

## Animal-Kind International Annual Report-2025 & Way Forward-2026



This year our annual report includes a new section, Way Forward. What better time to look ahead than when we're reflecting on and assessing the previous year? Production of this report involved discussions with the AKI Board, Partners and Grantees, and volunteers. This process helped us learn what we're doing well and ways we can improve in 2026 and beyond.

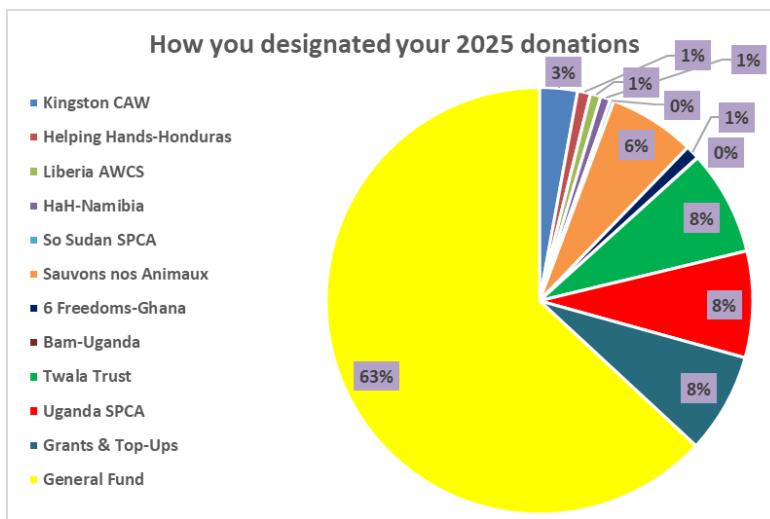


*Twala Trust volunteers knitted sweaters to keep the sanctuary dogs warm during Zimbabwe's winter.  
Little Panda received a beautiful handmade sweater!*

## Animal-Kind International Annual Report-2025

In 2025, we continued our focus on our two main programs, support for (1) our Partner Organizations and (2) our Grant Recipients:

- 1) We raised money for and provided technical and administrative support to our Partner Organizations in Africa and Latin America/Caribbean (LAC). In 2025, we kept the same Partner Organizations that we had in 2024 (a decision made during our December 2024 Board meeting not to add or drop a Partner in 2025). Having worked with our Partner Organizations closely, and because we continuously vet them, we confidently provide ongoing funding for their priority animal welfare needs as long as they comply with our requirements.
- 2) One big change for us in 2025 was our 8<sup>th</sup> annual grant program, renamed from the Africa-Based Animal Welfare Organization Grant Program to the Animal Welfare Organization Grant Program (for Africa and Latin America/Caribbean) affirming our focus on the two regions. Our Grantees receive one-time funding based on a winning proposal submitted during our open grant competition period.



We provided financial, technical, and administrative support to our Partner Organizations and Grantees. Financial support for our Partners is based on the amount of total donations we received; the amount that donors designated to a specific Partner (↔); need and capacity of the Partner to use the funds; and on the quality (accountability, transparency, clear and regular communications) of the Partner's reporting. In 2025, 63% of

donations were undesignated (our general fund), which allowed the AKI Board to have substantial input in how funds were distributed to our Partners and used for our Animal Welfare Organization Grant Program.

The Grant Program, with 8% of designated donations, includes funding for the 13 2025 grantees (see below) and for “top-up” grants to designated grantees.

**In 2025, we helped 26 organizations in 19 countries. These include our Partner Organizations:**

- Sauvons nos Animaux in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- The Six Freedoms in Ghana
- Liberia Animal Welfare & Conservation Society
- Have a Heart-Namibia

- South Sudan Society for the Protection & Care of Animals
- Uganda Society for the Protection & Care of Animals
- Bam Animal Clinics in Uganda
- Twala Trust in Zimbabwe
- Helping Hands for Hounds of Honduras
- Kingston Community Animal Welfare in Jamaica

And our [\*\*13 Animal Welfare Organization Grantees\*\*](#), 8 in Africa and 5 in Latin America/Caribbean:

- Tanzania Small Animal Veterinary Organization (3rd time grantee)
- Blind Love in South Africa (3rd time grantee)
- Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals-Grahamstown (4<sup>th</sup> time grantee)
- Starting Over Sanctuary in Israel/Gaza (2<sup>nd</sup> time grantee)
- Animal Smile Tanzania
- INADES Formation-Kenya
- Triglav Trust, Namibia
- Animal Welfare Society of Cameroon
- Fondation Alliance Verte, Haiti
- Rivadeneira Sterilization Center, Ecuador
- Amor y Abrigo, Honduras
- Asociación Huellas De Amor, Colombia
- Vida de Gatos, Chile

