



# Fall 2022

# NEWSLETTER

1011 Garfield, Oak Park, IL 60304 | (708) 848-8155 | [animalcareleague.org](http://animalcareleague.org)

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1 From the Desk of the Executive Director
- 1 Letter from the President
- 2 Our Impact
- 2 ACL Alumni Updates
- 3 Upcoming Events
- 5 Inside our Expansion Project
- 6 Meet Ivy
- 7 Jolene's Success Story



Malibu and her new mom!



We're expanding!  
See page 4



## Board Officers

### **President**

Diane Menza

### **Vice President**

Lynne Williams

### **Board Advisor**

Chatka Ruggiero

### **Treasurer**

Marsha McClellan

### **Secretary**

Keli Wojciechowski

## Board Members

Robin Akers, Brian Cheske, Gerald Lynch,  
Melinda Malecki, Lisa Polk, Megan  
Rooney, Vytas Sulaitis

## Advisory Board

Paul Harvey, Jr.

## Staff

### **Executive Director**

Kira Robson

### **Operations Director**

Gabby Keresi-Uresti

### **Events & Development Manager**

Quinn Lentz

### **Shelter Manager**

Mia Lindner

### **Adoption Team**

Michelle Wilfred, Andrew Schmidhuber,  
Kiley Brough

### **Communications Coordinator**

Eli Knapp

### **Volunteer & Foster Coordinator**

Rebecca Sztuczko

### **Rabbit Coordinator**

Liz Rench

### **Maintenance Supervisor**

Smiley Herrera

### **Animal Care Staff**

Colette Harper, Gabriel Manske, Alex  
McNeal, Siana Morales

### **Veterinary & Clinic Staff**

Dr. Julia Baehr, DVM, Dr. Amanda  
Riesterer, DVM, Michelle Watt

### **Medical Coordinator**

Alayna Hanna

### **2nd Chance Shop**

Kevin Murphy

# From the Desk of the Executive Director



*KIRA ROBSON*

Dear Friend-

I hope that our newsletter finds you well. I know that the last year has been challenging for many. We have seen proof of that in an increase of people reaching out for support for their pets, as well as an increase in pets being dumped at our doorstep.

While we hate to see this, it has become a motivation for us to work to expand our programs that offer support to pet parents. As we move into the holiday season, I would like to encourage those who can to consider supporting our efforts by attending an upcoming event, signing up for a small monthly donation, donating a bag of food, or giving to our Holiday Appeal. The strength of our programs is driven by the generosity of our supporters, and we are grateful for that. If you or someone you know is in need of support via pet food or other supplies, please reach out to us at [support@animalcareleague.org](mailto:support@animalcareleague.org).

I'd also like to add that 2023 will mark Animal Care League's 50th Anniversary! We are incredibly proud of how far we have come over the past 50 years, and we have some amazing things ahead. Be sure to read about our capital project update in this issue. It is such an exciting time for the organization, and we look forward to having you be a part of our continued success.

Thank you as always for your support! I hope to connect with you at an upcoming event or around the shelter soon.

Kira Robson  
Executive Director

# Letter from the President

*DIANE MENZA*

Happy Fall from Animal Care league! I want to extend my personal gratitude and that of the rest of the board of directors when I thank our donors, volunteers, staff, and general supporters throughout our entire community. The care our animals receive under our staff and volunteers is truly second to none.

Looking ahead to the remainder of 2022 and into 2023 we continue to prioritize our mission with a focus on continuing the renovation of 1011 and 1013 Garfield, while keeping Animal Care League open for business. This will be challenging, but our board, staff and volunteers are equal to the task. When the full renovation is complete it will allow our staff and volunteers to rescue, rehabilitate, and adopt into loving homes as well as facilitate a healthy and enriching environment for our animals on site.

On behalf of the Animal Care League Board of Directors, I want to wish you a safe and happy fall and holiday season from our families to yours. We appreciate all you have done for our community to date. and look forward to an even better 2022/2023!

