

WHATCOM HUMANE SOCIETY PAW PRINT

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER - FALL 2024

KINDNESS ♥ COMPASSION ♥ RESPECT



Reflections on the Wild World of Animal Welfare & Why We Do What We Do

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Fall is in the air. I hope you and yours are enjoying all the amazing things that the season brings with it. We had a chaotic summer at Whatcom Humane this year, and I for one am glad it's over and hopeful that things will slow down enough to allow our staff and volunteer teams time to breathe.



I've had the opportunity over the past several weeks to attend some very informative training workshops and chat with colleagues from around the state and region. Working in animal welfare is such a unique space. In many ways, those of us working or volunteering in the shelter/rescue community share so much in common: we all want to help animals. But in many other ways, our organizations and groups are vastly different. Our missions vary, philosophical beliefs differ, short and long term strategic plans, types of service, animals served—I could go on and on.

In the sheltering world, you hear a lot of buzz words and phrases: "Capacity to care", "length of stay", "managed admission", "open adoptions", and "data-driven statistics" are just a few of the current popular topics on agendas when attending animal welfare workshops and seminars. These are all interesting subjects to research, and as organizations like ours review our programs and services and consider available resources, they facilitate meaningful discussions with staff, volunteers, and stakeholders. **I Continued on pg. 2**



Whatcom Humane Society
CARING FOR ANIMALS SINCE 1902

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STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

WHS believes that all animals, as sentient beings, have value beyond economic measurements and are entitled to legal, moral, and ethical consideration and protection.

OUR MISSION

WHS advocates for animals; educates the community to promote humane treatment and respect for animals; and provides for abandoned, injured, abused, or neglected animals.

OUR VISION

A community in which all animals are treated with kindness, respect, and compassion.

SHELTER LOCATION

2172 Division Street
Bellingham, WA 98226
Phone: 360-733-2080
Fax: 360-733-4746

SHELTER SERVICES

360-733-2080 ext. 0
Tuesday-Sunday, 11:00-6:00
Adoption Counsels Stop at 5:00
Closed Mondays & Major Holidays

ANIMAL CONTROL DISPATCH

360-733-2080 ext. 3017
Tuesday-Sunday, 10:00-6:00
Monday: Please Call 911
for Emergency Dispatch

FARM FACILITY

By Appointment Only

WILDLIFE REHAB CENTER

Seven Days a Week, 9:00-5:00
Phone: 360-966-8845
*Not Open to the Public;
Please Call for Assistance.*

WHS THRIFT SHOP

1534B Birchwood Ave
Bellingham, WA 98225
Phone: 360-543-6792
Shopping:
Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00-5:00
Donation Drop-off:
Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00-4:00

Message from ED, continued from pg. 1 | I enjoy learning about how other shelters, big and small, operate—what works, what doesn't work, and how they implement and manage their animal populations and daily activities.

That being said, I always seem to find myself shaking my head a bit when I sit in group workshops, webinars, or am speaking with others in the animal welfare world who are so quick to judge open-admission shelters like WHS for doing what we do—making the difficult but necessary decisions that we make and being extremely transparent about those decisions. You know that feeling you had in junior high school when you didn't have the cool jeans, your shoes were not the right brand, and you wore really bad glasses? Yep, that's me, only 40+ years later, now talking to my colleagues. I've recently had well-respected members of national animal welfare groups suggest that our statistics would look better if we turned animals away, reduced all barriers to adoption (i.e., no need to ensure it's a good fit for adopter or animal, just get the animal out the door), and stopped performing animal control services.

Let me be clear: Change is good. Regular review of our operations is vital to ensure that we are being responsible with our resources and utilizing best practices for the benefit of our staff, our volunteers, and most importantly, for our animals. But let me also say that I could not be more proud of the fact that for almost 125 years the Whatcom Humane Society has been an open-admission shelter, turning no animal away. We work tirelessly to find permanent, responsible, and loving homes for domestic animals in our care where both the animals' needs and the adopters' needs are being met. Our animal control team works 24/7 to protect, advocate, and care for our community's animals, big and small. Our wildlife rehabilitation center is one of the most inspiring places one can imagine, caring for thousands of injured and orphaned wild animals annually. And if I got to choose anywhere to spend a beautiful fall afternoon, it would be the WHS farm, hanging out with the horses, goats, sheep, pigs, cows, and whatever other large animals are lucky enough to be housed there.

