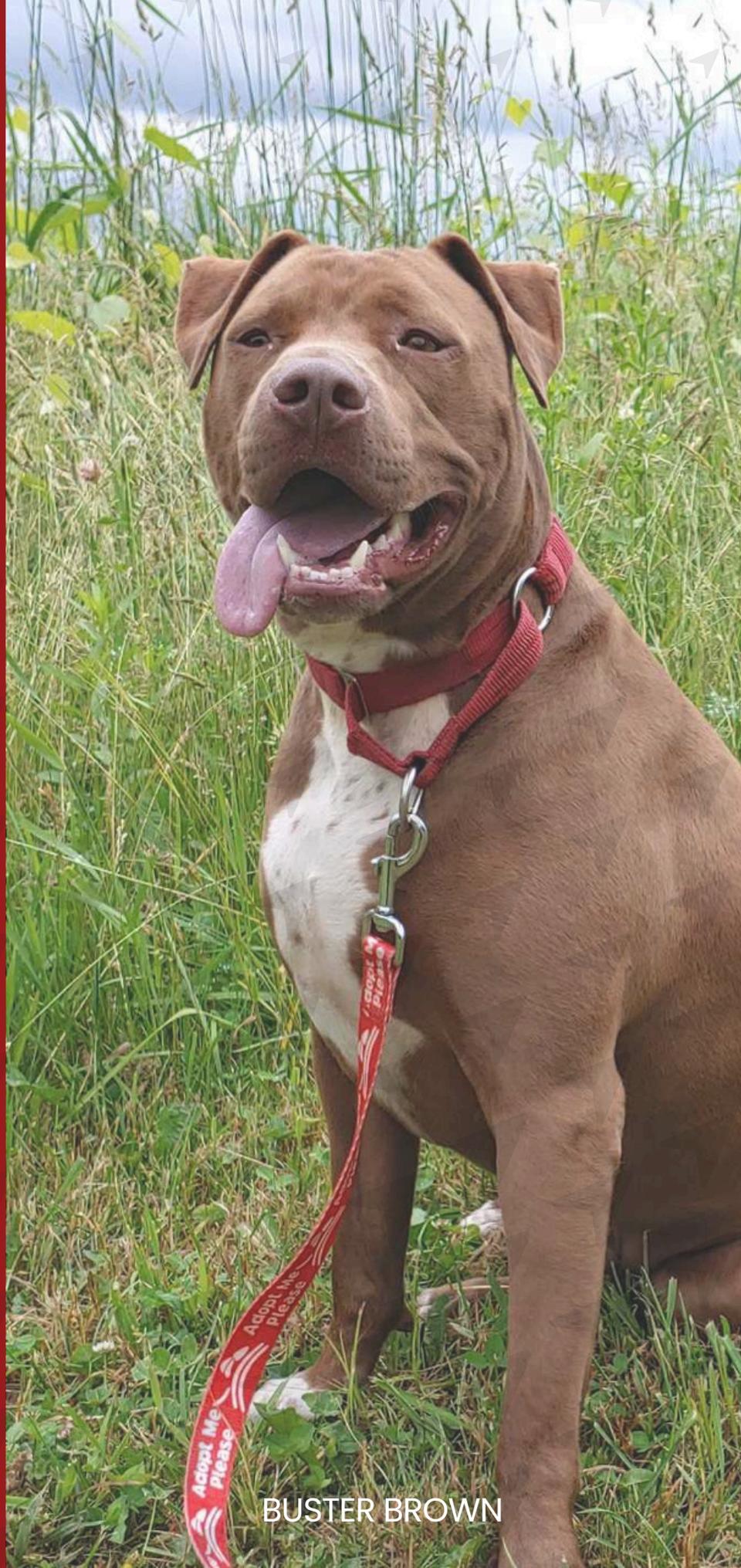


2025 ANNUAL REPORT



BUSTER BROWN

Guiding dogs towards brighter lives

A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**NICHOLE
FORTENBAUGH**



This past year has been a powerful reminder that rescue is about so much more than dogs. It is about **people, partnerships, and the belief that when a community comes together, lives truly change.** At Dog Star Rescue, we have continued to grow not just in numbers, but in impact, by building meaningful relationships with our local community, small businesses, and supporters who believe in doing good close to home.

