

The Georgian Triangle Humane Society Asks: Has 2023 Gone to the Dogs?

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Collingwood, ON (July 27, 2023)

At the Georgian Triangle Humane Society (GTHS), and around the country, dog and puppy homelessness has steadily risen leaving many Humane Societies and shelters at 100% capacity every single day.

“At our Animal Centre, we are hearing stories of puppies abandoned in the countryside, and dog owners are admitting to releasing their dogs so animal control will pick them up, because waitlists are too long,” explains Sonya Reichel, GTHS executive director. “Pet parents are struggling with housing and are living pay cheque to pay cheque. Simultaneously, fewer people are opting to bring a puppy into their lives, leaving backyard breeders or ‘oops’ litters no choice but to turn to Humane Societies to care for their rapidly growing puppies.”



Reichel has been working with the [Ontario Animal Welfare Network](#) (OAWN), a group of 16 SPCAs and Humane Societies that work together to improve animal welfare through resource sharing, collaboration, and support. Together, the OAWN is brainstorming ways to help more animals, and Reichel hints, “some exciting plans are in motion – stay tuned!”

When asked how the community can support the GTHS through its ongoing capacity challenges, Reichel responds, “if you, or anyone you know, are looking to welcome a dog into your family or are interested in joining the GTHS Foster Volunteer Team, visit gths.ca/ to learn more about the dogs available for adoption, or to fill out a Foster Volunteer application form. Also, if you run into a GTHS volunteer, please THANK them, as their efforts and dedication, at a combined 13,525 hours of service so far this year, mean the world to our pets.”



To learn more about GTHS impact and activities throughout the first half of 2023, you can access the [GTHS Q2 Impact Report](#) at gths.ca/q2-impact-report/.

Key highlights throughout the first half of 2023 include:

- **1,937 pets served** through programs and services.
- **The GTHS sheltered 655 animals**, which is 23 more pets than 2022.
- **492 have been adopted**, with the adoption return rate increasing (4 more cats returns and 5 more dogs returns over 2022). Observations around the return rate center around more challenging medical and behavioural cases entering the shelter system.
- Length of stay in the shelter increased by an average of 3 days for dogs (to an average length of stay of 19.4 days) and decreased by an average of 6 days for cats (to an average length of stay of 22.6 days).
- The GTHS animal hospital conducted **1,150 spay/neuter surgeries**, which is 195 less than 2022, due to staffing shortages and operating at a 4 day per week model. A 5 day a week model is anticipated to begin in the Fall.
- 176 pets have been fostered by dedicated volunteers.

- **HOT OFF THE PRESS!** The Town of Blue Mountains council approved the GTHS as a pound provider for the municipality. This means once a contract is signed, the GTHS will accept stray dogs from the Town of Blue Mountains.
- Treasure Tails, the GTHS Thrift Store in downtown Collingwood, continues to raise thousands of dollars due to generous donations and dedicated volunteers.
- **End of Life services** became available to the public, as a humane and dignified service for financially limited pet parents to offer a peaceful goodbye to their beloved pet.
- **Twice the number of rabies vaccinations and microchips** have been given due to an increased number of rabies and vaccination clinics. Stay tuned for a 'mega' event in the Fall!
- **Saugeen Shores Access to Care project**, funded by PetSmart Charities of Canada, is well underway (don't miss the [press release](#)). The purpose of the PetSmart Charities Grant is to increase access to veterinary care for a community that has been historically excluded. With an estimated population of 1,400 residents, and a minimum of 100 dogs, the desire and need for access to spay/neuter surgeries is great.
- **\$11,400 was spent** to cover the cost of veterinary bills in emergency situations with the goal of keeping pets with their loving families.
- **85 dogs received training** through Dog School programs.
- Online courses continue to be accessed by hundreds of youths in our community. So far this year, **370 youths have received their Junior Animal Welfare certification and 434 youth have completed the Responsible Pet Ownership course.**
- In the first half of the year, 343 volunteers have dedicated **13,525 hours of services, which is the equivalent of 13 full-time employees.**
- The **total value of volunteer hours in Q1 and Q2 was \$243,500.**
- 89 new volunteers were recruited and received their training and onboarding.



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The Georgian Triangle Humane Society

The GTHS is a non-profit charity that operates an Animal Centre serving the south Georgian Bay region by providing shelter for homeless animals and adopting them to caring families. They offer innovative programs that enhance and support the human-animal bond. These programs include humane education, pet retention, access to veterinary medicine and animal transport for pets in underserved communities.