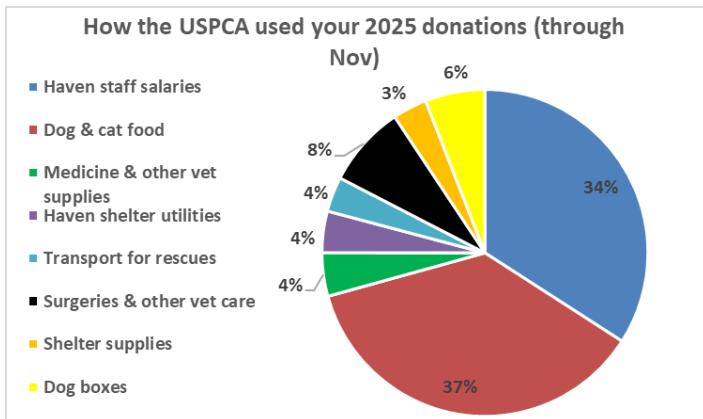
A third program is AKI “**Friendly Audits**,” which we started as a way of helping animal welfare organizations in non-financial ways. By providing a virtual volunteer mentor for targeted animal welfare organizations, this program strengthens administrative and technical capacities of select organizations. As was the case in 2024, in 2025, with fewer volunteers than we had when we started the program during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, **we helped an additional three organizations in 2025 through our Friendly Audit Program.**

### **1. Support to AKI Partner Organizations**

Below is a summary of AKI support to our ten Partner Organizations in 2025 and what that support has achieved.

#### **PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS: AFRICA**

**Uganda Society for the Protection and Care of Animals:** In 2025, we supported almost 75% of the USPCA’s operating expenses, funding the USPCA’s two shelters, the “old” Haven and the new shelter. Without AKI support, the USPCA would have been unable to keep their gates open. Local donations were much lower than in the past, probably in part due to expats leaving the country when the US Agency for International Development shut down and other aid agencies cut their staff.



\*the pie chart is through Nov. because funds for December will be reported on in 2026.

Our support to USPCA covered, in part:

- USPCA shelter staff salaries for nine to ten staff over the full year.
- A special project to fabricate nine new dog boxes for kennels at the old shelter (they will be moved to the new shelter when the old Haven shuts down).
- Spay/neuter of all shelter pets, and because of our support for prompt s/n, the volunteer vets were able to keep up with the growing shelter population.



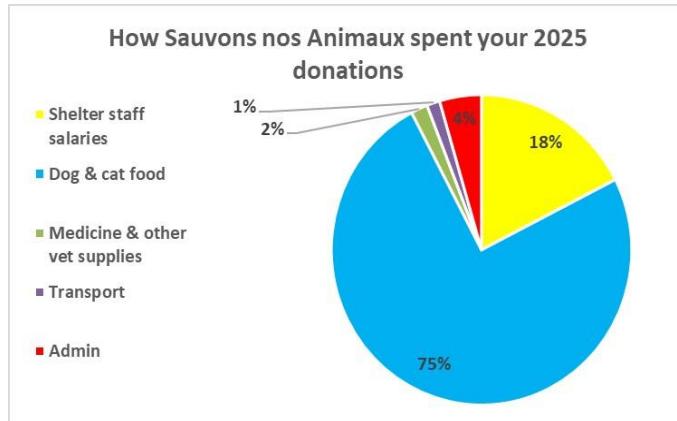
[← The USPCA cattery during feeding time.]

In 2025, we received great news about the new shelter site: We finally received the environmental permit from the National Environmental Management Authority, having

appealed NEMA's original decision, which denied the permit. After a NEMA site visit, the agency concurred with the USPCA that *most of the site was not a wetland* and construction could continue.

**Sauvons nos Animaux-Democratic Republic of Congo:** In 2025, we provided about 90% of the operating costs of SnA's shelter in Bukavu:

- Thanks to AKI's Shirlee Christensen Memorial Pet Food Fund, we covered 100% of the cost of cat and dog food for SnA shelter animals. By around mid-year, the population at the sanctuary had grown to 137 dogs and 23 cats.
- We also covered the salaries of the six shelter staff, including two part-time vets, Aristide and Jackson.



2025 was so difficult for SnA, it was all that they and we could do to keep the shelter operating and the staff and animals safe. Due to security issues and the ongoing conflict in eastern Congo, the Youth Club was unable to meet at the shelter, it wasn't safe to hold the Animal Friendly Kids Camp, and the shelter was unable to host their annual Christmas celebration for local kids.

Paterne, founder & director of SnA, sent alarming messages during the year which help to understand the situation, for example:

(November 2025) "The cost of goods has risen considerably due to the current war and economic situation. The exchange rate has also fallen sharply, which has disrupted our budget. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of animals taken in by the shelter, which has led to higher expenses for their food and care."

(October 2025) "In several cases, we have been unable to take a photo. Here is a very recent example: less than two weeks ago, I was almost arrested by the rebel intelligence service. These are things I don't often share, but this is our daily reality. Every photo, every outing carries a risk. Before taking a picture, we must first assess the location, the people around us, and the safety situation.

