

A Brief History of SHAID – Sheltering Helpless Animals in Distress

30 years later – annual budget of approximately \$185K
by Sandy Gardiner

Back in the early 1980s a woman from Crousetown, Nova Scotia found herself answering another lady, "No, I don't know anyone who would keep strays." The lady replied "Maybe I should put it back where I found it." The woman replied "No, leave it here, and maybe I will be able to find a home for it."

And so, even though no one knew it at the time, S.H.A.I.D. Tree Animal Shelter was about to be born. The woman was an S.P.C.A. Agent at the time and decided to use her own home and the buildings on her property to house abandoned or stray animals.

Rural Nova Scotians, having their own grapevine, passed the word and soon our woman, her friends and family were caring for homeless animals (dogs, cats, goats, and even ducks) - financially, emotionally, and physically.

In the winter of 1985, the woman was sitting with friends and helpers brainstorming how to continue caring for the fast-growing population of animals being dumped at her door. They decided they had to build a shelter and in February, S.H.A.I.D. became incorporated under the Societies' Act of Nova Scotia. Our woman also became the dog control officer for Lunenburg County and, with the help of her supporters, was successful in repealing the "kill unclaimed animals within four days" by-law. This was a major hurdle and allowed the SHAID animals to be kept until they could be re-homed with kind and caring people.

This dedicated group came up with an operating plan to best help the animals who continued to stream into their care almost every day. Their little shelter assisted more than 600 animals in 1986. By early 1987, they needed more space to house the growing demand. The original founder donated a parcel of land for the new shelter.

Rita McNeil, General John Cabot Trail & friends

Fundraising began in earnest and many of these events are still being held today: raffles, bake and yard sales, the Christmas Open House, etc etc. Celebrities such as Rita McNeil and General John Cabot Trail pitched in with benefit concerts raising several thousand dollars. The yard sales started in 1986 raising \$1,000. In 1987, that number almost tripled.

With much of the organizational groundwork laid, the SHAID organizers turned their talents to educating the public on why the shelter work was so important. Visits were undertaken to local schoolrooms to speak to the children regarding responsible pet care and training. Pamphlets were printed and handed out whenever and wherever possible. A column was added to the local newspaper. The goals of the shelter were explained and the need for improving the facility was stressed. SHAID needed power and running water!

Thanks to the generous support of another of the initial organizers and fundraising totaling \$31K, the site in Crousetown was cleared of brush and trees. Much of the work was done by hand by volunteers. Unfortunately, it was realized that the site was uneven and would be expensive to build on. To add to the woes, the SHAID President's son was in a devastating accident and she had to step down as well as

close her property in order to give him the support he needed.

In the spring of 1990, SHAID began to move and the residents were temporarily housed. An interim President stepped in, but the shelter had to be closed for six months and new animals were turned away until a new facility could be found. Finally our spot in Whynott's Settlement was identified and the land was level and ready for building. The existing plans were modified for the budget available while taking future needs into account.

Very generous contractors!

The contractors were hired and also donated extras to the 2,000 square foot building which included 10 dog runs (indoor/outdoor), a receiving room, three cat rooms and an isolation ward. Hot running water and an indoor bathroom were luxuries added. Many, many volunteers donated time and materials. SHAID was then and is still now, a truly community shelter. Membership grew as did the number of volunteers helping with the day-to-day animal care and fundraising.

Over the years, the initial loans were paid off. A spay/neuter assistance program (called Myrtle Quigley) was setup to help financially-strapped pet owners. A trap/neuter/return program was implemented for feral populations (TNR). A storage building was added. New windows and vinyl flooring in the main entry were recently installed.

Medical & emotional care & re-homing for thousands of animals

From the love of a few dedicated people, the hard work of many and the kind support of folks too numerous to mention, SHAID has continued to provide housing, medical and emotional care and re-homing for thousands of abandoned, stray and abused animals. Local high school students are able to obtain their "community service" hours by volunteering at the shelter and many are inspired to contribute more hours than required. SHAID is the ONLY animal shelter in Lunenburg County.

Fundraising is ongoing and SHAID is hoping to expand the facilities again. If you'd like to do something today to help SHAID, The Animal Rescue site is having its annual shelter challenge. There is money for the shelters obtaining the most votes by mid-March. You can vote once a day so please go and vote and make it a daily habit – click:

www.theanimalrescuesite.com/clickToGive/shelterchallenge.faces?siteId=3

S.H.A.I.D., which stands for "Sheltering Helpless Animals in Distress," is located in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, Canada. Our doors have been open since 1986, and in 1990, we moved into our current building. This new shelter cost \$120,000 and was paid in full in 1995. Now all money raised through our many fundraisers goes towards the operating costs of running the shelter and its programs - approximately \$185,000 annually.