

# YEAR-END REPORT

Orange County Animal Services 2023

**Sasha Baron Phillips (A461015)**  
was readopted from Orange  
County Animal Services on  
February 5, 2023.



# ANIMAL SERVICES AT A GLANCE

**94%**  
live release  
rate for dogs

**87%**  
live release  
rate for cats

overall live release rate 90%



**14,287**  
domestic animal  
impounds



**30,629**  
requests for  
citizen response  
handled



**71,129**  
shelter visitors



**\$51,020**

awarded in  
grants to  
non-profit  
organizations  
helping Orange  
County pets



**ANIMAL SERVICES  
CURRENTLY HAS  
104 FULL-TIME  
POSITIONS** split  
across four teams  
– Enforcement,  
Kennel, Clinic and  
Communications.



**RESPONSIBLE FOR ENFORCING  
CHAPTER 5 OF THE CODE OF  
ORDINANCES FOR ORANGE  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**, which  
encompasses nearly 1,000 square  
miles and has a human population  
of nearly 1.4 million residents.



**THE SHELTER IS  
SUPPORTED BY A  
NETWORK OF**



**252**  
volunteers

**448**  
foster  
parents

**103**  
rescue  
groups

# MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

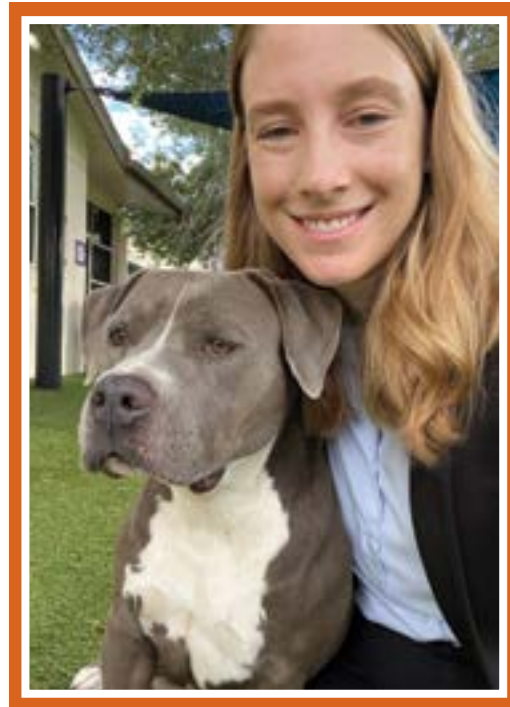
Hello,

I am thrilled to present this Year-End Report for fiscal year 2023. What a year it has been! This document highlights just some of our shelter's major achievements and our favorite stories that we're still thinking about days, weeks and months later.

Freshest in our minds is the canine pneumovirus. The outbreak of this virus, which is a part of the Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex, led to us suspending dog intakes for several weeks right at the end of the fiscal year in September. Thanks to the quick action of our clinic team, emerging cases were identified promptly and medications started immediately thereafter, ensuring these dogs made a full recovery. With dog intakes suspended, we were able to house a lower population than typical and quarantine our sick and exposed pups. I want to take a moment to thank our community for standing by us during this time so that we could make this unprecedented change to operations.

Additionally, I'd like to share my gratitude to our staff. We made immediate protocol changes in response to this virus, like nothing I've ever seen before, and everyone came together to get the job done, get the message out and protect our most vulnerable. I'm impressed by this group of people each and every day.

Because of this staff, our volunteers, foster parents and rescue groups, we were able to secure an overall live release rate of 90%, specifically 94% for our dog population and 87% for our cat population. This is the third year in a row our shelter has achieved an overall live release rate at or above



90%. This is no small feat and deserves to be recognized. If you assisted our shelter in some way during this past year, you share in this success right alongside us.

As we turn to look toward the future, we eagerly await the advancement of our new Animal Services shelter, which will be on our same footprint of land adjacent to the Mall at Millenia. The larger shelter will feature a number of advancements, including full climate control. The new building, progressing thanks to our Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings and Board of County Commissioners, will enable us to better serve our population and usher us into a new era of lifesaving and sheltering.

