



2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Together for a second chance



Société
protectrice
des animaux
DE L'ESTRIE

Adopte qu

03

Message from the Executive Director

05

Message from the President

06

Board of Directors

07

Management Team

07

Municipalities Served

09

The SPA in Numbers

10

Wak's Story

12

Animal Welfare

13

New Head of Animal Services

14

Infrastructure Improvements

15

Our Foster Families

17

Ethan's Story

19

Our Volunteers

20

Road & Municipal Services

21

Support for People in Precarious
Situation

22

Communications

24

Fundraising

26

Financial Statements



"They didn't know it was impossible, so they did it."
— Mark Twain

Over the past few years, the SPA de l'Estrie has achieved significant milestones, establishing itself as a key player in animal protection and welfare in Quebec.

In 2025, the SPAE reached an important milestone by serving its 50th municipality in Quebec. This achievement is not just symbolic; it also represents an expansion of our service area. Starting in January 2026, the SPAE will begin serving municipalities in two new regional county municipalities (RCMs): Haute-Yamaska and Brome-Missisquoi. I would like to thank the municipalities and, more broadly, our partners for renewing their trust in us year after year.

These ongoing developments and the organization's remarkable growth are the result of the excellence in daily work performed by all employees and departments. The rigor of our operations and the quality of our processes ensure that the SPAE enjoys credibility that extends beyond the local community, broadening the scope of what we can achieve. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to our entire staff for their dedication, professionalism, kindness, and unwavering affection for our vulnerable residents.

Whether in customer service, on the road, in the health, animal welfare, and licensing departments, or in administration, it is these teams that make it possible for us to give the animals that enter our doors a real second chance. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the volunteers and foster families who are an integral part of our team. Without them, we would not be able to share these happy-ending stories day after day.

I also want to express my gratitude to the members of the Board of Directors, who play a crucial role within the SPAE by volunteering their expertise, time, and experience. The directors ensure the sound governance of the SPAE, especially in the complex context of continuous growth. Thank you for your support!

As we look ahead to 2026, it is clear that we will face challenges related to animal welfare, both regionally and across the province. However, with such a dedicated team surrounding us, I am confident that we will respond appropriately and that our organization will continue to learn and grow.



Dominique Maître

A circular portrait of Louis Bourassa, a middle-aged man with short grey hair, wearing a dark suit, a striped shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling and looking directly at the camera. The portrait is set against a white background and is partially enclosed by a teal-colored arc that contains the text 'Message from the President'.

Message from the President

Another year has passed, and the SPA de l'Estrie has welcomed over 3,000 animals, many of which were strays. Our euthanasia rates have continued to decline over the years.

There have been many happy endings, including the stories of Rocky and Fidji, who both found loving families after a long wait. Ethan's recovery is another inspiring example; he has regained his health. Their time at the shelter showcases what can be achieved with quality care: helping animals find homes. For this, we would like to express our deep gratitude to the entire team.

Last year, I succeeded the amazing Ms. Evelina Smith, who led our board of directors for over twenty years. The organization has grown significantly under her leadership, and she can take great pride in that. As I reread her writings, I feel it's important to emphasize her belief that "together, we can ensure that this story belongs to every animal that walks through the shelter's doors."

Thank you to everyone!

A handwritten signature in white ink, which appears to read 'Louis Bourassa'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Louis Bourassa



Board of Directors



Louis Bourassa
President



Daniel Dumas
Vice-President



Lois Saucke
Administrator



Charlotte Rock-Rivard
Secretary



Cedric Lefebvre
Treasurer

Management Team



Dominique Maître
Executive Director - Chief Privacy Officer



Guylaine Lessard
Director of Operations



Émilie Gervais
Director of Municipal and Community Services



Valérie Lacasse
Shelter Coordinator



Cristelle Henri
Licences Department Coordinator



Philippe Thyron
Animal Welfare Coordinator



Maxime Isabel
Human Resources Consultant



Stéphanie Hébert
Administrative Assistant



Catherine Provost
Financial and Marketing Development Manager



Alexis Savoie
Communications Manager and Spokesperson

The SPA in Numbers

The performance metrics of the SPAE are primarily based on three factors: the number of intakes, adoptions, and complaints. This data is crucial for understanding the overall impact of our work. While we operate in an environment filled with uncertainty about the future, we are actively implementing preventive measures to reduce any negative effects on the animals in our care.

