

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Société
protectrice
des animaux
DE L'ESTRIE



*Together for a
second chance*

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A Message from the *Executive Director*

Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain extraordinary results.

– Andrew Carnegie

For the second year in a row, the SPA de l'Estrie has seen its excellence recognized with a prestigious distinction. In 2023, our organization's achievements earned it the *Charity NPO of the Year* award from the Sherbrooke Chamber of Commerce and Industry, highlighting its impact within the Estrie business sector.

This year, the SPA de l'Estrie was honored by its peers in the social and solidarity economy during the *Estrie Collective Entrepreneurship Gala* last November. Our organization was awarded the event's highest distinction, the *Grande Distinction*.

These successive recognitions reflect the major progress the SPAE has made in recent years across all departments and areas: animal welfare, biosecurity, animal health, licensing, financial development, field operations, and more.

This progress is the result of the daily dedication of every team member, as well as the care and compassion they show to every animal that crosses the threshold of 145 Sauvé Street.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to them for their incredible work, which brings our shared values to life every day.

I would also like to thank the members of the Board of Directors, who generously invest their time to ensure the organization's sound governance. This renewed governance has driven profound and positive changes within the SPAE. Finally, I want to express my gratitude to our volunteers and foster families, who play a crucial role in the functioning of our organization.

There is no doubt that a significant milestone has been reached in recent years, firmly establishing the SPAE as one of Quebec's leaders in animal welfare. I am confident that together, we will continue our efforts to reach new heights and become the leading reference in Quebec in the near future.

In closing, I would like to pay tribute to Ms. Evelina Smith, who, after so many years of dedicated service to the organization, has decided that 2024 will mark the conclusion of her term as Chair of the SPAE Board of Directors. On behalf of the entire team, I sincerely thank her and express my deepest gratitude for her unwavering support of our team and organization, her unconditional and genuine love for animals, her leadership, and the values she has upheld throughout the years—values that we have been fortunate to benefit from. A heartfelt thank you!



Dominique Maître

Executive Director



A Message from the *Chair of the Board*

As I reflect on my time as president of this incredible organization, my heart is filled with gratitude. Over the years, we have rescued, treated, rehabilitated, and rehomed thousands of animals, ensuring they find the love and care they deserve. None of this would have been possible without our dedicated staff, volunteers, donors, and community members who have stood by us in our mission. The compassion and commitment I have witnessed here have been truly inspiring, and I am honored to have played a role in making a difference in the lives of so many animals.

While we have made much progress, this year will bring unique challenges to communities across Canada, and the Eastern Townships are no exception. Rising costs of living, housing shortages, and economic uncertainty have made it increasingly difficult for many families to care for their pets. Pet food and supplies have increased the cost of basic necessities, and the rising cost of veterinary care has placed an even greater burden on pet owners. Many families are struggling to afford routine check-ups, vaccinations, and emergency treatments, forcing difficult decisions about their beloved animals. The SPA de l'Estrie is working tirelessly to provide resources and assistance to those in need, but the road ahead will require even more collaboration and community support.

After much reflexion, I have made the decision to step down as president and hand the reins over to a new president. As I prepare to step down, I do so with confidence in the future of this shelter. The foundation we have built together is strong, and I know that with your continued support, our SPA will reach even greater heights. Though I may be moving on from my role, my passion for animal welfare will never fade, and I will always be an advocate for this cause. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your president—it has been one of the greatest privileges of my life.

