



2021 ANNUAL REPPORT



Société
protectrice
des animaux
DE L'ESTRIE



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Our Mission

Protect animals and harmonize their relationship with humans. We work together with the public to develop respect for animals and sensitivity to their suffering in order to improve their quality of life.

We Are Member of:

- Association des techniciens et techniciennes en sant   animale du Qu  bec
- Association of Shelter Veterinarians
- Association qu  b  coise des SPA et SPCA (AQSS)
- Centre d'action b  n  vole de Sherbrooke
- Humane Canada
- National Animal Care & Control Association
- R  seau des entreprises d'  conomie sociale de l'Estrie
- World Society for the Protection of Animals

Municipalities

- Ascot Corner
- Austin
- Ayer's Cliff
- Bolton-Est
- Bonsecours
- Bury
- Canton de Cleveland
- Canton de Hatley
- Canton de Melbourne
- Canton de Potton
- Canton de Stanstead
- Canton de Westbury
- Canton d'Orford
- Coaticook
- Cookshire-Eaton
- Dixville
- East Angus
- Eastman
- Hatley
- Kingsbury
- Magog
- North Hatley
- Ogden
- Richmond
- Saint-Claude
- Saint-Denis-de-Brompton
- Sainte-Catherine-de-Hatley
- Sainte-Edwidge-de-Clifton
- Saint-  tienne-de-Bolton
- Saint-Fran  ois-Xavier-de-Brompton
- Saint-Herm  n  gilde
- Saint-Isidore-de-Clifton
- Saint-Venant-de-Paquette
- Sherbrooke
- Stanstead
- Stanstead-Est
- Stoke
- Val-Joli
- Waterville
- Windsor

Thanking the community

A Word from the President



«Animals are the bridge between us and the beauty of all that is natural. They show us what's missing in our lives, and how to love ourselves more completely and unconditionally. They connect us back to who we are, and to the purpose of why we're here.» — Trisha McCagh

The sun is shining through the window today but I know that it is still chilly outside. Inside I decided to sit down in front of my computer and write my yearly message from the president. What to write about? I sat in front of a blank screen trying to come up with something inspiring.

Then I realized that my inspiration was all around me. My cat Chico sleeping in the sun. My dogs Gracie and Grizzly curled up on the couch, probably dreaming of warmer weather. My houseguests Halo and Valley, sound asleep after a quick romp outside. These are the moments that put meaning to my life. They also remind me of the enormous responsibility I have to these creatures. But no matter how big the responsibility these animals repay me a thousand times over with love and loyalty and well, just being them.

The SPA has gone through some major changes this past year. We said goodbye to our Executive Director Bruno Felteau, who gave more than 35 years to the cause. We welcomed in our new Director Dominique Maitre who comes with an impressive background and the uncanny ability to see both the big and small pictures at the same time. We said goodbye to board members Jean, Chantal, and Michel; your expertise and insights will be missed and we wish you all the best in your future projects. We are also delighted to welcome three new board members to our already amazing team.

To the staff, this is my "formal" thank you for your hard work and dedication and professionalism. Every day, all day long. Please know that it is my honor and privilege to work with you.

I wish you all the very best in 2022 and thank you for believing in the SPA.

Evelina Smith

Respectfully,
Evelina Smith

A Word from the Executive Director



In my opinion, three words describe precisely the year 2021 for the SPA de l'Estrie: transition, adaptation and dedication.

2021 was certainly a year of significant transition for the organization due to a change at the executive level. I cannot thank the members of the Board of Directors, the Team

and all the stakeholders of the SPA enough for their warm welcome, their kindness and their constant involvement. This allowed me to step in quickly. As a result, I am now proud and happy to be able to help improve pets' lives in the beautiful Eastern Townships.

2021 was also a year of transition as we adopted new strategic orientations for the next five years. These orientations aim to make additional ongoing improvements towards animal welfare in our territory and in Quebec at large. This, thanks to our collaboration with government partners and Quebec SPAs and SPCAs. Ambitious orientations, indeed; but also respectful of our capacities and of the history of our organization

Also, this was a year of further adaptation insofar as the pandemic continued to rage in 2021. Every day our teams had to adapt to a changing and uncertain reality. Every day, I witnessed the resilience and the will of all the employees and volunteers. They took care of our residents and offered high quality service to citizens despite taxing health constraints. Well done and thank you for your work!

Finally, dedication, to which I could have added loyalty. Indeed, I must conclude by recognizing the dedication of our donors and our partners to the animal cause and to the SPA. Despite the pandemic and the changes in 2021, you have maintained your trust and support for us. Without you, our mission would remain a dead letter. Your unwavering support and backing make all the difference in allowing us to give the animals we harbor a second chance while we find them a loving and reassuring home. Many thanks to you all!

