



USPCA Annual Report - 2024

## Welcome to the 2024 annual report!



The Uganda Society for the Protection and Care of Animals (USPCA) is a non-profit animal welfare organisation established in 1997 to respond to the immediate needs of abandoned, stray, and sick animals whilst simultaneously tackling the root causes of the large population of strays and the high incidence of cruelty in Uganda. The USPCA (the "Society") is registered with the Uganda Registration Services Board (URSB) as an Association. The Vision of the USPCA is to create a society which is well informed about the basic needs and care of animals and strives to meet them responsibly.

We work with communities and schools to support a healthier pet population. The USPCA runs two animal shelters, the original shelter, called the Haven, and a shelter at our new location, not yet open to the public. At these shelters, which receive animals from across the country, cats and dogs are rehabilitated, spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and treated with anti-parasite

medicines before being rehomed. Some animals enter the Haven in need of significant vet care and emotional rehabilitation.

During 2024, up to 12 staff oversaw the two USPCA shelters, feeding and providing clean water, cleaning kennels, socialising the cats and dogs, and welcoming visitors. Volunteers provide much-needed support to our staff and in 2024, we were grateful for volunteer vets, foster families, and those who stop by one time or on a continuing basis to give our animals love, walks, shampoos, and grooming. Many locals and overseas visitors have brought donations of pet food, shelter supplies, and vet supplies to the Haven, and several supporters also brought gifts for the USPCA staff!

We faced several challenges in 2024, among them:

- **Loss of two senior staff members, the shelter manager and shelter vet.** We have been fortunate that very capable people quickly stepped into these roles. The USPCA's assistant shelter manager has taken over as shelter manager (in addition to her role as assistant to the vet) and several local vet volunteers have given their time to spay/neuter and provide other vet care for the shelter animals. In the end, the loss of the two staff members has offered some opportunities for the USPCA to improve service provision.
- **Our vehicle.** Our 4-wd utility vehicle was old and eventually became unsafe to drive and too expensive to repair. We are searching for a suitable vehicle so that we can actively rescue more animals-in-need. In the meantime, USPCA has relied on boda boda drivers (usually accompanied by a staff member) and, where possible, requested callers to bring sick or injured animals to the Haven, giving them the opportunity to see its work at first hand.
- **The new shelter.** We are still waiting for the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) to approve our environmental report (Project Brief) and issue the certificate that will allow us to resume construction and move all cats and dogs to the new shelter site. This means we have been paying rent on the old Haven (we own the land outright at the new site) and have had to pay running costs of two shelters. To remain in compliance with NEMA, currently, we keep no more than 50 dogs at the new site.
- **The "Dog Rescue Scam."** The scam (social media postings claiming to rescue dogs, and more recently, cats and rabbits, and asking for donations, whilst in some cases, inflicting harm, not providing food, and encouraging pregnancies) has brought worldwide attention to Uganda, has resulted in widespread mistrust of even the legitimate animal welfare organisations in Uganda, and has resulted in a loss of donations. Also, replying to people

who get in touch with us about the scam takes considerable volunteer time--time that could be better spent directly supporting the USPCA.

- **Lack of a dedicated quarantine area at the Haven.** In the past, we have set up storage areas at the shelter as quarantine spaces, or if needed, designated a kennel for quarantine. However, in 2024, with many puppies and kittens entering the shelter at one time (we rescued several litters), we needed a dedicated quarantine area, which was virtually impossible to create given the restricted space at the Haven. The result was that sicknesses that could have been easily contained spread beyond our new arrivals. At our new shelter, we intend to set aside a dedicated quarantine area to address this issue.

Our Annual Report gives only a glimpse into all we've done in 2024. If you follow our social media pages and check our website, you know we've done so much more. If you don't yet follow us, we invite you to join the USPCA.

## The Haven: Overview

The Haven cares for dogs and cats whilst they await adoption, or if not adopted, they have a permanent home at the USPCA shelter. We are currently located at two sites as we await the move from the Haven to our new plot of land. The majority of USPCA animals (on average, about 300 during 2024) and staff are still at our old location in Mbuya. No more than 50 dogs (the limit



until NEMA approval has been obtained) are ever at the new site at one time. At the Mbuya location, cats share a large outdoor cat enclosure (photo above, the USPCA cattery, which holds about 40 cats). Dogs are housed in communal kennels (see photo below). Separate rooms and kennels are dedicated for sick animals, mamas with pups or kittens, and orphaned kittens and puppies.