Evelina Smith

Evelina Smith

Chair of the Board



Board of *Directors*



Evelina Smith
Chair of the board



Louis Bourassa
Vice chair



Lois Saucke
Board member



Hélène Mayrand
Board member



Charlotte Rock-Rivard
Board member



Karianne Lacroix
Outgoing treasurer

New Board Members

Daniel Dumas
Board member

Cédric Lefebvre
Treasurer

Management *Team*



Dominique Maître
Executive Director



Guylaine Lessard
Operations Director



Émilie Gervais
Director, Municipal and Community Services



Valérie Lacasse
Shelter Coordinator



Cristelle Henri
Licensing Department Coordinator



Philippe Thyron
Animal Welfare Coordinator



Maxime Isabel
Human Resources Adviser



Stéphanie Hébert
Executive Assistant



Catherine Provost
Financial Development Manager



Alexis Savoie
Communications Manager

Achievements

➔ *Estrie Collective Entrepreneurship Merit Gala*

The SPAE was awarded the *Grande Distinction* prize at the Gala held on November 13, 2024. Our organization has experienced significant growth thanks to effective management. Increased revenue from donations, sponsorships, and licensing has allowed us to fund projects such as the Animal Welfare Department, the modernization and overhaul of governance and the development of innovative community projects. The SPAE has also strengthened its veterinary care services and expanded its team. Its 2022-2027 strategic plan reaffirms its role as a leader in animal welfare in Quebec.



➔ *Continuous Training: A Commitment to Animal Welfare*

In 2024, the SPA de l'Estrie took a significant step forward in its commitment to providing a safe and compassionate environment for the animals in its care. Our entire staff completed the *Fear Free* training, developed by **Fear Free Shelters**. This program raises awareness and equips professionals with the necessary tools to identify signs of stress, fear, and discomfort in animals, helping to minimize anxiety in their daily lives.



The SPA *in Numbers*



3251

ADMISSIONS

2404 cats
620 dogs
227 others

1988

ADOPTIONS

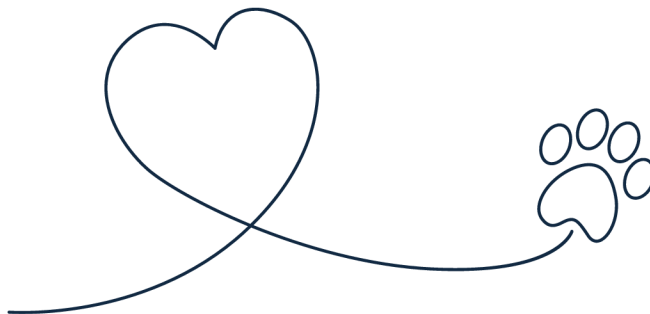
1650 cats
223 dogs
115 others

426

CLAIMS

138 cats
280 dogs
8 others

Our Volunteers



Our precious volunteers!

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude for their commitment and generosity. Their dedication enables us to fulfill our mission and make a tangible impact.

Thanks to them, over **30 transports** were made to various rescue centers, saving **248 animals**.

Additionally, **28 volunteers** came to lend a hand at the shelter, accumulating over **2,200 hours** of invaluable assistance.

Whether it's assisting with adoptions, walking the dogs in the morning, or maintaining their equipment, they carry out each task with energy, smiles, and determination.

We are proud to have them by our side!



Foster Families

Thanks to our foster families, animals in need receive care and comfort while easing the burden on the shelter. They care for mothers and their young, bottle-feed orphans, and assist with dog socialization. Their role is essential: they administer medical treatments, monitor the animals' health, and contribute to their socialization, especially for the more fearful ones. They provide a peaceful environment for recovering and geriatric animals, sometimes accompanying our pets at the end of their lives, and, most importantly, help us get to know each animal better to facilitate their adoption. Their commitment truly makes all the difference!

Special Mentions

Kim, our bottle-feeding expert

Every year, she generously donates her time to save and bottle-feed kittens.

Angélique and the fearful kittens

When we entrust her with a fearful kitten, it returns playful and sociable. Angélique has a special ally: her adorable dog, who acts as an older sibling.

