

SAFE PAWS PROJECT

# IMPACT REPORT



Prepared by:

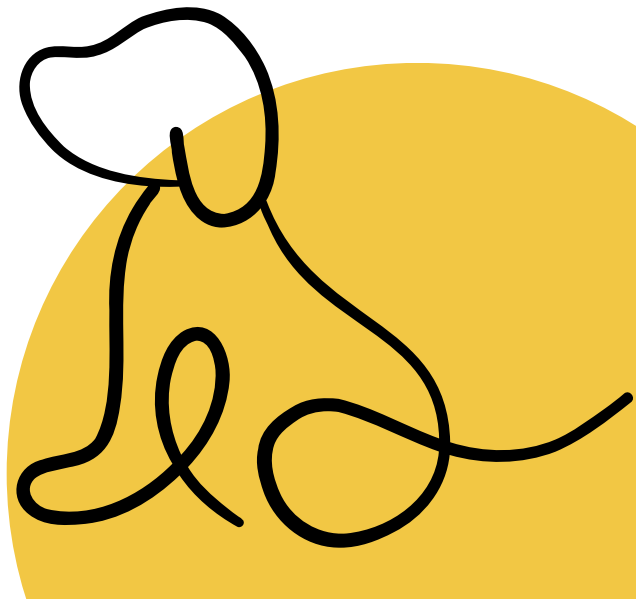
**Neda & PJ Jahangiri**

Jahangiri Family Foundation

Returned Peace Corp Volunteers

Tropoje, Albania

**AUGUST 2025**





# Introduction



In Tropoje, stray dogs are a daily sight. Without a shelter or animal control program, their numbers continue to grow, often leading to painful outcomes such as poisoning or shooting. The Safe Paws initiative was created to provide a humane and effective alternative. After a successful pilot in October 2024, which treated 34 dogs in a single day, the team returned this summer with a larger vision.

From **June 30 to July 4, 2025**, fourteen volunteers and two veterinarians from Kosovo converted an abandoned gas station in Bajram Curri into a small but fully equipped clinic. Over the course of five days, they treated 40 stray dogs—thirty females and ten males—while also educating the community and inspiring a shift toward more compassionate practices.



# The Journey



The project combined international expertise, local commitment, and donor support. Volunteers attended training, signed agreements, and were assigned clear roles in dog capture, intake, surgery assistance, and post-op monitoring.

The gas station venue was fitted with four kennels, two surgery tables, and a recovery area. A borrowed rescue van allowed safe transport of dogs to and from the site.

Here's how the project unfolded:

- June 29: Orientation and training at the community center
- June 30: Setup of the clinic and first dog captures
- July 1: A full day of surgeries from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- July 2: Operations paused due to a severe heat wave; the team used the day for community outreach
- July 3–4: Recovery and safe release of all 40 dogs, followed by site clean-up and a volunteer appreciation dinner







## Population Control

Sterilizing 30 females and 10 males has a powerful ripple effect. A single unspayed female can produce up to 60–90 puppies in five to seven years, and her offspring multiply further. By treating 30 females, Safe Paws prevented an estimated 1,800 to 2,700 unwanted puppies from being born, easing the burden on both the dogs and the community

## Public Health

The dogs were also vaccinated and dewormed, reducing the risk of diseases that can spread to humans and livestock, including:

- Rabies, still a threat in border regions
- Leptospirosis is spread through contaminated water and soil
- Echinococcosis (tapeworms), which can cause serious illness in people

## Animal Welfare

Forty dogs were spared from repeated pregnancies, malnutrition, and street dangers. More importantly, thousands of their potential offspring will never face suffering. Humane care also sent a strong message: Tropeje's dogs deserve dignity and compassion.

## Education & Awareness

More than 200 children at the annual summer camp learned about dog safety and responsible ownership. Hundreds of adults visited outreach booths and received flyers. For many, this was the first time they saw sterilization as not only an animal issue but a public health solution that benefits everyone.



---

## Challenges and Lessons

The project was a success, but not without challenges. One resident complained that a semi-owned roaming dog was captured and sterilized unintentionally. In future projects, enhanced communication through social media, posters, and townhalls will enable residents to secure their dogs in advance.

A severe heat wave also forced the suspension of surgeries on the second day. Dogs hid in shaded areas and were unresponsive to food lures. Future projects may avoid the hottest months or use sedation darts operated by trained veterinarians for dogs that are difficult to capture.