Let's hope that 2022 can be summed up as follows: faith in the future, a return of the «living together» and above all a lot of love for our loyal companions.

Dominique Maitre

Dominique Maitre
Executive Director

A well-deserved retirement for Bruno Felteau



In 2021, there was a major change in the management of the SPA de l'Estrie. Indeed, after 35 years of loyal service, Mr. Bruno Felteau retired, giving up his place as executive director.

It was as a member of the board of directors that Bruno began his career with the SPA. Then, his passion and dedication for animals led him to become a trusted General Manager for 35 years.

Bruno has been at the forefront of the transformation of the SPA and its facilities.

After a first move to 1139 Queen-Victoria Boulevard, followed later on by three expansions with limited means,

the option of moving to a new shelter became obvious. It was then that Bruno became the conductor of Opération Doux Refuge. This translated in offering a new and twice as large shelter, with optimal living conditions for all residents, including twice as much comfort.

The shelter at 145, rue Sauvé is the culmination of several years of work. It was Bruno's most ambitious dream to provide the animals and the SPA a larger animal-focused place before he retired.

Having a particular fondness for cats and in order to pay tribute to his contribution and his incredible achievements during these years, our feline adoption room is now named for him.

Thank you Bruno!

Another year marked by COVID-19

The year 2021 presented us with a whole range of challenges. Our services were put to the test and our staff had to adapt constantly. We also faced many changes and uncertainties due to Covid-19. We now recognize that some realities that we thought were only temporary have now become routine. We are also beginning to see the pandemic-initiated adoption craze waning and to feel the resulting backlash. Indeed, we are now welcoming more and more animals with special needs as well as animals adopted in haste due to the context of the pandemic.



In order to deal with the crisis, from January to mid-June, we had to make our services available by appointment only (adoption, admission, claim and license payment). Despite the significant adaptation that this required, we learned a lot of positive things from it. Firstly, the adoption by appointment service offers our customers more time for a much better match with the chosen animal. Secondly, admissions by appointment allow us to do more prevention of pet abandonment and to discuss with the parent possible options to avoid the admission of his pet to the shelter. For customers, these new ways

of doing things mean less wait time and a better contact with the employee. We received a lot of feedback from citizens, which inspired us to keep the adoption and the admission by appointment policy, even though the shelter had reopened to the public.

All of these measures have been put in place, among other things, to protect citizens, volunteers and the team. It was an open-ended challenge to offer the best possible service to the citizens of the Eastern Townships and to our residents.

Welcoming animals in need

Because we are devoted to helping animals in need, we commit to offer high quality services, defined by compassion and respect.

Pets: Victim Of The Pandemic

It is well known, a huge wave of enthusiasm for adoption has quickly spread across the province over the past two years. Many people adopted a companion to counter the loneliness and uncertainty caused by the global pandemic. However, this unusual situation has also brought its share of challenges. The SPA finds itself faced with a sudden increase in the number of animals on its territory. In addition, it has to welcome more and more animals who are victims of the health crisis; so-called «Covid» animals.

These animals, which have behavioral problems caused by a lack of human contact, either abandoned for lack of time with the return to work, or because they were adopted in a hurry, are now found at the shelter. Furthermore, they are often old and in need of comfort care, or sick and in need of urgent veterinary care.

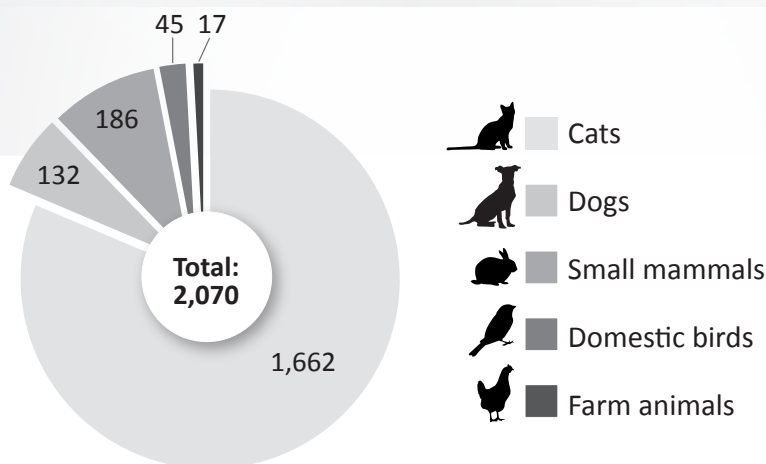


A New Family For 2,070 Animals





Our attending team, made up of veterinarians, animal health technicians and animal care workers, works every day to feed, pamper and care for the animals that find refuge under our roof. Once again, the team played an essential role in the well-being of our animals so that they could find a new family and start a new life. In 2021, 2,070 animals who stayed at our shelter were fortunate enough to find a new loving family. Also, more than 629 animals, who unfortunately went wandering, were able to return to their homes thanks to our efforts and the wearing of the SPA ID Tag. In addition to all these, we transferred 28 animals, i.e., 19 wild birds, 3 wildlife animals and 6 exotic animals, to specialized resources for these types of animals.

