



# OCONEE REGIONAL HUMANE SOCIETY



## STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2026

APRIL 2022



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# LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Today's animal welfare issues are complex and growing, adding pressure on the already stressed capacity of the Oconee Regional Humane Society ("ORHS"). This forces us to look at what we do, and how we do it but also creates opportunities for us to do it better.

ORHS is at the forefront of identifying solutions to these critical issues through innovative approaches and strategic partnerships that go beyond our traditional boundaries. Rather than simply reacting by doing more of the same, we are identifying the issues' root causes in order to alleviate them in the future, which will improve the lives of our pets and their humans.

Twenty years after its creation ORHS is at an exciting state in its development. To guide this next stage of growth, we conducted a formal strategic planning process that solicited input from a broad range of stakeholders. The result is a distinct long-term plan to expand the range and impact of our work.

Our Strategic Plan provides a clear roadmap for ORHS's future. It lays out the path that leverages our assets to create opportunities and partnerships that drive innovation in animal services. It outlines a focused direction to build an animal services facility able to address the most critical issues of today as well as the challenges of tomorrow.

Moving forward we remain committed to putting ideas into action that will result in a safer and healthier public and the best outcomes for animals.

*The ORHS Board of Directors*

# INTRODUCTION

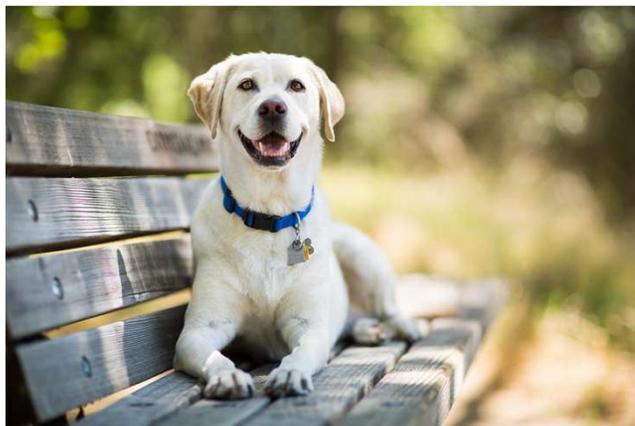
This Strategic Plan is intended to guide ORHS's efforts as a community resource for Georgia's Lake Country (focus on Greene and Putnam counties) to ensure they are in the best interest of the residents.

Our Strategic Plan reflects the changing societal needs, building upon traditional sheltering services and incorporating changes that will better prepare us for the future needs of our community.

Our mission and vision reflect the desire to work more with our community and build an organization that provides broader services for the overall health and wellbeing of its pets. The Strategic Plan lays out the roadmap for how to:

- Deliver traditional services
- Improve those services through new enrichment programs
- Enhance partnership with the community, both those that rely on us for services and those that provide services
- Operate in an efficient and effective manner

The Strategic Plan is a living document that will be reviewed and revised to meet the changing needs of our community.



# HISTORY

ORHS was formed in 1999 by a group of residents with a common passion for animals. ORHS started as a small team of volunteers who took animals into their homes while trying to get them adopted any way they could. This included weekend road trips to Milledgeville, Athens and Conyers.

In 2004 ORHS became a 501c3 non-profit organization with a Board of Directors. In our adoption center (a no-kill facility) all incoming animals accepted are evaluated, medically treated and rehabilitated when needed. ORHS does not receive any government funding and relies on the goodwill and generosity of individuals and corporations. Our volunteers ran the operations and did the necessary fundraising.

ORHS grew quickly. Within a few years, hundreds of cats and dogs were being rescued, adopted, and spayed or neutered annually. Thanks to a bequest, a low income Spay/Neuter program was added for residents of Greene and Putnam counties.

In 2012 ORHS was fortunate to find a small centrally located place to house its many cats and kittens with an area to temporarily hold a small number of dogs. Eventually we hired a few employees to help run the center, but we continue to rely on our volunteers for much of the shelter support and fund-raising activities.

Thanks to such great support from the community ORHS has now celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, having rescued, adopted and spayed/neutered thousands of animals.



# HISTORY: ORHS BY THE NUMBERS

## Volunteers:

- Currently we have 175 volunteers who collectively contribute some 220 hours weekly: cat and dog care and feeding, walkers, front desk, publicity, marketing, fund raising, food distribution and transportation
- Fosters (volunteers that care for cats and dogs in their homes while animals are awaiting adoption): 11 cat foster homes and 32 dog foster homes

## Pet Care:

		2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Intake	Cats	173	154	116	129	135
	Dogs	313	354	263	185	268
	Return %	4.5%	4.5%	5.8%	4.4%	7.9%
Outcome	Adoptions	409	474	363	314	379
	Relocation	59	13	0	0	1
	Other	20	17	17	19	28

Notes:

- Relocation, the transfer of pets between agencies, occurs both in intake and outcome. This is done to optimize the chance for successful adoption. Currently we intake more than we transfer through relocation.
- Intake and outcome numbers in a year will not tie due to timing.

