

Ohio House Rabbit Rescue

Be the Voice

A capital campaign for the first rabbit-only
Adoption and Rescue Center in Ohio.

611 Overbrook Drive, Columbus OH, 43214

Ohio House Rabbit Rescue Background

Mission & Vision

Mission

The mission of Ohio House Rabbit Rescue is to establish and operate a Center for rescued abandoned pet rabbits, offer a robust adoption program, and provide educational resources and programming on the proper care of rabbits as indoor companions.

Vision

Ohio House Rabbit Rescue envisions a community where all pet rabbits live indoors as companions and have access to a proper diet, habitat, and regular veterinary care for the duration of their lives.

History

Ohio House Rabbit Rescue (OHRR) was founded in August 2009 through the efforts of long-time rabbit owner Beverly May. May's first rabbit came from a colleague whose daughter was leaving for college and could no longer care for her pet bunny. After that, May continued to welcome unwanted rabbits into her home. After rescuing nine abandoned rabbits, she realized that developing a rescue organization specifically for pet rabbits was imperative. "If there were that many people who wanted to give up their bunny to me, there must be more. And I didn't want to think about what was happening to those rabbits."

OHRR is incorporated in Ohio and is a 501(c)(3) not-for profit organization. OHRR's growth is demonstrated through the wide variety of events and programs it provides, including Midwest BunFest, the largest rabbit-centered festival and educational exposition in the Eastern United States. Over the course of 2012, OHRR developed the first Low-Cost Spay/Neuter program in Ohio that is specifically for rabbits and hosted the first Run Your Buns Off 5K. Most importantly, OHRR established a growing network of foster homes for 30 to 40 surrendered and abandoned rabbits while they await adoption, which has allowed OHRR to respond to owner and Good Samaritan surrenders as well as large-scale rescues across Ohio.

Currently, OHRR operates with the help of over 150 volunteers who volunteer a combined total of 8,000 hours, including a diverse Planning Team. The Planning Team includes dedicated members of the community with various skill sets including marketing, management, journalism, development, corporate strategic planning, education and animal sciences.

Community Programs

Ohio House Rabbit Rescue strives to protect abandoned rabbits throughout Ohio through education and adoption, and by advocating for rabbits as companion animals, just like dogs or cats. To achieve these goals, OHRR developed programs and services that promote rabbit adoption, emphasize owner education of proper rabbit care, and assist in population control through spaying and neutering. Further, OHRR's visibility in the community encourages

people to consider the unique and quirky personalities of a pet rabbit as a wonderful companion animal.

Adoptions and Foster Care:

OHRR's highest priority is to rescue homeless rabbits and place them in loving, forever homes, which is why OHRR created a growing network of foster homes made up of people willing to temporarily house adoptable rabbits. Currently, the foster network consists of 17 foster homes that can house a total of 30 to 40 adoptable rabbits at a time. Since the inception of the foster and adoption program in 2011, OHRR has taken in 79 rabbits. In 2012, OHRR accepted 41 surrendered or abandoned rabbits found forever homes for 29 rabbits. OHRR's goal is to steadily increase the adoptions of these rabbits by 50 percent each year, while increasing the number of available foster homes by 10 percent each year. All rabbits are spayed/neutered, litter box trained and receive a wellness check before being adopted. People interested in adopting a rabbit go complete an extensive application process to ensure the highest quality of care for the rabbits adopted through the organization.

FAB: OHRR's Fix-A-Bun Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Program

The national House Rabbit Society strongly suggests the spaying/neutering of pet rabbits because it is best for their overall health and behavior. However, OHRR realizes that spaying/neutering a rabbit can cost double or even triple the price of spaying/neutering a dog or cat. OHRR's Low-Cost Spay/Neuter program helps rabbit owners in the community spay/neuter their rabbits to prevent bad behavior, add to a long life and prevent potential pregnancies. This program not only helps to combat rabbit overpopulation, but also helps rabbits stay with their current families by eliminating behavior issues and renewing the human-animal bond. Since the program was initiated in October of 2012, OHRR helped six families spay/neuter their pet rabbits.

Midwest BunFest

Initiated in 2011, Midwest BunFest is an educational exposition and festival that caters to current and potential rabbit parents. BunFest features 10 to 15 educational sessions, a Bunny Spa with grooming services, Glamour Shots pet photography, and the Hop Shop and Bunny Boutique, which is a small store selling hard-to-find rabbit supplies and bunny collectables. In addition, 12 to 15 rescue organizations from throughout the Midwest attend, giving individuals interested in adopting a rabbit an opportunity to get in touch with various rescue groups while simultaneously helping the rescues spread the word about adoption and rabbit ownership. In 2012, the event attracted more than 375 participants, nearly double the attendance in 2011, and assisted more than 1000 rabbits through owner education and rescue support.