That's why, sometimes, certain actions are not documented. We live and work in constant fear, but despite everything, we continue to save lives. Thank you for your understanding, patience, and trust. Your support is vital to us, and every day, thanks to AKI, we can continue to save and protect the animals at the shelter."

On a positive note, in December, during a break in the violence, SnA invited local vet school students to the shelter. It had been about one year since the last time it was safe enough to visit. They participated in spay/neuter ← and learned about rescue



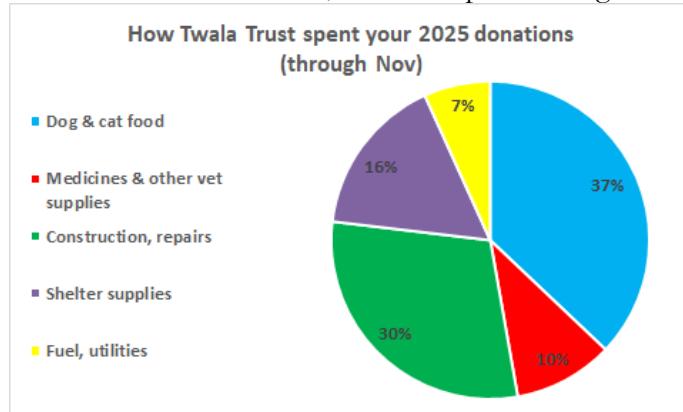
and sheltering →. We hope that peace comes to eastern DRC and the shelter can enjoy more visitors and serenity, and live up to its new name, Havre de Paix.

**Twala Trust-Zimbabwe** used the bulk of AKI funds for:

- Dog food for Doggy Tuesday, for up to 600 dogs who attend weekly, and for takeaway doggy bags for those in need of nutritious food during the week (thanks to the Elaine Law Memorial Pet Food Fund).
- A large solar system (panels, inverters, batteries), significantly improving life at the sanctuary for animals and humans (2 batteries, an inverter, and a Twala dog →). The system alleviated the impacts on sanctuary operations from the continued deterioration in electricity supply.



AKI helped cover other budget shortfalls due to decreased donations in 2025: “We received less visitor income. This is due to the terrible state of our access roads, as well as the number of animals needing hands on care increasing significantly which made us decide to only be open for visitors during specific hours 2 days a week. We currently generate the same visitor income in a year as we did in one month in 2015, and we expect this figure to continue to drop as there is no sign of the roads being repaired.” (Sarah, Trustee of Twala Trust, December 2025)

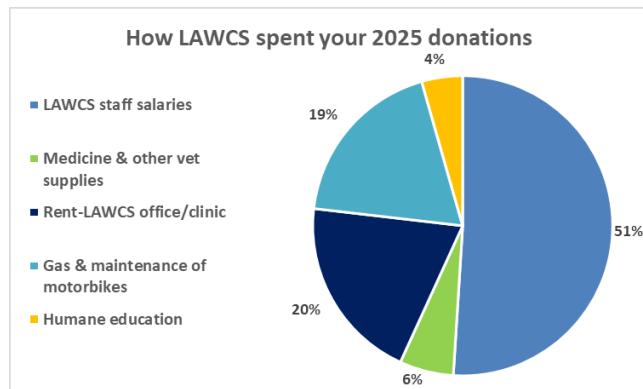


We were particularly happy to help Twala’s Waggle Tail Club dogs in 2025, the “retirees” who are living out their senior years at the sanctuary.

Sarah wrote: “The support from Animal-Kind International improves and changes lives every day. We saw between 190 and 230 children bringing their dogs to Doggy

Tuesday each week during the recent school holidays. The dogs are in great condition, well socialised, bonded with their owners, valued and recognised as we always wished for them. The success of this programme sustains us through the many challenges, and coming home each day to our beloved Waggle Tail Club members living the happiest lives in retirement makes every second worthwhile. Thank you for all you do to make this possible.”

**Liberia Animal Welfare & Conservation Society:** In 2025, with AKI funding, LAWCS paid the salaries of three full-time staff who support their Humane Ed Program in Zorzor District and their remote animal care clinics, held throughout Lofa and Montserrado Counties, in communities with no other available animal health care.



