

2024

# ANNUAL REPORT

*National Mill Dog Rescue*



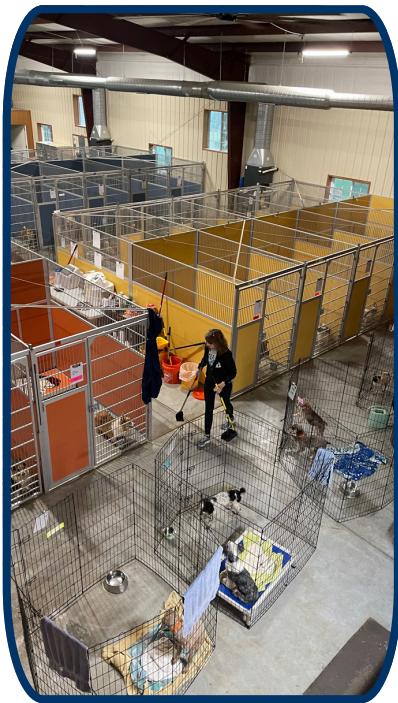
## From Our Founder



**Theresa Strader, Founder/ED**



**Read Chime's story of redemption on back**



**DOGSVILLE - MO SHELTER**

### **Lily's Haven - CO Shelter**

**Dear Friends,**

What a busy and wonderful year 2024 was at NMDR! Thanks to your generous support, we rescued a record breaking number of dogs for the third consecutive year! We also assisted out-of-state authorities on two large-scale confiscation cases, and purely out of desperate need, we launched our "Roadside Rescues" program, serving dogs and puppies in desperate, often deadly, situations around our rural Missouri shelter.

By the end of the year, we rescued just under **3,000 dogs!**

#### **Number of dogs rescued yearly since 2020**

<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
1,077	1,069	1,447	2,055	2,936

#### **How is NMDR accommodating so many more dogs?**

Here are the standout reasons we have been able to continue meeting this very challenging time:

- **You, our friends and supporters.** Without you, our work cannot happen. You are a gift to our mission and a lifeline to thousands of dogs currently living in cages without hope.
- **Lily's Haven & Dogsville** - our two wonderful shelters with very knowledgeable, compassionate, dedicated staff and volunteers. Every day, they show up and make a huge difference for dogs!
- **Our shelter and rescue partners** - while NMDR is currently serving three times the number of dogs our infrastructure was built for, our partners have willingly and regularly stepped up to become life-saving destinations for so many dogs, allowing our Rescue Team to leave no one behind!

Together, we are brightening the future for thousands of dogs!

With love and gratitude,

*Theresa Strader*

Theresa Strader Founder, ED

## Mission Statement

**TO RESCUE, REHABILITATE AND REHOME  
DISCARDED BREEDING DOGS AND TO  
EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE  
CRUEL REALITIES OF THE COMMERCIAL  
DOG BREEDING INDUSTRY.**

National Mill Dog Rescue (NMDR) is the leading organization in the country solely devoted to rescuing commercial breeding dogs, often referred to as puppy mill survivors. Over the past eighteen years, we have grown from a small group of passionate volunteers to a nationally known, well-respected organization, employing 51 individuals, and offering a wide variety of opportunities to hundreds of volunteers from our community and beyond.

***NMDR is a private, 501(c)(3)  
nonprofit organization, and as  
such, we rely entirely on the  
generous support of donors to  
carry out our life-saving mission.***



## WHY OUR MISSION IS ESSENTIAL

Commercial breeding dogs are among the most vulnerable dogs in this country. Throughout their lives, most are confined to small cages or outdoor pens, often suffering from social and medical neglect. When they are no longer able to reproduce, many are destroyed, despite having years of life ahead of them.

We believe this is a cruel betrayal of our best friends and are working with partner organizations to change this and many other harsh and outdated practices in the commercial dog breeding industry.



## Rescue Program

**In 2024, NMDR's Rescue Team traveled over 50,000 miles and gave 2,936 dogs a second chance at life. Every van load carried more than just dogs—it carried hope, compassion, and the beginning of something new.**



Rescue is emotionally and physically demanding, and logically complex. But it's where our mission begins. Thanks to the unwavering efforts of our Rescue Team and the support of donors and volunteers, thousands of lives were changed this year.



From quiet back roads to bustling highways, the team worked tirelessly to rescue dogs who had waited far too long for this moment. Rescue trips often begin before sunrise and end long after dark, with each stop carefully planned to ensure the safety and well-being of every dog on board.

