

Companion Animal Advocates, NJ

2026 Mid-Year Progress Report

January 1–June 30, 2026



Companion Animal Advocates, NJ

Letter from the Founder

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first Companion Animal Advocates, NJ Mid-Year Progress Report.

Nearly a decade ago, someone asked us to become involved in a local shelter issue. What began as a single request to help one community and the animals in its care has grown into Companion Animal Advocates, NJ. We are not a statewide organization dedicated to improving the lives of companion animals through education, collaboration, accountability, and practical, evidence-based solutions.

This report reflects six months of meaningful work on behalf of companion animals throughout New Jersey. While many of the initiatives highlighted here remain ongoing, they collectively demonstrate our commitment to improving animal welfare through education, collaboration, accountability, and practical solutions.

Companion Animal Advocates, NJ was founded on a simple belief: every companion animal deserves compassionate care, responsible stewardship, and the opportunity to live a safe and healthy life. Achieving that vision requires more than passion. It requires knowledge, collaboration, persistence, and a willingness to work constructively with others to identify problems and develop solutions.

Throughout the first half of 2026, our efforts extended across a broad range of initiatives. We continued advancing legislative proposals designed to strengthen New Jersey's animal welfare laws, developed educational resources for pet owners and animal welfare professionals, supported municipal shelters and rescue organizations, advocated for individual animals in need, and promoted transparency and accountability through careful review of records and regulatory compliance.

Meaningful progress is rarely achieved by one individual or one organization alone. We are grateful for the relationships we have developed with municipal officials, shelter professionals, veterinarians, rescue organizations, fellow advocates, nonprofit organizations, and national resources who generously share their expertise and work alongside us to improve outcomes for companion animals. Whether providing technical assistance, sharing professional contacts, supporting legislative initiatives, or helping identify opportunities for animals in need, collaboration remains one of our greatest strengths.

Every project described in this report represents more than a policy initiative or educational resource. Behind every legislative proposal, investigation, shelter partnership, and advocacy effort is a companion animal whose life may be improved because people chose to act. Whether helping Bella receive the medical care she needs, assisting Max in finding a new opportunity that also opened doors for other shelter dogs, supporting families seeking justice for their pets, or providing resources that help shelters make informed decisions, each effort reinforces why this work matters.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to these efforts during the first half of 2026. Thank you to our volunteers, supporters, fellow advocates, municipal leaders, shelter professionals, veterinarians, rescue organizations, and countless individuals who continue to share their knowledge, time, and compassion. Your willingness to collaborate has strengthened our work and, more importantly, has made a meaningful difference for companion animals across New Jersey.

Although we are proud of what has been accomplished, much work remains. We look forward to continuing these initiatives throughout the remainder of 2026 while expanding our educational resources, strengthening partnerships, supporting sound public policy, and advocating for practical solutions that improve the lives of companion animals throughout New Jersey.

Thank you for your continued support and for joining us in this important work.

Sincerely,

Founder

Companion Animal Advocates, NJ

2026 At a Glance

- 8 active companion animal cases
- 5 cruelty advocacy matters
- 3 retail rescue matters
- 2 dogs directly helped
- 4 dogs receiving placement advocacy
- Legislative initiatives
- Municipal oversight
- Educational resources

Legislative Initiatives

RUBY'S LAW

A Legislative Initiative of Companion Animal Advocates, NJ

Purpose

Strengthen New Jersey's municipal animal impoundment system by improving accountability, clarifying municipal responsibilities, and ensuring companion animals receive safe, humane, and timely care.

Key Objectives

- Clarify municipal responsibilities under New Jersey law.
- Improve accountability and oversight.
- Protect companion **animals** while reducing unnecessary taxpayer costs.

Status

Active legislative initiative.

POET'S LAW

A Legislative Initiative of Companion Animal Advocates, NJ

Purpose

Strengthen accountability, professionalism, and oversight of New Jersey's Animal Control Officers and municipal animal shelters while improving the protection and welfare of companion animals.

Key Objectives

- Establish state oversight of Animal Control Officer certification.
- Strengthen accountability and transparency.
- Improve shelter licensing and regulatory compliance.
- Promote consistent standards for the care and protection of impounded companion animals.

