



AmiciCannis

# Annual Report

[www.amicicannisusa.org](http://www.amicicannisusa.org)  
EIN#: 47-5463065

# A Message from our founder, Dr. Heather Steyn

What a landmark year 2025 has been for Amici Cannis. As we prepare to open the doors of our new hospital, a dream that once felt impossibly distant, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the community of supporters who made it a reality. Your belief in this mission has carried us through every challenge and every moment of growth.

When Phillip and I first arrived in Ecuador, we hoped only to give Amici Cannis the stability and attention it needed to serve animals who had long been without access to care. We never imagined that, just a few years later, we would be standing on the threshold of a fully equipped, modern veterinary hospital built through the collective generosity of people who share our vision.

This year, your support did more than fund a building. It strengthened our programs, expanded our reach into Indigenous communities, deepened our education initiatives, and allowed our team to grow in skill, confidence, and compassion. Time and again, you stepped forward, with donations, expertise, encouragement, and connections, to ensure that dogs and cats across Cotacachi receive the care they deserve.

It has been profoundly moving to witness how many of you, from near and far, have united around this mission. Together, we are proving that high-quality veterinary medicine can transform not only the lives of animals, but the health and well-being of entire communities.



*Heather A Steyn, DVM*



# A Year in Review



This year has been one of profound progress and unwavering compassion at Amici Cannis. Every day, I am reminded that our work is only possible because of the extraordinary community that stands beside us; our donors, volunteers, partners, and the families and animals whose resilience inspires us. Together, we expanded access to veterinary care in underserved communities, strengthened our street-animal outreach, and deepened our commitment to humane, sustainable change. As you read through this annual report, I hope you feel as proud as we do of what we have accomplished together. Thank you for your trust, your generosity, and your partnership in this mission we all share.

*Alex Rothlisberger*



# 2025 Program Highlights



# Veterinary Care for Community Dogs and Cats in Cotacachi

Understanding and managing the population of street dogs and cats is essential for any organization committed to humanely reducing the number of homeless animals.

At Amici Cannis, we take this mission to heart. We work to improve the lives of stray and community dogs and cats in Cotacachi by offering free and low-cost spay/neuter services, along with vital preventive care such as vaccinations, deworming, flea and tick treatments, and skin therapies. We also ensure that community animals have access to food and clean drinking water.

In 2025, Amici Cannis provided life-changing preventive and emergency care to **198** street dogs and cats. These animals received everything from routine spay/neuter surgeries to specialized treatments, including skin

care and diagnostic procedures like X-rays and ultrasounds to uncover the rootcauses of their health issues.

Beyond immediate medical care, we focus on long-term solutions that create lasting impact. Vaccination, deworming, and microchipping help protect animals on the streets and contribute to a healthier, safer community. Our work not only alleviates suffering today — it builds a brighter future for the animals we serve and the people who share their neighborhoods.

[Learn about our street dog survey efforts.](#)



8,420+ patients treated  
4,830+ vaccinated  
1,460+ spayed/neutered

# Veterinary Care and Empowerment of the Indigenous Villages



## Our One Health Approach

Amici Cannis is committed to strengthening Indigenous communities in Ecuador by expanding access to essential veterinary care. Our work goes far beyond treating animals as we strive to support the health, dignity, and resilience of entire communities. Through compassionate, community-centered services, we help families keep their animals healthy, protect public health, and build a brighter, more sustainable future for both people and their animals.

Access to veterinary services is often limited in remote Indigenous communities, creating challenges for both animal and human health. To help bridge this gap, Amici Cannis brings high-quality veterinary care directly to these areas through targeted, community-centered programs.

Our services include preventive care, vaccinations, spay/neuter surgeries, and emergency medical treatment for dogs and cats.

By offering consistent, compassionate care, we help improve animal welfare while also supporting public health and community well-being.

Just as importantly, our programs are built on collaboration. We work hand-in-hand with Indigenous leaders and community members to ensure our efforts reflect their priorities and respect their traditions. This inclusive approach builds trust, strengthens local capacity, and helps create lasting, positive change for both people and their animals.

**32 Indigenous Communities**  
**3,150 rabies vaccines**  
**administered**

**Between 2024 and 2025, we**  
**vaccinated more than 7,000**  
**animals, helping create a**  
**protective barrier against rabies**  
**throughout Cotacachi.**





## Indigenous Family Fund (IFF)

Most of the Indigenous families residing in villages around Cotacachi face systemic poverty and inequality, making it challenging for them to access even basic veterinary care for their animals.