Community Outreach

OHRR hosts and participates in community events centered on animal welfare and adoption to raise awareness about rabbits as indoor companion animals. OHRR has developed several events, including the Luv Some Bunny Wine Tasting, the Mad Hatter's Tea Party Silent Art Auction, and Midwest BunFest. OHRR also partners with local animal supply stores, such as PETCO, PetSmart and PetPeople, to host monthly adoption events. This wide variety of

community outreach events allows OHRR to increase the visibility of the organization while increasing adoptions and revenue.

Information and Referral Services

OHRR hopes to help rabbit owners in the community in any way that it can, which is why OHRR offers information and referral services via phone, e-mail, and online. Everyday, OHRR receives inquiries about rabbit care, health, nutrition, behavior and re-homing strategies. OHRR is also compiling a network of rabbit-friendly veterinarians throughout Ohio.

Financial Information

Ohio House Rabbit Rescue is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and receives no government funding. OHRR relies on the generosity of the community to continue its programs and provide for the rabbits in its care. OHRR's current budget is supported by donations, grants, adoption fees, events, and other contributions.

The OHRR Capital Campaign: Be the Voice

Ohio House Rabbit Rescue is seeking the support of the community to invest in the lives of abandoned rabbits in Ohio by helping us establish the Ohio House Rabbit Adoption Center. Many rescue organizations in Ohio already have active adoption programs for dogs and cats, but these programs often exclude rabbits. Unfortunately, this means there are limited facilities for over 900 rabbits that are abandoned or offered for surrender annually in Central Ohio alone. In 2012, OHRR was contacted about approximately 200 rabbits that it was unable to assist because there was no available space.

Since its inception, Ohio House Rabbit Rescue has worked to establish a Center specifically for abandoned rabbits in the community. In order to purchase and maintain this facility along with OHRR's current programs, OHRR determined that additional funding and community support is needed. Therefore, OHRR has initiated a Capital Campaign: *Be the Voice*, to strategically place the organization in a position to effectively carry out its mission and to *Be the Voice* for the rabbits who desperately need our help and attention.

Why Not Just Use Foster Homes? **Current Options for Abandoned Rabbits**

Currently, OHRR facilitates a foster and adoption program, which is a positive option and a step in the right direction for abandoned rabbits in the community. Unfortunately, the structure of a foster network cannot keep up with the number of rabbits that are abandoned each year. Alternatively, it may seem logical to increase the available space for rabbits in existing local shelters, however this option causes unnecessary stress on the rabbits and forces them to compete with dogs and cats for attention from potential adopters. A rabbit-specific rescue facility proves to be the most beneficial for the rabbits, volunteers and adopters.

The following table compares the various options for housing abandoned rabbits:

	Foster Home Network	Current Shelters	A Center Just for Rabbits
Ease of Adoption	Rabbits are not readily available to potential adopters, and many adoptable bunnies are overlooked because they are in separate foster homes.	Rabbits are housed near many dogs and cats. As prey animals, this significantly increases their stress level, causing them to act skittish or frightened, ultimately making them difficult to adopt.	Adoptable rabbits will be readily available so individuals interested in adopting can meet and interact with multiple rabbits to find the right bunny for their family. They will be kept in spaces appropriate for their needs to reduce stress until they are adopted.
Availability of Space	Requires a long-term commitment of time and space from volunteers. Volunteers with ability to foster are limited.	Have a finite number of spaces for rabbits due to a focus on dogs and cats. The shelter believes it is allocating the maximum amount of space for rabbits as possible, and are limited to 15 to 30 rabbits.	Will have space for 25-30 adoptable rabbits, using foster homes exclusively for temporary situations, such as new bunnies needing extra socialization or medical evaluations, rabbits recovering from spay/neuter or other medical procedures, or “sanctuary” rabbits who are not likely to be adopted because of medical or behavioral issues.
Health and Veterinary Care	Requires foster home volunteers to be knowledgeable about the unique health issues of rabbits, and willing to take the rabbit to the vet if a problem presents itself.	Because rabbits have unique needs, shelter staff must be specially trained and special equipment must be purchased to ensure quality rabbit care, which requires additional costs to the shelters. This is a reason many shelters opt not to accept rabbits.	Will have on-call veterinarians and veterinary technicians who specialize in rabbit health to provide the highest level of care to the bunnies at the center. In addition, the organization’s operations can be streamlined because of the focus on one type of animal.
Services to Rabbit Owners	Without a centralized location, rabbit-service events must take place at a rented facility, and therefore cannot occur regularly because of the additional cost.	If shelters host community-pet service events at all, they generally focus on nail trims, microchipping, and vaccines for dogs and cats.	The Center will allow for low-cost rabbit service events, such as grooming days, and a rabbit supply store so rabbit owners can purchase hard-to-find rabbit supplies.