3123 Admissions

2133 Adoptions

360 Reclamations



Cats

2346 Admissions

1734 Adoptions

103 Reclamations



Dogs

542 Admissions

249 Adoptions

220 Reclamations



Small Animals

235 Admissions

179 Adoptions

8 Reclamations

Wak: tiny... but incredibly brave

Wak arrived at the shelter on April 8 and needed to be bottle-fed. When she came in, she weighed only 331 grams. Even then, she was the smallest of her litter. We quickly noticed something unusual.



While her siblings were gaining weight and developing their playful kitten energy, **Wak remained frail and lethargic**, often gazing into the distance. Her abdomen was severely distended, and she experienced painful constipation and dehydration, with her weight stagnant despite our attentive care. On several occasions, her prognosis was described as highly uncertain. We had to closely monitor every gram gained or lost, fearing a possible relapse. X-rays, ultrasounds, and blood tests were performed, but the answers came slowly.

Then, the results arrived: congenital hypothyroidism was confirmed. It is an extremely rare condition, so rare that our experienced veterinarians hadn't seen a case in ten years.

Finally, we understood. Her little body wasn't producing enough hormones to support her growth and development. This condition explained her significant growth delay, bradycardia, lack of energy, slower development, and that little "different" look in her eyes that had worried us so much.

Treatment began immediately, but the road to stability was far from smooth. For weeks, right up until the end of July, Wak took us on a rollercoaster ride of ups and downs. There were dosage adjustments, frequent trips to the clinic, abdominal discomfort, and bouts of lethargy, followed by encouraging improvements. Though her condition fluctuated, she never completely stopped fighting. Gradually, something changed.

Wak started to play more, eat with appetite, gain weight, and awaken to the world around her. This tiny kitten, who had once been half the size of the others, was growing stronger, more present, and more alive. Once she became stable enough, she could be spayed—an important and symbolic step in her journey toward normality. Then, the story took an even more beautiful turn.

Her foster family, who had stood by her side through every appointment, every worry, and every small victory, realized they couldn't let her go. Wak was already home, so they decided to adopt her.

Today, Wak is a happy little survivor. She will need medical follow-ups, of course, and her diagnosis will remain a reality for the rest of her life. But she is loved, surrounded by care, and understood. Her story serves as a reminder of the importance of perseverance and human kindness.

Because sometimes, behind the tiniest of kittens lies immense strength.





Departmental Restructuring

To improve our ability to handle challenging situations at the shelter—such as disease outbreaks, staff shortages, and high occupancy rates—we have restructured the animal welfare department, which includes caregivers and animal handlers. The hiring of an animal services manager enables us to better organize and support both our team and volunteers. Additionally, providing versatile training for our animal care staff across different areas (such as dogs, cats, and small animals) enhances our flexibility in managing the animals in our care. This approach also reinforces our animal welfare standards for every individual admitted to the shelter.

Training / Certification

At the SPA de l'Estrie, prioritizing a high level of expertise is essential. This commitment is evident in the ongoing training provided to our animal care staff and the development of specialized skills within our management team, focusing on behavior, welfare science, and management.

This year, our canine and feline behavior specialists completed training in applied ethology (AZCA) and earned the Éduchateur's certification as feline welfare advisors. Additionally, our canine behavior team is now fully staffed, with three members recognized by the RQIEC. The year 2025 has been dedicated to learning, while 2026 will focus on consolidating and sharing that knowledge.