AKI is the only organization paying for rent of the LAWCS office, and in Liberia, an NGO is required to have a physical office. In Zorzor, AKI funding helped LAWCS reach over 30 schools with over 8000 children enrolled in

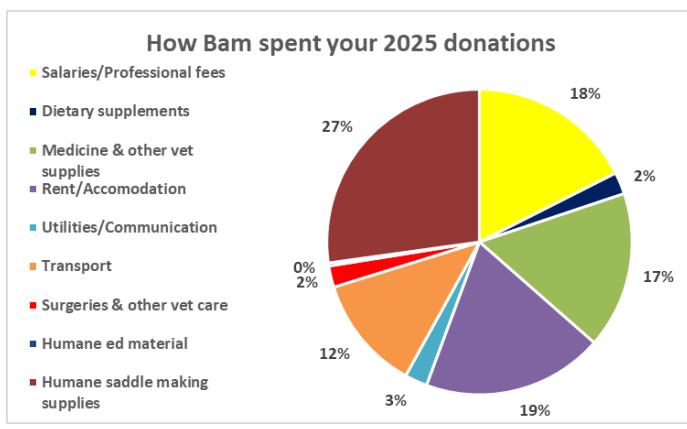
Humane Education classes. LAWCS free outreach animal health care clinics helped thousands of dogs and cats in Montserrado and Lofa Counties. (→August outreach clinic in Montserrado)



**Bam Animal Clinics-Uganda:** In 2025, we funded Bam's donkey welfare program in eastern

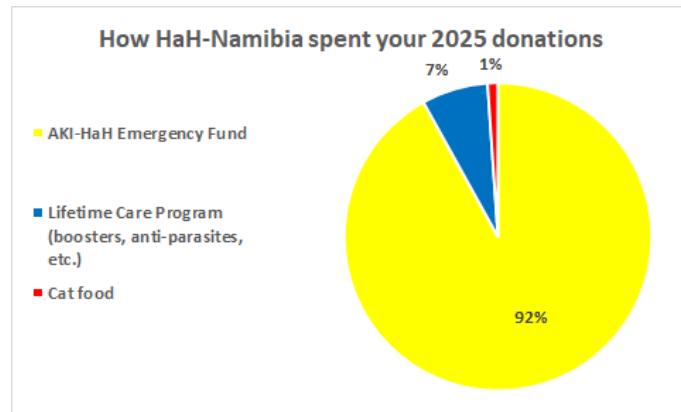
Uganda, which included four visits by the Bam team (Feb, April, August, and October) to conduct:

- Community vet clinics, providing free vet care for donkeys, reaching about 1000 donkeys/clinic with the only accessible and skilled donkey care available.
- Training donkey owners in humane saddle making, maintenance, and use. Bam distributed 300 humane saddles at no cost to the owners. (an October 2025 training in humane saddle making →)



**Have A Heart-Namibia:** In 2025, HaH-Namibia helped 30 cats and 62 dogs through the AKI-HaH Emergency Fund and 430 dogs and 17 cats through the Lifetime Care Program. The Emergency Fund pays for vet care for pets whose owners are unable to afford it (having had their pet spayed or neutered or agreeing to s/n after the care, is a requirement for receiving Emergency

Fund support). The Lifetime Care Program provides boosters and parasite prevention for previous HaH s/n clients-for life.



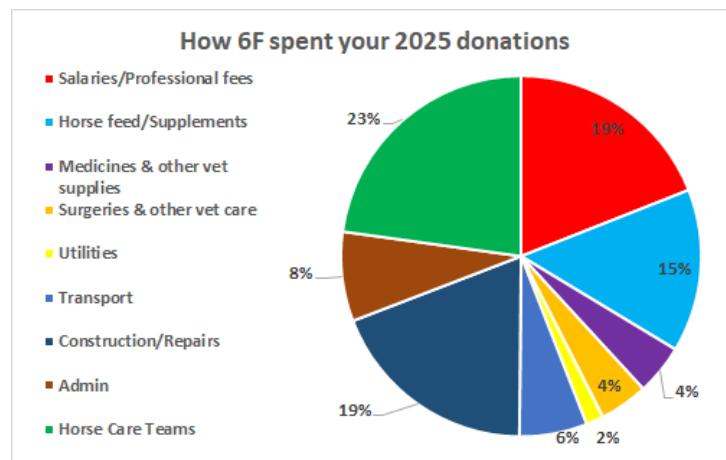
*^Giovanni from Otjiwarongo, Namibia got in touch with AKI to ask for help. He was desperate, Duggie, his puppy, was dying. Giovanni was so worried and upset, he didn't know where to turn; he knew he couldn't afford private vet care. We connected Giovanni to HaH and agreed that the AKI-HaH Emergency Fund could be used for Duggie's care. Many people then came together to help Duggie, including a prior AKI grantee, Reni from Bubu's. Elvira's Vet Clinic gave us the diagnosis: severe tick bite fever, specifically, ehrlichia, and Duggie urgently needed a blood transfusion. That's where Buddy came in. Buddy donated blood to Duggie. It was tough-and-go for a while and we were so relieved when we finally got word that Duggie had made it through the worst. Giovanni was the happiest of all of us especially when he was told he could take Duggie home. Duggie still had one requirement to fulfill: his neuter surgery. In December, HaH's Geesche wrote to us: "After AKI saved his life a few months ago, Duggie was now strong and old enough for his neuter. His responsible owner kept his appointment as he wants Duggie to have a healthy, happy life! Duggie was also vaccinated and treated for parasites. Thank you once again for helping Duggie!!!" More great news: Buddy, the donor dog, found a forever home.*

Our support to HaH is so cost-effective, while having extremely high impact. The most expensive emergency care in 2025 was ~US\$600 (for Ouboe, an older boy who needed surgery, there were complications, he also had gastroenteritis, and stayed a few days at the vet clinic), but most emergency cases were under US\$200, and many less than \$100. We believe it's so worthwhile saving the lives of these much-loved and already spayed or neutered pets!