This year, we also deepened our commitment to supporting families in need. We believe that loving a pet should never be a financial burden that forces impossible choices. With that belief guiding us, we proudly introduced two new programs designed to keep pets healthy and families together. Our low cost Veterinary Clinics expand access to essential medical care, while Full Bowls by Dog Star, our 100% free pet pantry, ensures that no family has to worry about feeding their beloved companion. **These programs reflect our promise to support the human animal bond in real and tangible ways.**



A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CONTINUED

**NICHOLE
FORTENBAUGH**



We were equally proud to expand and re-imagine one of our most meaningful initiatives. What began as Dog Stars for Veterans has grown into Dog Star Heroes, now serving active military, military veterans, first responders, and medical professionals. By broadening this program, we honor those who dedicate their lives to protecting and serving others, while recognizing the incredible healing power of the human-animal connection. **Watching these partnerships form has been one of the most inspiring parts of the year.**

As we look ahead, we do so with gratitude and optimism. Every success we celebrate is made possible by a community that believes in compassion, collaboration, and advocacy. **Whether you adopted, volunteered, donated, partnered with us as a local business, or shared our mission with others, you are part of the Dog Star Rescue story.**

Thank you for standing with us, for believing in dogs, and for helping us build a stronger, kinder community for all.



2025 MILESTONES

752

TOTAL ADOPTIONS

Each of these rescued dogs was placed in a loving, forever home

OVER
2,100

APPLICATIONS PROCESSED

Each applicant was screened against our eligibility requirements

All done by our incredible VOLUNTEERS

The term “it takes a village” is true when it comes to our organization. We help match dogs to the best homes and we do this while many of balance full time jobs, families and other demands.



CHANGING DOGS' LIVES

MAC'S STORY

BEFORE ADOPTION

Mac was surrendered to one of our southern partners when his family moved - of no fault of his own. He struggled in our kennels and bouncing between foster homes but finally - after 609 days with us - he found his perfect family.



HOME SWEET HOME

His new mom and dad knew he was the one almost instantly. Mac now has a better life than we could have imagined for him. He is a cherished family member, loved beyond measure and graced the cover of our Alumni calendar after winning the most votes - one for every day in rescue.

2025 Annual Report



2025 MILESTONES

300+

VOLUNTEERS ACROSS MANY TEAMS

We can't do what we do without our absolutely pawsome volunteers. These compassionate individuals support our rescue on so many teams - often volunteers helping in more than one role.

ADOPTION TEAM

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

EVENT TEAM

FOSTER TEAM

FUNDRAISING TEAM

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TEAM

INTAKE TEAM

KENNEL TEAM

MEDICAL TEAM

VOLUNTEER TEAM



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

RACHEL BLACKMER

Rachel started volunteering with Dog Star Rescue in the beginning of 2020 after realizing she wanted to help dogs in any way she could.

Since then, Rachel has made a tremendous impact on our mission. **She has facilitated over 400 adoptions, including for many of Dog Star's long-term dogs who need something a little extra special in a forever home.**

In addition, Rachel took on the challenge of helping the organization prioritize local intake by creating and nurturing relationships with Connecticut Animal Control Officers. She works tirelessly to advocate for our local dogs and ensure that they get the TLC they deserve.



2025 FOSTER MILESTONES

237

FOSTER FAMILIES IN 2025

As a foster-based rescue, fosters are our lifeblood. Being in a foster home allows our dogs to be cared for until they are forever home.

