Incorporated in 1966, Anderson Animal Shelter has been dedicated to saving the lives of homeless pets for more than 50 years. Over the five decades of its existence, Anderson has taken in thousands of homeless dogs and cats each year, saving them from the cruelty of life on the streets and giving them a second chance to find love through adoption.
The changing face of animal welfare

Beginning in the early 1970s, animal welfare organizations across the country took on the challenge of addressing the enormous problem of pet overpopulation, the biggest humane crisis facing our nation. At the time, animal shelters throughout the US were euthanizing as many as 70-80% of the dogs and cats entering their facilities each year because there were simply too many homeless pets and not enough families willing to adopt them.

Anderson joined in the fight to prevent unwanted litters of puppies and kittens by creating and supporting low-cost spay/neuter initiatives, altering all pets before adoption, and promoting responsible pet ownership (including spay/neuter) through intensive marketing campaigns. And eventually, the face of animal welfare began to change.

So much so in fact, that by 2015 large parts of the US, including here in the Fox Valley area, no longer experienced a pet overpopulation problem. Shelters in many southern states are still grappling with the flow of incoming unwanted pets, but even in these areas, great strides are being made in the right direction. Within the next decade, pet overpopulation could be a thing of the past across the entire United States. Wouldn’t that be amazing?

Solving the tragedy of pet overpopulation throughout the entire US has been the goal of animal welfare organizations for the last half-century. Thanks to many years of dedicated commitment, we’re nearly there.

Throughout much of the country including here in the Fox Valley area, we’ve already reached that goal.

So what’s next?
A time for change

We are proud of our lifesaving legacy. Over the course of over 50 years, we have saved the lives of nearly 100,000 homeless dogs and cats and we’ve solved the problem of pet overpopulation in our community.

And now it’s time for us to re-envision animal welfare and our responsibility to the people and animals of our community. It’s time for us to recognize the value of all animals and to embrace the knowledge that animals and people connected, are better.

It’s time for an expanded vision and mission. It’s time to envision a new kind of humane.
Our new Vision:
A humane world for people and animals.

Our new mission:
Creating mutually beneficial connections between people and animals through programs that raise awareness and inspire kindness, empathy and respect throughout our community.

Our 2021-2025 Strategic Goals:

Major Strategic Initiative: be our community’s resource for animals.

1. Assistance for all animals.
   Expand animal welfare programs and provide information about all types of animals in our community, including “little critters”, pet birds, companion animals and wildlife.

2. Saving animals, helping people.
   Offer inspiring and engaging programs accessible to all members of our community, that create and cultivate mutually beneficial connections between people and animals.

3. Build a Humane Center that will transform our community.
   By 2024, build a state-of-the art Humane Center campus designed for the comfort of both people and animals, that will promote positive, engaging and impactful interactions with animals, inspiring kindness and respect for animals—and other people.
We believe that all people and animals have value and are worthy of respect. We provide information, advice and training so people can learn to interact effectively with animals, in the knowledge that awareness leads to understanding, empathy, and respect, not only for animals, but also for one another.

We believe it is our responsibility to protect animals and to preserve relationships between people and animals that improve the wellbeing of both. Through visionary programs and lifesaving partnerships, we protect pets, wild animals and wild places, and provide resources that safeguard mutually beneficial relationships between people and animals.

We recognize that people who experience positive interactions with animals are happier, healthier and have greater empathy and respect for others. We believe these are the building blocks of a humane community. By facilitating meaningful engagement and supporting positive relationships between people and animals, we will create a kinder, more humane community where together, people and animals thrive.

Our Guiding Principles

Respect
We believe that all people and animals have value and are worthy of respect.
We provide information, advice and training so people can learn to interact effectively with animals, in the knowledge that awareness leads to understanding, empathy, and respect, not only for animals, but also for one another.

Protect
We believe it is our responsibility to protect animals and to preserve relationships between people and animals that improve the wellbeing of both.
Through visionary programs and lifesaving partnerships, we protect pets, wild animals and wild places, and provide resources that safeguard mutually beneficial relationships between people and animals.

Connect
We recognize that people who experience positive interactions with animals are happier, healthier and have greater empathy and respect for others. We believe these are the building blocks of a humane community.
By facilitating meaningful engagement and supporting positive relationships between people and animals, we will create a kinder, more humane community where together, people and animals thrive.
Major Strategic Initiative: Be our community’s resource for animals.

No matter the question, problem or concern, Anderson will be the first place our community thinks of to help with anything animal-related. If we can’t help directly, we’ll connect you with someone who can.
Since 2001, Fox Valley Wildlife Center has provided care for thousands of injured and orphaned wild animals each year, rehabilitating and releasing them back into the wild.