Status

Active legislative initiative.

COAC IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

A Companion Animal Advocates, NJ Initiative

Purpose

Provide municipalities, law enforcement, veterinarians, shelters, prosecutors, and animal welfare professionals with practical tools and guidance to effectively implement New Jersey's Cost of Animal Care (COAC) law.

Key Objectives

- Develop standardized forms, templates, and checklists.
- Promote consistent documentation and evidence collection.
- Support successful implementation of the COAC law.
- Improve collaboration among animal welfare professionals, veterinarians, law enforcement, prosecutors, and the courts.
- Help protect companion animals while reducing unnecessary costs to municipalities and taxpayers.

Status

Toolkit under active development.

Domestic Companion Animal Council (DCAC)

As a member of the New Jersey Domestic Companion Animal Council (DCAC), we remain actively engaged in supporting the Council's mission through participation in Council meetings and related activities.

Investigations & Accountability Process

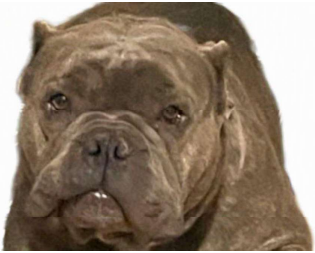


Animal Cruelty Advocacy

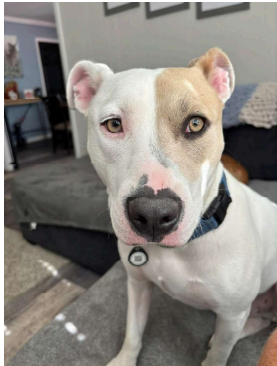
INSERT PHOTOS:

Ruby, Poet, Boe, RIP, Boomer

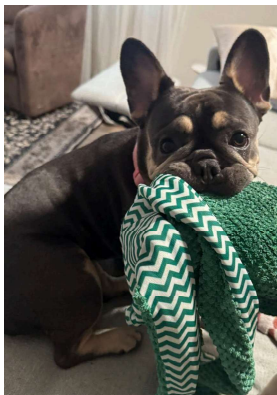
One paragraph under each.



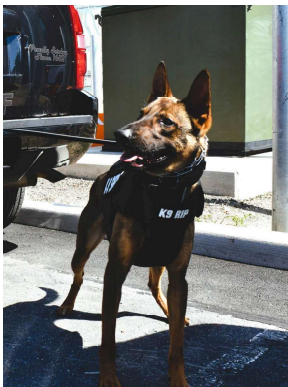
Poet's case underscores the importance of accountability when companion animals are in protective custody of ACOs.



Boe's case highlights the importance of thorough investigations, careful review of the facts, and ensuring that animal cruelty laws are applied consistently to protect companion animals.



Ruby's case demonstrates the need for clear statutory guidance to ensure every municipality provides safe, compliant impoundment services and that companion animals receive the care and protection they deserve.



RIP and Boomer's cases emphasize the importance of thorough investigations, careful review of veterinary and investigative records, and ensuring that animal cruelty laws are applied fairly, consistently, and based on the evidence, not if you are an officer.

Animal Cruelty Accountability

Companion Animal Advocates, NJ reviews animal cruelty cases to promote consistent, evidence-based enforcement of New Jersey's animal cruelty laws.

Our work includes evaluating veterinary findings, investigative records, public documents, and applicable laws and regulations. While some matters remain under investigation, others concluded without prosecution despite evidence that, in our view, warranted further review.

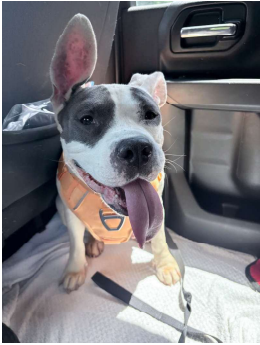
Our Goal

To promote accountability, encourage consistent application of New Jersey's animal cruelty laws, and ensure that veterinary evidence and documented facts receive appropriate consideration in every case.

We also are trying to request independent review by the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General of declined animal cruelty cases involving severe pain, prolonged suffering, or death to promote consistent, evidence-based enforcement of New Jersey's animal cruelty laws.

