

**W**hat do you call an organization that for 50 years has addressed the medical, behavioral and emotional needs of homeless animals? You call it an inspiring success.

In 1967, Lesley Sinclair left her job as an interior designer in New York City, bought a five-acre chicken farm in New Jersey and turned it into a nonprofit, no-kill sanctuary for homeless dogs and cats. Fifty years later, the Animal Care Sanctuary (ACS)—which since 1980 has occupied more than 130 acres of Pennsylvania countryside in East Smithfield and, more recently, Wellsboro—is still in the caring business. Roughly 500 dogs and cats, all of whom are monitored, microchipped, vaccinated, and spayed or neutered by the sanctuary's resident vet team, are usually in residence. It has a vigorous adoption program, placing 90 percent of the animals it takes in. For those who aren't adopted, ACS provides a forever home.

ACS's no-kill policy was practically unheard-of in the 1960s sheltering world, and Sinclair's pioneering adherence to it is just one of reasons for the "inspiring" label. Another is its long engagement in out-of-the-box thinking as a way to address the challenges that routinely arise in this type of work. ACS stands out in its embrace of innovative approaches to facilitating animal well being.

One example can be found in its alternative-housing program, which pairs dogs most in need of

## Animal Care Sanctuary

Pennsylvania haven celebrates its 50th anniversary.

By Susan Tasaki



behavioral help with college-level pre-vet or animal science interns in onsite housing. Within this carefully monitored environment, dogs undergo individually tailored behavior-modification training regimes. To date, the program has a 100 percent success rate, with 24 of its 24 dogs now in new homes.

The organization's support of shelter medicine also exemplifies its innovative thinking. ACS draws from a deep academic pool, one that includes Cornell, Purdue, Michigan State and Emory Colleges of Veterinary Medicine. The sanctuary has the benefit of students' time and attention and the students get a hands-on perspective on shelter medicine, learning the intricacies and demands of caring for the group as opposed to caring for a single animal in private practice.



Janet M. Scarlett, DVM, MPH, PhD, professor emerita of epidemiology and founder of Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program at Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine, has been instrumental in making recommendations and providing guidance as ACS develops its robust veterinary team and intern program.

The sanctuary puts equal effort into community outreach: The two clinics it supports provide the only low-cost wellness and spay/neuter services in their respective counties. It educates the public on humane issues. And it vigorously advocates for anti-cruelty laws.

Fifty years in the no-kill arena is an enviable achievement, and Bark salutes the Animal Care Sanctuary for all the good it's done, and continues to do, for the most vulnerable members of the companion-animal world as well as the cause of humane treatment of animals everywhere. [B animalcaresanctuary.org](https://www.bark.com/acs)

*For more on ACS, see the Q&A with Executive Director Joan Smith-Reese online at [thebark.com/acs](https://www.bark.com/acs)*