Adoptions in 2021



Adapted Care

Among the many animals that cross the doors of the shelter, some are unfortunately in bad shape, either injured or sick. For several years, the shelter has been welcoming more and more animals requiring veterinary care adapted to their condition in order to be rehabilitated with a view to being adopted. In 2021, 210 surgeries such as entropions, enucleations, mass excisions, excisions of supernumerary claws and various amputations were performed by veterinarians.

Veterinary procedure	Number
 Surgeries	210
 Sterilizations	1,382

In order to curb the canine and feline overpopulation problem and thus prevent the suffering of unwanted animals, we sterilize all dogs and cats that we place for adoption. Thus, in 2021, our veterinarians carried out more than 1,380 animal sterilizations before they were put up for adoption.



Unique Adoptions

Toby: A dog for life

« I wanted to have a dog when I retired.

If possible, I wanted to adopt a medium-sized dog to whom I would give a second chance to live in an environment that would suit him.

I had been consulting the SPA de l'Estrie website regularly since the fall of 2020 and in May 2021, Toby, a 3-year-old Shetland sheepdog, showed up. I was convinced that I could meet the expectations outlined in his description sheet. I decided to apply and after an interview, at the end of the same day, I learned that Toby would come and live with me. I was really happy and confident that



everything would be fine even knowing that Toby was very anxious and very fearful of what he did not know. I knew that I could count on the support of the members of the SPA team if needed, which is very reassuring.

Once at home, we took the time, calmly, to get to know one another and gradually, after a few days, Toby became an endearing, affectionate and playful dog capable of trusting me.

It is a beautiful gift for life”

Jean



Ébène: benefiting from appropriate care



Ébène is a little cat found wandering, and in bad shape, who has generated a lot of interest and sympathy on social networks.

Sarah, our patrol officer, went to a citizen's house to pick up a stray cat. She was very weak, dirty, appeared hungry and had several visible injuries.

Once arrived at the shelter, we had her seen immediately by the veterinarians. She had a lot of loose stools, which caused her anus hyperplasia, as well

as a loss of hair near the anus at the level of her tail. The medical examination revealed that she also had rhinotracheitis with moderate to severe nasal congestion, as well as severe conjunctivitis.

Ébène, was put on antibiotics to treat her rhinotracheitis, as well as received eye drops to cure her conjunctivitis. It was, among others, Emily who took care of her daily as no parent came forward to take her back.

When she was finally put up for adoption, Ébène quickly found a new home!



Baruch: A sign in times of mourning

« I adopted Kachou the rabbit in September, and it's going really well! I never thought I was ever going to adopt a rabbit, but he had the same name as my dog who died last May, so I took that as a sign... But I changed his name anyway: now his name is Baruch.

Baruch lives in my work room at home. The door to his cage is always open. I think he only goes there for the litter, the water and the treats that I put there for him. He doesn't like walking on wood floors, but luckily my work room has a rug. Since then, I have added two more rugs and changed my chair to a sofa: when I sit on it, Baruch comes to say hello.

I made two hiding places with cardboard boxes for him. He hides there, grazes the hay that I give him... and he also grazes the boxes... I tell myself that it's not too serious, since it's cardboard.

I have cats too, who ignore him. From time to time, my cat Minibou comes to the door to observe Baruch, but that's about it.

I'm so happy that he came to live with us! »

Virginie



Assisting the Community Whenever Needed

Patrollers Serving the Community



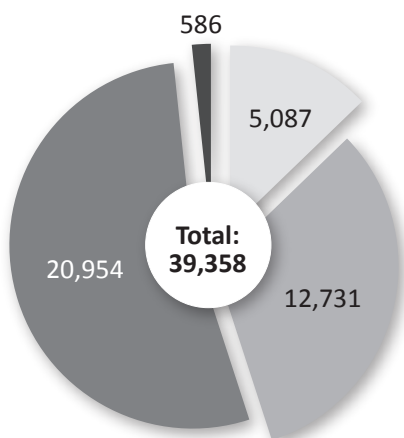
Citizens dealing with animal-related issues can sometimes find themselves in need of help, day or night. For this reason, we work diligently to provide regular and emergency road service. Our call centre responds to requests from citizens in the Eastern Townships and beyond, while our patrol officers are deployed directly in the field, in the 40 municipalities we serve, to address complaints and ensure compliance with municipal regulations.