Our initiative to provide veterinary care to underserved animals has two core components. First, we organize large-scale sterilization, vaccination, and deworming campaigns to keep animals healthy and safe, efforts that directly reduce the number of abandoned animals in our communities.

At the same time, through our Indigenous Family Fund (IFF), our hospital offers discounted, and in many cases free, veterinary services to animal guardians enrolled in Ecuador's Human Development

Bonus, a program that supports families living in poverty and extreme poverty. Many of the animals brought to us through the IFF require extensive care, including hospitalization, surgery, or other lifesaving treatments that would otherwise be financially out of reach for their families.



1,821+ families assisted  
through our Indigenous  
Family Fund (IFF)

# Education in Schools and Communities

At Amici Cannis, we believe that kindness is a skill that can shape entire communities. Our Be Kind Education Program was created to inspire children and families to build compassionate, respectful relationships with the animals who share their lives and environment. Through interactive lessons, storytelling, and hands-on activities, we teach the values of empathy, responsibility, and humane care, principles that strengthen both animal welfare and community well-being.

This program is more than education; it's prevention. By helping young people understand animal behavior, basic care, and the importance of respect for all living beings, we reduce fear, neglect, and mistreatment before they occur. Students learn how their actions impact not only animals, but also public health, safety, and the environment.

In 2025, Amici Cannis' Be Kind Education Program marked meaningful progress in both reach and impact. Here are some of the program's key accomplishments:

## **Expanded Reach:**

The Be Kind program reached 2,235 students and 134 teachers, creating a combined impact on 2,369 individuals across Cotacachi.

## **Growing School Presence:**

Our team delivered the program in 22 public schools, connecting with children ages 5 to 12 through interactive lessons and activities. Additionally, more than 700 children enjoyed the Be Kind puppet show, which brought animal-welfare education to life in a fun and memorable way.

## **Community Partnerships:**

We collaborated closely with teachers, school administrators, and community leaders to ensure that our content was culturally relevant, engaging, and aligned with local needs. These partnerships strengthened the program's foundation and will support its continued growth.

We successfully engaged 2,369 individuals—2,235 students and 134 teachers—from 22 public schools, reaching children aged 5 to 12.



# Veterinary Student Externship Program

At Amici Cannis, we believe that shaping the next generation of veterinarians is one of the most powerful ways to create lasting change for animals and the communities who care for them. Our Student Externship Program offers veterinary students a unique, hands-on learning experience in a high-impact, community-centered environment.

Externs work alongside our medical team in a setting where their skills grow quickly and their contributions make a real difference. They gain experience in surgery, clinical care, community medicine, and One Health principles, often encountering cases and learning opportunities they would rarely see in traditional academic settings.

Beyond technical training, students develop cultural humility, adaptability, and a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by underserved communities. Many return to the US with a renewed sense of purpose and a stronger commitment to compassionate, accessible veterinary care.

Amici Cannis is proud to collaborate with the prestigious Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University to offer a unique and enriching externship program. Students from other universities, such as Cornell, UC Davis, and Ontario Veterinary College, have also participated in an externship at our hospital in Ecuador.

Our externship program strengthens the future of the veterinary profession and expands our capacity to serve more animals and families in need. It is a partnership that enriches students, supports our mission, and builds a more humane and equitable world for animals and people alike.

**16 veterinary students  
trained at our hospital.**

**18 veterinarians volunteered  
time and expertise.**



# Grants to Other Organizations

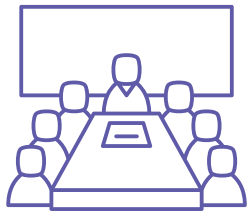
In 2025, Amici Cannis supported Fundacion Verde Oveja, a nonprofit organization working in San Antonio Del Punge, Ecuador, and played a key role in strengthening their growth and expanding their impact on both animals and people.

Fundacion La Verde Oveja project, or LVO, supports local communities in the Cotacachi canton in Ecuador through animal welfare and animal husbandry. The LVO project provides fair opportunities for jobs, teaches unique skills, invests time and resources in training individuals on a unique craft, improves local income, and grants funding towards community projects.