**The Six Freedoms-Ghana:** In 2025, we provided broad-based support to 6F with about 75% put towards fees to grooms and other professionals, horse feed, construction/repairs (at Asafo and Tuba stables, where 6F keeps rescued horses, and preparation of the Langma property, leased by 6F for additional rescued horses), and Horse Care Teams (formed based on our discussions with 6F about how, within 6F's capacity, to have the greatest impact for horses and the horse community in Ghana). Specifically,

- We created a Horse Rescue Fund for 6F. When the 6F team identifies a horse in need of rescue, they have to act quickly to negotiate with the horse's owner, and they need ready access to cash for a payment to the owner (usually fairly low; for example, for Arrowboy, about \$200), plus transport, and emergency vet care and other care. In 2025, with the Horse Rescue Fund, Arrowboy was rescued (→groom William walking Arrowboy to his new home at the Langma property) and Merlin's rescue was underway.

- 6F used AKI funds to pay stipends to the grooms who feed and care for 6F's rescued horses. Typically, in Ghana, grooms are paid a salary well below survival rate. With no respect for their skills, a very low salary, and forced to live in degrading conditions (horse owners often house them in horse stables), the grooms take their frustrations out on the horses (and grooms often become addicted to cheap and dangerous street drugs to help them get through the day). Instead, 6F's model is based on equity, values a grooms' skills, provides training, and gives grooms a decent stipend when working with 6F. (One of 6F's goals is to provide treatment for drug abuse.)
- We covered the cost of food, supplements, and vet care for 6F's rescued horses.
- As 6F discovered from Horse Care Team visits to informal stables around Accra, a huge



them is [AVAILABLE HERE](#), and helps explain the complex horse welfare and rescue situation in Ghana.

**South Sudan Society for the Protection & Care of Animals:** Throughout 2025, we held Zoom meetings, often weekly, with the SSSPCA team to plan for SSSPCA's mass spay/neuter campaign. The meetings expanded to include at least one Kenya SPCA participant and one local vet. We've collected many supplies, and we continue to collect more supplies as the campaign date draws near. Because we felt that KSPCA's participation was crucial to a successful campaign, we provided the funds to cover KSPCA's participation in the event. Three KSPCA staff members, with many years of experience and expertise at organizing and holding large-scale s/n campaigns, will join the South Sudanese team to oversee and train locals: [→ *Typical street scene in Juba, South Sudan; dogs, some owned, some stray, roam throughout the city.*]

Dr. James Nyariki —Kenya SPCA Vet (Lead Vet for the s/n campaign)



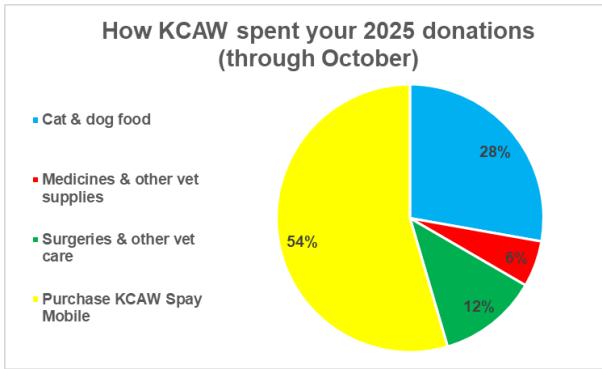
George Guyo --Assistant/overseeing anesthesia during the campaign

Nicholas Mungiria --Floor manager during the campaign and humane handling expert and trainer

KSPCA staff will also work with local volunteers to train them in humane education for adults and children.

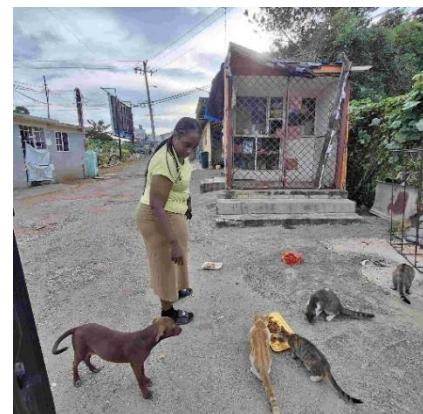
## PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS: LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN

**Kingston (Jamaica) Community Animal Welfare:** As the only organization providing food and vet care for Kingston's street animals, KCAW used AKI funding to:



- Cover about 95% of their total costs, helping about 1000 cats and dogs during 2025.
- Spay/neuter 43 cats and dogs (7 male cats, 20 female cats, 6 male dogs, 10 female dogs) living on Kingston's streets. The number of spay and neuter surgeries declined from last year, in part because we don't yet have the s/n numbers for Nov and Dec.

