

THE PET POST

Volume 62 Number 1
Spring 2026

Zuzu's Birthday Breakthrough

When Zuzu first came to the Richmond SPCA, she was caught in a heartbreaking cycle she couldn't escape. Chronic allergies made her so itchy and uncomfortable that she was injuring her own face in an attempt to find relief. Helping Zuzu meant beginning a long and careful search for answers.

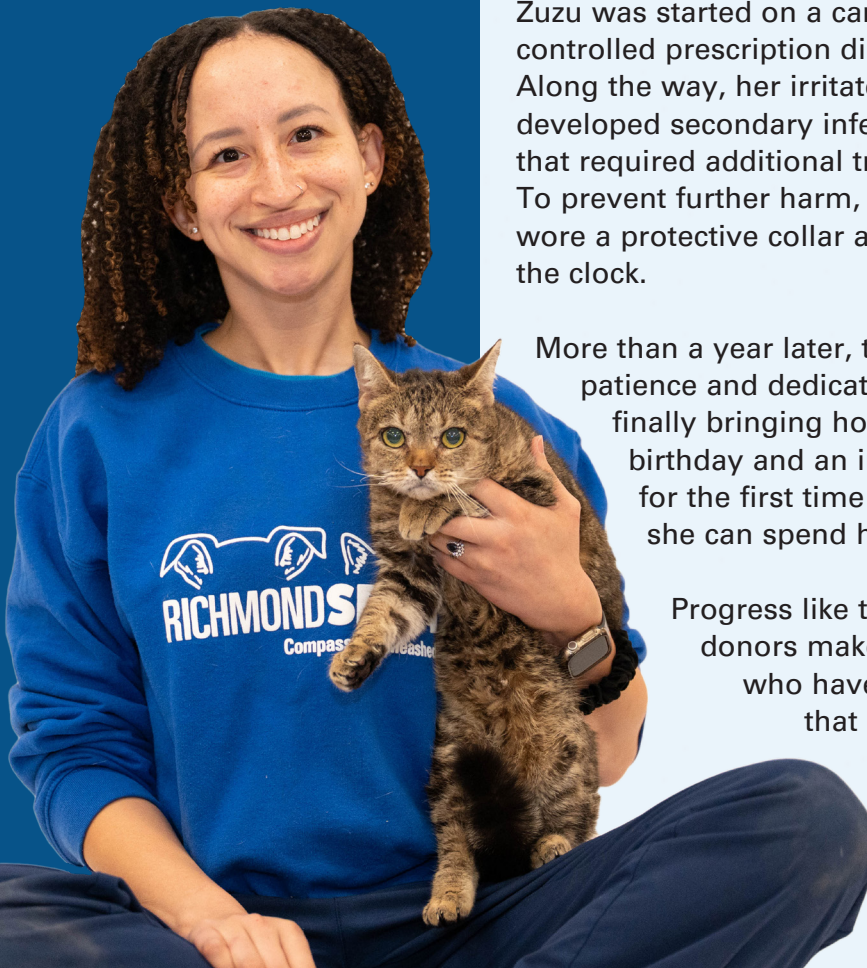
Our veterinary team began an extensive effort to understand and treat the source of her condition. Over many months, we carefully adjusted medications, trying different combinations of immune suppressants, anti-itch drugs and topical medications that help calm Zuzu's itchiness. Testing pointed to severe food allergies, and Zuzu was started on a carefully controlled prescription diet. Along the way, her irritated skin developed secondary infections that required additional treatment. To prevent further harm, Zuzu wore a protective collar around the clock.

More than a year later, that patience and dedication are finally bringing hope. Zuzu's team recently celebrated both her birthday and an important milestone: Zuzu's skin is clear and for the first time since she entered our care in February 2025, she can spend her days without a collar.

Progress like this is possible only because compassionate donors make advanced veterinary care available to pets who have nowhere else to turn. Your support ensures that homeless animals like Zuzu receive the time, expertise and treatment they need. Your gift today will help the next vulnerable pet begin their own journey toward healing.



Our veterinary team celebrates Zuzu at her birthday party.



Chutney's Heartwarming Story

Chutney arrived at the Richmond SPCA in August 2025 with a large mammary mass, a heart murmur, and a persistent cough. Surgery successfully removed the mass, but the biopsy revealed upsetting news. Chutney had a rare and aggressive cancer called carcinosarcoma, which often returns or spreads within months. Chutney was also diagnosed with a severe heart murmur and leaking heart valve, which would likely lead to congestive heart failure.