One-of-a-Kind Interventions - 24/7

Day and night, seven days a week, our patrol officers and inspectors respond to requests from citizens and intervene in thousands of different situations. In 2021, 6,157 interventions were carried out in the field, including taking statements, rescuing animals left in hot cars, addressing animal-bite complaints and serving notices pertaining to municipal by-laws.

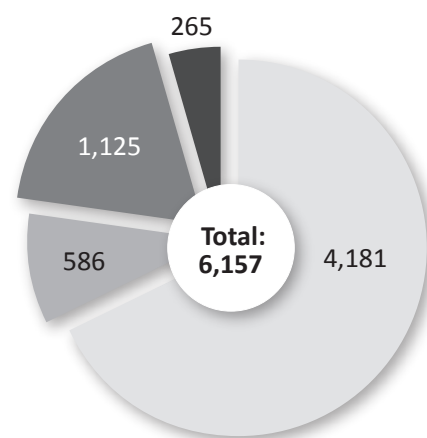
Once again this year, due to COVID-19, patrol officers needed to adapt the way they work in order to minimize contact with citizens. The protection protocol established in 2020 to safeguard our patrol officers against infection when a home visit was the only option was vital again this year. We also continued to apply the intervention protocol that covered the handling of animals coming from a place that might be contaminated by COVID-19.





Calls Processed in 2021



-  Road Services
-  Licensing Services
-  Shelter Services
-  Emergency Services

Interventions Carried Out in 2021



-  Daytime Assistance
-  Nighttime Assistance
-  Animals Transported to the Shelter
-  Park Patrols



Dogs Who Bite - Assessing Their Dangerousness

Cases of dogs who are aggressive and/or bite require thorough analysis and specific framework. In 2021, we put in place the final details of our procedure for handling bites, and made several improvements that increase our effectiveness. Therefore, we provide rigorous support to municipalities under agreement with the SPA de l'Estrie when dealing with these issues. We are present and we offer assistance to cities at each stage of this complex and sensitive procedure.

In addition, in order to adequately inform citizens, we produced an information folder that details each step of the process when reporting a dog bite or aggressive behavior. Our goal is to demystify the steps that lie ahead and to clarify the manner in which certain interventions are conducted.

Patrol Officers Present in Parks

Patrol officers regularly visit different parks in the city in order to raise awareness among dog guardians about the different regulations in effect. In April, following a request by the Regroupement du Mont-Bellevue, the SPA de l'Estrie set up an awareness kiosk. The purpose was to answer questions citizens had about the regulation



and about the behavior they need to adopt when in a public space with their companion animal. The parc du Mont-Bellevue, among others, was dealing with the issue of off-leash dogs on its trails.

Indeed, we received many complaints from citizens about dogs running loose in parks. It was therefore important for us to do prevention in parks and to inform people of the necessity of keeping their dog on leash at all times and under control. We also took the opportunity to talk to them about the provincial regulation regarding the management of dogs, and about the wearing of the ID Tag.

Citizens like it when the SPA de l'Estrie team is present and available to answer their questions.



A Cat Rescue in Partnership With Hydro-Sherbrooke

A citizen contacted us to report a cat up in an electric pole. Since our patrol officers are not authorized to climb hydro poles because of the hazard involved, we called upon a Hydro-Sherbrooke crew to give us a hand. Once on site, Hydro-Sherbrooke employees climbed the pole. Our patrol officer, Pierre-Olivier, guided them on how to safely handle the cat so they could bring him back down.



In no time at all, the intervention was over! The animal was brought to the shelter, and his guardian contacted us to claim him!



A One-of-a-Kind Rescue

We received a call from a citizen about a cat who was in serious trouble downtown.

We had no idea what to expect...

When our patrol officers arrived on the scene, they found the cat caught in the installations of a Hydro-Sherbrooke dam. Not having the authority to carry out interventions in

the dam, they called on the services of Hydro-Sherbrooke. Unfortunately, they too were unable to intervene because they lacked the proper equipment.

We therefore called on the City of Sherbrooke Fire Department. After examining the situation, one of its men roped down in order to retrieve the cat. Because of the unique nature of this intervention, the team of firefighters present used it as an opportunity for a training exercise.

The cat was brought back up safe and sound and taken to the SPA de l'Estrie for a veterinary examination. He turned out to be fine! He was identified and reunited with his family!

Once again, we would like to thank all those who took part in this one-of-a-kind intervention. We can only rejoice at the happy ending to this story made possible by everyone's collaboration.