Michael and Annie: A precious foster family for dogs

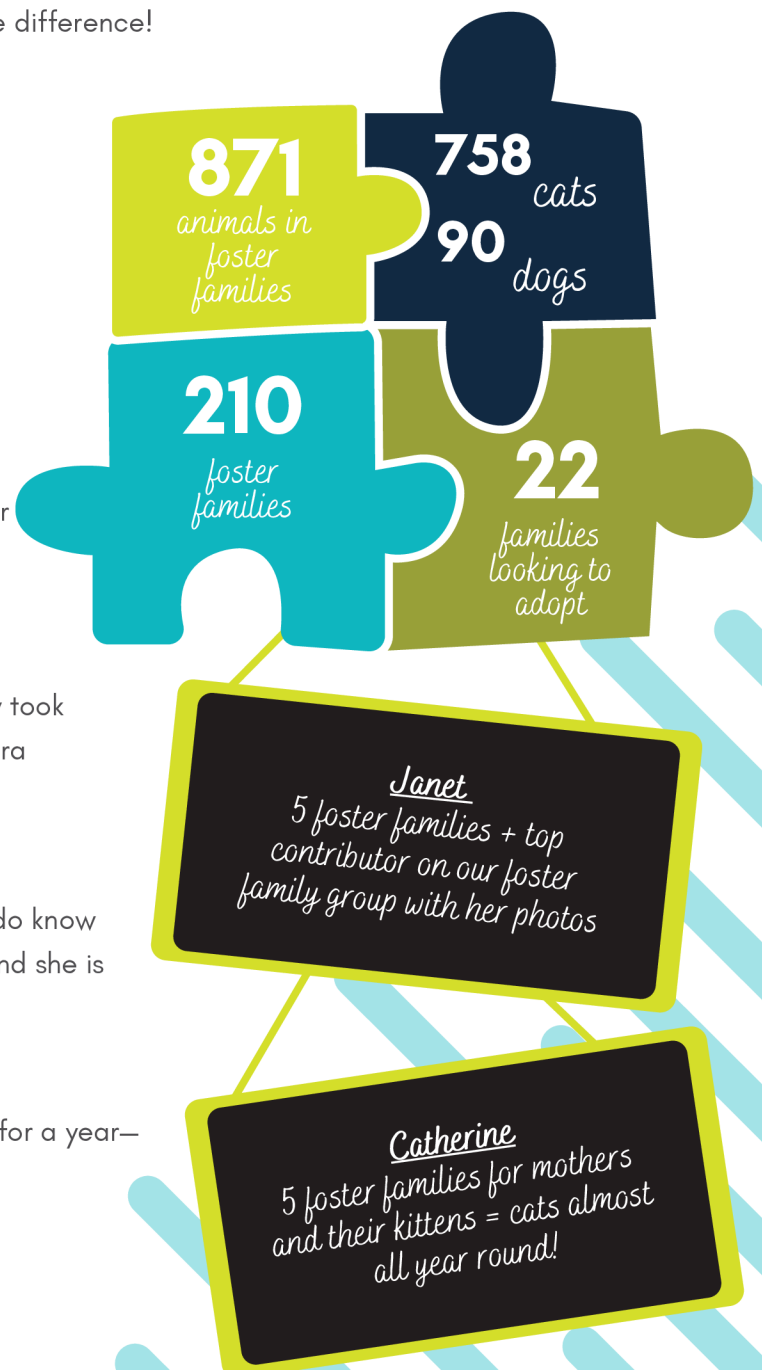
They welcomed 7 dogs in 2024! They also generously took Rocky, a dog with dietary issues, to a shelter in Niagara Falls that specializes in such cases.

Cynthia and the fearful adults

We don't know Cynthia's secret recipe, but what we do know is that she has a special way of winning them over, and she is wholeheartedly dedicated to the cause!

Amy-Valérie and Louna

Louna has now been in foster care with Amy-Valérie for a year—our longest foster period for a cat!



Road & Municipalities Department

The Road & Municipalities Department of the Eastern Townships SPA maintains a constant presence in the field to ensure the safety and well-being of animals. In response to public reports, our officers act quickly to assist animals in distress, investigate cases of neglect, and enforce current regulations.



Our Involvement in the Community

The Eastern Townships SPA is fully committed to supporting vulnerable animals and their owners, particularly those going through difficult times. Through various partnerships with six local food banks, we offer several essential services to these pet owners and their animals, including food assistance, cat spaying, and community vaccination clinics.

