

## Women Lead the Way for 50 Years and Counting

Anne Irwin was in her 20s when she began working at the BCSPCA in 1971. She was paid \$2/hour. By 1974, Anne was leading the organization.

Operating expenses were especially tight during the 1970s when animal intake was peaking. A new ambulance was purchased with help from the Grundy Foundation and a two-way radio for the ambulance was purchased thanks to 1,800 S&H Green Stamps collected by the community. Staff kept track of the animals on the backs of real estate cards donated from a local agent.

Relief came in the 1980s as animal intake finally began to drop (thanks to effective spay/neuter efforts and increased pet adoptions). Successful events at Seven Pines Farm and a few bequests provided funds to hire staff and expand services.

In those days, there was no training required or available for humane officers who were given the power to enforce anti-cruelty laws. Anne was given a badge, a map, a copy of the law and a pile of complaints. During her 44-year career with the BCSPCA, she helped organize a comprehensive 2-day training program required for all humane officers in Pennsylvania. Her work to strengthen laws

against animal cruelty resulted in increased penalties for a variety of offenses.

Today, the BCSPCA's all-women team of Humane Law Enforcement Officers drive fuel-efficient hybrid SUVs (bottom right previous page) instead of motorbikes. They respond to more than 400 complaints of suspected animal cruelty each year.

When asked if there were unique challenges to being a woman in this field of work, Anne heartily replied that it was in fact an advantage. "Sometimes it kept people from getting carried away with their anger toward the SPCA's actions. Instead, people listened. We were called on to help with all kinds of animals that needed corralling. We were fearless and we just went for it." Reflecting on what she is most proud of from her long career, Anne is quick with an answer: "It's the cumulative power of small victories. That's what matters. Not the big events. To make a difference, you have to be there. You have to show up every day."

## Services Expand to Meet Changing Needs of People and Pets in Bucks County

BCSPCA's current executive director, Linda Reider, took up the reigns of leadership when Anne retired in 2015. With more than 35 years' experience in animal welfare, Linda hit the ground running. First on

her agenda were upgrades to the Lahaska shelter, doubling the size of the clinic, and in turn, the capacity for sterilizing public cats. She hired a full-time shelter veterinarian and a team of clinic staff who provide thousands of exams and surgeries for shelter animals annually. She took steps to expand the community outreach and foster programs. A new pet behavior helpline and dog training classes have been successful in helping many people resolve behavior problems and avoid surrendering their pets to the shelter. In response to the growing number of pet owners facing financial challenges, the surrender prevention program provides small financial grants for essential medical care and connects people to pet food pantries and other resources within the county. Our goal is helping keep pets at home with their families.

Looking back on BCSPCA's 110 years of animal rescue work, Linda noted that "much has changed, but two things remain the same: our commitment to ending animal suffering in Bucks County and our reliance upon the generosity of our community whose support makes our work possible."

You can play a part in securing a brighter future for homeless animals. Visit [buckscountyspca.org](http://buckscountyspca.org) to adopt, volunteer, foster, and donate.

# Quakertown Shelter 10 Year Anniversary

- 20,000 animals assisted through the Quakertown shelter in 10 years
- Nearly 10,000 dogs, cats, small and farm animals adopted
- More than 1,300 lost pets reunited with their families
- 1,000 animals rescued by BCSPCA animal cruelty investigations
- 2,289 cats sterilized through public spay/neuter clinics
- *And so much more!*

Join the party!

**Quakertown Open House**

JUNE 11 • 11:00-3:00