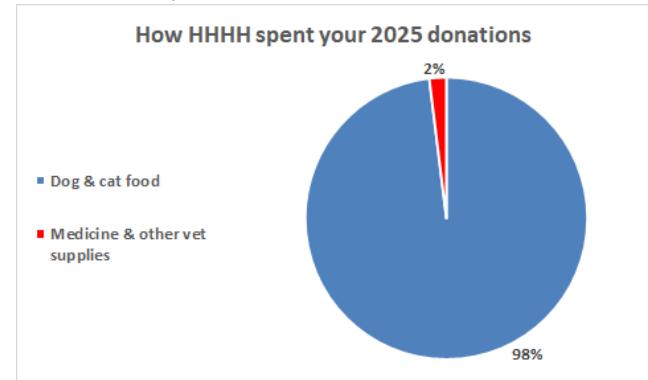
- Purchase a spay/neuter and rescue mobile (→ it came in handy for hurricane relief efforts) for KCAW. (Finding and actual purchase took significant time and effort, some of which would have been spent on actually spaying and neutering). 2026 should see a large increase in s/n numbers!
- Purchase meds, such as de-wormer, parasite prevention, and antibiotics.
- Pay for vet care when treatment was more complex than what KCAW could manage themselves (vet care included 2 poisoned dogs at the same home; cat with a mangled leg; 6 pups in one yard, vomiting and diarrhea; dog with a fractured leg; dog with a maggot wound to head; cat hit by a car, had to be euthanized; and dog with a chronic ear infection.
- Provide hurricane emergency response for street animals. Before the hurricane hit at the end of October, KCAW (Deborah) checked on unhoused dogs, bringing them food and clean water and visited all the cat caretakers she works with → to give them extra food. After the hurricane, KCAW was out on the street as soon as it was safe, carrying water and food, and providing basic care, as well as getting cats and dogs, who were more severely injured, to the vet. Our funding covered 100% of KCAW's hurricane response pre- and post-storm.





**Helping Hands for Hounds of Honduras:** In 2025, Helping Hands for Hounds of Honduras mainly used AKI funds for the 7 dogs and 4 cats at the HHHH sanctuary, an old age home and hospice for Honduran dogs like Pixie. Pixie's family had asked the vet to euthanize the little dog in 2021. The vet refused, because Pixie, although emaciated (she weighed only 3 lbs) and with deformed rear knees, was a healthy dog who, with better care, could live many more years. The vet called Pilar at HHHH, and Pixie has been at the HHHH sanctuary ever since.

Pilar (HHHH) founder/director) has always mentored the next generation of animal caregivers, and in 2025, as the number of cats and dogs at the sanctuary decreased, she continued to provide this assistance for Honduras's current and future rescuers and is helping us identify a new Partner in Honduras once Pilar moves on from HHHH.



## 2. Animal Welfare Organization Grant Program

Our 8<sup>th</sup> annual grant program saw a big change in 2025. We expanded from an Africa-only grant program to include Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) organizations. As a test for year 1, we accepted grant proposals from only 15 invited organizations, ten of whom applied.

We received 76 proposals from Africa and LAC. Thirteen volunteers participated in our review committee to evaluate the proposals. Based on the committee and AKI Board reviews, and input from sector experts, we funded eight grant projects from Africa and five from LAC. The grant projects are described at this link, where you can also find videos, grant project progress reports, and final reports, which together give detailed information about each grant:

<https://www.animal-kind.org/grant-program-2025>

Thanks to AKI supporters who wanted to help our 2025 grantees do even more, we provided additional funds to four grantees (with more to come in 2026):

- Fondation Alliance Verte in Haiti is using their top-up grant for vet care and other needs at their shelter, the only operating dog and cat shelter in Haiti.
- INADES Formation in Kenya will monitor the health and wellbeing of rescued donkeys placed in permanent or foster homes and will provide vet care, as needed for them, as well as for donkeys in local communities affected by drought.
- Rivadeneira Sterilization Center in Ecuador will continue to hold spay/neuter clinics with a focus on pets of impoverished elderly and homebound.
- Starting Over Sanctuary in Israel will use their top-up grant to provide vet care for rescued horses and/or donkeys.

