs and cats.

My mom was my biggest inspiration in my love of all animals as a child. While growing up, I always had at least five dogs, 10 rescue horses, two pot-bellied pigs, and cats.

The numbers are staggering—of the perfectly adoptable purebred and mixed breed dogs and cats that end up at high-kill facilities every day and most of the time only have one-to-three days before they are euthanized due

to lack of space—unless they are rescued by a no-kill shelter like Animal House.


We receive over 300 urgent requests every day and can only take in 45-50 animals per week right now. With the building expansion we will be able to double the number, leading to 5,000-6,000 rescued per year.

We utilize eight different local veterinary clinics in an effort to keep up with up with neutering all of the animals we rescue, heart worm treatments, specialty surgeries, and emergencies, and we desperately need our own vet clinic to save us the time and expenses involved in traveling to so many different clinics twice a day.

We have Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Eagle Scouts, Brownies, school groups, and children donating in lieu of gifts for their birthdays visiting the shelter every single day, and the children's education room will give us the much-needed space to accommodate those children who we do not currently have. We hope to properly educate them on the humane treatment of animals and why no-kill shelters like Animal House exist—and need to thrive—in order to save the tens of thousands of animals that are euthanized every year.

The training facility will help us to train the newly rescued animals their basics, like walking properly on a leash, in order to get adopted more quickly. The harder cases, such as those animals that have been abused and neglected, will need this space to help us rehabilitate them. We will also utilize the training facility for training classes with adopted dogs that either need basic training on manners, or more intense training with behavioral issues.

We rely solely on private donations and need the community's help in order to continue saving the lives of homeless dogs and cats by donating towards this much needed building expansion. It is our duty to help right the wrongs by society for these defenseless, domesticated animals.

To contact Lesley Irwin, founder and president of Animal House Shelter, call 847-961-5541 or email [lesley@animalhouseshelter.com](mailto:lesley@animalhouseshelter.com). 



The proposed new shelter facility.



Since opening in 2002, Animal House Shelter has rescued, rehabilitated, and adopted over 45,000 dogs and cats.

We are expanding in order to save the lives of over 5,000 more each year, and we need your help!



Animal House Shelter takes in, cares for, and adopts out abused, neglected and abandoned animals, especially those scheduled for euthanasia at other shelters. Once rehabilitated and ready, these animals are carefully matched with prospective adopters and placed in loving homes. Over 45,000 animals have been adopted from Animal House Shelter, many of which were those passed over for rescue by other shelters. Animal House Shelter does not discriminate against animals based on breed, age, or health problems and we pride ourselves on taking care of any medical needs that the animals might have regardless of the cost.

We rely heavily on private donations to run the facility. Founded in Barrington in 2002, we moved to Huntley in 2006 and quickly outgrew our facility. Currently, we are transporting our animals between six different veterinary clinics in order to keep up with their medical needs. With this expansion, we are looking to build a state of the art vet clinic, on the shelter's property, to take care of all the animals coming to our organization from high-kill facilities throughout the year. In addition to that, we will be providing low-cost vaccinations, microchips, and neutering to all communities in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago to provide services to those who would otherwise not be able to afford them.





## New Facility Services

### Low-Cost Animal Clinic

With an in-house, low-cost animal clinic, we will not only be able to better serve the animals we take in, but also our adopters and surrounding community.

Animal House Shelter regularly takes in animals with significant health problems and we often find that the funds needed to care for their medical procedures, surgeries and medications exceeds that which we have available to us. The cost of this care would be offset greatly if we had our own vet clinic to care for their needs and we would then be able to rescue and re-home a far greater number of animals. We see every day that there is sadly no shortage of animals in need of rescue and sanctuary and many of those that have even minor health problems are not being given the chance for rehabilitation and adoption into a loving home. Animal House shelter can only take in as many of these animals as we have the funds available to care for. It is our hope to continue our already adamant campaign that all dogs and cats should be neutered, vaccinated, and have quality health care available to them.



Some of the services our clinic will offer include:

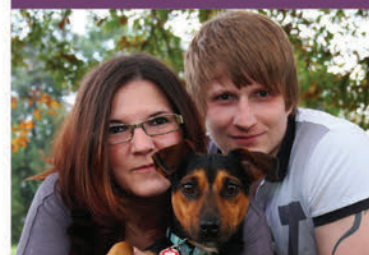
- Vaccinations
- Spays & Neuters
- Microchips
- Heartworm Treatments
- X-Rays
- Fecals

### Training Center



At our training center, we will have the chance to offer a wide range of on-site pet training classes.

### Bonding Rooms



The new bonding rooms will help adopters meet and interact with their next potential pet in a safe and quiet space.

### Education Center

The Education Center will give us the ability to offer a variety of classes and uses for our community.

Every week we have groups of children from birthday parties, girl scouts and brownies, church groups and school groups, as well as multiple groups per week from the Pioneer Center of McHenry County. We are so grateful for these groups and accommodate them the best way we can but currently do not have a room for them to come into and learn about the animals. Our lobby is the only place to do this and it is very small. The ability to properly accommodate and educate these children and groups is vital, as they are our future.





## New Facility Exterior

The exterior of our new facility will be surrounded by a Bird and Butterfly Garden, as well as the Farmstead Silo Memorial Garden. Not only will these be beautiful additions to the facility, but they will offer a way for the community to remember and memorialize their loved ones.

## Building Naming Rights

Naming Rights to Building with Signage	Please Contact Us
Low Cost Veterinary Clinic	Please Contact Us
Adoption Center/Lobby	Please Contact Us
Children’s Education Center	\$400,000
Retail Store	\$300,000
Free Roam Cat Colony	\$250,000
Farmstead Silo Memorial Garden	\$250,000
Legacy Building	\$250,000
Training Room	\$100,000
Feline, Bird and Butterfly Garden	\$75,000
Outdoor Off-Leash Play Yard (3)	\$25,000 each
Indoor Socialization Play Space (3)	\$25,000 each
Laundry Room	\$20,000
Bonding Rooms (10)	\$10,000 each
Sanctuary Rooms (8)	\$5,000 each
Kitten Play Rooms (9)	\$5,000 each

## Tribute Bricks

Tribute Brick - 4x8	\$150 each
Tribute Brick - 8x8	\$300 each



## Interested in Donating Materials?

We will gladly accept donations of building materials, to help us expand the shelter!



## New Facility Layout

Covering almost 15,000 square feet, our new facility will give us the space to better serve the homeless animals, volunteers, fosters, and adopters.



1. Adoption/Volunteer Welcome Center
2. 10 Bonding Rooms for Families to Meet & Adopt
3. Child Education Center
4. Free-Room Cat Habitat, Overlooking a Bird & Butterfly Garden
5. Kitten Playrooms
6. Spacious Sanctuary Rooms for Longterm Dogs with Private Outdoor Play Yard to Minimize Stress
7. Multiple Indoor & Outdoor Exercise Yards
8. State of the Art Veterinary Care Clinic

