

# GRATITUDE REPORT

20  
23



fort.wayne  
animal care  
and control



# Our mission & vision

a voice for the *voiceless...*

## Mission Statement

It is our mission to serve our community in a humane, public safety capacity while working to keep pets with loving families by providing education opportunities and resources or facilitating re-homing or adoption when necessary.



fort wayne  
**animal care  
and control**

Helping People. Helping Animals.

## Vision Statement

It is our vision to promote a humane community and find a positive outcome for each healthy, safe and treatable animal in our care.



3020 Hillegas Rd  
Fort Wayne, IN  
46808



(260) 427-1244



FWACC.org

# A message from our Director

Every employee of Animal Care and Control plays a critical role in ensuring we provide the best possible service and care for the animals entering our doors. Whether it's the dispatchers taking the calls from citizens; animal care specialists providing daily care; adoption assistants matching pets to families; education and outreach sharing information on our socials; foster team getting kittens into homes; medical team performing surgeries; transfer team sending animals to partnering agencies; or volunteers filling in our gaps; everyone plays a critical role. There is one team I wanted to highlight in this gratitude report. Our enforcement division has eleven Animal Control Officers (ACO) and a Field Coordinator who are out there seven days a week responding to calls involving animals.

A little fact about our department that most don't know is we fall directly under the Police Department and are considered part of public safety. Our ACO's are tasked with upholding and enforcing city ordinance as well as state statutes regarding animal welfare. They all have a special police commission which provides them with the authority to investigate and pursue enforcement when warranted. Our ACO's are on duty from 7:00am to 1:00am then on emergency call out from 1:00am to 7:00am seven days a week. These officers are called upon for a multitude of reasons. In 2023, they had over 22,000 calls and brought in more than 6,000 animals.

Beyond enforcement, these officers often are the first entity to offer pet owners the resources needed to keep their pets when times are tough. They provide food, direct them to low-cost vet care, issue spay-neuter certificates to help reduce the chance of unwanted litters, provide education on how to properly contain pets, and can even offer training certificates to help with behavior concerns. Officers also have the discretion to return animals to their owners when they are found running loose in lieu of bringing them to the shelter. Our enforcement team does an amazing job balancing their role as both enforcement as well as a resource for those in need. Our community is lucky to have such a dedicated team that truly speaks up on behalf of the animals.

As you'll read in this years' report, all our departments have 'tails to tell' about 2023. We are continually working to make sure we are finding the best outcome for every animal we see. We've come a long way and are always looking forward to how we can continue improving. Thank you for being part of our journey.



**Amy-Jo Sites**





# Medical Team



We have said it before and we will say it again, our medical team alongside Dr. Riebe is a crucial asset to our shelter. What they accomplish against all odds is amazing. Not only are they dedicated to providing the best care for our animals, but they also come to work each day with a positive attitude that absolutely makes a difference in this line of work. ”

**Laura Rowe**  
Deputy Director of Medical & Shelter Operations

**Total Surgeries in 2023**  
3,947

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**Avg. Surgeries Per Day**  
16.4

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**Total Spay/Neuter Procedures**  
3,827

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**Community Cat Surgeries**  
1,258



Your donations to the

# Angel Fund

gave second chances

## Honey the Hippo

Honey arrived as a stray at Fort Wayne Animal Care and Control in August of 2023. Our medical team noticed she had a significant infection on her face and an abnormal back limb. Honey was sedated for a comprehensive exam and radiographs. This exam led our veterinarian to discover she had minimal range of motion in her left back leg and a concerning mammary mass.

Honey's leg's lack of range of motion was also causing concerns for her hip; our medical team decided the best outcome for Honey's quality of life was to amputate her leg. On September 11, Honey's leg was amputated, allowing her to walk around freely with the help of pain medication.

Honey's face infection was healed after it was properly cleaned and medicated. Additionally, she was tested for heartworm disease and had in-house bloodwork completed.

All of Honey's extensive care was made possible because of generous people like you who choose to donate to our Angel Fund.