All my best,

Diane Menza  
President

# OUR IMPACT

We are committed to helping animals and people in our community and strengthening the human/animal bond. Here's a look at a few of the ways we've made an impact since the beginning of this year!



11,400

Pounds of Pet food distributed to those in need

884

Adoptions

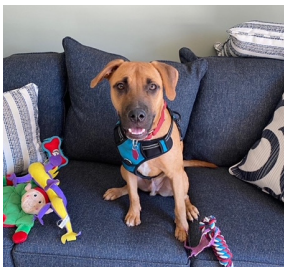
143

Lost pets reunited with their owners

## Checking in With ACL Alumni

Making lasting connections through our adoption program is one of our favorite things to do. Here are a few updates from shelter pets who found their forever homes.

### WRIGLEY

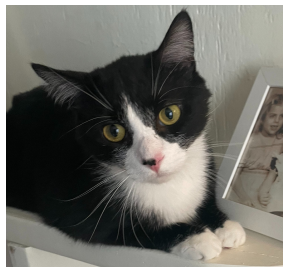


Wrigley (named Ritchie at ACL), was transferred from a partner in Puerto Rico as a puppy. After his journey, he used his super-sweet personality and adorable face to steal the heart of his adopter! Now, Wrigley is having the time of his life playing and snuggling in his new home. We're so happy for him!

*"Wrigley is such a joy. He gets along fabulously with my sister's dog, loves daycare, and enjoys the dog park. Thank you bringing him into my life."*

-Wrigley's adopter

### GRIFFIN



This outgoing boy spent the latter part of his ACL career in the shelter's front window, where he made sure to say hello to people passing by. When he felt he wasn't getting enough attention, he turned his focus inward and got his pets from the shelter staff. These days, Griffin is thriving in a great home, and even has a kitty friend!

*"He's even made friends-ish with my 15 year old cat. They argue about what games to play (she wants to play "who can nap the longest" and he wants to play "jump on you from above") but they're working it out. I still can't believe he was overlooked for 8 months, but I'm thrilled he's here with me now."*

-Griffin's adopter

### MAXAMILIANO



Maxamiliano came to us after his previous owners could no longer care for him, and he quickly showed us what a funny little guy he is! After he and his big personality spent some time in the shelter, Maxamiliano got his chance at a forever home, and it couldn't have gone better!

*"He is doing great! He is affectionate, curious, neat, not a furniture chewer, and the best little bunny! I have a heart explosion from his cuteness at least once a day. He has found his forever home"*

-Maxamiliano's adopter

Adopted a pet from us? We'd love to hear how they're doing! Send updates to [updates@animalcareleague.org](mailto:updates@animalcareleague.org)



# UPCOMING EVENTS



## BARKTOBERFEST: TRIVIA EDITION!

**October 6  
6pm - 9pm  
One Lake Brewing  
1 Lake St**

Raise your glass, shout "PROST," and join us for trivia, raffles, and local beer and eats at One Lake Brewing. Grab your family and friends to form a trivia team and compete to win amazing prizes. Plus, try your luck in our raffle for more chances to win.

[Get Tickets now!](#)

Gift wrap and ribbons and seasonal trinkets. Pictures of Santa with your pups and kittens. Baked goods, a raffle, and holiday bling; these are a few of our favorite things! Animal Care League's Holiday Bazaar is back for its 37th year! With in-person and online shopping, this year it's easier than ever for you to do your favorite thing: helping homeless pets!

[Learn More!](#)

### ACL's 37TH ANNUAL

## HOLIDAY BAZAAR

**December 2 - 4  
Berwyn VFW  
1529 S Harlem Ave**



## FOSTER DOG MEET & GREET/INFO SESSION

**December 16  
Animal Care League  
1011 Garfield St**

Fostering an animal makes a huge impact at the shelter, and it's incredibly rewarding too! Those who attend this session will learn all they need to know about fostering, plus get to meet wonderful animals. If you find a good fit, you might leave the event with a foster pup!