In March of 2020, Anderson joined forces with FVWC, moving us one step closer to fulfilling a core component of our mission and strategic plan:

Assistance for all animals.
Along with our commitment to wild animals must also come a commitment to promoting the preservation of the forests, prairies and other habitats these animals rely upon for their survival. Through interactive programming and accessible information, we will share the beauty and awe of nature, cultivating respect and inspiring the protection of wild animals and wild places.
Strategic Goal #1: Assistance for all animals.

There are others who need our help

For over 50 years, we have defined "pets" as dogs and cats: a narrow definition, indeed. We now recognize that our community defines "pets" more widely. Many species of animals are kept as pets. From the smallest to the largest, they need our help. And so do the people who love them.
“Little critters” such as hamsters, gerbils, ferrets, and rabbits are a diverse group of small mammals commonly kept as pets. They live in homes throughout our community, yet there are few resources available when they become homeless or to help their owners provide the specialized care they need.

Many species of parrots are kept as pets. They vary from small parakeets to much larger macaws with lifespans of up to 80 years. These birds have very specialized caging, handling and diet requirements, and they often outlive their owners. They become homeless at alarming rates, yet there is no one to help owners care for their birds, and nowhere for homeless birds to go.

Among “little critters”, rabbits are the most common type of pet. They require specialized care that many owners are not prepared to provide. Most animal shelters turn rabbits away, so few resources exist for homeless rabbits or their owners.

When it comes to abuse and neglect, few animals rival the fate of horses throughout history. They are expensive to keep, and the first to suffer when financial situations change. Anderson will partner with Field of Dreams Horse Rescue & Adoption, to provide care and rehoming of horses in need.
Protecting families in times of crisis.

Helping families keep their pets safe during times of crisis is a fundamental need in our community. Through partnerships with human service organizations such as Mutual Ground and Elgin’s Community Crisis Center, we will provide free boarding to the pets of domestic violence victims, allowing them to leave their abuser without fearing for the safety of their pet. Similar partnerships with Lazarus House and Hesed House through which we will provide free boarding to the pets of those experiencing homelessness, will ensure the safety of both people and pets.
Supporting the bond. Keeping families together.

Thousands of pets are relinquished to shelters each year by owners who can not afford to feed them or provide even basic veterinary care. Families are torn apart simply because there are no resources available to help low-income families to care for their pets.

Through programs focused on supporting the bond between people and their pets, we will keep pets out of shelters and with their families, where they belong.
Strategic Goal #2: Saving animals, helping people.

Anderson’s Military Veterans’ Program (MVP) provide specialized opportunities for veterans to volunteer with animals either at one of our shelter locations or in their own homes. These interactive experiences create lasting connections, changing the lives of both people and animals.
Their whole world

For many people, animals form the center of their social relationships. The elderly especially, are prone to isolation-related depression and suffer rapid physical and emotional decline if they can no longer keep their pet. Yet there are few resources available to help elderly and low-income pet owners care for and keep their pets.

Through programs that subsidize the cost of adoption and provide resources for adoptive families in need, we will provide opportunities for people to adopt, who would not otherwise be able to afford a pet.

We’ll be the safety net that family needs, to ensure the family stays happy, healthy and together.
Strategic Goal #3: Build a Humane Center that will transform our community.

In 2019, Anderson purchased 124 acres of farmland in Kane County approximately 6 miles west of St. Charles with a generous gift from Steve and Mary Hinze, in memory of Steve’s mother, Dottie Hinze. By 2024, we plan to build a Humane Center on this location, that will revolutionize animal welfare in our community and that will change the way we think about animals and the connections they form with people.
Bringing people and animals together, for good.

Designed with the comfort of both animals and people in mind, the new Anderson Humane Center campus will support our mission to connect people with animals through a variety of lifesaving and impactful programs. The main building will house our dog, cat and “little critter” adoption programs as well as providing space for administrative functions. Our Parrot Resource and Adoption Center will be the first of its kind in the Midwest, providing opportunities for people to learn about, interact with and adopt these highly intelligent birds. Our Equine Therapy, Resource and Adoption Center will be operated in partnership with Field of Dreams Horse Rescue and Adoption and HorsePower Equine Therapy Program, creating opportunities for people of all ages to interact positively with horses, donkeys and other hooved animals. Our Wildlife Center will be designed to support the care of orphaned and injured wildlife and to encourage visitors to understand and experience the awesome power of nature.