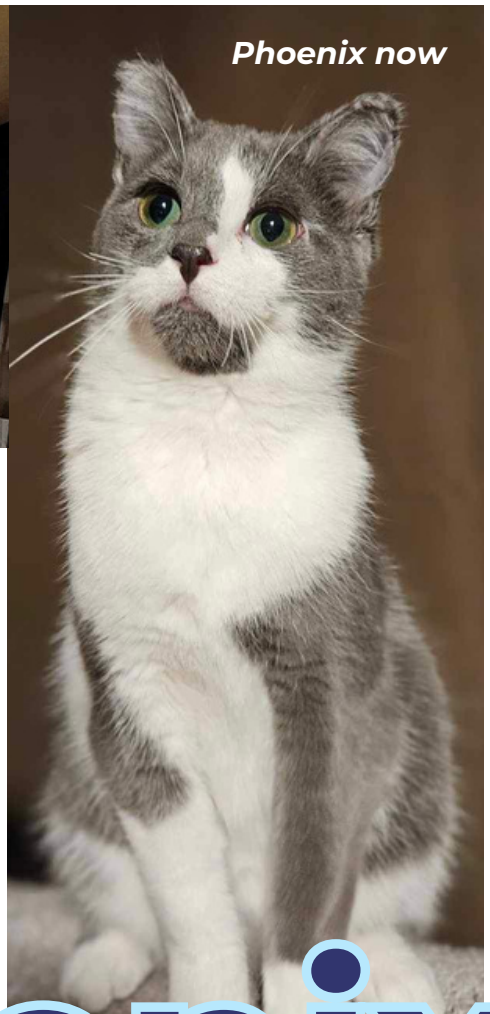
The Angel Fund helps give animals in our care a second chance...just like Honey the House Hippo.



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and control



Adopted  
10/03/2023



In September 2023, Phoenix was found wandering outside and was brought into our care. He was trembling from the pain he couldn't escape from. Burns were covered throughout his body: on both ears, all four paws, his legs, and around his eyes. We didn't know how this happened, but this sweet soul needed us, and we were here to step in.

This little fighter improved each day with the help of supportive care, pain medication and a transdermal medicine on his burns. Later, he had surgery to remove any necrotic tissue and the tip of his broken tail. He went into a loving foster home to recover that later decided to officially adopt him!



# Phoenix

## *Happy Tail Adoption Update*

“He’s doing great! He’s the most affectionate cat I’ve ever met. He immediately flops and rolls around in front of you the second you walk through the door. He’s purring during all hours of the day.

He’s really bonded with my three-legged cat, Chibi. They play all day, then cuddle up together at night. His favorite past time is throwing his toy fish in the toilet, then bringing it back to you.

He really has the most outgoing, sweetest personality for a cat that went through so much.”

**Phoenix is 1 of 2,821 animals adopted in 2023!**

# Fostering Saves Lives

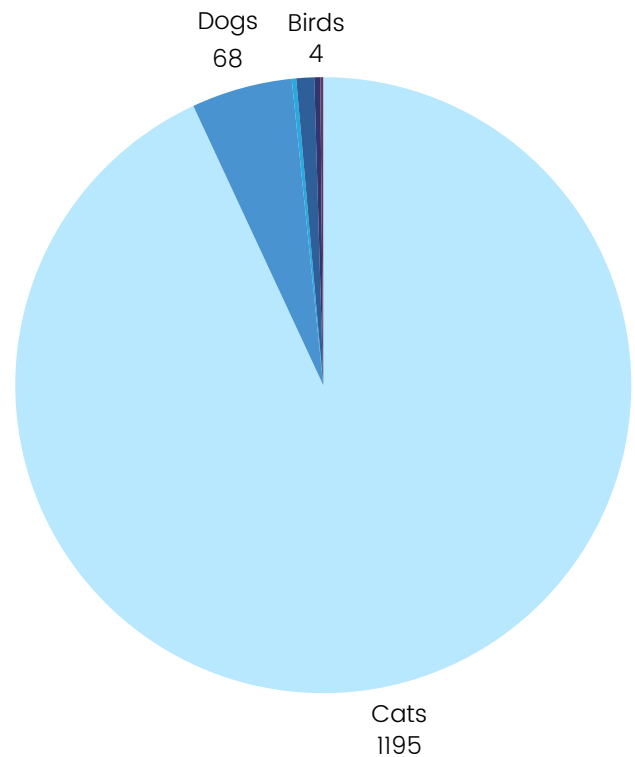


Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control takes in approximately **1,000 animals each month**; this can be overwhelming to our shelter since we do not have enough staff and space.