[Stay Tuned!](#)

Have new or gently used holiday items you no longer need? Donate them to the Holiday Bazaar and help homeless animals! Drop donations off at the shelter during open hours!



# GivingTuesday is November 29th

The countdown to the world's  
biggest day of generosity is on!

GivingTuesday was created in 2012 as a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do good. Today, GivingTuesday has become a movement that unleashes the power of radical generosity around the world. Following Black Friday and Cyber Monday each year, GivingTuesday gives us a chance to balance our collective conscience by giving back to organizations we love.

On Tuesday, November 29th, 2022 we will ask our online networks, adopters, volunteers, staff, supporters and anyone who cares about community to join in and celebrate generosity during a 24 hour global giving movement.

GivingTuesday is not only the world's biggest day of generosity, it's also Animal Care League's biggest fundraiser of the entire year. We count on your donations to help ensure our essential work can continue. And, thanks to the generosity of ACL's Board Advisor Chatka Ruggiero, donations on GivingTuesday are MATCHED so your gift will have DOUBLE the impact!

Every act of generosity counts, and on GivingTuesday it counts twice.

## Save the Date!

Add to Google Calendar

Add to Other Calendars

## GET INVOLVED THIS GIVINGTUESDAY



### BE A FUNDRAISER

Create a personalized fundraising page on ACL's website or on Facebook and leverage your personal networks to raise money for animals in need!



### SPREAD THE WORD

GivingTuesday harnesses the power of social media to get people involved in the causes they care about. Share ACL's social media posts and fundraising link on your page or post an #unselfie showing why you support us this year!



### COLLABORATE WITH A GROUP TO FUNDRAISE

Get creative and enlist co-workers, gym buddies, book club members to help collect funds in unique ways and then drop donations off at ACL on November 29th.



### MAKE A DONATION ON NOVEMBER 29TH

Donate online, mail a check, or drop off a donation at the shelter to support our lifesaving work.

Get Involved Now

# Pardon our Dust!

## We're Expanding our Impact!

If you have visited our facility in the last few years, you likely noticed the need for a few repairs. Although our facility has served us well over the past 15+ years, a modernization of our space and an expansion of our capabilities is long overdue.



Adoption Center lobby

Animal Care League has been growing steadily over the years, and in 2020, we purchased the 1009 Garfield property. This property had been sitting vacant for 10 years, nestled in between our current facility and the 1003 Garfield property, which Animal Care League had purchased several years prior. The purchase of the abandoned 1009 Garfield building was made possible through a partnership with the Cook County Land Bank, and with it, ACL came to own four adjacent properties on Garfield Street. Having these four properties set the stage for us to move forward with plans to build a facility that would increase lifesaving, ensure the physical and emotional health of our animals, and serve as a centrally located resource for the community.

In December of 2021, ACL broke ground and began Phase 1 of a 2-part construction project to transform our facility and our organization.



Breaking ground at 1009 Garfield



### Construction Phase 1

Phase 1 of the project saw the building of our new adoption center, which will allow us to better foster the human/animal bond and create a more engaging space for our visitors. New adoption suites and meet-and-greet spaces will make it easy for pets and people to connect. The new adoption center's goal is to destigmatize the shelter experience for potential adopters and help more shelter pets find loving homes. Cats, dogs, rabbits, and other small critters will be housed in a low-stress and fun environment. In addition to modern adoption spaces, the new center's community room is perfect for a wide range of events and programming.

### Looking to Begin Phase 2



Clinic and Resource Center Lobby

The second phase of construction, which is expected to begin in November, involves renovating our intake, medical, and community resource center. This space will allow us to care for twice as many animals, expand our in-house medical capabilities, revamp our spay/neuter clinic, and utilize proper spaces for isolation and grooming. It will also offer low-stress spaces for animals who may be overwhelmed when entering the shelter. A "real life room" — a home-like space where volunteers can watch movies or work remotely while spending time socializing shy or fearful dogs — will make for another exciting addition to the space. This side of the facility will be designed to promote better health for the animals in our care as

well as offer a safer and more efficient space for staff, volunteers, and our animal control partners.