WHS might not have all the bells and whistles that some shelters have; we may not get the same publicity as some groups get; and we may not hang out with the "popular" crowd—but I will put our shelter programs, services, operations, philosophies, hard work, and heart up against anyone, anytime. And you know what: we will rock it!

Working or volunteering at a shelter like WHS can be challenging on a good day, really hard on a bad day, and then there are some days when it just feels impossible. But we get through it because of the commitment of those who believe in what we do: our dedicated staff, our amazing volunteers, and the support from our community. Thank you for continuing to believe in us, to believe in our mission, and to care about the domestic, farm, and wild animals in our shelters and community.

I hope to see many of you this fall and during the holiday season at our Division Street shelter, at one of our upcoming events, or at our thrift shop. Thanks for helping make our community a better place for people and animals.

*With sincere gratitude and appreciation,
Laura Clark, Executive Director*



Current Project Spotlight: WRC Flight Cage

REFURBISHED WILDLIFE CENTER BUILDING WILL PROVIDE AID TO WHATCOM COUNTY'S LARGE RAPTOR SPECIES



The Whatcom Humane Society Wildlife Rehabilitation Center (WRC) consists of forty acres with several buildings, including the main lodge and several pole buildings. In addition to the daily animal rehabilitation services of the WRC, a priority project for 2024-2025 is to refurbish an existing building on the property into a flight cage and expand other adjacent structures for large raptor species in need of care.

The WRC receives many raptor species each year in need of help, and a large flight cage will increase the number of raptors that can be cared for onsite and ultimately released back into Whatcom County and surrounding areas. At the moment, we do not have enough space and appropriate caging to help all of the raptor species in need of rehabilitation, and as a result, have to euthanize raptors when transfer is not an option. Unfortunately, this problem is only exacerbated by the limited number and capacity of other rehabilitation centers in our region, as well as the recent spike in High Pathogenic Avian Influenza that has prohibited safe transfer in many cases.

Once completed, the flight cage will serve at least 11 different large raptor species throughout Whatcom County, as well as allow us to assist transfers from around the state. The total estimated cost of the project is \$52,000.

CAN YOU HELP WHATCOM COUNTY'S BIRDS SOAR?

We are currently seeking funds to help us complete the wildlife center flight cage as soon as possible! Donations can be made using the QR code here, mailed in via the remit slip included with this newsletter, or online at whatcomhumane.org/donate



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THRIFT SHOP

Dana Browne, *Manager*
Jo Williams



Happy Sales & Happy Tails at the WHS Thrift Shop

THE STORE CELEBRATES 4 YEARS WITH NEW HOURS, NEW DEALS, AND THE SAME GREAT MISSION

When it's time to unlock the storefront doors each day, it's not unusual for Thrift Shop staff and volunteers to be greeted by customers eagerly awaiting its opening.

"The store is always humming with customers talking and singing along to the music," said Thrift Shop Manager Dana Browne. "I am constantly being told that they love our shop: It's clean, friendly, and with great prices."

The number of store visitors seems to reiterate this sentiment, with Browne sharing that the shop typically has 150-200 transactions per day.

"I just love when our customers are so happy to be here, especially the ones that bring in their pets," she said. "We get all kinds of dogs and an occasional cat or even a rabbit. All pets must be in carts, but that doesn't stop the bigger dogs."

Alongside customers' visiting pups, the Thrift Shop hosts WHS foster kittens about once a week.

The donation intake side of operations is just as busy as the front of the store—perhaps even more so at times, with staff and volunteers working hard to keep up with the steady stream of donation drop-offs that need to be sorted and prepped for sale.

"I am always surprised and grateful for the generous donations we receive," Browne said. "We have had everything from collectables and antiques to fun and unusual items to everyday housewares and clothing."

One thing the shop could use more of? Volunteers. There are some days when the store doesn't have enough help and has to temporarily close donation intake, which can cause inconvenience for community members looking to drop-off items.

