

## How Animal Charities Are Helping Dogs

**Animal welfare charities received record-setting donations in 2005 and are using the money to help dogs in several ways.**

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Americans gave about \$260.28 billion to charities in 2005, \$8.86 billion of it going toward environmental organizations and groups working for animal welfare, reported Giving USA, a publication of Giving USA Foundation, researched and written by the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University.

This sector saw a 16.4 percent increase from the prior year. Cheryl and David Duffield, who contributed \$93 million to Maddie's Fund, the animal welfare organization they created in 1999, topped environmental and animal contributions for 2005.

In turn, these charities distribute money toward pet-related causes, many in the form of grants.

Maddie's Fund ([www.maddiesfund.org](http://www.maddiesfund.org)) is an example of donation money at work. It announced in December that they are offering spay/neuter grants of up to \$200,000 over two years. The grants are for counties with Live Animal Release Rates of 40 percent or less, counties where the animal control, traditional and rescue shelters euthanize 60 percent or more of the total shelter population of dogs and cats.

Earlier in the year, other animal charities announced how they will distribute donation money. Morris Animal Foundation ([www.morrisanimalfoundation.org](http://www.morrisanimalfoundation.org)) approved funding for 2007 in the amount of \$4.3 million. The money will go toward 55 new studies and 45 continuing studies addressing issues such as canine cancer and influenza virus.

Morris Animal Foundation is also leading a multi million dollar effort to cure canine cancer, the No. 1 cause of natural death in canines. MAF hopes to raise \$30 million by April 2012. This will help fund clinical trials, prevention studies related to genetics and canine genome, and a tumor tissue bank, and help establish an endowment to guarantee continued research efforts.

Morris Animal Foundation hopes to raise \$22 million by getting 1 percent of the 44 million dog-owning households within the United States to make a donation of at least \$50 in the name(s) of their present dog(s), previously owned dogs, and/or on behalf a future puppy.

Dog owners can call 877-364-2873 or visit [www.curecaninecancer.org](http://www.curecaninecancer.org) to make a donation.

The American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation ([www.akcchf.org](http://www.akcchf.org)) has awarded a \$24,777 grant to Dr. David Wilkie of the Ohio State University to research canine cataracts. Cataracts are the most common cause of blindness in dogs, according to the study.

The foundation also approved \$1.1 million in new grants, which will support research such as cancer, male infertility, vaccine-associated allergic reactions and neurodegenerative disorders in dogs.

The Banfield Charitable Trust ([www.banfieldcharitabletrust.net](http://www.banfieldcharitabletrust.net)) recently distributed \$228,114 in funding to 29 organizations that focus on the human-pet bond. Two grant cycles are offered each year (January/June) and in this first cycle, Banfield more than doubled its funding distribution as well as the total number of grant recipients from 2006.

One of the recipients was Service Dogs of Virginia, which raises, trains, and places dogs to assist people with disabilities. They received an \$18,000 grant. The organization plans to initiate an Autism Service Dog Program.

Other Banfield Charitable Trust grant recipients include Pet Orphans of Southern California, Best Friends Animal Society, and the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Interaction of Animals and Society.

For dog lovers interested in donating to an animal charity, there are several resources to help guide the way. One is GuideStar ([www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)), which provides information on more than 1.5 million nonprofit organizations.



GuideStar offers the following tips for donors: Clarify your values; Identify your preferences; Focus on the mission; Verify a charity's legitimacy; Avoid charities that pressure you or won't share information.

Charity Navigator ([www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org)), a nonprofit charity evaluator, is another resource. It provides information on more than 5,000 charities.

Charity Navigator recommends donors ask several questions before giving: Can the charity clearly communicate who they are and what they do? Can the charity define their short-term and long-term goals? Can the charity tell you the progress it has made (or is making) toward its goal? Do the charity's programs make sense to you? Can you trust the charity? Are you willing to make a long-term commitment to the organization?

Pet owners may be surprised to learn that there are other ways to support a charity other than just donating cash, one of which is called "planned giving." The North Shore Animal League of America ([www.nsalamerica.org](http://www.nsalamerica.org)), a no-kill pet rescue and adoption organization in Port Washington, N.Y., provides some examples: Bequests: This is through a will or living trust. A gift can be made of a specific amount, a percentage of an estate or even all or part of the residuary of an estate. Charitable Gift Annuities: This is an agreement between the donor and the organization whereby the organization pays a certain amount of money to the donor each year in exchange for a gift. Appreciated Assets: The donation of stocks, bonds or real estate. Life Insurance Policies: A donor can name the organization as a beneficiary of his/her insurance policy. Retirement Plans: A donor can name the organization as a beneficiary of his/her retirement fund. Upon the donor's death, all or a portion of the unused balance in the account is transferred to the organization as a charitable gift. Trusts – A charitable lead trust will generate funding for an organization until it is time to transfer the remainder of the fund to the donor's heirs.

Planned giving provides a lasting gift to the organization of choice, but there are other benefits as well. A valid planned gift will offer savings on income tax, capital gains tax, gift tax and estate tax, according to Pets In Need ([www.petsinneed.org](http://www.petsinneed.org)), a nonprofit, no-kill adoption shelter in Redwood City, Calif.

However, Pets In Need advises that potential donors consult an attorney or estate planner on all such matters.