To help as many animals as possible, we search for grant funding and individuals who want to be a part of changing and saving lives.

Thanks to the **Orphan Kitten Club**, our foster program received a grant to fund a new Field Fostering program. This program was able to assist 103 cats/kittens without them having to take a kennel space in the shelter.

In 2023, **310 foster families** hosted **1,224 animals**. Fosters care for animals until they are healthy enough and at proper weight to go into our adoption program.



Our volunteers are the foundation of FWACC. We would not be able to function without them. With only around 50 staff members, our volunteers are a vital resource to us.

### New Volunteers

64

### Total Active Volunteers

138

### Total Volunteer Hours in 2023

13,641

“ I absolutely have the best team on planet earth. In all my years of leading teams I have never worked with a more dedicated, caring and impactful group as our Volunteer team. We could not function without their support and love for our animals. I am so thankful to work with such amazing people. - Jeffry Dingeldein  
Volunteer Coordinator ”

# VOLUNTEER







“ “ ———  
The Dispatchers and Officers are instrumental in gathering information and going above and beyond to reunite lost animals with their owners. They all have a heart of gold and show tremendous empathy for the animals and owners they work with. Every day is not always the happiest of days, but they are able to pivot effortlessly with whatever animal situation they encounter. These two positions take a very unique individual who can transition from one emotional extreme to the next in the span of minutes, and they do this with dignity and compassion. They work tirelessly to fight for the animals when they have no voice. FWACC is very lucky to have such an amazing group of ACOs and Dispatchers.

— Lisa Cain  
Deputy Director of  
Field Operations

” ”  
*Helping People.  
Helping Animals.*

With only five dispatchers, **29,983** calls were answered, and **79,215 minutes** were spent on the phone.

Our team of 12 Animal Control Officers completed **22,236** total activities.

- 🐾 Investigated **9,144 cases** with 3,150 of those investigations involving bites to a human or animal.
- 🐾 Rescued **6,415 strays** from the streets.



# Community Outreach

*Education is our super power...*

Our Humane Education team’s goal is to use education as a means to **put an end to animal cruelty, neglect and irresponsible pet ownership.** By combining the mission of FWACC with various interactive youth programs, we are working towards a brighter future for the animals in our community and the people that care for them.

2023 was another year of growth in both our youth programs and in our involvement in the community. With a mighty team of two, through our camps, tours, classroom visits, read to the animals, and animal care teens volunteering, we reached a grand total of **1,005 students!**

Through community events such as JA JobSpark, Open Streets, Familienfest, Fiesta Fort Wayne, Riverfront Literacy Expo and more...we were able to educate approximately **19,600 community members!**





# LEAVE A LOVING LEGACY

Whether you are a consistent donor or an occasional one, your love for animals and their health can continue for future generations. By planning a gift for the future, you are helping to improve the welfare of animals in our care and assisting us in educating the community on pet care and safety. Planned gifts allow you to continue to show your support for Fort Wayne Animal Care and Control. Our estate planning options have several tax benefits.

Estate planning allows you to:

- Honor a family member, friend or pet
- Reduce taxes
- Avoid capital gains taxes
- Preserve wealth for your family

## DONATIONS make a difference in their lives

The shelter relies on donor dollars to save the lives of over 10,000 animals who come through our shelter annually. Your gift to any of our funds will absolutely make a difference in the lives of animals from right here in our own community.

### Angel Fund

This fund creates lifesaving options for animals with advanced medical needs, including broken bones, heartworm disease, dental disease, or critical care due to cruelty.

### Adoption Fund

Adoption fund enables us to purchase much needed items for the comfort, mental stimulation, training and placement of adoptable animals.

### Community Outreach

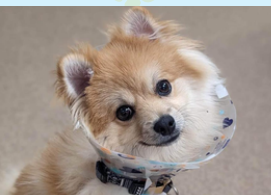
Our presence throughout the community, in schools, in media, and the Web are made possible by donations. Donating to this fund helps provide education programs to children and teaching them to be safe around animals.

### Critter Care

Help provide items to enrich the lives of the stray and adoptable animal population in our care. With your donation, we can provide special food that is needed, and provide straw and outdoor housing for our community cat program.

### Pet Retention

This fund helps Fort Wayne families maintain care of their pets should they temporarily fall on difficult times. Through support with spay and neuter assistance and minor preventative care needs, we can keep pets with their families and out of the shelter.



# Moving in the Statehouse



Call & email your Indiana Senator & Rep. TODAY!  
Ask them to **OPPOSE** the  
**Puppy Mill Protection Bill: SB 134/HB 1121**

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Join us at the Indiana Statehouse on **Monday, Jan. 23.**  
The House Agriculture Committee will hear the bill  
at **10:30am in Room 156-C.**  
**WEAR PURPLE** to show your opposition!

Indiana doesn't have a state-wide organization that oversees, inspects, or has enforcement authority over any shelter, rescue, pet store, or hobby breeder. Currently, the State Board of Animal Health is an administrative agency that predominately strives for compliance. They rely on local law enforcement or animal control agencies to provide the enforcement if violations are found.

Each year FWACC monitors what type of legislation is being proposed that may affect animals and or sheltering operations. In 2023, both House Bill 1121 and Senate Bill 134 were introduced. Both bills had language that would reverse the 13 humane pet store ordinances that had already passed throughout Indiana. In addition, no other communities could work to pass humane pet store ordinances. Throughout the session the language was modified, but the main goal was to remove any existing local humane pet store ordinances. Often, the enforcement component of the proposed bills affects Fort Wayne Animal Care and Control. Our Director, Amy-Jo Sites, takes the time to travel to Indianapolis to speak at the hearings using statistics and other relative information from our shelter in either favor or opposition of the proposed bills. In 2023, she spoke in opposition of the proposed bills because the language would ultimately place more responsibility on the enforcement division of FWACC without any parameters, guidance, or assistance of a state agency. Information on where the bill(s) were at in the process were shared with staff, volunteers, and the community so they can contact the committee members, state senators, and representatives to encourage them how to vote and why we need them to do so. We were successful in defeating both preemption bills along with a third that had been brought up in committee discussion. This proves that our voices matter when we are sharing the same message.

# FORT WAYNE ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL



“Fort Wayne Animal Care and Control helps abandoned dog “Tito” find his happily ever after”



“Volunteer showcases ‘Safe and Humane Fort Wayne Month’ mission and is Positively Fort Wayne.”

## In the Spotlight

“We were all ‘fawning’ over Fawn. Whoever adopts this beautiful girl will be filled with love.”



“For its work to keep pets safe and unite them with forever families Fox 55 news recognizes Fort Wayne Animal Care and Control as one of our Community Champs.”



Daily Dodo • Cute Dog

# Man Sees Something Move In A Pile Of Brambles — Then Does A Double Take

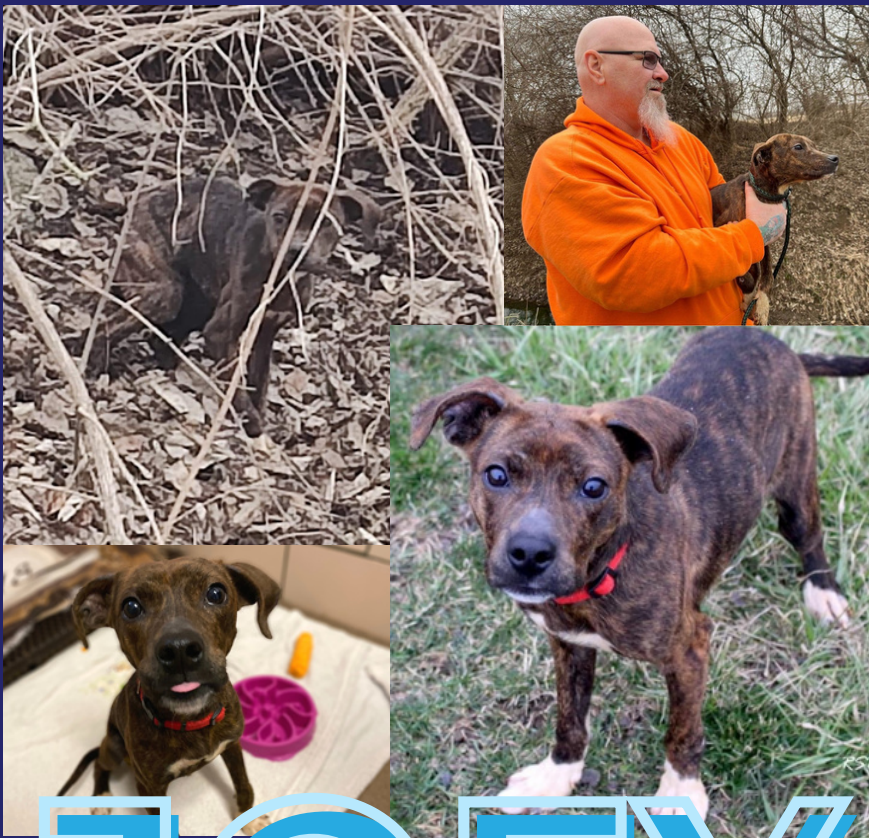
Someone was hiding ...

By [Maeve Dunigan](#)

Published on 4/7/2023 at 10:24 AM

It seemed like an average day at work. Andrew, a tow truck driver, was on his way through a wooded area near Fort Wayne, Indiana, watching the endless collage of brown leaves and brambles pass him by.

But suddenly, Andrew did a double take — did he really see that? He swore there was a little face hidden in the sticks and mud.



# JOEY

*Rescued by the angel fund*

Little Joey was found in March of 2023 by a kind person alone, cold and frightened. He was severely underweight with his bones showing, he was urine stained, and had an arched back presumably from being confined in a small crate.

He was brought to us for immediate medical care. Unfortunately, we receive many animals in the state of Joey's, so our medical team was able to immediately begin giving him the medical support he needed, and let him decompress.

We started to see the light in Joey's eyes after consistent fluids and food in moderation in order to not shock his digestive system. Once we saw progress in his medical prognosis, we were able to help him feel better behaviorally.

Our staff worked with him one on one slowly acclimating him to new things like toys, walking on a leash, new people, and new dogs. Joey started associating his positive experiences with our staff, and began to trust us. That is when his true personality began to blossom!

Joey is a reminder of why we do what we do. We are so thankful for the kind people that found him and that Joey didn't have to suffer and die alone. Because of his rescuers, our staff, and the kind people who donate to our Angel Fund, Joey received a second chance at life and was ADOPTED!



## *Joey's adoption update*

***"Joey is now Duke and he's doing wonderful! He's super active and loves to play with his brother and be outside. He loves his bones and loves to defluff stuffed toys! We are always finding fluff everywhere. He knows how to sit and shake, we are working on laying down. He's a super good boy and he's found a happy place in our home!"***

# Working at FWACC means...



"The best part of being an ACS is being able to show up and make a difference for the animals in our care. Being in the shelter is so stressful to the animals and providing some sort of comfort to them – no matter what that looks like – brings us so much joy. There's truly no better feeling than being the hand that reaches out and helps them find home."

- Tabby & Cynthia | Animal Care Specialists



"We are a small but mighty medical team. We work tirelessly to ensure that every animal that crosses our path receives the most care and compassion possible, many times under very difficult circumstances. This is hands down the finest team that I have ever had the pleasure of working alongside in my career."

- Keely Mettler | Veterinary Technician



"To be part of a team who advocates for animals and has a passion to teach students to help care for animals is an honor. Animals are a gift of life, and our responsibility is to help them have a happy and healthy life. When the community gets involved by adopting, fostering, volunteering, donating, or sharing the story of one of our animals, it brings a warm feeling and makes me proud to be part of the city of Fort Wayne."

- Abigail Reyes  
Community Relations & Education Specialist



"I enjoy being able to come to work every day with my amazing team members and getting to meet all the new animals that are up for adoption! Getting to know those animals and their personalities, and then matching them with what our adopters are looking for, is such a great feeling. I love seeing how happy the animals and humans are when they get to go to their forever homes!"

- Hallie Johns | Adoption Assistant



# Fundraising with FWACC



Seeing our fellow animal-loving advocates come together for one shared goal is a driving force for us to continue the daily fight for animals. Having fundraising and event opportunities not only supports FWACC, but also helps us connect with our community who we couldn't function without. We wanted to provide a few highlights from our events in 2023.

**Together**, we raised **\$24,064.20** at our annual Barks & Mews Gala for our Angel Fund,

**\$8,843.83** at our annual Howl-O-Walkoween for Humane Education,

and **\$10,621.91** at Fire Police City County FCU's Strikes for Charity for our Angel Fund!