Food Assistance

Food assistance is a central pillar of our involvement outside the walls of our shelter. This program distributes food, treats, litter, and pet accessories through donations and surplus items we receive. These are distributed either directly through our food bank partners or when an outreach worker meets pet owners in need.

Vaccination Clinics

Since 2024, the Eastern Townships SPA has launched a community vaccination clinic program. So far, we have organized three clinics in strategic cities within our territory: Sherbrooke, Magog, and Cookshire-Eaton. In partnership with the Clinique vétérinaire des petits animaux de l'Estrie, we have been able to provide basic veterinary care to 76 animals of pet owners in socially and economically vulnerable situations.

Targeted Spay Clinics

Another key aspect of our initiative is the low-cost spay clinic, specifically for the cats of people supported by our partner food banks. Each week, we spay an average of 3 to 5 cats.

These programs go beyond animal care: they address social and economic exclusion by enabling these families to continue caring for their companions despite their challenges. By working with emergency services and social workers, the SPA plays a crucial role as a safety net to support families and strengthen the human-animal bond, especially in crisis situations such as domestic violence or mental and physical health issues.



Shelter Department

Every day, our dedicated team ensures the well-being of animals in need, whether they are abandoned, stray, or abused. Through care, support, and rehabilitation efforts, we offer them a second chance in a loving home. Here are some stories of animals that deeply touched us in 2024.

A Second Chance for Cocotte

In March, Cocotte arrived at the SPA de l'Estrie, struggling with encephalitozoonosis. This condition is caused by a parasite that primarily attacks the brain, particularly the animal's neurological functions. The symptoms were severely debilitating, causing Cocotte to experience balance loss, a twisted neck, ataxia (involuntary and uncontrolled movements), and great difficulty moving. With only a one-in-three chance of responding to the prescribed treatment, Cocotte survived and repeatedly demonstrated her resilience. Her recovery was long, leaving lifelong consequences on her small body, such as her twisted neck. However, her overall condition and quality of life regained strength, and by the end of May, she was ready for adoption.



Carotte and Her Incredible Fight

At the end of March, kind citizens brought us Carotte, a small black cat that appeared to be injured. Her triage examination quickly confirmed that she needed medical care. X-rays were required to understand the extent of the problem. One of the X-rays, taken of her abdomen, revealed a surprising discovery: an impressive amount of material in her digestive system. Upon closer inspection, we identified... chicken bones!

It seemed that Carotte had been surviving as best as she could on the streets. Her future appeared uncertain, and a long road to recovery awaited her. However, after several weeks of care and attention, she was finally ready to join a foster family. A few months later, in June, a wonderful surprise awaited her: Carotte found her forever home!



Zodiac's Story

Zodiac arrived in March 2024, wandering the streets with no known past, making his evaluation challenging. From the first observations, his file described him as a very intense dog, constantly jumping, moving nonstop except when eating. With his 23 kg of raw energy, he was a true ticking time bomb. His hyperactivity, amplified by the stress of the shelter, made his outings risky—not because of aggression, but due to accumulated frustration.



To give him a real chance of adoption, a personalized intervention plan was implemented, combining physical and mental stimulation with long-term antidepressants. A month later, the transformation was striking: "Calm in his enclosure, attentive to humans, responds to commands." Thanks to this protocol, Zodiac finally began to show his true temperament and potential.

Then, in August, a family familiar with the shelter met him. The connection was immediate, and Zodiac embarked on his new life!

Some of this year's *adoption highlights*





New Human *Resources Adviser*

Maxime Isabel is a former nurse who has always had a strong commitment to the well-being of others. Driven by deep empathy and a desire to support people in a different way, he made a career shift into human resources management. Through a combined training program at Université Laval and TÉLUQ, he has built solid expertise in personnel management, which he now applies to our organization.

A lover of animals, Maxime is himself the proud guardian of a dog and two cats from the SPA. His commitment to the animal cause naturally led him to join our team, where he ensures that those who care for our residents benefit from a healthy and supportive work environment at all levels.