White Book on Animal Welfare

Our animal welfare coordinator has been very active lately. After returning from Humane Canada's Summit for Animals, he focused on drafting the White Book on Positive Animal Welfare for the SPA de l'Estrie. He enhanced his understanding of animal welfare science and shelter management ethics, studying at both the University of Edinburgh and the University of Colorado Boulder. Additionally, he has actively participated in the work of the Observatoire québécois du droit animalier (OQDA) and contributed to establishing a Learning and Resource Centre Task Force for Humane Canada.

New Head of Animal Services

Since April 2025, Roxane Cabanac has been the animal services manager at the SPA de l'Estrie's animal welfare department.

Roxane previously worked as a canine behaviorist at the SPAE. Like many members of the department, she is certified as a canine behaviorist by the Regroupement québécois des intervenants en comportement (RQIEC).

As the Animal Services Manager, Roxane is responsible for supporting and overseeing the teams in the dog, cat, and small animal departments. She works closely with our animal welfare coordinator and supervises the canine and feline behavior specialists, as well as the volunteers who provide invaluable support to ensure the well-being and happiness of our residents. Roxane plays a crucial role in maintaining a safe work environment and actively contributes to the continuous improvement of our practices.

Her commitment to animal welfare is undeniable. Roxane ensures that both our residents and the individuals who care for them daily thrive in a healthy, respectful, and nurturing environment. Through her dedication and professionalism, she contributes every day to making our organization a place where well-being is a top priority.





The improvements made to the shelter in 2025 have enhanced the well-being, safety, biosecurity, and health of the animals in its care.

The artificial turf has been replaced with a concrete surface that features a drainage system. This update enables more effective cleaning of the outdoor enclosures and proper disinfection of the surfaces, significantly reducing the risk of contamination, parasites, and the spread of disease. Additionally, the drainage system facilitates water runoff, helping to keep the areas drier and more hygienic.

Cost : \$50 000



Anti-jump fencing has been installed in some of the indoor dog kennels. This enhancement is designed to prevent jumping dogs from escaping, ensuring their safety as well as that of other animals and staff. Additionally, it helps reduce stress related to potential escapes and provides a safer, more controlled environment.

Cost : \$3 600



Our Wonderful Foster Families

Without our foster families, it would be impossible to help so many animals every year. They provide our most vulnerable residents with much more than just a temporary home; they offer a real family life, a reassuring environment, routines, love, and the stability essential for recovery.

Whether caring for bottle-fed kittens, animals recovering from illness, complex medical cases, or residents suffering from serious diseases like panleukopenia or parvovirus, foster families play a crucial role in the care and healing process. Their commitment, availability, and close collaboration with our team make all the difference.

Foster families embody a form of quiet, constant, and deeply human kindness. Thanks to their efforts, hundreds of animals have not only survived but have also regained the chance to live healthy, stable, and loving lives. Their dedication is a fundamental pillar of the SPA de l'Estrie's mission.

OUR NETWORK OF FOSTER FAMILIES

218

**Active
Foster
Families**

164

cats only



31

dogs only



23

cats & dogs



622

**animal
placements**

563

cats



59

dogs



27

**adoptions that
result directly
from the foster
care network**



12

**Families united in
the fight against
feline
panleukopenia and
canine parvovirus**

Tangible Results:

3

puppies that survived parvovirus

27

cats that survived
panleukopenia
(2 mothers + 25 kittens)



When Resilience meets compassion

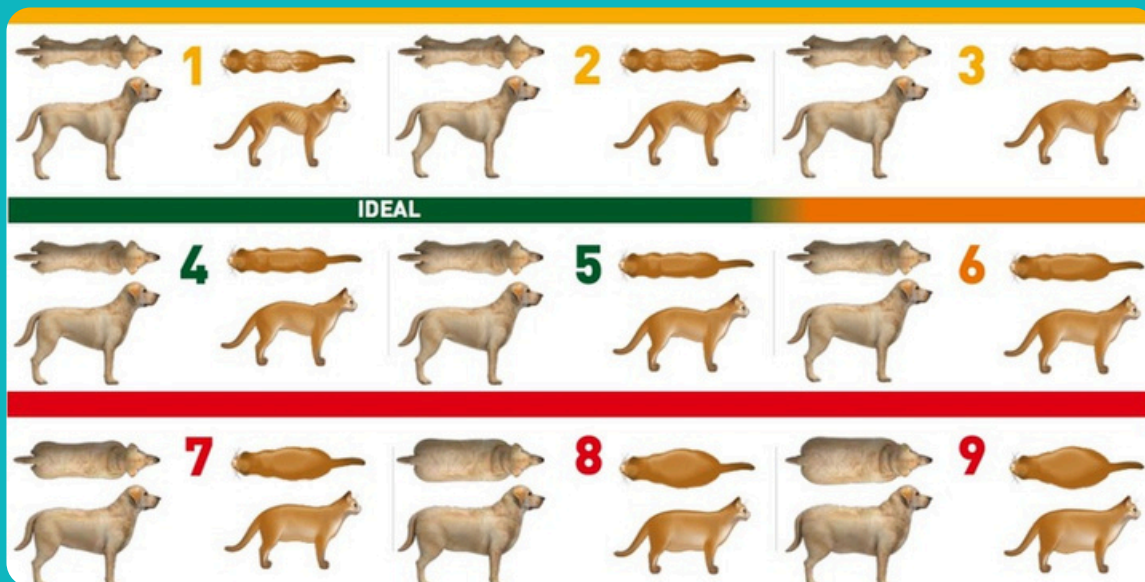
When Ethan arrived at the shelter, he was in alarming condition. He had been found wandering the streets and was extremely thin, with a body condition score of 1 out of 9. He was severely dehydrated, very weak, and lethargic. His body showed the signs of a long struggle: wounds, multiple lumps, bald patches, excessively long nails, pus-filled discharge from his ears, eye problems, and a heart murmur. Everything indicated that he was an elderly, exhausted dog—truly at the end of his rope.

Ethan displayed remarkable patience and gentleness from the moment he arrived. He allowed people to interact with him calmly, particularly when food was involved, and he clearly communicated his boundaries. Despite all he had been through, he remained a respectful dog.

Ethan's Story



Visual Assessment Grid for Evaluating Flesh Condition



Before any treatment could begin, our priority was to help him regain his strength. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our team—including veterinarians, canine behaviorists, and animal care technicians—we developed a plan for rehydration and intensive care that included therapeutic baths, subcutaneous fluids, antibiotics, and daily attention.

Weeks turned into months, and his health had its ups and downs, leading us to fear for his survival at times. However, at nearly 12 years old, Ethan demonstrated something remarkable: he wanted to live.

Slowly but surely, the once listless dog transformed into a cheerful, laid-back companion who wagged his tail and lit up with joy during interactions with people. His gentle personality gradually resurfaced. Nine months later, Ethan found his forever family. Today, he is under veterinary care, has gained weight, and, most importantly, he is happy, loved, and safe.

Ethan's story reflects the resilience of an elderly dog and the unwavering belief of a dedicated team. It serves as a reminder that every gesture, every act of care, and every hour invested can truly change a life.



Our Precious Volunteers



In January 2025, the department responsible for volunteer activities at SPA de l'Estrie underwent a review and restructuring to better address the shelter's various needs.

Our volunteer manager is responsible for implementing a new system designed to streamline the recruitment and assignment of volunteers to the shelter's various departments.

Volunteers play a vital role in our daily operations, participating in activities such as taking our canine residents for morning outings, providing enrichment activities for adoptable cats, and helping with dishwashing and laundry tasks, where they wash and fold numerous stuffed animals. Their contributions are invaluable to the shelter.

Volunteering by the Numbers

29 volunteers helped out during 5 events.



A total of 2,360 hours were contributed by 63 volunteers.

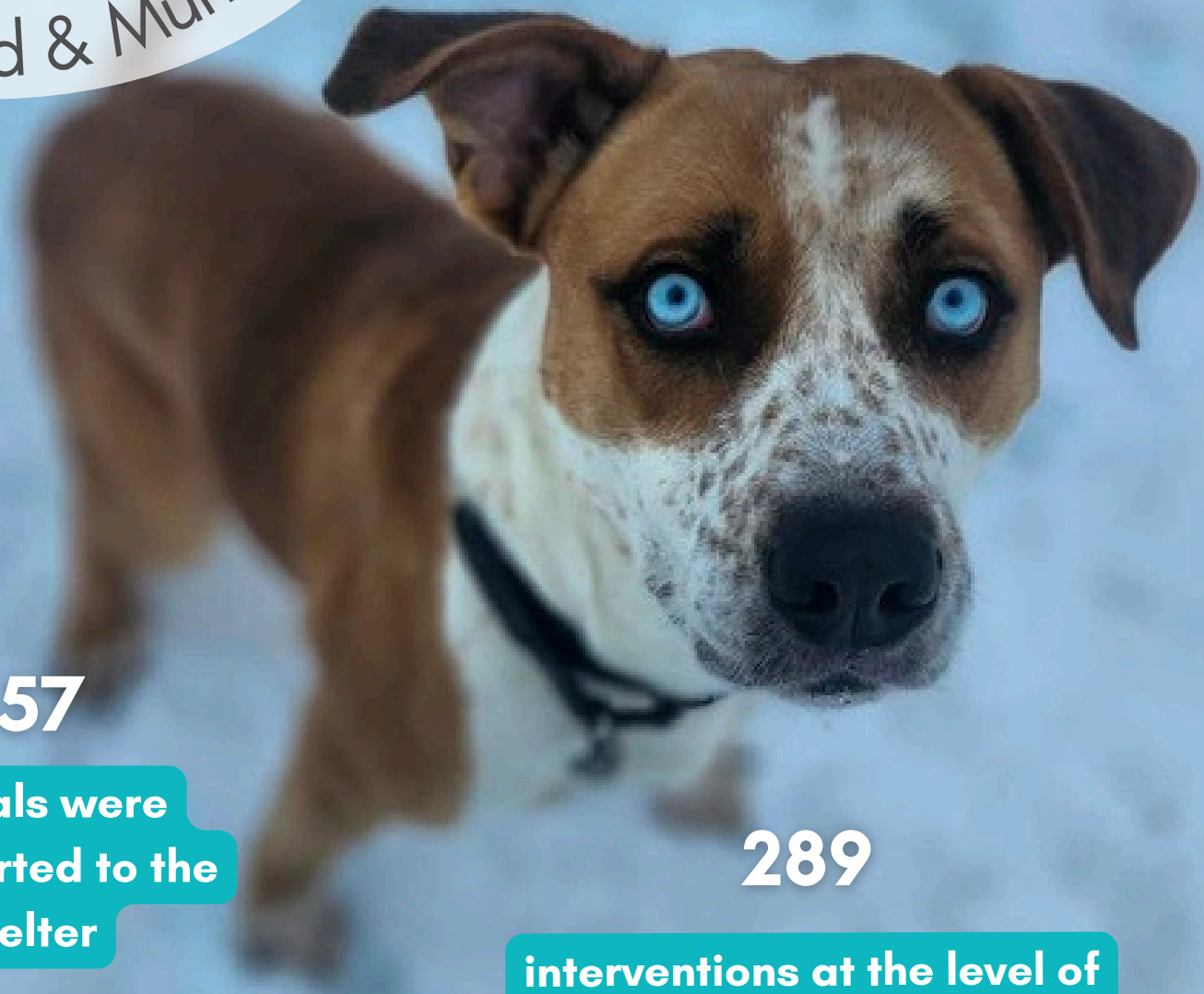


24 volunteers traveled a total of 10,500 km during 30 transport trips to other rescues.



43

**criminal investigations
have been launched**



657

**animals were
transported to the
shelter**

289

**interventions at the level of
Bill B-3.1 have been made**



Support for People in Precarious Situations

Supporting the pets of individuals in need is central to the mission of SPA de l'Estrie. In 2025, these efforts were sustained and expanded to better address the growing needs of the community.

With the help of grants and donations, two community vaccination clinics were organized, providing free examinations, treatments, and vaccinations for families in need. These clinics were made possible thanks to the support from local partners and referrals from community organizations.

Targeted spay-and-neuter clinics also continued, enabling low-income individuals to have their cats spayed or neutered at a reduced cost, thereby helping to prevent animal overpopulation.

In addition, demand for food assistance rose significantly in 2025. In addition to directly helping families, the SPA de l'Estrie redistributed surplus food to several organizations in the region to support as many animals as possible.



The SPAE in the News

In 2025, animal welfare continued to be a prominent topic in the regional media. Through nearly 40 media appearances, the SPA de l'Estrie successfully raised awareness on important issues such as overpopulation due to population migration, adoptions and abandonments during the holiday season, specific legal cases, and the launch of our 2025 fundraising campaign.

The SPA de l'Estrie remains committed to its mission of educating the public about the realities of animal shelters and the daily challenges faced in the realm of animal welfare.



A story that crossed the ocean

The end of 2025 was marked by the arrival of a very special kitten named Pirate. He had an unusual coat pattern and, likely due to inbreeding, exhibited distinctive physical traits that sparked both curiosity and compassion. Despite his appearance, we saw a vulnerable animal in need of care and stability, just like all the others we take in. Unfortunately, even with the care we provided, our dear Pirate passed away a few weeks after his arrival.

In an effort to raise awareness about the consequences of unregulated breeding and the dangers of selecting animals based solely on appearance, we chose to share his story on our Facebook page. The public's response exceeded our expectations, with the post reaching nearly 1.2 million people—an all-time record for our page, which has 36,000 followers.

The response to Pirate's story was truly remarkable, generating thousands of comments, shares, and messages of support, which turned it into a viral sensation. Notably, 45% of those reached were from France, highlighting that these issues extend far beyond our borders.

This extraordinary mobilization demonstrates the effectiveness of social media as a tool for raising awareness.



Thanks to Pirate, we were able to initiate an important conversation about responsible breeding practices, the significance of spaying and neutering, and the real-world consequences of irresponsible behaviors on animal welfare. We also emphasized that behind every animal, there is a story that deserves to be heard.

Social Media Statistics 2025

Through our social media channels, we have reached a record number of **11 million views**



**10 million
views**

+185%
compared to 2024



**421,000
views**

+1,500%
compared to 2024



**387,000
views**



Fundraising

We are committed to continuously improving our fundraising and cause-marketing efforts to raise public awareness about the work of the SPA de l'Estrie. The support of the community and animal lovers is crucial to our mission, which we carry out every day.

In 2025, our initiatives to highlight the financial needs associated with caring for the thousands of animals we have taken in proved successful. Throughout the year, we launched several campaigns, and individuals, organizations, and businesses in our communities generously contributed to our cause. As a result, we raised a total of **\$335,000**.

We are incredibly grateful for the kindness our donors show toward animals. Their support makes a significant difference and allows us to pursue our mission with determination.

Let's write them a new story TOGETHER



*There's no such thing as a
small donation—
only donations that make a
big difference.*



SPA
DE L'ESTRIE

On October 11, 2025, the second edition of the Course des Belles Gueules was held, organized in partnership with the Club de Canicross Estrie!



COURSE DES BELLES GUEULES

ÉVÉNEMENT BÉNÉFICE



3

Courses

8

Challenges

3

Disciplines

25 065\$

Jackpot accumulated
for the 50-50 drawing

242

Participants

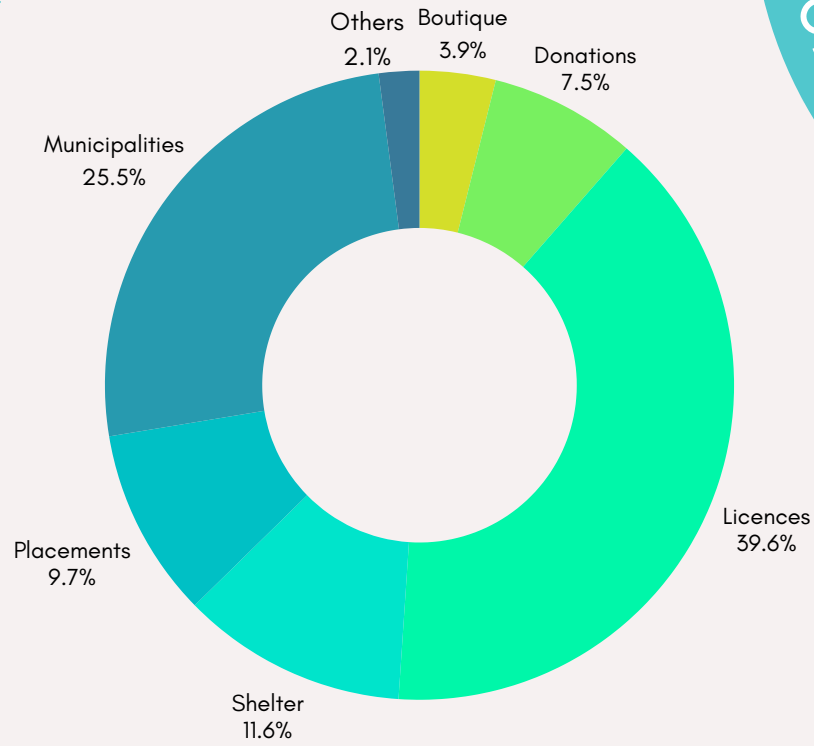
22 887\$

Funds raised during the
event, which is twice
the amount for 2024

425

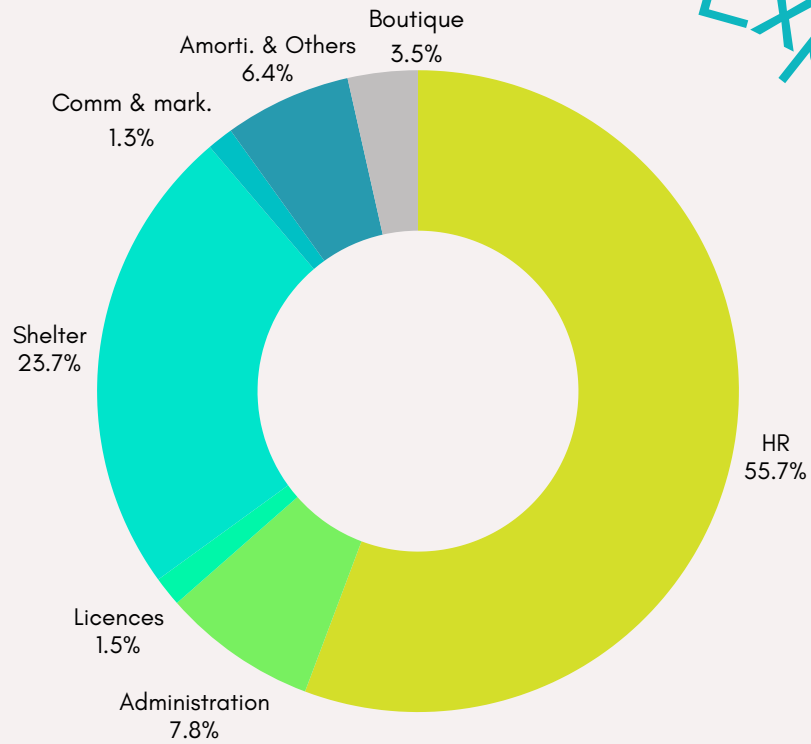
Departures

Revenues



Financial Statement

Expenses





Société
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