"Compassion demands accountability. Justice requires evidence."

Direct Animal Advocacy - Opportunities to Life



Bella is thriving in a loving medical foster home, where she is receiving the care she needs while awaiting surgery before beginning the next chapter of her life.

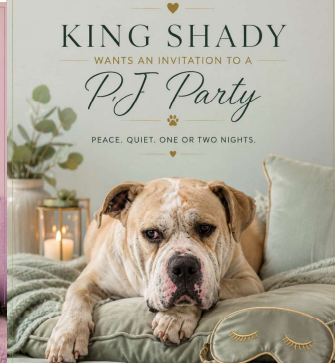
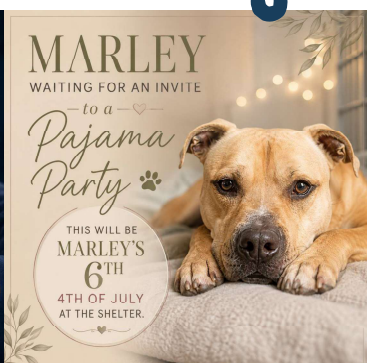


Max's journey created opportunities for three shelter dogs to leave the shelter together. As of today, two of the three have already been adopted into loving homes, demonstrating how one opportunity can change multiple lives.



Asia continues to receive advocacy as she waits for the right opportunity. Every dog deserves an individualized path forward, and we remain committed to helping her find the placement that best meets her needs.

Pajama Party



Municipal Oversight



Hamilton Township

Providing behind-the-scenes support to improve outcomes for shelter dogs through collaboration, networking, and special initiatives such as the Fourth of July Pajama Party.

Trenton

Conducting ongoing review of shelter operations, regulatory compliance, and companion animal welfare through records analysis and oversight.

Vineland

Monitoring municipal animal impoundment compliance and related companion animal welfare issues to promote accountability and best practices.

Salem County

Monitoring municipal impoundment compliance and assisting with companion animal welfare matters, including active animal cruelty advocacy efforts.

Technical Assistance

When appropriate, we provide practical recommendations and help connect municipalities and shelters with qualified professionals and organizations that can provide technical assistance. Depending on the need, this may include introductions to shelter consultants, Board Certified Veterinary Behaviorists (Diplomates of the ACVB), Best Friends Animal Society contacts, veterinarians, rescue organizations, behavior professionals, and other subject matter experts who can assist with improving operations, animal care, and outcomes for companion animals.

We also assist on small special projects.

Retail Rescue Initiative



Education

The Canine Corner continues to expand as a comprehensive educational resource for pet owners, animal welfare professionals, advocates, and municipalities. Through our Pet Parent Library, Animal Welfare Insights, and a growing collection of downloadable resources, we provide practical, evidence-based information on responsible pet ownership, adoption, fostering, rehoming, lost and found pets, animal welfare issues, legislative initiatives, shelter operations, medical and behavioral topics, and companion animal advocacy. Our goal is to make reliable information readily accessible so individuals and organizations can make informed decisions that improve the lives of companion animals.



Looking Ahead

OUR FOCUS



ADVOCACY. ACCOUNTABILITY. COMPASSION.

*Working together for a better future
for companion animals.*



Ruby's Law



Poet's Law



Retail Rescue



Shelter Support



Education



Municipal Accountability



Public Outreach



TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



Mission Statement

Companion Animal Advocates, NJ is an all-volunteer group dedicated to improving the lives of companion animals through education, advocacy, collaboration, accountability, and practical, evidence-based solutions. United by a shared commitment to animal welfare, our volunteers work with pet owners, municipalities, shelters, rescue organizations, veterinarians, nonprofit organizations, state agencies, policymakers, animal welfare professionals, and community partners to promote responsible stewardship, strengthen animal welfare practices, advance meaningful legislative reform, and support safe, humane, and compassionate outcomes for companion animals throughout New Jersey.

Every initiative described in this report was made possible through the dedication of volunteers and the collaboration of individuals, organizations, municipalities, and state agencies working together to improve the lives of companion animals.