His goal is clear: to promote a human and respectful management approach, in line with the values of compassion and protection that guide our mission. Through his attentive and engaged approach, Maxime contributes every day to making our organization a place where both human and animal well-being are top priorities.






Let's Demystify

Dog Adoption at the SPA de l'Estrée

Our Mission

To give each animal a second chance in a suitable environment and raise public awareness about compassionate training methods.

The Adoption Process in 3 Steps

- ✓ Fill out a form 
- ✓ Phone interview 
- ✓ Meet the dog 

The Basics of Animal Welfare

- ◆ The 5 Freedoms: A framework ensuring the absence of physical suffering.
- ◆ The 5 Domains: An approach focused on fostering a positive relationship and respecting animals' emotions.

Our Evaluation Criteria

- ◆ Fundamental Freedoms:
 - ✓ Safe environment 
 - ✓ Appropriate nutrition 
 - ✓ Basic and specialized care 
- ◆ Emotional Well-being:
 - ✓ Compassionate educational approach 
 - ✓ Ability to recognize and respect the dog's emotions 
 - ✓ Commitment to improving mental well-being 



Communications Department



SPAe in the News

Animal welfare has become a prominent topic in regional news, and the SPA de l'Estrie has been highly visible in the media. In total, we participated in around forty media interventions, ranging from radio interviews to newspaper articles and television reports. Some of the hot topics this year included: the rise in veterinary care costs in Estrie and across the province, pet abandonment during moving season, and the increasing number of animals arriving in poor condition at the shelter. The SPA de l'Estrie prides itself on being present in the media to inform and raise awareness about the reality of the shelter and the animals we care for every day.

The Belles Gueules Race

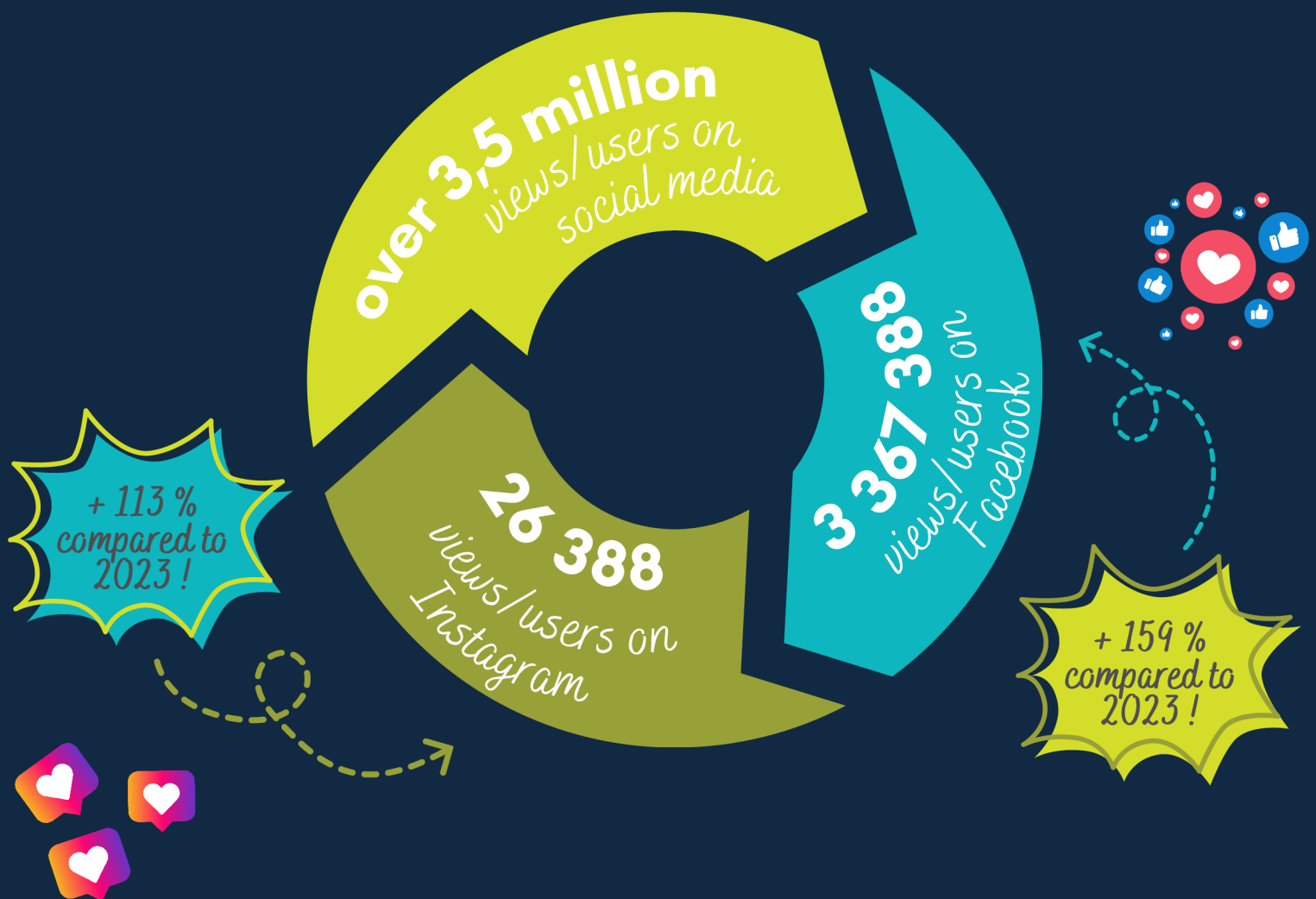
The event aspect of SPA de l'Estrie was reinvented in 2024, particularly with the inaugural edition of the Belles Gueules Race. Organized in collaboration with the Canicross Estrie club, this colorful event brought together nearly 300 human and canine athletes at the André-Nadeau outdoor base in Sherbrooke last October.