	Foster Home Network	Current Shelters	A Center Just for Rabbits
Increasing Adoptability and Volunteer Opportunities	Bunny-Socialization volunteers are often hesitant to help because they are required to visit the bunnies in a foster home. Further, volunteer-socialization can only occur when the foster parent is available, and is an additional burden on the foster parent.	Volunteering with rabbits is often overlooked due to the appeal of dog walking or cat-socialization. Therefore, shelter rabbits are frequently shy due to under-socialization.	Provides an environment where volunteers are always welcome to socialize bunnies, which is a wonderful opportunity for families considering rabbits as a pet, Pre-Vet students seeking experience with exotic animals, or members of the community searching for relaxing volunteer hours. Rabbits will be well socialized and therefore more easily adoptable.
Visibility	The lack of a location and adequate signage makes it difficult for potential adopters to find the rescue group. Advertising is mainly through events, online marketing and word-of-mouth.	Rabbits are often grouped with “pocket pets” at shelters, which causes potential adopters to forget about them when seeking a companion animal. In addition, dogs and cats are more heavily advertised and promoted than rabbits.	The facility will gain attention through signage and location. It will cause people to think seriously about adopting, instead of buying, a pet rabbit. It will also help to encourage people to think of a rabbit as a companion animal, just like a dog or cat.

Since large-scale fostering and adding on to other facilities are not practical, many rabbits are euthanatized or released outdoors. While wild rabbits can thrive in nature, house rabbits do not have the ability to survive outdoors and must be kept inside. Establishing a Center exclusively for house rabbit adoption creates a positive alternative to accommodate the over 900 rabbits that are abandoned annually. OHRR's mission to establish and operate the Center is endorsed by other central Ohio rescue groups.

Ohio House Rabbit Adoption Center

With community support, OHRR plans to establish and maintain a facility to shelter abandoned pet rabbits and showcase them for adoption. OHRR conducted a survey of animal welfare organizations in Columbus and the surrounding counties, and found that more than 900 house rabbits are abandoned or offered for surrender every year. To meet this need, the programs and services provided will be multifaceted.

Currently, OHRR has a lease-to-own agreement with the owners of a 4,073 square-foot property, spread across 18 rooms of varying sizes. Most of these rooms will be used to house adoptable rabbits, which OHRR determined to be enough space for 25 to 30 rabbits in 4-foot-

by-4-foot enclosures. This amount of space, which meets House Rabbit Society national standards, will provide a quality environment for the animals. Through an aggressive adoption program, OHRR expects 75 rabbits to be adopted from the facility annually.

In addition, OHRR plans to reserve a room for basic veterinary care, an intake room for new rabbits, and two rooms for a rabbit play area. Also included will be two small kitchens, a laundry room and a combination library and meeting room to host a variety of programs and events. In the entrance of the building, there is space for a rabbit supply store, which will provide a convenient location for rabbit owners and others to buy high-quality supplies and rabbit-oriented materials. The store's sales and other rabbit-oriented services will generate an income stream for the Center. Further, the facility will serve as a hub for activities related to house rabbits, including their rescue and adoption, and education for current and prospective rabbit owners, children and the general public.

The Center will be funded through donations, store sales and other rabbit-related services, grants, special fundraising events and partnerships with businesses and organizations.

The Ohio House Rabbit Rescue Comprehensive Campaign

In order to establish the Ohio House Rabbit Adoption Center while continuing to provide our current programs, OHRR has determined that additional funding is needed. OHRR is conducting a three-year Capital Campaign titled *Be the Voice* to place OHRR in a position to effectively carry out its mission of adoption and education while simultaneously opening and running the Center. OHRR has prioritized capital purchases, rabbit services and program expenses during the campaign with a goal of \$285,000.