### What to Expect over the Next 8-10 Months

Since ACL will need to remain open during construction, we will be making adjustments to our operations in order to navigate Phase 2 of construction. Soon, we will be moving some of our staff as well as our adoption program over to the completed space. Please be sure to check our website and social media for the most current updates or give us a call to confirm our hours and availability for services. We anticipate hosting a grand opening of the completed facility in 2023.

### Capital Campaign

We feel strongly that Oak Park and the surrounding communities deserve to have a more modern animal shelter and pet resource center, and we can only complete this capital project through the generosity and support of these communities. Animal Care League is currently working to raise an initial \$2.25M which will provide significant support towards completing the facility expansion and renovation. Funding will be key to determining the pace of construction, expansion, and programming priorities. We are currently looking for donors who are interested in giving a gift at the \$10,000 or above level.

If you or someone you know is interested learning more or in making a leadership gift to our Capital Campaign, please contact Kira Robson at [executivedirector@animalcareleague.org](mailto:executivedirector@animalcareleague.org) or 708-848-8155.

# Help Ivy Find a Home!



This beautiful lady is Ivy. In October of last year, she came to ACL as a stray with a whole litter of kittens in tow. After spending time socializing in the cat room and seeing her kittens find homes of their own, Ivy is ready to start the next chapter of her life!

Since she has ACL seniority over many of the others in the cat room, Ivy has special dibs on some of the very best kitty spots. Often, you can find her in the extra-fluffy bed by the window, watching the birds and squirrels. She also likes to cuddle with her friend Marjorie!

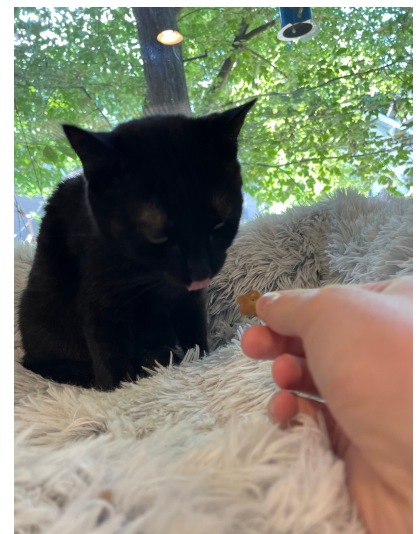
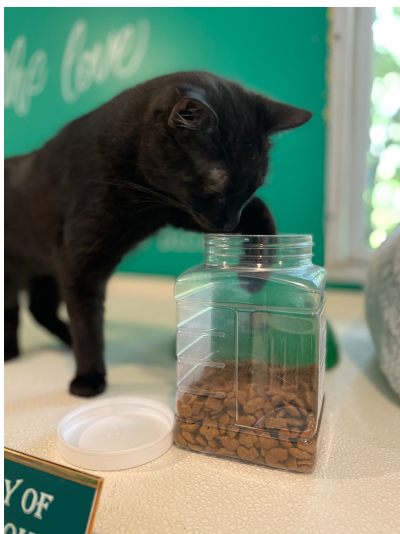
While she does enjoy her naps, Ivy is usually up for some playtime too. If you bring the toys, she'll be sure to bring her expert hunting skills. Wand toys are her favorite! As you can see below, she does appreciate rewards for her efforts, and will take matters into her own paws if the treats aren't flowing.

If you'd like to welcome this sweet girl into your home, you can start the adoption process today. This black kitty is sure to bring you nothing but good luck!

[Start the Adoption Process](#)

[See Other Adoptable Animals](#)

**Follow us for  
adoption updates:**



# Making it Count

## The Impact of Animal Care League's Medical Fund

This sweet, big-eyed kitty is Jolene (named Plum at ACL), and her relationship with us began at something of an eventful time in her life – when she was found outdoors and brought to the shelter, she was at the tail end of pregnancy. The very next day, one cat had turned into five, and Jolene was a proud, tired mom. While her litter was healthy, and Jolene herself was able to get some much needed rest in a foster home, we soon found out that she wasn't quite out of the woods.