All of the race's proceeds were donated to SPA de l'Estrie. In the end, Canicross Estrie contributed over \$11,000 to our cause. Several regional partners also joined forces to make this event a complete success. It was a fantastic debut!

Given its resounding success and the overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants from across the province, we are determined to make the Belles Gueules Race an annual tradition, and we are already actively working on the organization of the second edition!



Communications Department



Animal Welfare Department

Since 2023, Philippe Thyron has held the position of Animal Welfare Coordinator. He diligently ensures that each animal receives the highest standards of care and attention throughout their stay with us.



New Spaces

Cats and Small Animals

We have invested in the custom-made construction of condos for our cats and rabbits, designed to meet the highest standards of animal welfare legislation.



Active Participation

Two Major Events on Animal Welfare

In 2024, we participated in the essential Summit for Animals organized by Humane Canada (Halifax, Nova Scotia) as well as the International Animal Behavior Symposium in Montreal.



Internal Awareness

Education is key

Through various workshops and discussion groups, all departments at the SPA de l'Estrie have benefited from the expertise of our Animal Welfare Coordinator to ensure consistency and alignment in our daily actions.



Research

Developing our understanding of animal welfare

In partnership with the Université de Sherbrooke, we launched a research program focused on animal welfare. The first step involves reviewing and conducting a meta-analysis of existing publications on the subject.



Department of Financial Development

➔ Annual Campaign

Driven by the joy of giving, our annual campaign, "Donating to animals feels good too," called on the generosity of our community. In just a few months, we raised a total of \$75,000.

➔ Partnership of the Year

Royal Canin has become an essential partner, providing food for the animals in the shelter and supporting our initiatives. Their partnership began with a generous sponsorship of \$15,000.

➔ New SPAE Crew Neck

Designed by local artist Nathalino Porlier, we've enriched our SPAE merchandise store with a crewneck featuring our colors and message. Additionally, cat, dog, and rabbit versions are now available in our store.

➔ Citizen Investment Fund

Launched by Sherbrooke MP Christine Labrie of the Québec Solidaire party, the community vaccination clinic initiative ranked among the top 20 most popular projects. It received a \$5,000 grant to support its implementation.