Mental Health Training

The SPA de l'Estrie team is sometimes called upon to intervene with citizens suffering from mental disorders. In order to understand this reality and to better intervene with this clientele, 13 employees underwent training in mental health intervention. The training was given by

Geneviève Duford, an agent with the Sherbrooke Police Department and member of the mobile psychosocial intervention team. What we learned will allow us, among other things, to plan our actions in a more secure way, and to intervene more appropriately with these citizens.

Increase in Reporting of Animals Left in Cars



Again this year, reports involving dogs left in cars in hot weather were numerous. Between May and the end of September, we received 54 reports, handed out 8 statements of offense and gave 17 verbal and written notices. The number of interventions is on the rise compared to 2020. Moreover, of these 54 calls, 46 occurred in large commercial, grocery store, shopping centre or hospital parking lots. Besides rarely offering any shade, these are places from which one's departure can be significantly delayed.

If you recall, last year's review of interventions involving dogs left in cars showed that 38 reports had been made, which led to 8 statements of offense and 12 written or verbal notices.

Every year, the communications department organizes a media appearance on this subject. This year, some ten interviews were conducted for different media, such as television, radio and local newspapers. Unfortunately, despite the multiple awareness messages, reports continue to multiply.

Creation of the Position of Coordinator for Services to Municipalities

In order to optimize the services offered to the municipalities we serve, and above all, to facilitate communication with them, a new position was created in 2021, the Coordinator for Services to Municipalities position. Émilie Gervais has held the position for several months already. Among other things, she accompanies municipalities in cases involving dogs with aggressive behavior, and conducts follow-ups with them on the issues specific to each. She also coordinates the production of communication tools according to the needs of municipalities, for example, an article for the municipal newsletter, the creation of a visual for their social media, the creation of various leaflets for citizens, etc.

Émilie is also responsible for the road crew, that is, the patrol officers.



Rescuing Animals in Distress

Sadly, because many animals still suffer at the hands of humans, our inspectors are there to respond to cries for help from citizens who witness acts of negligence and cruelty. In order to protect animals and ensure their welfare, inspectors are mandated to enforce federal and provincial animal protection and welfare laws. They intervene in the field by carrying out inspections, conducting investigations, carrying out seizures of animals and by laying formal complaints with the Ministry of Justice. Every year, countless animals receive much needed help thanks to the vigilance and professionalism of our inspectors.



In 2021, the SPA de l'Estrie Department of Investigations and Inspections performed 280 inspections, involving 1,115 animals of all species. As a result of these interventions, the Crown Prosecutor pursued several criminal and penal prosecutions.



The Importance of Citizen Denunciation

We invite citizens who witness acts of neglect or cruelty towards animals to contact us. Public collaboration is of utmost importance. The public is our eyes and, through their actions, they give voice to vulnerable beings who cannot speak. It is thanks to their reports, all of which are confidential, that we are able to rescue hundreds of animals here in the Eastern Townships.

819-821-4727, Option 5
All reports remain confidential.

Inspections and Investigations	Number
 Inspections and Investigations Performed	280
 Number of Animals Impacted	1,115

Increase in Municipal Inspection Mandates

In 2021, we were increasingly solicited to work in partnership with the Office municipale d'habitation de Sherbrooke (OMHS), with social workers and with police forces in cases involving unsanitary conditions and mental health. In cases involving unsanitary conditions, we resort to search warrants, in accordance with municipal regulations, that enable us to inspect and seize animals when needed.

Investigations That are Essential to Animal Protection

Several cases were opened in 2021 after receiving complaints from citizens. After investigating each of these, SPA inspectors, together with the Crown Prosecutor, laid various charges under the Criminal Code. These cases should be subject to a judicial decision at the earliest sometime in 2022.



Multiple Investigations

22 Exotic Birds Seized During a Search

On December 6, 2021, the SPA de l'Estrie, in partnership with the Sherbrooke Police Department, carried out a search at 1280, Larocque Street in Sherbrooke, following an investigation by its officers.

During the search, SPA de l'Estrie officers, accompanied by a veterinary team specialized in exotic birds, found the site to be unsanitary and cluttered, and the living conditions of the birds deplorable and inadequate. The lack of natural light and ventilation, the size of the cages, their layout, the state of disrepair and filth of the cages, and the absence of suitable food and safe water posed a

direct threat to the physical and psychological health of the birds, thereby justifying their immediate seizure. The birds were taken charge of so they could be examined and provided with care as soon as possible.

The individual is facing charges of negligence towards animals for failing to provide food, water, shelter and suitable and adequate care (article 446. (1) b) of the Criminal Code) with respect to more than twenty animals kept in the home, including Cockatoos, African greys, Youyous, Aras and other exotic species. The case will be brought before the court in 2022.