When we saw her next, Jolene was in our clinic for an exam. Her foster owner had noticed that she was having trouble keeping her food down. She was strikingly skinny. We prescribed medication and saw her again two weeks later. Still, Jolene's vomiting persisted, and so to get to the bottom of what was wrong, we ordered an X-ray.

But even the X-ray failed to give us much insight into her condition. With multiple potential diagnoses and only a murky picture of how we could help her, our team was in a tough spot. But although we didn't quite know what to make of Jolene's condition, we knew this curious, sweet, funny cat deserved the best possible chance of a full life. Through all her visits to our clinic and her health troubles, we never saw Jolene's happy spirit waver. We started her on a different medication, sent her home, and waited, hopeful that we would finally see improvement.

After some time on her new meds, Jolene's condition appeared to show signs of stabilizing. We adjusted her diet, and in no time, she was ready to go forward with her spay surgery. With this development, we were able to give Jolene a final diagnosis – a congenital condition known as megaesophagus – and her path to a happy life came into focus at last. After a brief stay in the shelter's front window, where her antics elicited laughs and swoons from passers-by, Jolene got her well-deserved happy ending.



Jolene with fellow ACL kitty Dolly



Jolene's path to her forever home wasn't always easy, and it wasn't always certain. But thanks to the invaluable support of ACL's medical fund, we had the resources to never give up on her. We believe every animal deserves a chance like the one Jolene got, but without funding to cover tests, medication, and other medical care, many happy endings like this one simply wouldn't be possible. Donating to the medical fund has a direct impact, not only for animals like Jolene, but for the people who can't imagine life without them.

These days, Jolene is happy and comfortable at home with her sister Dolly, a fellow ACL alum! "She's full of personality," says Jolene's adopter, "and in spite of her special needs, she's quite happy. The vet said that even though she has megaesophagus, she's overall very healthy and has a good quality of life. She is a joy!"

Giving animals a second chance at life, and watching as they spread happiness to the people they meet, is one of the most gratifying parts of what we do. Since 1973, we've been working toward a community where every animal has the best chance possible, and we've seen that work pay off in so many cases like Jolene's. If you want to help us continue to expand these efforts and save the animals who have nowhere else to turn, donate to ACL's medical fund and save a life.

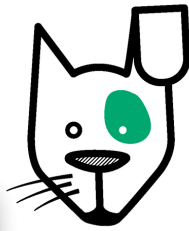
Support ACL's  
Medical Fund

Donate Today

*Thanks to  
ACL's  
medical  
fund, we  
had the  
resources  
to never  
give up  
on her*

”





# Second Chance Shop

A Thrift Store Supporting  
**Animal Care League**

808 Harrison, Oak Park, IL. 60304 | (708) 383-9660

Have you heard about our thrift store? The 2nd Chance Shop provides year-round funding, allowing us to continue and expand our lifesaving efforts.

Every purchase and donation at the shop translates to real impact for the animals in our community. Come pay the 2nd Chance Shop a visit!

#### Hours

Monday: Closed  
Tuesday: Closed  
Wednesday: 11 - 5  
Thursday: 11 - 6  
Friday: 11 - 6  
Saturday: 11 - 6  
Sunday: 11 - 5



Follow the Shop

Housewares,  
clothing,  
jewelry,  
furniture,  
unique gifts,  
and more!



## Support our Essential Work

Your contribution will help change the lives of the animals and people in our community.

With your support, we can provide food, care, and housing to homeless animals, and work to keep people and their pets together

Donate Today

## Make a difference while you shop

Select Animal Care League as your preferred charity, and a portion of every purchase will be donated back to us.

If you want to support us even more, use Amazon smile to send us essential supplies from our wishlist!



Shop our Amazon Wishlist

Shop with Amazon Smile



Stay in the loop



1011 Garfield  
Oak Park, IL 60304  
708-848-8155  
animalcareleague.org