Capital Purchases

Facility- \$220,000

OHRR is seeking funding to purchase a 4,073 sq. ft. building to be used as a rescue and adoption center for adoptable rabbits. The building has space for 25 to 30 rabbits, a small rabbit supply store, bunny play area, veterinary treatment room, a kitchen, a laundry room, and a studio apartment for a live-in caretaker. OHRR recently entered a lease-to-own agreement with the building owners, who are OHRR Board Members that purchased the building expressly for OHRR's purchase and use as an adoption and education center. Our Campaign Goal is to raise funds to purchase the building in full within a three-year timeline. The figure above includes property taxes for one year, which OHRR would be required to pay before we could apply for an exemption as a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization. Achieving the goal of purchasing the center will allow us to further our mission and focus our funding on OHRR's adoption and education programs.

Start-Up Costs- \$7,000

To ensure the highest quality of care for the rabbits at the Ohio House Rabbit Adoption Center, OHRR must make several start-up purchases including a washer and dryer, refrigerator, shelving (to be used for supply storage and the OHRR Hop Shop- a rabbit supply store) and an Ohio House Rabbit Adoption Center street sign. In addition, OHRR must purchase extra litter boxes, exercise pens, Plexiglas pen dividers, linoleum flooring, and make additions to electrical and plumbing capacity. These purchases will ensure that the

rabbits in our care are safe and kept in clean and sanitary spaces. The outdoor sign will help draw potential adopters into the rescue, and will encourage new visitors.

Staircase Replacement-\$3,000

The OHRR facility currently has a metal spiral staircase in one portion of the building and for the safety of OHRR volunteers, staff, adopters and rabbits, OHRR plans to replace the spiral staircase with a regular staircase. The estimated cost of this project is \$3,000

Rabbit Services and Programs

OHRR will include the initial increase in operating expenses associated with the purchase of the new facility in the three-year campaign. This campaign goal includes new operating expenses to maintain the facility, including utilities and maintenance. This goal also includes increased adoption program expenses as OHRR anticipates the expansion of its current program with the publicity of the facility.

Operating Expenses- \$40,000

In addition to purchasing the facility, OHRR will assume responsibility for the cost of utilities and maintenance of the facility. OHRR plans to offset these costs for two years with the funds raised through the Capital Campaign in order to gain stability in the new Center. At the end of this period, OHRR is confident that it will have gained enough community exposure to continue to cover these costs. The amount above includes general maintenance costs, electricity, gas, water, security system fees, telephone and Internet services and are based on current rates for these services, and usage estimates for the building from previous years.

Adoptions Program- \$15,000

With the purchase of the new facility, OHRR plans to accommodate 75 rabbits annually, which is a 50 percent increase from its current capabilities. This campaign goal will help OHRR expand its adoptions program to ensure that all rabbits are spayed/neutered, have access to high quality veterinary care, a diet of pellets, hay and fresh greens, litter, and toys.

Share in the Dream: *Be the Voice* for Abandoned Rabbits

Ohio House Rabbit Rescue wants you to share in the dream of a Columbus community that respects and loves house rabbits, just like cats and dogs.

You can make it possible that OHRR's programming and services become a model for other rescue organizations in the state and throughout the country. Please join OHRR in our commitment to providing shelter and veterinary care and finding forever homes for abandoned rabbits. With your help, OHRR will have the ability to provide care for rabbits, educational programming and community outreach activities that promote responsible pet ownership.

Please consider one of these giving levels. There is a level for everyone!

\$15,000 and above: Champion

Includes all benefits below PLUS your name and photograph on the Major Donors Wall, naming opportunities for a room in the facility and a Private Tour of the facility.

\$5,000-\$14,999: Visionary

Includes all benefits below PLUS your name and photograph on the Major Donors Wall, naming opportunities for an individual bunny's living space, and a Private Tour of the facility.

\$2,500-\$4,999: Leader

Includes all benefits below PLUS your name in the Leader's Book, which will be kept on display at the facility.

\$1,000-\$2,499: Guardian

Includes all benefits below PLUS a limited edition commemorative gift.

\$500-\$999: Hero

Includes all benefits below PLUS an invitation to the Donor's Reception at the Ohio House Rabbit Adoption Center.

\$250-\$499: Steward

Includes all benefits below PLUS a certificate to recognize your support and discounts at the Hop Shop rabbit retail store.

\$100-\$249: Advocate

Includes the benefits below PLUS your name in an exclusive, Advocates of the Shelter spot on our webpage.

Other Gifts up to \$99: Friends of Ohio House Rabbit Rescue

Includes a public Thank You on our website and in reports to the community.