88%

DAYS IN FOSTER CARE

The vast majority of our dogs were able to be in a foster home instead of our kennels while they stayed with us.

why fostering matters

Having dogs in foster homes shows them what it's like to be loved, teaches them vital skills and helps them transition into their forever homes when they're adopted.



PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

S.K. LAVERY APPLIANCE COMPANY

When the McMillian family, owners of SK Lavery Appliance Company, met two sweet siblings rescued by Dog Star from an overcrowded shelter, something clicked. DS Danielle quickly became a cherished family member and without hesitation, they decided to profoundly impact Dog Star's future too.



MAKING OUR NEW HOME AMAZING

SK Lavery generously donated the essential appliances that help our facility run every single day. From refrigerators and freezers that safely store food and life saving medications, , to washers and dryers that ensure every dog has a clean, warm place to rest, their impact is woven into the daily care, comfort, and dignity we provide.

Dog Star Rescue is deeply grateful for this partnership.

2025 Annual Report



2025 EVENT MILESTONES

100+

ADOPTION EVENTS

We have adoption events every week, giving volunteers and adopters an amazing opportunity to change the lives of our rescued dogs.

3

MAJOR FUNDRAISERS

Our fundraising team hosted a Fashion Show, formal Gala, Golf Fundraiser and planned for a Pups & Pours event which had to be rescheduled due to weather. There were many other smaller events throughout CT too.

events help connect us

Our adoption events allow families to meet dogs in a helpful setting, and our fundraising events offset the costs of running our non-profit rescue.



2025 HEROES PROGRAM MILESTONES

40+

HERO ADOPTIONS

Our Dog Stars 4 Veterans program expanded to include first responders – police, firefighters, doctors, nurses, and EMTs. Renamed our Heroes program, this has allowed us to give back to those who give so much every day to make the world better.

truly changing lives

In addition to half off adoptions, we also provide half off an approved training program. Good people helping good people is what we believe in, and how we operate our rescue.



OUR FULL BOWLS PROGRAM



OUR FREE COMMUNITY PET PANTRY OPENED IN 2025

Helping low income CT families in need, this program allows families to sign up and once approved, receive a one-week supply of kibble per dog, plus donated extras like wet food, treats, or toys to make tails wag a little more.

supporting our communities

This program is one of many community programs we offer to make an impact in the communities in which we live, work and volunteer. Together we are changing the lives of families, including their treasured dogs.



CT DOG GONE RECOVERY

81%

RECOVERY RATE

Of the record-breaking 986 dogs reported missing, most were found and reunited with their incredibly thankful families.

SERVICES PROVIDED

This wonderful group of volunteers helps bring dogs home by providing a variety of free services to distraught owners:

- Initial and ongoing consultation
- Posters, flyers and handouts
- Boots on the ground if possible
- Trapping and camera monitoring
- Thermal imaging drone services
- Continued education about pet safety



TRIXIE WAS MISSING FOR 6 MONTHS!

A NEW HOME FOR DOG STAR



20 NORTHWOOD DRIVE, BLOOMFIELD

Over the past year, preparations at 20 Northwood Drive have been fueled by incredible volunteer effort and generous community support. Behind the scenes, volunteers have dedicated countless hours helping us prepare this space for the future of Dog Star Rescue, laying the groundwork for what will soon become a central hub for our mission.

We are deeply grateful to the local businesses that have made this progress possible. Donations and in kind support from Sherwin Williams, Home Depot, and SK Lavery, among others, have played a vital role in helping us move closer to opening our doors. Their generosity is a powerful reminder of the impact local partnerships have on rescue work.

We are excited to share that our grand opening announcement is coming soon. Be sure to sign up for our mailing list and follow us on Facebook for official updates, event details, and the announcement of our opening date. We cannot wait to welcome our community into this space and celebrate what we have built together.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

donate



As non-profit, we always need **personal and corporate donors**. Make a monthly or one-time donation. Every bit counts.

As an all volunteer organization we need **fosters and other volunteers** to help us change lives.

volunteer



DogStarRescue.org