Volunteer shifts happen three times a day, with 14 spots per shift, and include such roles as intake, clothing, linens, electronics, jewelry, stocking, and cashiering. Currently, Browne estimates the shop has 7-10 volunteers per shift on a normal day, meaning there is room for more people to join the team.

I Continued on pg. 5



Thrift Shop, continued from pg. 4 | For those who can't volunteer, you can show your support by shopping at the store and encouraging others to do the same, by donating great items, or by leaving a positive online review.

As of this month, the Thrift Shop has new hours and is open for shopping Tuesday-Saturday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. (Donation drop-offs are a similar but slightly shorter timeframe of Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.)

Each day of the week also highlights a different sale type: Tuesday is 10% off for senior citizens; Wednesday is 50% off pet-related items; Thursday is 50% off clothing; Friday is 50% off DVDs, CDs, games, books, and puzzles; and Saturday is 50% off kitchen items and linens.

"We are always trying new things to keep our customers happy," Browne said. "For instance, I just added a TV that plays animal videos, which has been a big hit. We even did a photo contest earlier this year themed 'Your Pet with Your Thrift Shop Find' that had over 100 entries."

This October marked the Thrift Shop's four-year anniversary under operation by the Whatcom Humane Society and one-year anniversary at its location in the Birchwood Neighborhood. Browne shared that a near-future plan is for the shop to join the Birchwood Neighborhood Association, with the overarching goal of the store remaining steadfast: "Bring in more money for the animals in our care and gain the respect of the community."

New Hours!

WHS THRIFT SHOP

Great Finds For a Great Cause.

PARK MANOR SHOPPING CENTER
1534B Birchwood Ave | Bellingham, WA

STORE HOURS:
Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00am - 5:00pm

DONATIONS ACCEPTED:
Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00am - 4:00pm

Questions? Call 360-543-6792



Create a Legacy of Compassion

Plan for the people, pets & causes you care about with WHS & FreeWill: freewill.com/whatcomhumane

Questions? Email us at development@whatcomhumane.org

A Tax-Smart Way to Support WHS

Further our mission and your financial wellness before year-end.



We are so grateful for our entire community's support. *Thank you!*



With Heartfelt Gratitude to Our 2024 Sponsors & Partners

MANY, MANY THANKS FOR MAKING THIS YEAR'S FUNDRAISERS A SUCCESS!

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Louise Granger & Leaf Schumann
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Skylark's Cafe
Spark Museum
Stemma Brewing
Stickers For Days
Still Life Massage & Float
Stones Throw Brewing
Structures Brewing
Studio K
Sugar Mountain
Sullivan Plumbing
Summit Adventure Park
Sundara West B&B
Sweet as Waffles
Surroundings Home & Garden
Tails & Trails Photography
Tails-A-Wagging
Tangled Threads Quilt Shop
The Bagelry
The Birch Door Cafe
The Black Cat
The Bourbon
The Chrysalis Inn & Spa
The Daisy Cafe
The Fairhaven Village Inn
The Fork at Agate Bay
The Rusty Wagon
The Sandwich Odyssey
The Wild Oat Bakery & Cafe
Third Planet Boutique
Tipsy Tractor Farm
Tony's Coffee
Kit Topaz
Trader Joe's
Trejo's Tacos
Twin Sisters Brewing
Melissa Ugurlu
VanWingerden Greenhouses
Village Books & Paper Dreams
Wander Brewing
Whatom Museum
Wild Bird Chalet
Wildcat Cove Paddle



THANK YOU FOR BEING A WHATCOM HUMANE SOCIETY MEMBER!



This summer, we launched a brand new annual membership program, and we want to share our sincere thanks to everyone who answered the call so far and joined as a **Paw Protector, Animal Ally, Critter Caregiver, or Furever Friend.** The list below includes membership donations made August–September 2024, as well as our pre-existing lifetime members. Your annual membership supports the ongoing operations at our four facilities so that we can continue to be a resource for any and all animals in our community. *Thank you so much!*

Haven't heard about our new membership program? Learn more at whatcomhumane.org/donate/#membership

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The Heart of a Champ

WHS FARM WELCOMES EQUINE IN NEED OF EXTRA TLC

Champ is the newest horse at the WHS Farm and was picked up by our Animal Control team after his owner passed away. He and a mare were found on a property with unsafe conditions, with both horses in poor health. Unfortunately, the mare suffered from such extreme neglect—including severe foot issues that made her unable to stand or walk—that she was unable to recover.