Department *of Financial Development*



1st Edition of the Belles Gueules Race

In collaboration with the Canicross Estrie club, more than 280 human athletes, accompanied by their canine companions, participated in the first edition, which included 7 events. The event raised \$11,000 and will return in October 2025.



2nd Edition of Lily Trotteuse

Famous for his love of good beer and his adopted cat from the SPA, Nicholas Ratthé, owner of Bières Dépôt Vent du Nord, brewed a second batch of the popular IPA Lily Trotteuse to benefit our animals. A total of \$1,020 was donated to our shelter.



Young Chamber of Commerce

As a proud member of the Sherbrooke Young Chamber of Commerce, we organized a 5-to-7 event to meet with up-and-coming business leaders and raise awareness of the cause we defend.



The Project "A Shelter for Every Pet"

Thanks to Royale's "A Shelter for Every Pet" project, our shelter gained significant visibility and received numerous donations. This partnership helped raise over \$10,000 through various fundraising events.

THANKING
YOU

That feels
good too!



Facility Improvements

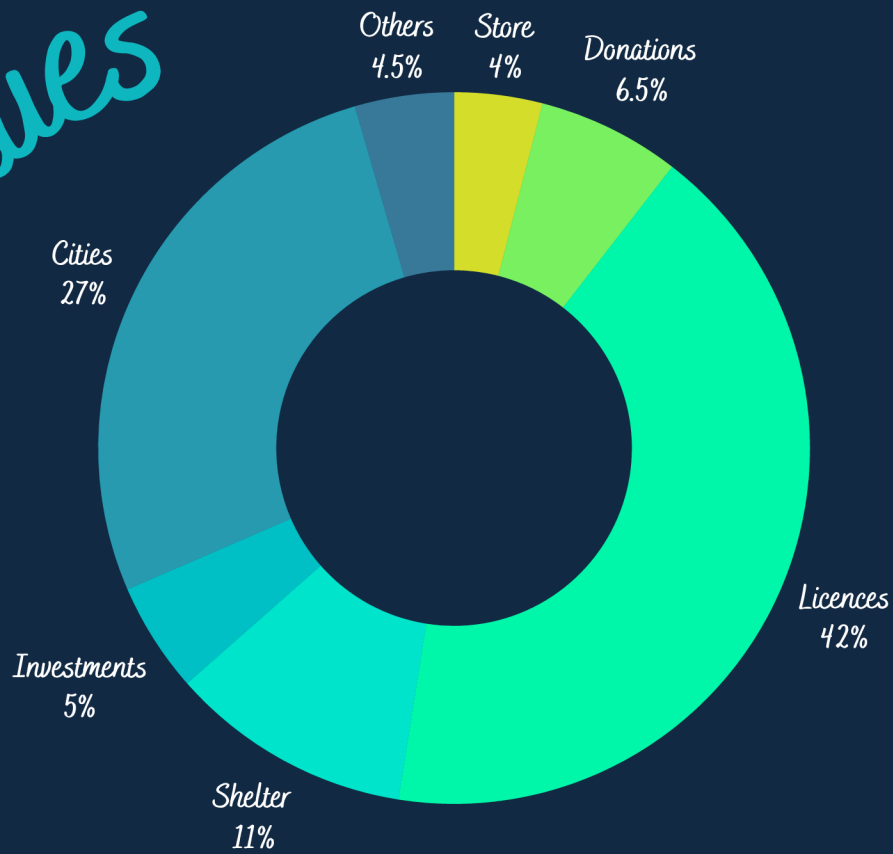
In 2024, several improvements were made to the shelter to preserve the well-being of the animals.

- ➔ The acquisition of customized condo cages for cats and rabbits ensures their well-being throughout their stay at the shelter.
- ➔ The expansion of the adoption room and the small animal quarantine area has allowed us to install more spacious cages and playpens where rabbits, among others, can stretch their legs freely in all seasons.
- ➔ Two specially designed enclosures now welcome unsocialized farm cats. These spaces, built to reduce their stress, offer them the opportunity to jump on elevated shelves or hide as they wish.
- ➔ The addition of a roof to the outdoor enclosures in the Flex area and the dog isolation room ensures optimal comfort for the residents, protecting them from the weather while offering a secure space.