## Community Spay Neuter:

- 275 surgeries completed in 2021:
  - Dogs: 48 spayed, 53 neutered,
  - Cats: 120 spayed, 54 neutered

## Food Distribution:

- 200 families throughout Greene and Putnam counties receive approximately 12,000 pounds of food annually

# MISSION, VISION AND VALUES



## MISSION

ORHS is dedicated to advocacy for the care of cats and dogs in need of help through an approach that benefits and improves the community and lives of animals utilizing outreach, education and services accessible to all



## VISION

ORHS envisions a community where companion animals live in a safe and loving home and the human/animal bond is honored by respect and compassion

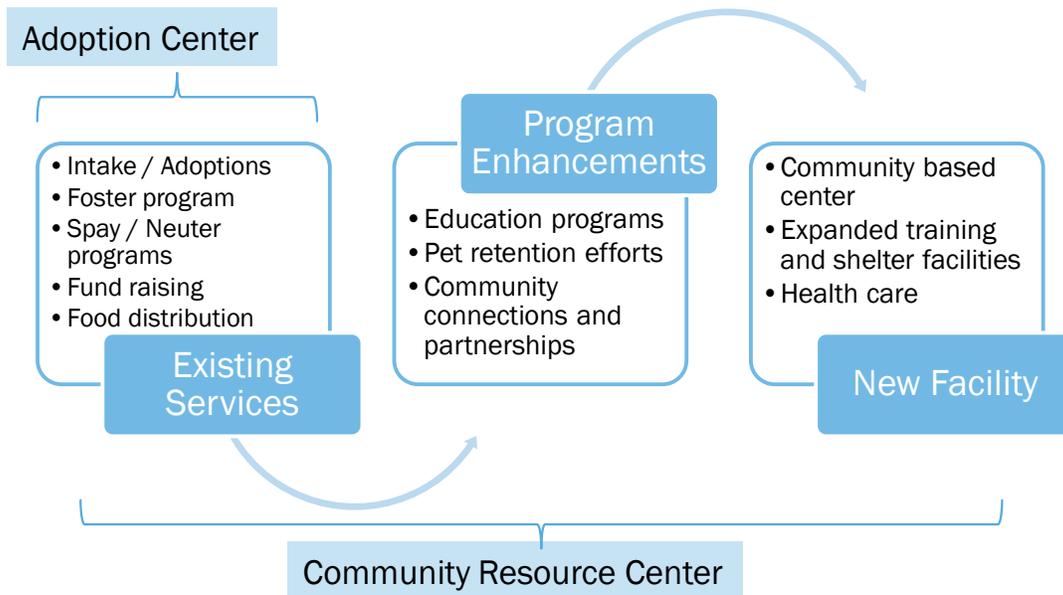
The way we operate to deliver our mission and strive to progress towards the vision includes key **VALUES** of:

- Compassion
- Integrity
- Fiscal responsibility
- Compliance with laws, and
- Teamwork



# DAY-TO-DAY AND LONG-TERM GOALS

ORHS wants to move from our current Adoption Center to a Community Resource Center.



Significant effort and coordination is required to deliver our day-to-day services while we build out the enhancements and improvements as outlined in this Strategic Plan. New initiatives will be planned, developed and embedded into every-day activities. The result will be the Community Resource Center we hope to become.

The critical factors for the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan will be ORHS's ability to partner more broadly with the community. This will allow us to:

- Expand our volunteer base
- Increase fund-raising goals
- Improve / expand our brand
- Team with local pet professionals (veterinarians, trainers)

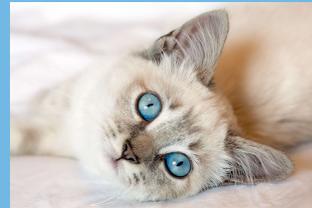
# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The strategic priorities reflect our desire to build upon what we've started while expanding our efforts to consider the needs as outlined in "The 5 Freedoms".

## The 5 Freedoms

Our strategic priorities are intended to deliver on the promise of the 5 Freedoms for Animal Welfare (Farm Animal Welfare Council 2009):

- 1 Freedom from hunger and thirst
- 2 Freedom from discomfort
- 3 Freedom from pain, injury or disease
- 4 Freedom to express normal behavior
- 5 Freedom from fear and distress



Simply, we want to be able to do more for people and their pets.