Animal Cruelty Charges Against a Sherbrooke Man

SPA de l'Estrie inspectors launched an investigation following a complaint of animal cruelty from the public. The individual against whom the complaint was lodged was arrested for deliberately and unnecessarily causing pain, suffering or injury to an animal. Two dogs and one cat were seized from the home of the individual at the centre of this investigation. He is awaiting trial in accordance with article 445. (1) a) of the Criminal Code.

Awaiting Trial for Negligence

In August 2021, we intervened in a residence in St-Isidore de Clifton following complaints about unsanitary conditions. Inspectors found sick cats without care housed in unsanitary conditions. Therefore, they obtained a warrant to seize the animals. In all, six cats were brought to the shelter, where they were subsequently examined.

The individual is charged in accordance with the Criminal Code's article 446. (1) b), being the guardian or person having custody or control of a domestic animal or bird, or of a wild animal or bird in captivity, and abandoning the animal in distress or deliberately neglecting or omitting to provide food, water, shelter and suitable and adequate care.

The case is currently awaiting trial.

Implementation of Best Practices

This year, the pandemic has once again turned our daily lives upside down and slowed down our services. Despite that, we still launched some new initiatives to ensure better living conditions for the animals and to serve you and your pets to the best of our abilities.

2022-2027 Strategic Direction

Following the change of senior management in June 2021, the new Executive Director and the members of the Board of Directors felt that it would be beneficial for the organization to set the strategic direction of the SPA de l'Estrie for the coming years. As a result, an overview of the NPO was conducted by senior management in order to guide discussions on major current and future issues.

Following this preparatory work, the members of the Board of Directors, team members and management met for two days of reflection and discussion workshops on four major themes:

- Increasing and diversifying revenue sources to ensure the long-term sustainability of the SPA de l'Estrie
- Rebalancing the role and involvement of the SPA de l'Estrie in the Eastern Townships and Quebec communities
- Remaining a leader in animal welfare in Quebec
- Increasing the chances of survival, adoptability and retention of animals collected by SPA de l'Estrie

After two days of thought-provoking planning, the Board of Directors adopted on December 15, 2021, four strategic directions for 2022–2027. The team will translate these directions into a concrete and operational action plan in early 2022.

Creation of a Feline Behaviourist Position



Catherine Breton has been working at the SPA de l'Estrie for about six years as a customer service representative. This great animal lover is now our new feline behaviourist!

The main objectives of the cat behaviourist position are to avoid cat abandonment for behavioural reasons (meowing, litter box use, aggression, etc.). When people are ready to invest the necessary energy to try to change, Catherine accompanies them by suggesting best practices and alternatives to be implemented in their environment. The behaviourist's valuable advice often leads to success and allows these cats to stay in their families.

In addition, Catherine offers support to the shelter for more complex behaviours requiring specific follow-up. Her presence also makes it possible to improve cats' stay at the shelter, to reduce euthanasia and to equip adopters with tools and education before, during and after the adoption of their cat!

Shelter Accommodations

Despite the fact that the shelter is still very new, several rooms were not finished yet. They were usable, but we knew there was more work to be done.

A New Dishwasher



Since our move to the new shelter, the team has been hand-cleaning all the equipment. It was a very long task because of the many pieces to rinse, soak if necessary, scrub, rinse again to remove the soap and finally spray with a virucide, and this on a daily basis. Thanks to a donation from Mondou, the SPA de l'Estrie has acquired a commercial dishwasher that ensures, among other things, optimal disinfection, more

time saving as well as a reduction in handling. Employees have been trained to use the new device.

We have also adapted counters and sinks to make this room more functional and therefore more efficient and ergonomic. We also reviewed the washing procedure for bowls, buckets and litter boxes because of these new amenities.

The Grooming Room

We completed the grooming room with the purchase of an electric adjustable bath, an electric adjustable grooming table and two high-performance dryers that reduce drying time. We have also purchased cordless razors that make shearing easier. This new room is very appreciated, because before its installation, we had to wash the animals in the garage. This room is now more suitable for employees, but also for animals who now have a suitable and less stressful place to get groomed.



Rabbit Condo



In 2021, we noted a 69% increase in rabbits admitted to the shelter compared to 2020. In view of an increase in the length of their stay at the shelter, we had four condo cages designed for them. These condo cages better meet the needs of rabbits, in addition to facilitating maintenance by staff. The ideation of these condo cages is, among other things, the fruit of an investigation and proposals by employees of the shelter who have the well-being of rabbits at heart. Indeed, several searches were carried out to find the perfect bunny condos. Unfortunately, nothing existed on the market. We therefore carried out our own analyses on the optimal conditions for keeping rabbits in cages and we then entrusted Veterinov with the design of suitable cages for our small residents.