Throughout the year, the team partnered with a growing network of organizations — including Bissell Pet Foundation, North Shore Animal League America, Wayside Waifs, Animal Rescue Corps, Aussie Rescue San Diego, and many more. These life-saving partnerships allow us to meet the demand, rescue many more dogs than we could alone, and we are so happy to share our dogs with communities around the country!



Every saved dog is a promise kept. A promise that their life matters—and that the next chapter will be written in love.

## Veterinary Program

**“Behind every procedure is a life worth fighting for. Our veterinary team doesn’t just treat wounds—they restore hope.”**



From spays and neuters to surgeries, vaccinations, and long-term care, the veterinary staff tackled it all. They also advanced preventive efforts with parasite control, improved nutrition, and wellness protocols to support recovery inside and out.

In 2024, NMDR's veterinary team continued to go above and beyond to heal the bodies—and spirits—of rescued dogs. Over the past year, this compassionate team provided medical care to more than **800** dogs, with nearly one-third requiring extensive dental procedures. Whether handling emergencies or managing chronic conditions, they ensured each dog had the best chance at a healthy life.



This year brought challenges, but the team met them with skill and compassion. Their work continues to shape brighter outcomes for the dogs who need us most.



*Freya, a pregnant dog suffering from a bladder stone, required an emergency C-section to save her and her puppies.*



*Lionel, born with a deformed leg, found relief after a successful amputation.*



*Pandora experienced a dangerous reaction to anesthesia but was revived and later adopted.*

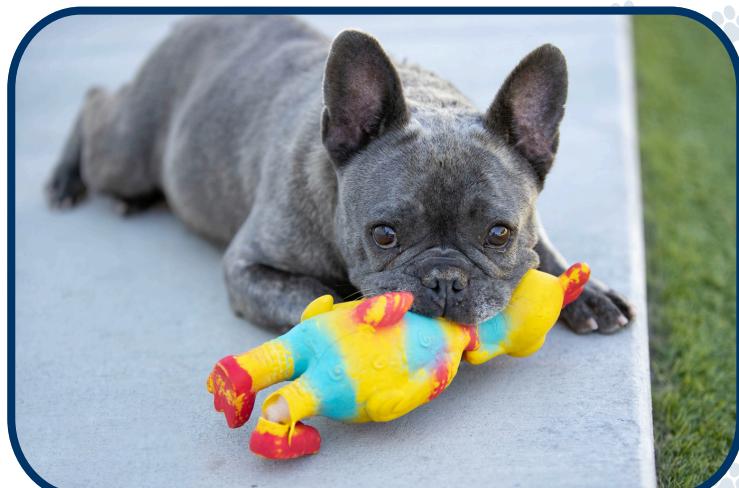
**Each story reminds us that behind every procedure is a life worth saving. We are proud of our veterinary team and grateful for the expert, empathetic care they provide to every dog who comes through our doors.**

## Behavior & Enrichment



***“Healing starts with trust—and thanks to you, our dogs are learning that people can be kind, gentle, and safe.”***

One of the most impactful changes this year was the launch of the Welcome Paws Program, a new approach that replaces traditional assessments with a gentle decompression period. This allows dogs to adjust at their own pace, helping them build trust, learn leash skills, and grow more comfortable with human interaction.



In 2024, every dog at NMDR received a personalized enrichment and socialization plan, thanks to a fully staffed Behavior Team, dedicated volunteers, and strong collaboration across departments. Our dogs experienced consistent, compassionate care from the moment they arrived.



We also restructured our former Rehabilitation Program into a unified Behavior Program, providing trauma-informed, individualized plans for dogs with severe fear responses. The results speak for themselves: in 2023, 43% of our dogs needed behavioral intervention. In 2024, that number dropped to just 8%.

Thanks to your support, our team continues to deliver daily enrichment—from puzzle toys to puppy parties—giving each dog the chance to heal, grow, and discover joy. Together, we’re not just preparing dogs for adoption—we’re helping them discover life.

## Dog Care

While the team is sometimes limited in size, it is a highly organized and deeply dedicated group that takes great pride in its work. Every kennel is cleaned daily, every blanket and toy washed, and every effort made to reduce stress and prevent illness—creating a space where healing can begin.



Though much of their work happens quietly behind the scenes, its impact is unmistakable.

The Dog Care Team provides the stability and care our dogs rely on as they begin their journey toward trust—and eventually, adoption.

In 2024, NMDR's Dog Care Team provided the essential foundation every rescued dog needs—cleanliness, comfort, and calm. Their tireless work ensures every dog is safe, seen, and cared for from the moment they arrive.