Our goals are to:

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Reduce animal homelessness

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Optimize and enrich animal care

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Provide community education and outreach

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Drive operational excellence

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Foster financial growth and stability

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: REDUCE ANIMAL HOMELESSNESS**

ORHS's core programs of rescue / adoption, fostering and low-cost spay / neutering are geared towards reducing animal homelessness. But we can do better. Over the next 3-5 years we want to:

- Grow our successful rescue / adoption program
- Grow our foster program
- Expand the spay / neuter program to the broader community.

### *Goal 1A: Grow our successful rescue / adoption program*

Our enhancements to the existing rescue / adoption program will begin in 2022 and continue to be developed and deployed in 2023.

Activity	Timeframe
Align adoption events with the community calendar	2022
Expand adoption events venues	2022
Expand relocation program to enhance adoptability	2022
Evaluate use of technology	2022
Develop training / resource manual for adopters	2023
Develop pet retention strategies	2022
Develop and deploy pet ownership education materials	2023

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: REDUCE ANIMAL HOMELESSNESS

## Goal 1B: Grow a successful foster program

Our enhancements to the existing foster program will begin in 2022 and continue to be developed and deployed in 2023.

Activity	Timeframe
Expand existing foster handbook with detailed guidelines	2022
Create virtual foster program for older dogs and cats	2023
Create a network for fosters to communicate / collaborate	2022
Enhance awareness of the foster program	2022
Create foster family retention strategies	2022
Better utilize existing fosters	2022
Increase community collaboration	2023

## Goal 1C: Enhance Spay / Neuter Program

Our enhancements to the existing Spay / Neuter program will be defined in 2022 and executed over 2022-2023.

Activity	Timeframe
Evaluate ability to help with transportation for spay / neuter program, via pick-up / drop-off capability	2022 - 2023
Evaluate operating models, i.e. use of local veterinarians, mobile units, etc.	2023

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: OPTIMIZE AND ENRICH ANIMAL CARE**

ORHS's most ambitious effort over the next 3-5 years will be to build a facility that is better suited to meet the growing needs of our community. This means providing enhanced care / service to those in our custody and better resources to the community at large to enhance the pet ownership experience.

To meet this priority, we have identified three goals:

- Build new and improved facilities
- Create enrichment programs for animal well-being
- Provide basic medical care / treatments

### **Goal 2A: Build new and improved facilities**

This is our biggest effort and the reason for the capital drive. Key efforts include:

Activity	Timeframe
Obtain community input through interviews and surveys	2022
Define internal / external / clinical / community space needs	2022
Develop requirements for land / building	2022
Run capital campaign for new building <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seed money allocated</li><li>• Balance of required funds</li></ul>	2022 2023
Finalize center design	2023
Acquire property, hire contractor	2023
Manage / oversee construction	2023-2025

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: OPTIMIZE AND ENRICH ANIMAL CARE**

### *Goal 2B: Create enrichment programs for animal well-being*

As we continue to grow and add value to the people and pets of our area, we want to create programs that will promote long term bonds between pets and their owners. Key activities include:



Activity	Timeframe
Develop / partner with others for puppy / dog basic obedience training	2023
Create a pet food pantry program beyond our current food distribution services	2024
Integrate with community resources for pet food distribution (food bank, meals on wheels)	2022



## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: OPTIMIZE AND ENRICH ANIMAL CARE**

### *Goal 2C: Provide basic medical care / treatments*

We want to expand what we currently do for the community to provide basic animal care to residents who might not otherwise have the resources. Key efforts include:

Activity	Timeframe
Talk with vet partners to define what services we may want to provide and who will provide them	2022
Begin by expanding our spay and neuter program to a low-cost model attracting broader participation	2022 - 2023
Consider low-cost vaccines through partnering with vets and / or animal control	2023
Determine what should be insourced and select partners for outsourced services, consider staffing impact	2023



## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: PROVIDE COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

One area we feel we can be impactful more immediately is the expansion of our community outreach and educational programs.

### *Goal 3A: Divert surrenders by offering cost effective support*

As we evaluate the reasons for pet surrenders, ORHS feels that we might be able to better support citizens by helping them in the on-going support of their pets. Specifically:

Activity	Timeframe
Formalize surrender reasons tracking	2022
Provide access to low-cost vaccine, community medical programs, transportation and counseling.	2022-2023
Link to pet food supply programs (either our distribution programs and eventually our food pantry)	2023-2024
Expand education efforts to include outreach to local organizations to provide content to be shared upon request and on the website	2023



## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: PROVIDE COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

### *Goal 3B: Develop a marketing plan that promotes our services via events, publicity and community partners*

We will enhance our brand awareness throughout the community so people have a better understanding of the breadth of our services.