Bottle Feeding Project for Newborn Orphaned Kittens



A few times a year, we welcome litters of kittens without their mother. It's caused us some headaches, because we didn't have a lot of options to provide the care they needed to survive.

We had tried in the past to pair orphan kittens with a nursing mother when there was one at the shelter. On the other hand, it was risky to put neonatal kittens with other kittens of unknown origin who could be sick and contaminate the other healthy kittens.

When a nursing mother was at the shelter without her kittens, we would sometimes pair her with the orphaned kittens, because the mom has a better immune system, but this was a rare event.

That is why we set up a training program to teach foster families how to take care of orphaned kittens and bottle feed them. We started by training a foster family to take over and fine-tune our procedures. We knew that this would be very challenging, especially when there are several kittens, because it takes a lot of time. It is a round-the-clock responsibility: every two to three hours at the beginning.

Hélène's Story

"I have been volunteering for about 10 years as a foster family for cats and kittens rescued by the SPA.

In the summer of 2021, Isabelle, the Head of Volunteers and Foster Families, contacted me to ask me to take a bottle-feeding training course for orphaned kittens. I agreed immediately. I was interested in understanding how to bottle feed and I wanted to play my part in allowing these small kittens to survive.

After training given by a veterinarian and with a document containing the essential information, I was ready for this new feline experiment. In early December, a family of two little kittens arrived at the shelter and I agreed to take them in. I fed and cared for them until they were about seven weeks old. Without the help and support of Sandy, who is in charge of the project, I am not sure that I would have accepted this mandate, because I was venturing into uncharted territory, and I needed an experienced person to advise me.

The experience was much more difficult and demanding than I expected and as I felt very tired, I contacted Isabelle in early January to bring back the kittens who had a lot of difficulty

gaining weight. They needed to be examined again by the veterinarian and placed under observation to ensure their good health before being taken in charge by a new family to complete their growth before sterilization.

In general, the care to be given involves a lot of time, a great availability and a good organization. The frequency of feedings is quite high during the first weeks and requires getting up at night. While the pandemic limited outings and activities, it did not provide us with more hours in the day. When feeding every three hours, there is not much time left to sleep or do anything else. You should also prepare the milk, but not too early and, clean all the material several times a day. In theory, feeding a kitten only takes a few minutes. In practice, it's a bit different!

Despite the difficulties and in hindsight, I must say that I enjoyed the experience. It is very impressive to see these little balls of fur grow up and, in a matter of weeks, go from being totally helpless on us to increasingly independent. It is very rewarding to think that I was able to give them a good start in life and to see that my efforts were not in vain."

Dog Park Infrastructures

This summer, we decided to add some amenities to the shelter’s dog park. This approach seeks to improve the well-being of the animals of the SPA de l’Estrie by enriching their living environment.

The first advantage of diversifying the dog park is to give each dog the power to choose. They can choose between interacting with humans or other dogs, or jumping into a pool or on a trampoline.

The second advantage is more pragmatic: to cool off in the cool water of a swimming pool on a hot summer day, physical activity on a trampoline, etc. In a more discreet way, these activities can also serve to improve the relationship with dogs, but also their self-confidence. Some will dive headfirst into the pool while others need a little help to approach the trampoline for example, sniffing it, etc.

Other amenities will follow in the coming years.



Improving the Welfare of Animals With Special Needs

Animals with special needs are increasingly numerous and require constant and complex follow-up by the SPA de l’Estrie team: expensive veterinary care, medication, and behaviour interventions. In addition, these animals encouraged us to set up a mentoring and training program for foster families because of their long stay at the shelter.

Despite our team’s unwavering dedication, we have limited human and financial resources and need your support more than ever to face these new challenges. With these new programs, we will be able to help more animals and give them a second chance and all the affection they deserve.

Targeted Sterilization Clinics

The primary objective of this project is to reduce feline overpopulation in the Eastern Townships by making sterilization more accessible to low-income families. The sterilization fee was set at only \$60, including taxes, for a cat, regardless of the sex. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the veterinary clinic had difficulty serving its own clients

so to remove pressure and prioritize animals in the shelter, we cancelled or rescheduled several targeted clinics. When we could plan one, we then reduced the number of cats to a maximum of five per targeted clinic to ensure that we did not affect the surgeries scheduled at the shelter on those days.