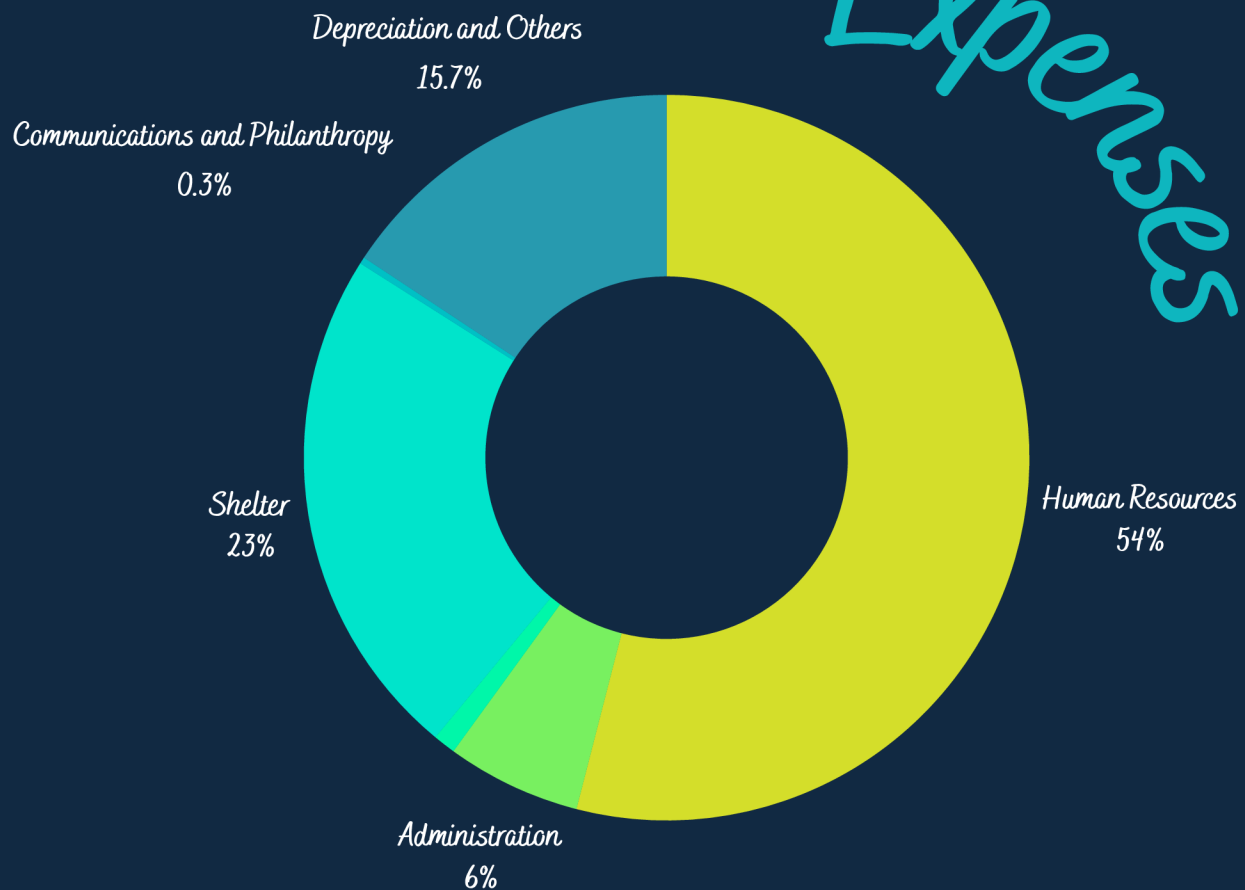


Finances

Revenues



Expenses





Société
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DE L'ESTRIE



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