The shelter is open to visitors every day of the week and potential adopters and other visitors drop by daily. We promote adoption via our website and social media, highlighting particular animals looking for homes on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

Long-stay residents, those who are often overlooked by adopters, are generally animals with disabilities or behavioural issues, and those who may have scars and disfigurements from difficult lives on the streets. All animals are precious to us, regardless of how they look or behave. Although a life at the shelter may not be ideal, thanks to our donors we are able to offer this option for those who need it, all the while maintaining hope for the perfect adopters to come along for each of the lives we care for.

# 374 animals rescued in 2024



## Animal Rescue

We faced several challenges in 2024 (e.g., loss of the shelter manager and the full-time shelter vet), which affected the ability of the USPCA to track and retain good records. Without a vehicle, we were unable to rescue as many animals as we have in previous years.

From April 2024 onward, we resolved some of these issues. Therefore, we can only present the exact number of animals that we rescued from April through December of the year, shown in the table below.

### NUMBER OF ANIMALS RECEIVED AT THE SHELTER, 2024

	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
ADULT DOGS	8	9	6	4	6	9	3	9	7	61

<b>NEONTAL PUPPIES</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>PUPPIES UNDER ONE YEAR</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>ADULT CATS</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>NEONTAL KITTENS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>KITTENS UNDER ONE YEAR</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>343</b>



Based on records of vet care and spay/neuter, **we estimate an additional 31 animals were rescued in January through March 2024, for a total of 374 dogs and cats rescued in 2024.**

As in previous years, puppies were the most common animal in our care, followed by kittens, dogs, and finally cats.

We receive calls at all times of the day and night from members of the public who are concerned about animals. We never turn an animal away. We plan to purchase a dedicated USPCA vehicle in 2025 so that we can better serve our community with a more effective and quicker response to stray, injured, and sick animals-in-need of rescue.

*(Photo left: These local kids found a stray kitty during a rainstorm and brought her to the USPCA where they knew she'd be safe.)*

## Rehoming

We aim to rehome all cats and dogs at the shelter and do not have a time limit on how long animals can stay, offering life-long care to those who need it. All animals in the shelter are spayed/neutered (if they are old enough, and if not, they are required to return for s/n), vaccinated, and de-parasitised before being rehomed.

As above, the adoption records in our possession are from April through December 2024, and are presented in the table below.



Adoptions	Dogs	Puppies	Cats	Kittens	Total
Jan, Feb, March	4	5		1	10
April	2	2	1	1	6
May	7	5	3	4	19
June	1	1	2	3	7
July	9	4			13
August	5		1		6
Sept	4			1	5
Oct	2	1	1	3	7
Nov	1	1	2	4	8
Dec	3				3
<b>TOTAL Adopted 4/24 to 12/24</b>					<b>84</b>



*(Photo right: Kintu adopted a kitten in April 2024)*

Prior to April 2024, with a full-time vet active at the shelter, we were able to spay or neuter all incoming cats and dogs, and if old enough, puppies and kittens. If too young to be spayed or neutered prior to adoption, adopters are required to return with their pets to the shelter, where the USPCA’s full-time vet sterilised them.

From April onward, we relied on local volunteer vets (photo left, Dr Brian; photo right, Dr Lewis and student vet Edward) to spay and neuter shelter pets. Thanks to these dedicated volunteers, we have ensured that all adopted pets are spayed or neutered prior to adoption, or if too young, have been returned for sterilisation.



We instituted an improved adoption policy in 2024. We updated our adoption application and agreement form. The application now includes a one-on-one interview and discussion with prospective adopters to help ensure that the matches we facilitate are for life and that adopters fully understand their responsibilities toward their pets.

## Fostering



The shelter is a very busy place and it is not always possible to provide extra care and attention to animals who need it. We rely on a small group of volunteers to foster the most vulnerable animals. At the top of the priority list for fostering are always the very young (especially neonate, like those in the photo left, luckily found with their mom) orphaned kittens and puppies, as they require around the clock care. We also try to find foster homes for animals with disabilities, those who are very shy and are not coping well with shelter life and require additional socialisation support, and those with recurring health issues.

We also try to prioritise our long stay residents who have spent many years at the shelter and are repeatedly overlooked for adoption, as foster carers have the opportunity to get to know the animal's personality very well and take great photos in a home environment, making the animal's adoption advertisement very personal and more likely to be successful.

**The USPCA desperately needs more foster homes!**

## Community Outreach and Animal Welfare Education



In 2024, we significantly expanded our outreach and services to the local community, in particular, those living around the Haven shelter in Mbuya. We have been told that now local kids and adults feel much more welcomed at the shelter than they ever did in the past. This has resulted in a continuous stream of visitors requesting vaccinations, de-worming, and sterilisation of their pets and we have been more than happy to oblige (see photos left and below).

In addition to the vet care, which we give free of charge, all community members who visit the

USPCA receive a tour of the premises and animal welfare/humane education discussions with the staff (below).



We celebrated World Rabies Day (photo below) by inviting local community members to visit the Haven with their pets and get a free rabies vaccination. The response was overwhelming, and we continued to give vaccinations through the following week for those who missed the September 28 event.



Photo right: Local kids brought their puppies to the Haven and shelter manager Jackie gave them checkups, vaccinations, and talked to the kids about good puppy care.)



## Volunteers and Staff

During 2024, at the two USPCA shelters, we employed 10 to 12 paid staff members; nine of them, in their new uniforms, are shown in the photo below from December 2024, and additional staff are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> photo below, at the new site.





Many, many wonderful volunteers gave their time and skills to help the USPCA serve animals in need during 2024 (for example, photos right and below). From volunteers who come to the shelter on a regular basis to help with animal care and rescues to those coming for a day as part of their holiday or to celebrate a special occasion, we appreciate all help and support.





We welcomed several Makerere vet students who did their required field work at the USPCA shelter. The shelter gives them hands-on experience in rescue, shelter medicine, and emergency care that they would be unable to get in any other setting in Uganda.

## Donors and Fundraising

Our Partner Organization in the United States, Animal-Kind International, raises funds to cover our shelter operations. Animal-Kind International's support consisted of: the AKI-USPCA Pet Food Fund (as part of AKI's Elaine Law Memorial Pet Food Fund) covered the cost of cat and dog food (other than what was donated locally and through kennel sponsorships, including those directly to AKI); staff salaries; spay/neuter of shelter pets; and other shelter running costs. A huge thank you to Animal-Kind International for their ongoing support to the USPCA. Year after year their unwavering financial and in-kind support enables the Haven to rescue, rehabilitate, and adopt, and we are extremely grateful to them.

Please see our page on the AKI website: <https://www.animal-kind.org/uganda>

Cafe Javas, a local café, <https://cafejavas.co.ug/user/home>, has been a long-time supporter of the USPCA. They donate fish trims for our kitties. We thank them for their dedication to the USPCA and animal welfare in Uganda.

We received many cash and in-kind donations from supporters, including local businesses, over the course of the year. Commonly donated and much needed items included dog and cat food, kitten and puppy formula, newspapers, and towels.

In 2020 we launched kennel sponsorships, a fundraising initiative to allow our supporters to make annual commitments to animals in our care. Kennel sponsorship has proven to be a great way for individuals, families, schools, companies, and organisations to become more involved in our work.

Many of the sponsors were already long-term supporters of the USPCA. Others were individuals and families who had adopted from the USPCA previously and saw kennel sponsorship as a way of giving back to the USPCA and further contributing to the USPCA's work. Sponsorships have

been made in memory of beloved pets and in honour of current pets. The kennels that have sponsors are:

<i>Kennel</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>
Germany	Sponsored
UK	
Kenya	
Gulu	
Kampala	Sponsored
Arua	
Adoki	Sponsored
Jinja	Sponsored
Spain	Sponsored
Garuga	
Nile	
White House	
Malawi	Sponsored
Mbale	Sponsored
Uganda	
Brazil	Sponsored
Sudan	
Cat House	Sponsored

If you would like to know more about our kennel sponsorship program, please see our website, <https://www.uganda-spca.org/sponsor-a-kennel>, and if you would like to sponsor a kennel, get in touch!

## New Shelter Update

After 15 years at our current location, with assistance from Animal-Kind International, the USPCA finally raised enough money to buy our own plot of land in 2021. The new plot is along the Entebbe Road and is buffered from any residential areas, so it is perfect for us.

Unfortunately, construction at the new site is on hold for the time being due to more stringent restrictions governing occupation of wetlands now implemented by Uganda's National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). Although it is our intention to retain that part of our site which is classified as wetland in its natural state, as an area for walking and relaxing with shelter dogs, we need to comply with NEMA's Environmental and Social Impact Assessment requirements. To that end, we submitted a Project Brief (environmental report) to NEMA in 2024 and are awaiting approval before we can continue to transfer all operations to the new site.

That means we are running two shelters, bringing added costs that are very difficult for us to cover. We hope 2025 brings us good news from NEMA.

## *Thank You!*

Worldwide, 2024 was a difficult year for so many, with so much uncertainty. Since we rely on donors from all over the world, this meant that donations to the USPCA, which markedly decreased in 2024, had to stretch further than in the past.

We feel very blessed to have such wonderful, loyal supporters around the world who, even though they may have been struggling, kept answering our pleas for donations and continued their long-standing financial and in-kind support to us.

The USPCA community is a truly wonderful group of people. Your support and solidarity in 2024 helped to motivate and spur us on, even during the most difficult weeks and months.

Words are not enough to express our appreciation- but thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, on behalf of all staff, volunteers, and most importantly, the animals at the USPCA.