We invite you to stay tuned to all of our progress, developments and new services and programs.

*Diane Summers*

Diane Summers

# ENFORCEMENT

**30,629**  
Number of activities handled

**1,313**  
Number of citations issued

**198**  
Number of court cases

**2,573**  
Number of bite reports

**Number of wildlife and pocket pets relocated**

**+ 230**  
Back to Nature

**+ 209**  
Fallin' Pines Critter Rescue

**+ 69**  
Audubon Center for Birds of Prey

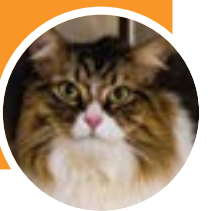
**+ 1**  
Local Farm

**509**  
**ANIMALS**

**The Animal Services Enforcement Operations Team includes** 24 Animal Services officers, four Senior Animal Services officers, a dispatch team, program coordinators and a program manager. The Enforcement Operations Team responds to calls for citizens assistance on a priority basis and does so 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.



More information on our cover pet: Sasha Baron Phillips (A461015) was adopted from Orange County Animal Services in 2020 by Rob Phillips, who worked with Orange County's 3-1-1 team as well as the ISS team. Sasha spent three years with Rob before he unfortunately passed away on March 27, 2023. Sasha found a new home, through Orange County Animal Services, in early 2023. When asked recently how Sasha is doing in his new home, adopter Molly Hall stated: "He is a joy to have in the house. I love him. He is my best friend."



**Confiscations** Animal Services Officers confiscated more than 1,000 pets from unsafe situations this year. These situations include abandoned pets, those left in hot cars, those not receiving adequate care and even hoarding situations. This year there were 29 cases that resulted in the seizure of nine or more pets from individual households, due to concern for their wellbeing. Many of these situations appear to be hoarding, with an owner or owners beyond their capacity for care. These are pictures from a few of those households.



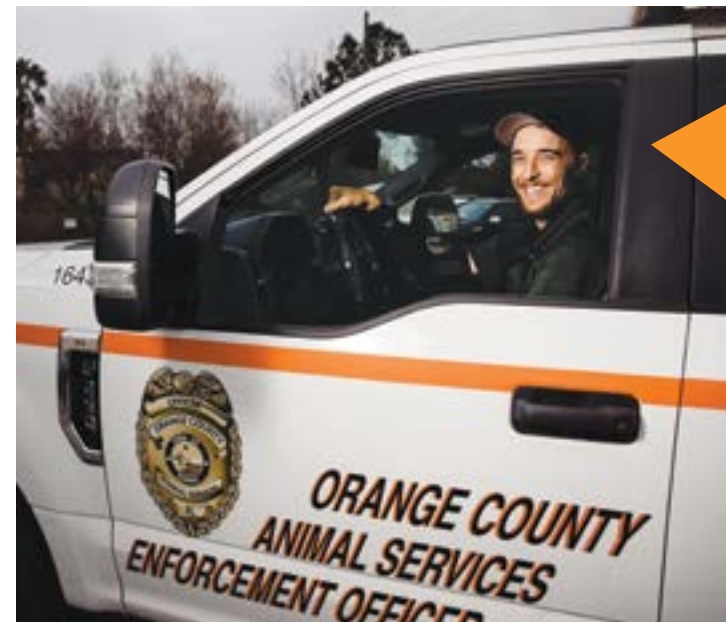
"Hoarders isn't just a show on A&E, these are real-life situations that our officers handle on a regular basis. Hoarding is a mental disorder and tends to get worse with age. Hoarders are characterized as having difficulty in getting rid of things, finding value in things that are damaged or soiled, and an obsessive compulsion to collect items. In regard to animal hoarding, we typically find that people in these situations start out with good intentions. They may have found a kitten or dog. They feel bad for the animal and allow it to cohabitate with them, but then quickly become overwhelmed once the animals begin to breed with one another. Many of the people we encounter in this situation are at one point able to cope with the animals, but a major life change sparks a downward spiral into deplorable conditions.

I have been in homes and shown family photos of the home prior to a loved one passing away and it is unbelievable how much the home had deteriorated in a short period of time. Other times, losing a job or going through a divorce causes a mental depression that allows them to ignore their unsanitary living environment. I have been to a call where a divorcee was living in her car in the driveway; she would go inside only to toss some food for the cats, and fill up their water containers. Inside, the 18 cats had completely destroyed this middle-class home. The smell inside a home such as this is unbearable without a mask. Ammonia smell burns the lungs and throat. There is particulate

matter floating in the air while walking on all the debris and feces. Cats are flying off of the furniture and trash inside as they have never been properly socialized or handled. For several hours we were suited up in hazmat gear, climbing over mountains of debris, attempting to net cats in a hot, smelly environment. This owner was still able to hold a job, but our officers are sometimes the first people who have been in these residents homes in months or even years.



It is frustrating dealing with residents and situations such as these and even more so knowing that the recidivism rate is so high for hoarding/animal hoarding. The best feeling of all is getting animals out of these situations, seeing them nursed back to health and giving them a much-needed bath. The second best feeling of all is taking a long hot shower after spending a few hours in one of these hoarder homes. Thank you to all of our brave ACOs who fearlessly charge into the filth!" — Senior Animal Services Officer *Daniel McCracken*



We are incredibly proud of our Officers and the work they perform day in and day out, working with our community to help protect as many pets as possible.

# CLINIC

16,834

Number of vet exams performed

602

Number of X-rays taken

353

Number of pets sponsored for heartworm treatment through partner clinics Ocoee Animal Hospital and the Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando

7,855

Number of spay/neuter surgeries performed

973

Number of spay/neuter vouchers issued

623

Number of trap-neuter-return program surgeries

158

Number of surgeries for CARE Feline TNR

136

Number of Wait Til 8 program surgeries



## The Animal Services Clinic Team is comprised

of three full-time veterinarians, one part-time veterinarian, two supervisors, a group of technicians, two receptionists and a chief veterinarian. The Clinic Team handles spay/neuter surgeries, preps

animals for departure with their adopters and rescue groups, triages animals as they arrive and conducts exams for ongoing medical issues for pets in the shelter's care.



Vet Tech Tomye is pictured here with her foster dog Ferdinand and his new family.

The Animal Services Clinic is key in caring out the shelter's thriving foster care program. In addition to pets fostered by members of the public, a total of 360 pets were fostered by Animal Services employees. Thank you to team members Caroline St. Clair, Eleanor Edwards, Angel Rivera Velez, Danielle Fay, Tomye Armstrong, Lorenz Small, Sharnell Womack, Gwen Bulinski, Staci Dees, Leigh Anne Marsh, Linda Hull, Ryan Potts, Lydia Quinn, Crystal Kincaid, Desiree Eichner, Makayla Cobia, Amy Sullivan, Cameron Grant, Ivy Martinez, Stephanie Fernandez, Yalina Baella, Amy Olinsky, Chantelle Fernandez, Tiffany Seay, Darlene Rivers, Bailey Buchold, Colleen Rodriguez, Danielle Cannon, Faith Galvez, Jasmine Lopez, Katherine Martinez, Kendal Deakin, Dr. Tamara Downs and Jennifer Diaz for carrying for the shelter pets both at work and at home.



**Chowder (A526913)** arrived at our shelter on May 17, 2023, after a resident observed him being thrown from the window of an unknown car. Chowder weighed just over one pound at the time and was estimated to be only five weeks in age. Our Foster Coordinator Amy Sullivan took him in for foster care and the two had quite the adventure together over the next few months!

Chowder's leg was damaged and unfortunately unable to be saved, resulting in Veterinarian Dr. Leili Haas to perform a leg amputation. Dr. Haas and Amy have found a niche interest in helping kittens with leg injuries. Together they have saved approximately two dozen kittens, with Amy fostering and Dr. Haas performing the medical care. Some kittens have been able to regain use of their injured extremity and others, like Chowder, have needed amputation.

Now a tripod, Chowder's medical issues weren't over yet. He was diagnosed with feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) and later developed pneumonia. In total, he spent nearly three months in foster care with Amy before being adopted on August 12, 2023, at that time weighing nearly five pounds.

This case helps demonstrate the lengths our Clinic Team goes to save an individual life. Thank you to our Veterinarians and Technicians who make miracles happen nearly every day.

**Beckham (A534203)** arrived at Orange County Animal Services on September 25, 2023, having been found with a badly injured back, right leg. The shocking injury left the metatarsals visible. He was immediately transported to the shelter clinic where the veterinarians and technicians began to work on him, providing multiple medications including one for pain management.

Despite his severe injury, Beckham was still friendly and easily able to be handled. He was taken in by **Furever Bully Love Rescue** the same day. We sincerely appreciate the dedication of our rescue partners to take in our most significant medical cases.

# KENNEL

Number of domestic animals (dogs, cats, birds, etc.) impounded by intake type:

**7,464**

Strays

**2,455**

Owner Surrender

**1,159**

Owned

**1,102**

Confiscated

**611**

Adoption Returns

**870**

Requested Owner Euthanasia

**357**

Requested Disposal

**269**

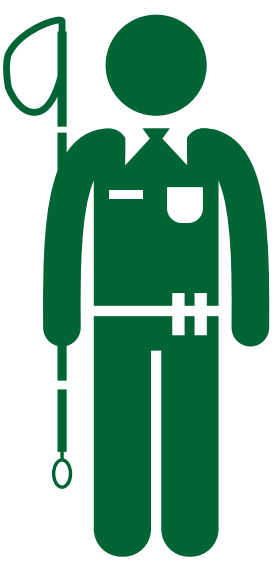
Trasferred in from Rescue

**14,132**

Behavior Observations Logged

## The Animal Services Kennel Team includes

16 Animal Services officers, four animal care assistants, two supervisors, the volunteer coordinator, a full-time behaviorist, a part-time behaviorist and a program manager. The Kennel Team is responsible for impounding animals, housing them and providing their day-to-day care. The Kennel Team also encompasses the volunteer program.

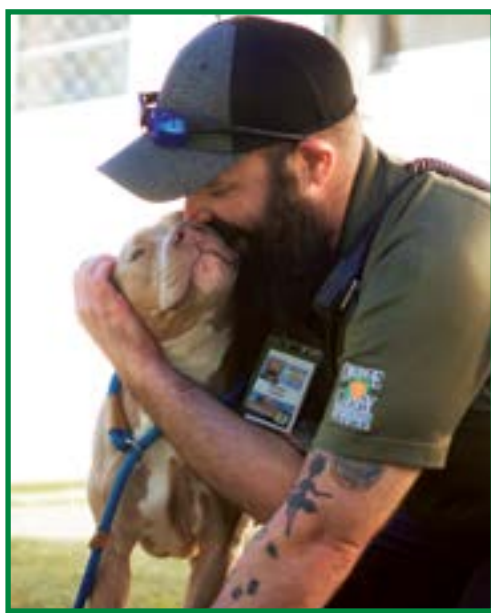


Orange County Animal Services launched the "Book Buddies" program in May 2023. The program invites students to visit the shelter to read one-on-one to a homeless shelter pet. The experience is beneficial practice for new readers and comforting to the animals as well. The program was implemented by and now thriving thanks to Volunteer Coordinator Crystal Kincaid.



**18,620**

Number of volunteer hours



**8,252**

Number of community service hours



## Volunteer Spotlight

- Mike Davis

"ORANGE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES IS BOTH PROUD AND LUCKY TO HAVE MIKE AS ONE OF OURS."

— OCAS Volunteer Ken Schields



"Over the past years, Mike has become a beacon of joy to our dogs. He spends a large amount of his time focusing on the more needy girls and these include the ones that have fear issues, lack of socialization and/or have insecurities, or general behavior issues after being abandoned or discarded by their owners. He is also a major source of information for other volunteers concerning the dogs' needs and/or behavior challenges.

"His devotion and compassion has been so very evident this year during the canine pneumovirus challenges. He jumped in and was a leader with our enrichment program, taking charge and giving the dogs a daily outlet they so badly needed.

"Mike is such a pleasant soul. His always-smiling face and ability to uplift volunteer feelings simply by his presence provides an abundance of support to everyone, especially on those days when the pre-OCAS plight of so many dogs gets everyone down. He is a bastion of hope that we know will eventually come true for our favorite (as in just about all) canines." — Volunteer Ken Schields

"Mike is amazing in the mornings while taking the dogs out during cleaning. He does his absolute best to keep the dogs from walking through the cleaner on the floors and if he sees us moving dogs over to clean the other side while bringing his dog back to their kennel, he will put the dog on the proper side so we have one less dog to move. It may seem like a small thing, but in the midst of chaos he really is a saving grace. I have pointed out dogs to him that seem super pent up and he takes them out first so they have a calmer day ahead of them. We appreciate Mike so much. Thank you for all your help!" — Animal Services Officer Darlene Rivers

# COMMUNICATIONS

**71,129**

Number of shelter visitors

**8,314**

Number of pet adoptions

**1,465**

Number pet reclaims

- Approximately 37% of dogs were reclaimed by their owners compared to just 4% of cats.

**1,935**

Number of pets fostered

**360**

Pets fostered by Animal Services Staff

**211**

Number of new foster parents recruited this year



**The Animal Services Communications Team includes** a group of Animal Services specialists, two supervisors, a program coordinator for adoptions, a program coordinator for foster care, a program coordinator for rescue placements and a program manager. This team is often the first face many people encounter at with the shelter, as they serve at the front desk, helping to facilitate adoptions and reunifications between owners and their missing pets.



## Social Media Efforts

**79,094**

followers on **FACEBOOK**  
@orangecountyanimalservices

**60,503**

followers on **INSTAGRAM**  
@orangecountyanimalservices



**Linda Hepenstal** began with Orange County Animal Services in November 2003 and served as the front desk supervisor for nearly 20 years, retiring in October 2022. Linda passed away on May 1, 2023, at the age of 74. "Linda was a cat person through and through. I had the opportunity to work with her for about a decade, and we became quite close during that time. She was a joy to be around and poured her heart into her work here. She would have worked here for every moment possible if her body let her. She loved coming in each day, spending time with her coworkers and helping the shelter visitors. When I learned of her passing my first thought was for her kitties. My hope is that Linda knew her cats would be taken care of after she left us." — Manager *Diane Summers*



Linda's passing left behind four cats, **Meowgi (A229530)**, **Izzy (A526007)**, **Tigger (A194586)** and **Rusty (A023154)**. The latter two both at 18 years old. Meowgi and Izzy were adopted, but unfortunately Tigger and Rusty were struggling, having been adopted and then returned due to not reacting well to the dog in the home. Thankfully the stars aligned for them to be adopted into the perfect family.

"I worked at Orange County Animal Services for about 5 years and never adopted a pet of my own because at the time I had a roommate who had three dogs. I always loved the senior pets, they had a special place in my heart and I knew when it was time for me to adopt I would want a senior. After working at OCAS, I transitioned into a new career and my husband and I had to travel 100% of the time so timing wasn't right for me to adopt. My husband and I recently moved back to Central Florida and are no longer traveling for work. We knew after settling into our apartment we were ready to adopt our first pet. When I saw Rusty and Tigger on social media, they looked perfect! Two senior cats who recently lost their owner, they shouldn't have to spend their golden years at the shelter. Within 5 minutes of seeing them online, my husband and I made the decision to drive over to the shelter and meet them in person. We fell in love instantly. We couldn't believe how great these two kitties looked for being 18 years old. We knew their previous owner had to have taken really great care of them. As we were finalizing adoption paperwork, a former coworker of mine approached me and informed me that Rusty and Tiggers previous owner was Linda. I had no idea but then it all made sense how these cats looked so great for their age. Linda was the cat guru. When I worked at the shelter I remember everyone went to Linda if they needed any type of cat advice. Linda knew everything about cats. Rusty and Tigger are settling in so well in their new home and my husband and I love them so much. They are so sweet and affectionate and love to curl up next to us in our bed. We're so thankful that Linda provided these kitties with such a wonderful life prior to us adopting them. She will forever be remembered in our hearts as the cat expert who was always ready to share some feline wisdom." — Adopter *Carolina Devine*



## Foster Spotlight

**Kim and Dante Roderick** became foster parents in October 2021 and have quickly become some of our most reliable foster parents! Since they became foster parents, they have fostered 105 cats and kittens for OCAS! They are always willing to take on challenging cases and give the kittens their best shot, and have been a huge help when it comes to sick kittens in need of supportive care. Kim and Dante have taken bottle baby classes and have begun fostering bottle babies this year as well. They have experience giving SubQ fluids, bottle feeding, syringe feeding, and have always been willing to try their best to help our most in need kittens, even if the kitten's prognosis wasn't the best to begin with. They've worked their magic and gotten these kittens to be healthy and adoptable! Kim and Dante have also been available for overnight fosters, short-term fosters until a permanent foster became available, and watching others' foster pets when needed, in addition to regularly fostering their own litters. We can always count on them when we have a group in need. Their help has been invaluable to OCAS, and we appreciate all that they have done for us!" — Foster Coordinator *Amy Sullivan*



## Rescue Spotlight

"I must say that it took me a little by surprise when one of our cat rescuers was inquiring about a dog. Maurice, as the shelter named him, was brought to us with another dog confined to a crate in the back of a pick-up truck. According to the finders, they witnessed the dogs being dumped in front of their house. Maurice was critically emaciated, in mild heat distress, with overgrown nails, covered in fleas and intestinal parasites. In despite of his condition, he was very sociable. It wasn't until he was posted twice to our dog rescue partners that I surprisingly received a message from **Purrrfect Angels Rescue** inquiring about his medical records and his personality. Two days later they sent their hold request. Shortly after, I received a video of Maurice with his new foster-to-fail parent who is now his new happy and proud owner. Often, I still receive pictures and videos of how well Maurice is doing at his new home and how he sprung back to life! Purrrfect Angels Rescue is our second top supporter rescue this year, having pulled 112 cats with major behavioral and medical concerns! We are truly grateful of their support and professionalism." — Rescue Coordinator *Heidy Matos*



### 1,304 Dog and Cat Rescue Placements

#### To-pulling rescue groups of 2023 by animal type

Cats		Dogs	
CARE Feline TNR	153	Furever Bully Love Rescue	39
Purrrfect Angels Rescue	129	Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando	35
The Pixel Fund	57	Touch of Grey Rescue	28

# NOTABLE EVENTS



**ANIMAL SERVICES** strives to have a presence in the community and has attended and hosted several events in the recent year.

## HERE ARE JUST A FEW HIGHLIGHTS

**4th Annual Furry Fall Festival** - On October 26, 2022, OCAS hosted its 4th annual Furry Fall Festival. This fun and lighthearted event brings our staff and community together for a day of celebration, activities, and Halloween costumes. Adoption fees were waived for all animals, and the shelter hosted several food trucks for staff and our community, held a costume contest, and decorating activities for kids. It also hosted the annual Battle of the Doors competition, where different departments competed as to who had the best Halloween themed door.

**9th Annual Barktoberfest 2022** - On November 20, 2022, in celebration of all the great rescue groups that work with the shelter, OCAS took to Lake Eola for our annual Barktoberfest

event. Partnering up with Fox35, OCAS promoted rescue adoptions with almost 40 rescues, vendors and food trucks. The Animal Services mobile clinic was also present to provide free rabies vaccinations and microchipping for the community. Even though the weather did not cooperate, Barktoberfest was still one of the shelter's largest and most popular events of the year.

**Florida Animal Control Association Conference** - The annual Florida Animal Control Association Conference and Awards Banquet took place February 23 through February 26, 2023. Several OCAS staff members attended the conference to continue their education in the field and learn the latest and best practices.







**Volunteer Appreciation Week** – National Volunteer Appreciation Week spanned April 16 through April 22, 2023. Animal Services shared a number of social media posts adorning the volunteers for their year-round dedication and hard work. On April 19, 2023, Volunteer Coordinator Crystal Kincaid planned a celebration for the volunteers and many participated.

**5th Annual Golden Tarot Cattoo Day** – On May 28, 2023, OCAS partnered up once more with Golden Tarot Tattoo to host our large annual adoption event for cats in foster care. Dozens of cats were present for adoption with their foster parents, and all tattoo proceeds were donated to the shelter. The event drew a diverse crowd of adopters who were there both for the ink and the kittens.

**Petco Love Mega Adoption Event** – On June 23, 2023, OCAS joined PETCO Love for The Mega Pet Adoption event that took place in Plant City, Florida. The shelter staff transported 12 of our amazing dogs there, and almost half were adopted that same day. There were hundreds of dogs present from all other shelters in the Central Florida area, and the weekend-long event drew thousands of people from all over the state to adopt.

**Realtors for Rescues** – On Saturday, July 29, 2023, OCAS was invited by the amazing group Rescues for Realtors for their very first adoption event. The event was hosted at the Jewish Community Center in Maitland where food trucks, a live band, and various vendors drew many adopters from the local area. OCAS

transported 10 shelter dogs and successfully placed several of them with adopters.

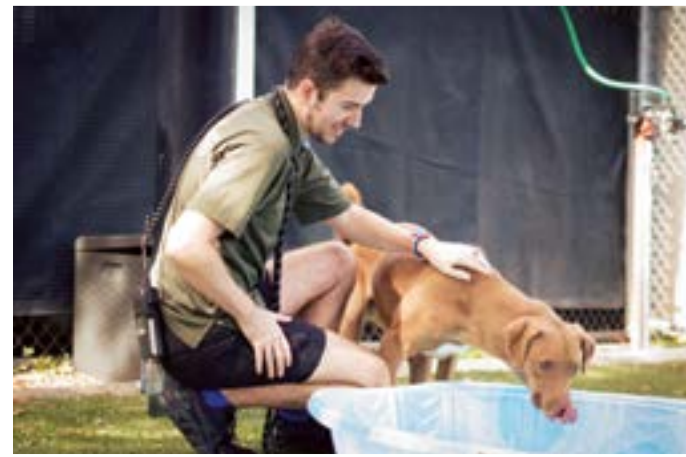
**Clear the Shelters 2023** – Once again, on August 1, 2023, OCAS took part in this annual month-long adoption event, teaming up with hundreds of shelters across the country in an effort to Clear the Shelters. This nationwide adoption event helps find homes for thousands of pets every year. Adoption fees were lowered or waived, and the event has proven to be incredibly successful not just for the pets at OCAS, but at shelters all over the country.



**Orange County Fire Department & Orange County Animal Services Calendar Collaboration** – In a first-of-its-kind collaboration, OCAS partnered up with Orange County Fire and Rescue for a Firefighters and Friends calendar shoot in September 2023. There was an overwhelming turnout of emergency responders that wanted to take part in this event — so many that the shelter had to host a second photo shoot. The calendar was a great success, with all proceeds from the calendar sale going to United Way.

**PetSuites Partnership Launches** – Beginning on April 1, 2023, OCAS began a partnership with PetSuites boarding facilities, at the Winter Garden and Winter Springs locations. PetSuites generously offered free room and board to a select few shelter dogs, providing them a much-needed break from the shelter. Tyger (A505741) was the lucky pup who piloted the program on April 1 and was adopted just two weeks later. PetSuites has been instrumental in helping these dogs find their new families and OCAS is grateful for their assistance.





**Animal Services  
looks forward  
to continuing to  
engage with the  
community in  
2024!**





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