Clinics and sterilizations	Number
 Clinics organized in 2021	14
 Cats sterilized	41

Major Events of 2021

Increase in Rabbit Abandonment in Quebec

Rabbit abandonment is a problem that has been constantly increasing over the last few months, according to different actors in the field. The SPA de l'Estrie is no exception. In 2021, rabbit surrenders at the shelter increased by 69%.

One of the hypotheses that could explain this wave of abandonment is that, unfortunately, during the pandemic, people were looking for animal companionship, a subject widely covered in the media in recent months. There was a

shortage of cats and dogs, and rabbits are animals that are thought to be inexpensive and there were many available. Unfortunately, after a few weeks, people realize that rabbit require a lot of work.

It is important to know that rabbits are challenging pets. They require care, constant access to food and drinking water, they are not happy to be caged and they need a large enclosure to exercise sufficiently.

Housing Crisis in Sherbrooke

For the past few years, towards the end of June, Sherbrooke, like many cities in Quebec, has unfortunately been experiencing a housing crisis. The year 2021 was no exception. In fact, many citizens found themselves without a home on July 1. Some 70 households had no home at the height of the crisis. Many of these families have pets.

Through an agreement with the City of Sherbrooke's emergency measures department, the SPA de l'Estrie is providing additional support to house these animals while their owners receive temporary accommodation until they find a new home. Thus, we welcomed 21 cats and 2 dogs.

The SPA de l'Estrie is close to its community!

We all share the dream of a better society. We are convinced that, in order to improve animal welfare, we need information, education and public awareness. That is why we make every effort to share and communicate with the community in various ways.

Donations of Toys and Food to Animals and Owners in Need

Last December, we launched a donation campaign for the shelter's animals. We invited citizens to drop items for the animals under our big tree in the reception area. We quickly received beautiful gifts for the animals of the shelter. Before the large number of donations received, our investigator Tanya Robinson and our patrol officer Sarah Rouillard, offered to pay it forward.



They therefore went out to offer toys and food to animals and caretakers in need whom we had worked with in the past year. The pet owners they met were very touched by this beautiful gesture.

Thank you to all those who donated. Your generosity allows us to make a difference in the lives of many animals and pet owners in our region!

Summer Prevention and Information Kiosks

In 2021, the SPA participated in a number of activities to raise awareness among residents of various municipalities on many topics related to animal safety and welfare. Municipal regulations, canine language, safety and services offered by the SPA are just a few examples of the topics covered at these events.

Among other things, our team was present at the Bellevue en couleurs event at Mont-Bellevue Park and at the *Pitous'ensemble* canine day held in the municipality of East Bolton.



Collaborate With our precious volunteers

An essential "family"

Because we can't accomplish everything by ourselves, we are fortunate to have the help and support of many people. All of our work could not be achieved without the constant support of our Board of Directors, members, donors, volunteers and employees. The continued support of this large family allows us to help animals in need and to develop new projects, in other words, to help make our society a better place. To all of you, a big thank you!



In 2021:

12 volunteers transported **46 animals** to other facilities;



74 active foster families who have given us a huge helping hand. **A total of 340 animals** benefited from their good care and exemplary hospitality.

Donators and Collaborators

2021 presented us with a range of challenges. Despite yet another difficult year, we were able to count on the support and contribution of generous donors and collaborators. We are fortunate to have people who are generous and dedicated to animal welfare. Thanks to your donations, your time and your involvement, the SPA de l'Estrie can fulfill its mission, which is to improve the welfare of animals and their relationship with humans, by organizing new projects and operating the shelter on a daily basis.

Please know that your support is essential to us. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

The Eastern Townships SPA: Much More Than a Shelter

Your SPA is much more than just an animal shelter. We're a non-profit organization that needs you! For almost 20 years now, the Eastern Townships SPA has relied on the generosity of its donors in order to continue innovating and fulfilling its mission of promoting harmony between humans and animals here in the Eastern Townships. Donors like you founded the SPA and have helped finance its activities and projects for close to four decades.

In addition to being an animal shelter, your SPA provides:

CONSULTATIONS ON CANINE BEHAVIOUR



to help pet guardians develop a healthy relationship with their dog.

ADOPTIONS



of thousands of animals every year.

A SHOP



where you will find everything you need for your pet and more!

A ROAD SERVICE



that includes a 24/7 emergency service.

INSPECTIONS



and investigations to ensure the enforcement of animal protection and welfare laws.

PET REGISTRATIONS



and reunions of thousands of pets with their families.

A UNIQUE CALL CENTRE




that handles citizen requests.



Protecting animals and ensuring their well-being, even in times of crisis.



Phone: 819 821-4727 • infos@spaestrie.qc.ca
spaestrie.qc.ca • facebook.com/spaestrie 
145 Sauvé Street, Sherbrooke (Quebec) J1L 1L6