“Her feet had gotten so bad they’d grown thick and started curling up, and someone had just hacksawed them off. I’ve never seen such bad feet in real life,” Farm Manager Kami Steinbach recounted. “She couldn’t stand or walk well. They were past the point of being able to fix, [and] the only humane thing to do was euthanize her.”

Since arriving at the farm, Champ has had much-needed veterinary care from the team at Kulshan Veterinary Hospital, including a basic intake exam, vaccinations, and dewormer, and he will be receiving a dental in the near future. He also had a visit from the farrier, who said his feet looked surprisingly good considering the conditions he came from, with no signs of laminitis.

The primary goal at the moment is to help Champ gain weight. At the time of intake, he was significantly underweight at 740 lbs. Thanks to the dedication of Steinbach and the farm volunteers, Champ is now over 860 pounds and continues to get closer to his ideal weight goal of 1,000 lbs.

Over the weeks since his arrival, Steinbach said she’s witnessed Champ’s confidence blossom more and more.

“He can still be timid and anxious with strangers, but he’s learning to trust people and like being around them,” she said. “He loves getting fed regularly, and he’s not so surprised to be given food anymore.”

As far as adoption goes, it’s all about finding the right home that will help Champ continue to gain weight and build trust, as well as be patient with his natural and learned anxieties.

“He’s doing really well,” Steinbach said. “I’d love to see him settle in somewhere if it were perfect for him.”

If you think you might be that perfect home, please complete an application at whatcomhumane.org/adopt or reach out to us at farm@whatcomhumane.org to ask questions & learn more about Champ.



ALL ABOUT CHAMP

Age: Mid-20s

Breed: Arabian

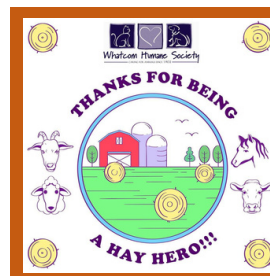
Gender: Gelding

Nicknames: Champeroni, Sweet Boy, Big Guy (because he’s tiny 🍷)

Likes: Treats, neck scratches, forehead rubs & being a good boy

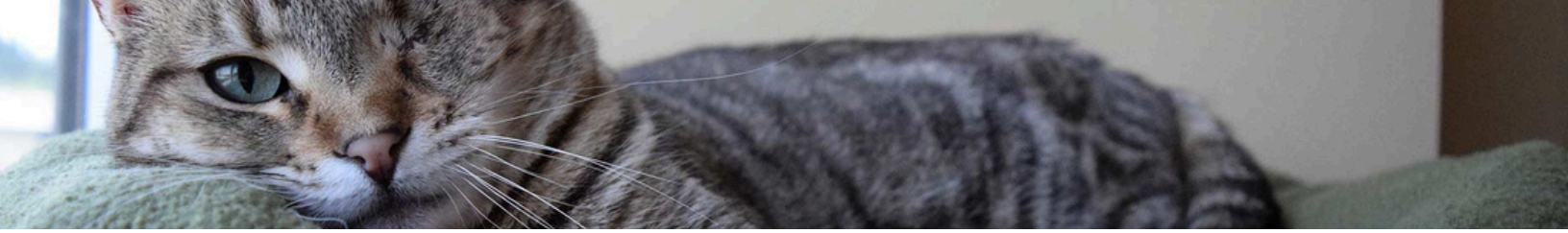
Dislikes: Stressors (he’s anxious), being alone, and JJ (one of his fellow horse mates who can be a bit of diva and tries to bully him)

Dream home/adopter: Someone patient who is familiar with higher energy/anxious horses, particularly Arabians. He needs a friend, a warm barn at night, and someone who is willing to keep helping him gain weight.



Looking for additional ways to support Champ and our other farm residents?

Consider becoming a Hay Hero with a one-time or recurring donation to support our monthly hay bill! Learn more and make a donation at wagives.org/Whatcom-Humane-Society



Sharing Space at WHS's Pet Loss Support Group



Written by Michael Berres, WHS Pet Loss Support Group Volunteer

On the first Wednesday evening of each month, people experiencing the loss of their pets or facing hard decisions on ending a pet's pain or illness meet at our humane society. They usually come as strangers feeling alone and isolated in their grief. While the WHS Pet Loss Support Group doesn't end the sadness, it helps people understand that they aren't unique or alone in their grief. And sometimes, people who started as strangers walk away as friends.

With two WHS facilitators for each session, people share the stories of their pets—most often dogs or cats. We see their photos, listen to how four-leggeds and two-leggeds met, understand the unique personality quirks of each pet, and usually hear one or more funny stories about each pet. We almost always hear the incredible sagas of what people do to help their furry family members go through disease and weakening. We hear about the indecision that everyone goes through as they are never quite sure if they “did enough” or “did I miss obvious cues” or “was I home enough at the critical moments” or....

We hear so many stories of people being misunderstood by friends or family members as they go through their grief. People are told things like: “It's just a cat; you'll get over it” or “Well...go out and get another dog or cat” or “Your sadness will soon pass”. For the folks coming to Pet Loss Support, it's not “just a dog” or “just a cat.” It's a life partnership with unconditional love and affection (and sometimes annoyance and sometimes disbelief) that is deeply embedded in who we are.

Losing pets or facing that loss is perhaps the hardest time in our loving our critters. It's inevitable because they generally live shorter times than we humans live. Every person does grief in their own way—the Pet Loss Support facilitators and other participants honor the unique way that each person does their grieving process. We've learned that some folks grieve deeply for weeks while others grieve deeply for years. We've learned that almost everyone finds the silence of their missing pets to be deafening—no more dog tags clanging on water bowls; no nails screeching across hardwood floors during zoomie moments; no more purring from underneath what was supposed to be your blanket and but became your cat's blanket; no more whining to go outside for the 15th time in a day; and no more monster howls because a squirrel has walked across your back porch.

The Pet Loss Support Group meets the first Wednesday of each month upstairs at WHS from 6:00-7:15 pm. The group is free and doesn't require pre-registration. You are welcome to come as often as you wish. It is helpful to bring a photo of your pet. The group doesn't pretend to be a clinical therapy experience, but we do provide a caring and supportive place to be when you go through or are facing the loss of your pet. For more information or questions, please call (360) 733-2080 ext. 3116.



PET LOSS SUPPORT

Provided by WHS

Our monthly in-person support group provides a safe place for connecting grieving pet owners with experienced facilitators and other resources. Whether you are currently suffering loss or anticipating loss, we encourage you to join us. Volunteer counselors offer support and resources for those who have been touched by:

- The loss of a pet
- Anticipating the death of a pet
- Dealing with the difficult decision of euthanasia
- Having suffered from a lost or stolen pet
- Wondering when/if they are ready for another pet

WHEN & WHERE:

First Wednesday of every month, 6:00 pm (typically 1-hour sessions)

Whatcom Humane Society
Multipurpose Room
2172 Division Street, Bellingham

FREE to attend
Registration not required

For more info, please email outreach@whatcomhumane.org or call 360-733-2080 ext. 3116

Additional resources available at whatcomhumane.org/resources



Canine Good Citizen Class Gets Two Paws Up

WHS SHELTER DOG TRAINING PROGRAM PROVIDES PUPS & VOLUNTEERS WITH LIFELONG SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE



It's mid-afternoon on a Friday and the sun is shining on WHS's green space as shelter dogs and their volunteer handlers line up for this week's Canine Good Citizen (CGC) class. Everyone seems grateful for the good weather, which is fair considering that the hour-long training session takes place year-round, rain or shine.

Volunteer program dog trainer Kerry Mitchell greets everyone from the center of the space as pairs of volunteers and dogs find a spot on the field. A 35-year dog trainer and 20-year shelter volunteer, Mitchell started CGC classes at the shelter in May of 2023 following a visit from the "Dogs Playing For Life" organization, a nonprofit whose mission is to enhance the quality of life of shelter dogs by helping shelters build successful playgroup programs.

"With so many of the dogs interacting in a positive way off leash, it opened the door for the dogs to work together in a class setting," Mitchell said.

"I started teaching CGC at WHS because I felt it covered the basics and we could work on desensitizing the dogs slowly to things they were wary of, such as being approached by strangers; having their paws, ears, and eyes touched by strangers; and gradually exposing them to loud noises and strange objects such as bicycles, crutches, and wheelbarrows to build their confidence," she went on to say. "Many of the dogs have benefitted by learning basic skills such as sit, down, and hopping in the car with confidence. These are skills that will help them stay in their new homes. The class also helps with their comfort around other dogs on leash. And because they are in class each week [and] have a card on their kennel showing what skills they're working on, they are more likely to be adopted."

Due to the varying timeline for each dog from intake to adoption, not everyone who begins the Canine Good Citizen program completes the full slate of classes or takes the final test. Still, there is value for the dogs in participating in even just one class, as many have had little to no training when they arrive at the shelter. **I Continued on pg. 11**





Canine Good Citizen, continued from pg. 10 | The class is a boon to shelter volunteers, too, since it provides them with the opportunity to practice their training skills in a supervised setting and with a variety of dogs.

"I am able to give them direction and feedback, which not only helps them as volunteers, but with their dogs at home," Mitchell said. "Many volunteers have told me how much [the class] has helped them understand and assist the dogs they work with and adore."

For volunteers interested in handling dogs with more complex behaviors, Mitchell also teaches two advanced level classes and provides one-on-one coaching to equip volunteers with the skills they need.

"I love teaching [the CGC] class and watching the dogs and volunteers change and gain confidence over time," she said. "Just like the dogs, volunteers come for weeks or months, then move on to other programs in the shelter, [so] we always need new volunteers to help with CGC."

From Mitchell's reflections on the past year, it's clear what a transformational addition both playgroups and the Canine Good Citizen program have been for everyone involved.

"The first summer was remarkable because we had a group of dogs in class who enjoyed being with each other in playgroup every day," she said. "One of the dogs, Pancake, was terrified of the car and new people. Over time, he became more and more confident with the strangers he was introduced to in class and eventually learned that the car was the best thing in the world. The day after he jumped into [a volunteer's] car without hesitation for an outing on a trail, he was adopted, jumped into his new parents' car, and was driven all the way home with his head on his new mom's lap."

Interested in volunteering to help WHS shelter dogs? Learn more about this and other volunteer roles at whatcomhumane.org/services, and reach out to our Volunteer Manager at volunteer@whatcomhumane.org.



WHATCOM HUMANE SOCIETY'S WORKING CATS PROGRAM

The Whatcom Humane Society's Working Cats Program places healthy semi-feral and non-socialized adult cats with adopters looking for cats not suited for indoor-only living environments. Working cats will receive:

- Spay/neuter
- Ear tip
- Microchip
- Dewormer
- Initial FVRCP Vaccination
- 1-Year Rabies Vaccination
- Flea Treatment (30 Day)
- FIV/FelV Testing

WHS will also provide the adopters with instructions on how to transition working cats into their new environment.

BENEFITS	REQUIREMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides natural pest population control. • Ideal for barns, stables, warehouses, ranches, wineries, churches, etc. • Provides previously homeless animals with a safe place to live and reduces number of cats euthanized in shelters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved WHS adoption application. • Cats must be adopted in pairs if there are no resident cats on the property • Adopters must provide food, water, & shelter year-round, as well as vet care. • Adopters will need to allow 2-4 weeks for cats to acclimate to their new space.



Contact our Working Cats Coordinator: 360-733-2080 x 0 or workingcats@whatcomhumane.org
Adoption Fee: \$25 for 1 cat; \$40 for pair; \$20 for 3+ cats

YOU AUTO DONATE!



Donate your old car, truck, boat, RV, or trailer to benefit the animals at Whatcom Humane Society!

All donated vehicles must have a clean title, be running, and be able to be driven. Your donation is tax deductible and will help support all of our daily operations, including our three animal care facilities!

Questions? Please contact us at 360-733-2080 ext. 3014 or email development@whatcomhumane.org



Whatcom Humane Society
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& stay tuned
for more details

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