## Special Project: Good DOG Fund



In 2024, a group of AKI donors were so impressed with SPCA Grahamstown's AKI-funded grant project, they donated towards an additional fund for the SPCA that allowed them to continue to spay/neuter and provide vet care for almost one year beyond the original grant project timeline. We named the fund the Good D.O.G. Fund (Dogs of Grahamstown), while agreeing that the fund should assist other animals, as well (it's helped many cats, and also a donkey and a cow). The Good DOG Fund was such a huge success, the original donors funded it again at the same level for 2025-2026. From December 2024-September 2025, the Good DOG Fund spayed 73 dogs and cats and neutered 55 dogs and cats and did so much more! ←

### 3. “Friendly Audit” Program

We started the Friendly Audit Program in 2020 to link virtual volunteers (mentors) with select animal welfare organizations. During the Covid pandemic, volunteers outnumbered the organizations requesting a mentor from us. However, since 2022, we've had the opposite situation, more organizations in need of a mentor and fewer volunteers. In 2025, we conducted one new “Friendly Audit” and two virtual mentors from 2024 continued helping their organizations during 2025, for a total of three virtual volunteers helping three organizations in 2025.

### 4. Other Animal-Kind International Activities and Support-2025

**Technical and Administrative Support:** We provided technical and admin support to our Partners and Grantees, including:

- South Sudan Society for the Protection & Care of Animals - Held ongoing, usually weekly Zoom meetings to plan SSSPCA's mass spay/neuter campaign and to help with SSSPCA management.

- Uganda SPCA - Updated their adoption application process, which now includes interviews with prospective adopters, and worked with the USPCA Shelter Manager, as requested, to improve other aspects of shelter management.
- On request, we helped our Partner Organizations develop or update their strategic plans and annual plans, helped develop best practices (community s/n, adoption, fostering, etc), wrote reference letters, developed ideas for proposals, and edited brochures and other organizational documents.
- Advised two Partner Organizations and two 2025 Grantees on ways to expand their work geographically and topically.
- Posting on social media pages for USPCA and covering the costs of the USPCA and Sauvons nos Animaux websites and domains.

**Communication with AKI Supporters:** Transparency and accountability are key to everything we do. We uphold this commitment by keeping our supporters updated about our Partners' and Grantees' activities and how we and they used AKI funds. In 2025, we:

- Wrote/published 37 AKI Blog posts about the work of our Partners and Grantees.
- Sent 12 monthly e-newsletters to AKI supporters highlighting the work of our Partners and Grantees.
- Kept our YouTube channel, AnimalsInternational, active with a total of 113 videos (17 in 2025) for the 702 subscribers. Subscribe to it here: [Animal-Kind International's YouTube channel](#)
- Organized a group of 13 AKI supporters (in addition to the AKI Board and sector experts) to participate in the proposal evaluation process for our 2025 Animal Welfare Organization Grant Program.
- Wrote GlobalGiving Progress Reports every three to four months for each GlobalGiving project that we sponsor (Have A Heart-Namibia and Uganda SPCA).
- Were awarded Charity Navigator 3-star charity status in 2025, down from 4-star in 2024 because we failed to have a document retention policy and a whistleblower policy. Those lapses are now rectified and we expect to get our 4-star rating back in 2026.
- Obtained Guidestar's platinum level again (the highest).
- Obtained Great Non Profit 2025 status (check out the comments from our supporters and please add your own!): [AKI's Great Non Profit's page](#)
- Kept the AKI website updated and creative-thanks to website developer, Deb Newman.
- Sent 76 end-of-year email messages to all 2025 recurring donors (at the end of 2026, we had a total of 70 recurring donors). The annual message to recurring donors includes the amount donated over the year and what their donations accomplished.
- At the request of supporters, we added Zelle for no-fee digital donations and a QR code for easy access to our donation page.

**Raising Visibility:** We help raise visibility of our Partners' and Grantees' work, their needs, and challenges. In addition to the above (Communications with AKI Supporters) which help raise visibility, 2025 activities in this area included:

- An interview with Community Cats for a podcast about attitudes towards cats in Africa (went live in April 2025).
- One session at each of three US Foreign Service Institute retirement seminars, during which we discussed the need for mentors for our Friendly Audits Program.
- Articles in the Donkeys for Africa magazine and website about our equine support work.
- Interviews with NBC News (about our grantee Starting Over) and with a German documentary film production company and the BBC (both about the Uganda dog and cat rescue scam).

***Collaborating to keep improving:*** As animal welfare evolves and more organizations are formed, in 2025, we reaffirmed our commitment as leaders in African animal welfare (and striving to be for LAC as well). In support of this, we:

- Joined the Donkeys for Africa six-member Advisory Panel formed to discuss the way forward for the South Africa-based Donkeys for Africa program.
- Joined as a founding member of Animal Welfare Alliance of Uganda (AWAU) to help get the word out about the Uganda dog and cat rescue scammers and about legitimate animal welfare organizations in Uganda.
- Participated in international fora about animal welfare in Africa.
- Attended online seminars on dog population management, shelter management, and volunteer management.