Another lesson was financial. A significant portion of donations went toward renting and preparing the gas station site and building kennels. While this reduced the budget for additional procedures, it created a safe and professional facility that significantly improved the project and can be reused in future years.

## Financial Overview

Funding came from generous donors, including sponsors who gave through the **Sponsor a Furry Friend** campaign (\$100 per dog). Every contribution went directly to the project, with no administrative overhead. Funds were used for:

- Veterinary services and medicines
- Venue rental, preparation, and kennel construction
- Transport van operation
- Surgical and intake supplies
- Food and care for dogs and volunteers
- Educational and outreach materials



## Looking Ahead

Safe Paws 2025 proved that Tropoje is ready for humane and sustainable solutions. The team's next steps will focus on:

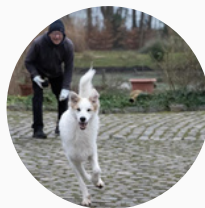
- Expanding community outreach before each project
- Scheduling projects in cooler months to avoid heat disruption
- Introducing sedation equipment for humane capture
- Training Albanian veterinarians for long-term sustainability
- Moving toward a permanent shelter or clinic in Tropoje



## *From Stray to Loved*

Xhema was discovered by Belgian tourists in Valbona National Park, near a lake called **Liqeni Xhemes**. Injured and abandoned, he was too frightened to be caught, so the tourists shared her story in Bajram Curri. Thanks to the awareness **Safe Paws** has built, the community immediately reached out. With the help of Eva, a local animal advocate, a rescue mission was launched. After a long drive and hike, Eva found Xhema with a wounded leg, weak, hungry, and exhausted. For the first time, he allowed someone to help.

Months of veterinary care, foster love, and Safe Paws support brought Xhema back to health. Then came the best news: the very tourists who had first spotted him wanted to adopt her. After preparing her for EU travel standards, a lengthy process of 4 months, Xhema finally joined his new family, who drove from Belgium to Frankfurt to welcome him. From a lonely lake in the Albanian mountains to a warm home filled with love, Xhema's story is a beautiful reminder of what compassion and teamwork can achieve.



*"Xhema may have started in Albania, but she was always meant to be part of our family."*





# THANK YOU TO OUR PACK

---

The *Safe Paws* 2025 project was only possible because of a true team effort. Just like a pack, every member played their part, and together, we made a difference.

We are grateful for the dedication of fourteen volunteers, who gave their time, energy, and compassion. We honor the generosity of our donors and sponsors, who believed in this mission and gave us the resources to act. We thank Dr. Blendi and Dr. Erjola Bejdoni from ProVet Kosovo, whose skill and care ensured every dog received safe treatment. We are humbled by the support of Tropoje's community, who welcomed us, listened, and learned alongside us.

Amy & Ali Raffati 🐕	Lisa & Shahram Malek 🐕	Andrea James 🐕	Susan Heller 🐕
Mike & Bev Donahue 🐕	Lien Hermans 🐕	Georgina Pinto 🐾	Tracey Longbottom 🐾
Glenis Taylor 🐾	Luke Elford 🐾	Sarah Taylor 🐾	Samantha Leigh 🐾
Florida Hoxhaj 🐕	Adela Sarci 🐕	Ardita Hajermataj 🐕	Lauranne Bauchot 🐕
Nermina Xhareffi 🐕	Marijn Markus 🐕	Uendi Pustina 🐕	Sara zekaj 🐕
Joel Ehrman 🐕	Natalie Hayashibara 🐕	Anna Roofthoof 🐕	Hanne Flothmann 🐕
Donald Baci 🐕	Eva Shimaj 🐕	Fariba Khosrowbod 🐾	Creagiorvan 🐕

🐕 **Leader of the Pack**

🐕 **Top Dogs**

🐾 **Faithful Friend**

🐕 **Helping Paws**

---

Jahangiri Family Foundation  
501(c)3- IRS EIN 99-2058057



714-423-2017  
info@jahangirifoundation.org



*Yeli*



*Alvona*



*Mike*



*Eva* ★



*Sarah*



*Parisa*



*Justin*



*Maya*



*Neda* ❤️



*Nijeta*



*PJ*



*Rejana*



*Engleta*



*Beverly*

# The Safe Paws Pack



The real unsung hero is the bright Orange Van, which faithfully carried dogs and volunteers to safety and back home again.



This report is dedicated to **Eva Shimaj**  
who stays when others leave,  
who loves when others forget, and  
who gives every stray in Tropoje  
a reason to hope. 🇺🇸🇦🇸



@STRAYS\_OF\_ALBANIA\_2019