However you choose to support Ohio House Rabbit Rescue, your partnership will positively impact the lives of hundreds, and, over several years, thousands of rabbits in Ohio. You can choose to have your gift go to a specific program or project for the Ohio House Rabbit Adoption Center. OHRR does not rely on government funding or advertising dollars. Therefore, our organization depends on the commitment of the community to benefit not only the lives of countless abandoned rabbits, but also current and potential rabbit owners. Together, we can make Ohio known for its compassion and generosity, a place that helps care for those animals that cannot care for themselves.

Capital Campaign and Center Preparation Timeline May 2013-December 2015

Phase 1

May 2013-January 2014

Financial goal: 40 percent of the overall campaign goal equaling **\$114,000** in cash contributions, pledges and in-kind donations

Summary of Expenditures

- Start-Up costs- \$7,000
- Operating Expenses- \$15,000
- Adoptions Program Increased Expenses- \$4,000
- 40 percent of Funds needed to purchase building- \$88,000

Key Events

May-June

- Fundraising/capital campaign committee established
- Key supporters approached for early lead gifts
- OHRR begins to lease 60 percent of the building at 5485 N. High Street, Columbus, Ohio.
- Start-up tasks accomplished and the Center opens to the public

July-August

- Capital Campaign Kick-Off
- Grand Opening of the Adoption Center
- Articles/stories in the local newspapers, radio and television
- Fundraising through web and social media initiated
- The Hop Shop, a rabbit supply store, opens at the Center to generate funds for OHRR

September-December

- In-person meetings, phone conversations and online solicitation continue with of potential contributors.
- Two to three major grants submitted to pet friendly corporate and family foundations that fund capital campaigns
- The major event, Midwest BunFest 2013, held on November 2, is used to promote the capital campaign to an even broader group of current and potential rabbit owners and the general public
- OHRR's second Annual Appeal conducted

Phase 2

February 2014-December 2014

Financial Goal: 40 percent of the overall campaign goal equaling **\$114,000** in cash contributions, pledges and in-kind donations

Summary of Expenditures:

- Staircase replacement- \$3,000
- Operating Expenses- \$15,000
- Adoptions Program Increased Expenses- \$8,000
- 40 percent of Funds needed to purchase building- \$88,000

Key Events

February

- OHRR acquires lease for the remainder of the building at 5485 N. High Street, Columbus, Ohio. OHRR now has a lease for the whole building.
- A metal spiral staircase in the newly acquired portion of the building is replaced by a traditional staircase

March- December

- Additional space acquired incorporated into appropriate use for the adoption Center
- New space used for expanded educational and community programming
- New space used to initiate rabbit boarding services as an additional income stream
- Expanded space and new opportunities to serve more rabbits utilized as a reason for additional support for the capital campaign
- Capital campaign progress promoted through local print, radio and television media
- Midwest BunFest 2014, held in November, is used to promote capital campaign progress and encourage contributions
- OHRR's third Annual Appeal conducted

Phase 3

January 2015- December 2015

Financial Goal: 20 percent of the overall campaign goal equaling **\$57,000** in cash contributions, pledges and in-kind donations

Summary of Expenditures:

- Operating Expenses- \$10,000
- Adoptions Program Increased Expenses- \$3,000
- 20 percent of funds needed to purchase building- \$44,000

Key Events

January-December

- In-person meetings, phone conversations and online solicitation continue- stressing the progress to date and amount needed to reach goal
- Additional grants from pet-friendly corporations and family foundations submitted
- Earned income streams of Hop Shop rabbit supply store and boarding services continue
- For-profit rabbit services, including quarterly Bunny Spa and other fundraisers, are initiated
- Midwest BunFest 2015 used to promote progress toward campaign goals and encourage "last dollar" contributions
- OHRR's fourth Annual Appeal is conducted
- Achievement of campaign goal celebrated in local media and on social media
- Private Tour of the Center held for Major Donors
- OHRR Center Donor's Reception held at the Ohio House Rabbit Adoption Center
- Commemorative gifts and Thank You notes distributed

The Fundraising Team

Campaign Co-Chairs

Pat Barron, Chair, OHRR Board of Trustees
Cara Haughey, OHRR Director of Marketing and Development

Fundraising Committee

Nancy Betz, Ph.D, Professor Emeritus, Ohio State University
Susan Borders, DVM, Norton Road Veterinary Hospital
Gia Lamanna, OHRR Volunteer
Beverly May, Founding Director
Mary Rose Molinaro, OHRR Volunteer
Mary Beth Parisi, CIO, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency