

KALAMAZOO

No-kill animal shelter plans new \$2.1M facility in Kalamazoo County

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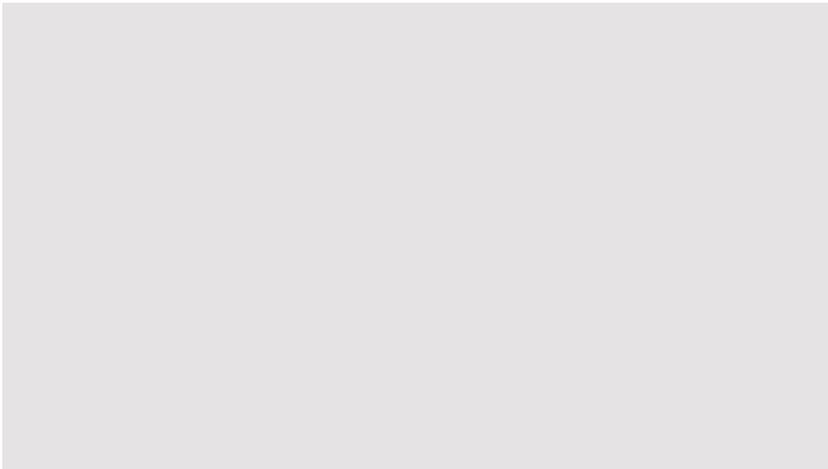


The final phase of fundraising is underway for a new 11,600 square-foot shelter facility for the Animal Rescue Project. The building, at 1616 Construction Drive in Comstock Township, Michigan, is in the midst of renovations. (Design Rendering by Schley Nelson) Provided by ARP

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KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MI — Having outgrown its home on Peekstok Drive, Kalamazoo County's Animal Rescue Project is preparing to open a new facility later this year.

The 11,600-square-foot Charles and Lynn Zhang Animal Rescue Center, at 1616 Construction Drive off Sprinkle Road in Comstock Township, will nearly double the footprint of its existing facility.



Purchased in March 2023 for \$800,000, the new facility — at one time a car dealership — is in the midst of renovations. But there's still work to be done and money to be raised to fund the \$2.1 million project.

With \$740,000 still needed, the nonprofit, no-kill shelter and adoption program launched a capital campaign on Thursday, June 13.

“When we started 14 years ago, we were a small group and the building on Peekstok worked great. But over the last 14 years, especially the last three or four, we have really grown out of it,” Animal Rescue Project Executive Director Jack Frost said. “There

are more programs we see the community needing and we want to offer more as we continue to grow.”

Frost said the last few years have been especially tough on the community, leading to more people surrendering their animals. Even with partnerships through foster homes, there isn't enough space at the existing facility, he said.

The existing building wasn't designed to be a shelter and houses 75 to 80 animals at a time. ARP adopts out more than 1,000 animals per year, Frost said.

While the new space will allow ARP to rescue more homeless animals, it will also help it expand a burgeoning partnership with the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission.

The organizations have developed an initiative called “Keeping People and Pets Together” that provides space for pets of unhoused people who are in Mission-based programming. The initiative also offers temporary shelter for domestic violence survivors who fear leaving pets behind.

Many unhoused people with pets refuse to go to the Gospel Mission for help because they don't want to leave their pets behind, Frost said. Those people will soon have the option to leave their animals with ARP until they are ready to be reunited.

The ARP is also offering care to those animals, from vaccines to spaying and neutering. Unlike the Peekstok facility, the new center will have a dedicated medical space to meet those needs.

The new center will also offer more separation for cats and dogs to ease the stress on animals, plus have a separate wing for animals who are unhealthy to limit the spread of disease.

As a community-funded organization, ARP receives no financial support from government agencies, which is why it's asking the public to help fund the final \$740,000 of its \$2.1 million goal.

"Animal Rescue Project has done, and will continue to do, a world of good for the people and homeless animals of Kalamazoo and the communities of Southwest Michigan," said ARP Board President James Di Loreto. "We are confident that the kind-hearted people and community-spirited businesses of Kalamazoo will help us reach our goal and make this dream a reality."

For more information on the campaign and how to donate, visit animalrescueproject.org/Give/Campaign.