Key activities to do so include:

Activity	Timeframe
Create better external awareness by leveraging social media more routinely	2022
Expand strategic partnerships with other rescue organizations, local businesses, veterinary, animal control offices, and service organizations (BPOE, Rotary, etc.)	2022
Create intern opportunities, working with college students more broadly, and cross training our volunteers	2023

### *Goal 3C: Improve website*

We will expand of our website to make it a resource for broader pet needs and education. Steps to consider:

Activity	Timeframe
Develop outline of desired site	2022
Select content resources	2023
Retain site manager for ongoing maintenance	Ongoing

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: DRIVE OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

As we continue and expand our services, it is critical that we do so in as efficient and effective way possible. ORHS is heavily reliant on a volunteer labor force which allows us to utilize the majority of the money raised to care for the animals. Keeping our eye on executing the day-to-day activities while optimizing our resources is imperative.

### **Goal 4A: Manage volunteer programs**

As we have grown, our volunteer pool has grown as well. We need to better match their skill sets to our needs and provide them with the resources to be successful. In order to do that, we will:

Activity	Timeframe
Invest in technology to <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a usable volunteer data base</li><li>• Provide online training</li></ul>	2022
Create a volunteer handbook that documents key training as well as operational information	2022
Explore volunteer retention strategies including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating a buddy-system</li><li>• Build volunteer follow-up and exit interviews, and surveys</li><li>• Develop more volunteer opportunities that are easy, e.g. pet photographer</li><li>• Reach out to past volunteers, trying to recreate enthusiasm for program</li></ul>	2022

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: DRIVE OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

### *Goal 4B: Recruit more volunteers*

Our volunteers keep us going, but as we do more, we will need more. Our efforts will be to expand the pool from which we typically draw by targeting specific populations outside of our “friends and families”.

Activity	Timeframe
Increase marketing and recruiting efforts to attract different demographics, including age-specific programs	2023

### *Goal 4C: Standardize training programs*

We need to make sure that our internal training programs for the volunteers are consistent and up to date, while also adding some basic dog training to better enable adoption.

Activity	Timeframe
Document internal training for administrative functions, facility cleaning, and intake	2022
Develop resources for some dog training to be delivered by volunteers with the help of local resources	2022



## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: FOSTER FINANCIAL GROWTH & STABILITY**

We're very proud of our fund-raising efforts and very appreciative of our donors. How we do what we do is 100% dependent on their efforts and contributions, and we have been successful in securing the funds needed to deliver the services we provide. With a view towards a new facility and expanded programs, diligent fiscal responsibility becomes even more important. Therefore, we must ensure we exercise diligence and optimize our resources.

### *Goal 5A: Develop annual fundraising plan*

Our approach is designed to build upon past success with discipline and create new opportunities to raise income to support current and future programs.

Activity	Timeframe
Set fundraising goals, events, schedule, market, plan, and staff. Leverage social media, and document responsibilities, requirements, etc.	Annual
Identify new fundraising opportunities	2022
Evaluate donor analytics to create a retention strategy	2022
Explore grants with local business	2023



## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: FOSTER FINANCIAL GROWTH & STABILITY**

*Goal 5B: Secure grant monies for key strategic initiatives and on-going care*

Activity	Timeframe
Investigate additional sources for future grants	2022
Identify targets, secure grant writing expertise	2022
Submit new grant requests	Ongoing

*Goal 5C: Exercise prudent budget management with goal of net zero budget*

We will continue successful financial management as we grow our programs and initiatives. To do so we will:

Activity	Timeframe
Minimize expenses	Ongoing
Maximize use of volunteers	Ongoing



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# PLAN IMPLEMENTATION & TRACKING

The Strategic Plan is meant to be a living document that will evolve over time as we improve existing process and implement new programs. The timing of the specific efforts identified may change as some will be easier than anticipated, and others will be delayed due to ORHS capacity, and unrealistic timelines. We will track our progress towards specific goals to ensure effective execution.

## *Implementation*

A key to the successful implementation of this plan is to embed changes and improvements into the existing fabric of the organization. Strategic Plan activities must become part of the existing management and culture of the organization.

The implementation of this plan will include checkpoints for assessing progress towards goals. This will require good program management throughout the organization. Program management will include oversight, but also evaluation and monitoring of each program area. As with any plan, these changes are fluid and may require adjustments over time. There will need to be a realistic appreciation of what is possible to accomplish given current commitments and time constraints.

Core services such as animal care and rescue and adoption cannot be compromised by new initiatives and responsibilities.



## Tracking

Program management will be the responsibility of ORHS Management and the Executive Committee.

Using metrics to monitor progress for improving existing processes and implementing new initiatives will enable ORHS to track execution success for the Strategic Plan.

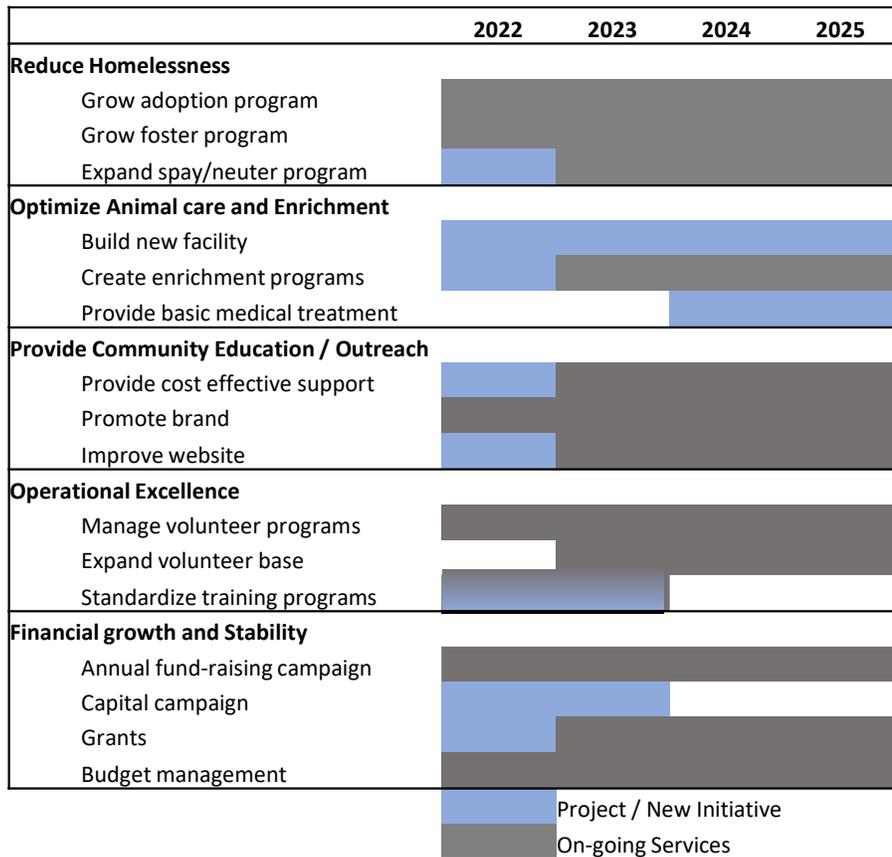
- Monthly Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – Tracking and reporting metrics for intake, fostering, adoption, donations etc. (KPIs were developed as part of the detailed strategic plan) will guide management and the executive team in assessing progress towards goals
- ORHS personnel and committee heads – Reviewing progress with teams (volunteers and board committees) via periodic written summaries that outline progress towards goals, obstacles encountered, and changes / help needed that will help keep ORHS moving towards its' goals
- Executive Committee – Meet and review overall progress and make strategic adjustments quarterly over the timeline of the strategic plan. First meeting should be at the end of the second quarter 2022 (before June 30, 2022).



## High level timeline

Balancing every-day activities while building out new programs can be challenging and will require discipline and exceptional project management. Many of the new initiatives will eventually be incorporated into new and improved daily activities, and future initiatives will be innovated as needed.

In an effort to illustrate how the projects that support the goals will work, we've created a chart that illustrates the initial (project / new initiative) and on-going efforts expected over the duration of this Strategic Plan.



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## CLOSING THOUGHTS

ORHS is committed to serve the best interests of the community and its companion animals. This Plan is documentation of that commitment and tangibly shows how this organization will achieve that commitment. The Strategic Plan will guide the actions of the staff and volunteers of the organization and is intended to help the organization have a greater impact in the community. Continued involvement from individuals who care about the work of the organization will be necessary to achieve the goals outlined herein.

As ORHS moves forward, we will continue to assess our customers' needs, both animal and human, and offer the highest quality services available. When resources do not exist, we will evaluate the opportunities to develop plans for how those gaps can be filled. Reassessment and revision will be needed in time as environments and resource availability changes. ORHS is committed to making this plan play a key role in its continued success.