Thanks to their consistency and compassion, dogs who once lived in isolation or neglect are now greeted each day with gentle voices, nutritious meals, and sanitized spaces that support recovery. The team follows structured feeding routines to ensure each dog receives the right nutrition, with extra care given to those with special needs.



## Grooming

Some of our dogs arrive painfully matted, shut down, and unsure of human touch. Often their first experiences with kind and gentle handling occur with our grooming team. One of the year's most powerful reminders came from Walter, a Toy Poodle, who came in a very fearful, bitey behavior dog. After a carefully planned bath and groom, something changed. He melted into our arms and began seeking affection. For Walter, grooming wasn't just about appearance—it was healing.

At NMDR, grooming is often the first act of kindness our dogs experience—in 2024, that was on full display with **1,384 baths** and **488 full grooms** completed, our grooming team gave hundreds of dogs the chance to feel clean, comfortable, and cared for, some for the very first time.

### Walter before & after grooming



***"In the grooming room, fear turns into relief—and dogs begin to understand they're finally safe."***

2024 also marked a milestone with the addition of Mialee (left), our first full-time groomer/grooming supervisor. Her leadership made it possible to respond quickly to emergencies, ensure every adoptable dog received proper grooming, and collaborate with the Behavior Team on dogs who previously couldn't tolerate touch. She also trained new volunteers, expanding our capacity for care.



From trimming bangs to reveal hopeful eyes, to full grooms that help dogs feel their best, grooming is a cornerstone of recovery. It's where fear turns into relief, and neglect begins to fade. It's not just about how our dogs look—it's about helping them feel ready for their new beginning.

## Education & Outreach

Education and outreach are essential to NMDR's mission. In 2024, our teams connected with communities across the region—**hosting 211 presentations, events, and educational activities** to raise awareness about commercial breeding and the journey from rescue to adoption.



From classroom visits and workplace team-building events to volunteer orientations and community festivals, each opportunity created space for education, empathy, and inspiration. These experiences not only introduce people to NMDR's work—they plant seeds of compassion that can last a lifetime.



We welcomed school groups, civic organizations, and animal welfare partners to our facility for hands-on learning and a closer look at the dogs whose lives are being transformed.

Each visit helped deepen understanding and foster a personal connection to our mission.



This year, we also expanded our efforts to reach younger audiences. By engaging students and youth groups, we're helping shape the future of animal welfare—encouraging the next generation to speak up, show kindness, and take action.



Whether at our shelter or out in the community, every conversation, handshake, and tour brings new allies into the fight for commercial breeding dogs. Outreach is more than education—it's how we grow the movement, one connection at a time.

# Foster & Adoptions

## Adoption Program

At NMDR, adoption is the heart of our mission. Every match represents a new beginning for a rescued dog—and a life forever changed. In 2024, **1,084 dogs found their happy homes**, thanks to the dedication of our Adoptions Team and the kindness of families ready to welcome them.

With hundreds of applications each month, our team worked diligently to ensure each dog was matched with the right home, setting them up for success beyond our walls.



Foster and adoption are the heart of our mission—the moment rescue becomes redemption. These programs give every dog not just a second chance, but the love, safety, and belonging they've waited their whole lives to feel.

***“Every adoption and every foster home is a promise—one that says, ‘you’re safe now, and you’ll never be forgotten again.’”***



## Foster Program

In 2024, **115 dogs found safety through NMDR's Foster Program**, including 56 puppies and several long-term residents. Foster care continues to be a critical bridge—offering dogs the chance to decompress, adjust, and learn in a home setting.

Of those placed in foster homes, 109 were adopted directly, while just six returned to the shelter before ultimately finding homes. Stories like Lillia, Snow, Jody, and Charlie—all adopted after time in foster care—highlight the power of this program.

We are grateful for our foster families, whose compassion creates a safe space where transformation begins and lasting connections are made.



## Events

### Festival in the Bark

In 2024, NMDR hosted our first-ever Festival in the Bark—a joyful, dog-filled celebration at a local park that brought hundreds of supporters together in the name of rescue.



The event earned gold in "Best of the Springs" for Best Fun Way to Support a Charity, a testament to the heart our volunteers, staff, and community poured into the day.



### Barks, Boots, & Bling

In 2024, NMDR swapped ballgowns for boots at our Barks, Boots, and Bling gala, held at the iconic Flying W Ranch. With western charm and heartfelt purpose, supporters came together to celebrate rescue and raise critical funds.



The evening featured a dog parade, silent and live auctions, BBQ dinner, and a moving speech from NMDR founder Theresa Strader, reminding us all why this mission matters.



Though the theme was new, the goal remained the same: to give more dogs a second chance. It was a night of generosity, joy, and unwavering support for the lives we're here to change.

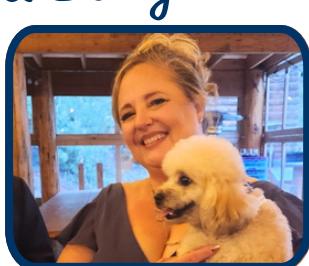
Our largest events do more than bring people together—they shine a light on the dogs who need us most. Through celebration, connection, and generosity, these gatherings help spread awareness and raise critical funds so we can continue rescuing, healing, and rehoming dogs from commercial breeding facilities.



With vendors, food trucks, games, alumni reunions, and adoptable dogs, the day blended fun with purpose. Supporters of all ages came to learn, connect, and honor the dogs finally getting the lives they deserve.



More than just a festival, it was a powerful step forward in raising awareness and sharing the hope of rescue.

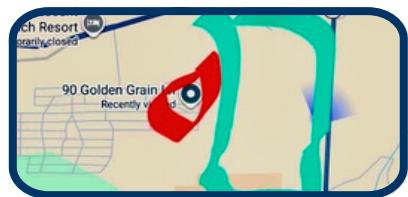


## Lost Dogs

In 2024, 34 dogs adopted through NMDR were reported missing. Thanks to quick action by adopters, volunteers, and caring community members, 31 were recovered safely. Two were sadly found deceased, and one remains missing.



Australian Shepherds were the most frequently lost breed—often slipping leashes or escaping through unsecured doors and fences. These incidents are reminders of how fast things can happen, and how critical prevention is.



Recoveries were often made possible through microchips, flyers, and neighbors who acted quickly. We continue to educate adopters on safety to help prevent future losses—because every rescued dog deserves a lifetime of security.



## Social Media

In 2024, NMDR's mission reached farther than ever—thanks to compelling storytelling and a dedicated online community. Across platforms, we reached more than 14 million people this year, with over half of our engagement coming from non-followers—proving that our message continues to find new hearts every day.



Behind every share is a chance to save a life. Social media remains one of our most impactful tools to educate, engage, and build a future of kindness for dogs in need.



## Dogsville

Originally created to rescue dogs who couldn't wait for a Colorado transport, Dogsville quickly became a vital part of NMDR's mission. In its first year, 125 dogs were adopted directly from the facility, with adopters traveling from across the country to welcome a dog into their home.



Dogsville also strengthened NMDR's partnerships with breed-specific and all-breed rescues. Organizations like North Shore Animal League, Wayside Waifs, and HSMO now pick up dogs directly, freeing up space and saving time. These collaborations have increased lives saved and expanded breeder education and outreach.



In addition to helping dogs from commercial breeding operations, Dogsville became a lifeline for those found in crisis—abandoned on roadsides, living in poverty, or surrendered by owners in need.

These "Roadside Rescues" now have their own adoption path at NMDR. In 2024, over 26 spay/neuter surgeries were completed, pet food was provided, and care education was shared with local families.

**On January 19, 2024, NMDR's Dogsville facility in Humansville, Missouri became a fully staffed, operational kennel—and from day one, it began saving lives.**



As we look to 2025, our goals include expanding community outreach, launching a spay/neuter clinic, and continuing to serve both dogs and the rural Missouri communities we're proud to support.



**Dogsville is more than a facility—it's a symbol of NMDR's growing reach, and our unwavering commitment to say "yes" when a dog needs help**

## Our Volunteers

**Volunteers are the lifeblood of NMDR. Their dedication touches every corner of our mission—from kennel care and enrichment to transport, adoption events, and the quiet, patient moments that help dogs begin to trust again.**



In 2024, more than 300 new volunteers joined our ranks, with over 300 active team members continuing to show up each week with open hearts and helping hands.

Together, they gave more than 50,000 hours of service—providing stability, support, and love to dogs who are just beginning their journey toward healing.



While the team varies in size and background, what they share is a deep commitment to giving rescued dogs the time, care, and kindness they've always deserved. Volunteers clean, feed, soothe, play, and encourage—often being the first to show a dog what it means to be safe.



Whether it's their first shift or their hundredth, each act of service moves our mission forward and reminds us that rescue takes a village—and our village is extraordinary.