The months following the mass removal surgery were critical, and Chutney was quickly placed on our foster care list. She needed a quiet place to recover and wait for follow-up testing. That's when Maria and Brian reached out.

As first-time fosters, they spoke at length with our team about finding the right match for their family. Brian uses a wheelchair and their foster dog needed to feel comfortable around it. Chutney was the first dog they met, and the connection was instantaneous. In November 2025, they welcomed her into their home as a medical foster.



Chutney and her adopter Maria strike a pose at the Richmond SPCA Dog Kissing Booth event.

Chutney returned to the shelter for a recheck, and her exams showed no signs of new tumors or metastasis. She was beating the odds and cleared for adoption.

Shortly after her foster stay, we made an urgent push to place pets in homes ahead of the January ice storm. When asked by our team if they could foster Chutney again, Maria and Brian didn't hesitate. Due to the incredible support of fosters like Maria and Brian, we placed 50 percent of all dogs in our care into foster homes, the highest number of dogs simultaneously in foster care to date.

After a two-week stay, it was time for Chutney to return, but Maria and Brian struggled to imagine life without her. They met with our foster care team to review her condition and ensure they were fully prepared. Chutney's heart disease had progressed to early congestive heart failure, requiring lifelong medication and monitoring. Despite this news, they knew she was already part of their family and officially adopted her.

Today, she is thriving in the home that first welcomed her as a foster. She's doing well on her medications, reached a healthy weight, and enjoys exploring her backyard and taking daily walks with Brian.

Chutney's future once looked uncertain. Now, thanks to lifesaving veterinary care, compassionate supporters, and a foster family who opened their hearts, she now has the comfort every animal deserves, a lasting home.



A Decade of Care and Healing

This year marks a special milestone for our full-service, low-cost Susan M. Markel Veterinary Hospital. For 10 years, the hospital has been providing accessible care to pets adopted from the Richmond SPCA as well as pets belonging to families with limited financial means. Since its opening in 2016, the hospital has treated 17,200 dogs and 16,710 cats and waived more than \$600,000 in fees for guardians who were unable to afford even our low-cost fees for essential, lifesaving care for their best friends. The crucial services delivered by our professional veterinary team over the last decade have kept pets where they belong — at home with the people who love them.

As veterinary costs soar nationwide, a growing number of guardians struggle to afford basic wellness, sick, and surgical care for their companions. In our public hospital, we're focused on meeting people where they are and providing treatment options for their pets, who often have nowhere else to turn.

As we celebrate our hospital's tenth anniversary and the lifesaving our colleagues have made possible over the last decade, we thank our generous donors and friends for funding critical resources like this one. All pets deserve access to care, and with your help, we are meeting a critical need and improving thousands of lives.

Smoky's Surpasses 15,000 Surgeries

Our team has sterilized more than 15,000 dogs and cats since opening our satellite Smoky's Spay & Neuter Clinic in Hanover County in 2022. Our clinic performs surgeries at a low cost for pets in the care of government shelters and private rescue groups and for free for free-roaming, unowned community cats. Our hospital ensures adoption agencies and community volunteers engaging in Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return have access to these crucial procedures, thereby reducing our region's homeless animal population.

From 2004 to 2021, the Richmond SPCA performed a high volume of sterilization surgeries — more than 120,000 — for pets belonging to the public as well as to community cats at our Hermitage Road campus. We believe deeply in high-quality, low-cost and free spaying and neutering, and your generous support makes this critical work possible.



ALUMNI UPDATES



Blanche and Rose, adopted in 2026



Oslo, adopted in 2026



Dugan, adopted in 2025



Snuffy, adopted in 2025
Stewie, adopted in 2024



Roxie, adopted in 2025



The Richmond SPCA, founded in 1891, is central Virginia's oldest full-service humane society. Each year we serve more than 18,000 pets across the community in our shelter, veterinary hospital, spay and neuter clinic, training programs and pet retention services. Since becoming no-kill in 2002, the Richmond SPCA has found loving adoptive homes for more than 76,000 dogs and cats. We are an independent nonprofit and not a chapter or affiliate of any other organization with Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in its name, including but not limited to the ASPCA.

The Pet Post is published for friends of the Richmond SPCA. A copy of our most recently-audited financial statements is on file with the Virginia Division of Consumer Affairs.