# 6

# Amazing Moments in 2023

Better Cities for Pets, a Mars Pet Program, awarded the shelter a grant that allowed FWACC to offer workshops to the community to help better understand their pets' body language and behavior.

In April, Mayor Henry Proclaimed Fort Wayne Safe & Humane Month. November 5-12, Governor Holcomb proclaimed "Adopt a Hoosier Shelter Pet Week." Both proclamations encouraged the community to adopt, foster, volunteer or donate.

The shelter received a \$50,000 grant from Petco Love. This investment allowed FWACC to add a contracted veterinary assistant to our medical team, allowing the medical team to double their performance in surgeries.

Fire Police City County FCU chose to support FWACC for their biannual Strikes for Charity fundraising event to raise funds for our Angel Fund.

Roller Dome North held a fundraiser to support our Humane Education Department.

To give our adoptable animals and potential adopters an opportunity to find each other, the adoption team extended their hours to the first Saturday of each month.

## Shelter Animals Count: 2023 Report Fort Wayne Animal Care and Control

	Dog	Cat	Other	Total
<b>Beginning Shelter Count 1/1/2023</b>	61	157	8	226
Animal Intake				
Stray at Large	2092	4280	121	6493
Relinquish by Owner	601	865	101	1567
Owner - Intended Euthanasia	396	213	19	628
Transferred in from Agency	15	73	2	90
Other Intakes	793	579	61	1433
<b>Total Intakes</b>	<b>3897</b>	<b>6010</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>10211</b>
<b>Live Outcomes</b>				
Adoptions	435	2233	153	2821
Returned to Owner	1333	360	20	1713
Transferred Out	273	451	19	743
Returned to Field (Includes Community Cats)	0	1161	0	1161
Other Live Outcomes	0	0	0	0
<b>Subtotal Live Outcomes</b>	<b>2041</b>	<b>4205</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>6438</b>
<b>Other Outcomes</b>				
Died in Care	7	60	7	74
Lost in Care	0	0	0	0
Shelter Euthanasia	1443	1556	82	3081
Owner-Intended Euthanasia	389	208	19	616
<b>Subtotal Other Outcome</b>	<b>1839</b>	<b>1824</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>3771</b>
<b>Total Outcomes</b>	<b>3880</b>	<b>6029</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>10209</b>
<b>Ending Shelter Count (12/31/2023)</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Live Release Rate</b>	<b>58.46%</b>	<b>72.24%</b>	<b>68.33%</b>	<b>66.34%</b>

# Suzi Q.

## *Happy Tail Story*

Suzi Q was a staff and volunteer favorite; her stay was longer than an average stay in 2022. She arrived at FWACC as a stray on February 16, 2022, and found her perfect family, who adopted her on April 26, 2022!

To celebrate her 4th birthday and her first year with her family, in April of 2023, her mom's put together a birthday party for Suzi Q. Suzi Q. and her mom's shared this celebration by fundraising for the shelter and encouraging their guests to donate to FWACC.

A trunk load of donations and \$800 were raised for our animals! We are very appreciative for the support of Suzi's family and friends who help to keep the shelter going!

The commission board acts as a citizen advisory group for the Fort Wayne Department of Animal Care and Control, advising the Mayor, and the Animal Control Director on policy and department direction.

## **Kody Tinnel**

President - Mayor Appointee

## **Dot Brandenberger**

Vice President - Mayor Appointee

## **Aaron Collins**

Secretary - City Council Appointee

## **Don Ross**

Commissioner - City Council Appointee

## **Paul Smith**

Commissioner - Mayor Appointee

# *Animal Control Commission & Supervisors*

## **Amy-Jo Sites**

Director

## **Jeff Green**

Office Supervisor

## **Lisa Cain**

Deputy Director of  
Field Operations

## **Emilee Smith**

Foster Coordinator

## **Laura Rowe**

Deputy Director of Medical  
and Shelter Operations

## **Abigail Reyes**

Community Relations & Education  
Specialist

## **Lindsay Pease**

Adoption Supervisor

## **Jeoff Dingeldein**

Volunteer Coordinator



Tito | Angel Fund Case



Birthday Donation



Spink | Adopted 6/20  
At Offsite Partner Kitty City



Gus Gus & Blu | Adopted 12/21



Ellie | Adoption made by  
BISSELL Pet Foundation



Spooky before & after | Angel Fund Case



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Fort Wayne Animal  
Care and Control