***"This work would not be possible without them. Every tail wag, every milestone, every adoption is built on the foundation they help create."***

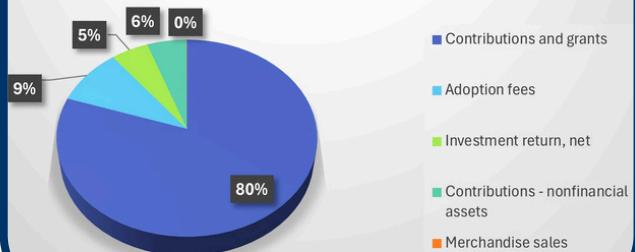


# Financial Report



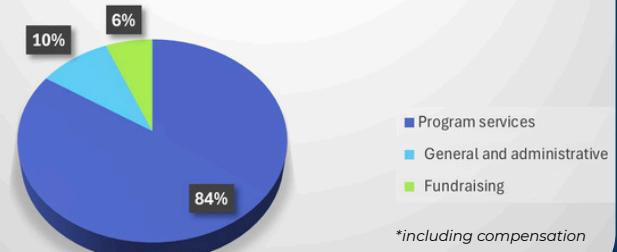
## 2024 Total Revenue

\$3,789,060



## 2024 Expenditures\*

\$3,528,872



\*including compensation

## Financials

	Year End 2024	Year End 2023
Cash	557,211	507,589
Investments	2,398,299	2,399,914
Accounts receivable and other assets	82,353	9,549
Property and equipment, net	4,623,969	4,483,682
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>7,661,832</b>	<b>7,400,734</b>
Accounts Payable	26,820	31,402
Accrued Liabilities	77,544	53,355
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>104,364</b>	<b>84,757</b>
Without donor restrictions	7,543,665	7,283,477
With donor restrictions - Purpose Restrictions - adoption assistance	13,803	32,500
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>7,557,468</b>	<b>7,315,977</b>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>7,661,832</b>	<b>7,400,734</b>

**"In 2024, your compassion helped us rescue 2,936 dogs –an all-time record and nearly triple our previous years. This remarkable growth is only possible because of your support. Every dog we save is a testament to your kindness and belief in our mission. Together, we're making a lasting difference."**

## Board of Directors



### Chairman

**Ric Drake (2022)**

Retired Marketing Executive/Partner,  
Q7 Group NMDR Shelter Volunteer 2022



### Vice-Chair

**Tammy Robel (2022)**

USAF Retired, USAA Manager,  
Claims Operations NMDR Shelter  
Volunteer & Photographer, 2014

### Secretary

**Kim Lehmann (2023)**

Retired Director of Operations, NMDR,  
Occupational Therapist - NMDR Shelter  
Volunteer 2007

### Treasurer

**Robbin Richards (2023)**

Part-time Accounting & Finance Consultant  
NMDR Shelter Volunteer & Foster, 2022

### Member

**Karen Lavee-Myers (2022)**

Retired Software  
Engineer, Verizon, US  
Army Veteran - NMDR  
Shelter Volunteer &  
Groomer, 2011

### Member

**Kristin Wattz (2023)**

Retired Hospital  
Administrator NMDR  
Shelter Volunteer 2022

### Member

**Suzanne Alton (2024)**

Educator, Groomer  
NMDR Shelter Volunteer,  
2012

# The Heart Behind Our Mission

Lada, known to us as Chime, spent her early years in a world that never saw her. No one noticed her sadness, her discomfort, or her longing for connection. Her happiness was never considered. Her needs—both emotional and physical—were never met. She was a soul surviving in silence, never knowing what it felt like to be truly cared for.



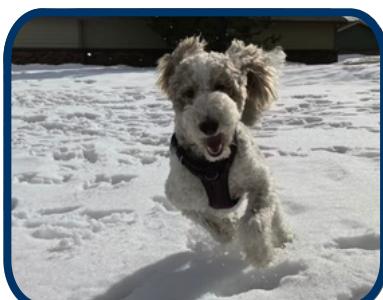
When Debbie met Lada, it wasn't just an adoption—it was the beginning of healing for them both. For the next four years, Lada was adored endlessly. She discovered warm beds, kind hands, and a voice that spoke to her with love.

Debbie gave Lada a life full of compassion and dignity, and in return, Lada gave Debbie her whole heart. She brought peace, joy, and a love that only a dog who's known heartbreak can offer.

*Lada, and the thousands like her, are why we do what we do.*

Each of the 2,936 dogs we rescued this year carries a story—often one of hardship, always one of transformation. These dogs don't just find homes. They find healing. They become someone's reason to smile again. We rescue them, but they rescue us, too.

*Again and again.*



*But everything changed the day she was rescued.*



Though her time in a loving home was far too short, every day was lived with intention—to make up for all the years she went without hope.



*In honor of Lada, and every dog who just needed a chance, we continue forward—with purpose, with love, and with the unshakable belief that every life is worth saving.*