***Requests to AKI for Financial and other Support:*** As in past years, most people who contacted us in 2025 requested financial assistance. We received about 700 messages requesting funding in 2025, about the same as last year; the main difference is that in 2025, 80% were written with AI, which has de-personalized our communications with rescuers. We always respond to messages, but when we get a non-AI generated message, we respond personally and try to help, and if we're unable to, we point people in directions where they may be able to get help.

We received fewer messages from people asking about the legitimacy of a rescuer or organization; most of these were about Uganda dog and cat scammers. We believe that the reason the number has fallen is that more people are learning about the scam. We received many messages (at least 100) from people asking for help in a cruelty case, or for a stray or a sick or injured animal (sometimes stray, sometimes owned), and we connected them to organizations we know, either a Partner, a current or previous Grantee, or other organization we're familiar with.

The highest number of requests for financial assistance were from organizations in Africa. We also received many messages requesting support from South Asia, South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Europe, mainly eastern Europe/Balkans/Caucasus, and many from Ukraine. The number of requests we received from the Middle East has grown significantly and indicates that a big gap exists between available resources and the need in that region.

As we know, animal welfare funding is always less than what is actually needed on the ground. But the growing number of requests we received surely is a sign that more people, around the world, care and our global community is growing and gaining strength

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We continue to use 100% of donations for animal welfare in support of our Partner Organizations and our Grant Program recipients.

Your support to AKI is making the world a better place for animals!

***Thank you so very much from the very bottom of our hearts!***

***~Karen Menczer & the AKI Board***

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## Way Forward 2026

As we wrote this year's annual report, we noticed a missing piece. Typically, and 2025 was no different, we spend so much time thinking back on the previous year. But we had never before linked that to the upcoming year. Until now, we hadn't taken time to reflect on lessons learned and how to put those to use in the upcoming year. What a missed opportunity. But no more!

This section, Way Forward 2026, is a summary of discussions with the AKI Board, some of our Partners and Grantees, and volunteers. These discussions were so useful, helping us discover what others think that we're doing well and suggesting ways we could improve in 2026 and beyond. Very briefly, below are a few of the key findings that came out of this discussion and reflection process, a few changes we'll be making, and some things we'll keep doing, but hope to do even better:

Animal welfare, sheltering, and rescuing are evolving and we need to evolve and grow, as well, as do our Partners and Grantees.

- In 2026, we will continue to identify learning opportunities for our Partners and Grantees (for our Board members too) to participate in animal welfare seminars and online training events.
- Most importantly, we will help (vs. simply connect them, as we had in the past) our Partners and Grantees learn and evolve to keep up with the most recent developments and thinking in animal welfare. Of course, rescue and other animal welfare aspects take precedence for our Partners and Grantees, and therefore, simply connecting them to a resource has often proved inadequate. We will continue to explore a role beyond acting as intermediary with a focus on Africa to Africa (and to LAC and vice versa) support.

And we will go beyond animal welfare and help strengthen other aspects of their organizations. Many non-profit organizations fail, and most fail because of poor planning, limited financial/business management experience, and/or lack of fundraising and personnel management

experience. Most of us started out in the animal welfare sector because of our love of animals. But it takes much more to run an organization and make it a success.

- We will identify and encourage more training in bookkeeping, proposal writing, volunteer management, personnel management, and other topics critical to their success.
- And as above, we will explore realistic roles we can play beyond acting as an intermediary.

While our Friendly Audits/mentorship program was created to do much of the above on a one-to-one basis, without additional volunteers, many organizations in need are not getting the training and support they desire.

- We will continue our previous methods, but will also explore new ways to attract virtual volunteers since many of the organizations that have gone through our Friendly Audit Program have rated it as extremely useful.

In 2025, we introduced greater flexibility into our disbursements, which our Partners greatly appreciated.

- We will continue and increase discussions with our Partners so that we can provide funding when needed, with the flexibility that animal rescue and sheltering in Africa and LAC require.

Everyone we spoke with agreed that the expansion of our grants program to LAC was a great success. Many were surprised to find that among the LAC organizations we invited (admittedly, at 15, not a large sample), most had little or no experience in proposal writing and grant management, nor had they considered applying for a grant. In part this seemed to be because so few grant opportunities exist for LAC animal welfare organizations.

- Unlike in 2025, we will open the Animal Welfare Organization Grant Program to all eligible LAC organizations (not only invitees).

Each of the 13 members of our proposal review committee provided such useful input. We valued each and every one.

- We agreed again to include as many reviewers as are interested, but to keep the review process manageable for all, we will break the external committee into two groups, one that will review proposals from Africa, the other to review LAC proposals.

Given that inflation is high worldwide, our grant program needs to try to keep up.

- If donations allow, we will increase the ceiling for a 1<sup>st</sup> time grant to US\$3000 and for previously successful grantees to US\$4000. (A \$1000 increase for each category).