## Leadership

### Advisory Board



Dr. Jill Clark, DVM, [IGNITE](#)  
 Dr. Robert Murtaugh, DVM, MS, DACVIM, DACVECC  
 Dr. Dan Brod, DVM  
 Brent Morse, [Morse Capital Partners](#)  
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### US Board of Directors



Dr. Heather Steyn, DVM  
 Officers:  
 Alexandra Rothlisberger,  
 Executive Director

### Ecuador Board of Directors



Jim McKay - President  
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 Dr. Heather Steyn, DVM - Treasurer  
 Angelina Galletti - Secretary  
 Dr. Phillip F Steyn - Board member  
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# Financials

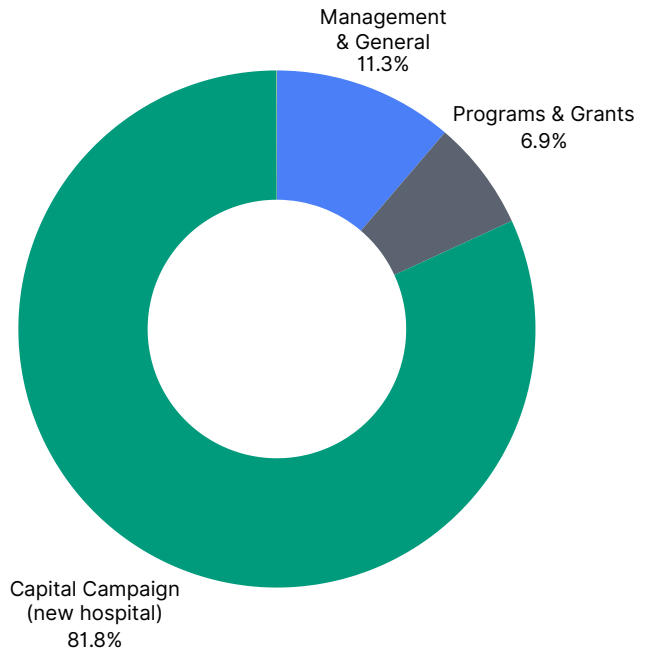
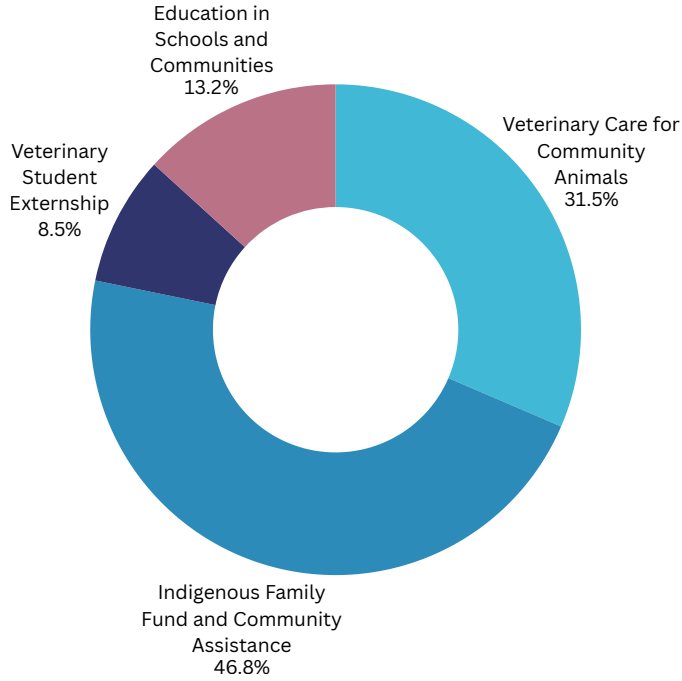
Amici Cannis operates an animal hospital in Ecuador, registered as a nonprofit organization in the country. The hospital's nonprofit efforts are funded by Amici Cannis in the United States. Our goal is to create a self-sustaining hospital and reinvest any surplus revenue into our programs, benefiting the animals and the community.

## Hospital Financials

OPERATING REVENUE	2024	2025
Health and hospital services	257,332.36	285,141.35
Donations of medical supplies	46,373.30	80,186.30*
		*in-kind donations for new hospital
Ancillary products & services	17,437.86	19,347.44
<b>Total operating revenue</b>	<b>321,143.52</b>	<b>304,488.79</b>
Contributions & grants	53,760	52,953.76
EXPENSES	2024	2025
Health and hospital services	253,802.01	259,400.69
Hospital management and ops.	84,674.79	98,192.19
<b>Total program expenditures</b>	<b>338,476.80</b>	<b>357,592.88</b>



# Distribution of Funds



# New Animal Hospital

## 2025: A Transformational Year for Amici Cannis Hospital

This year marks a defining moment for Amici Cannis as our long-envisioned animal hospital moves from construction to reality. The 12,500-square-foot facility, designed as both a fully equipped veterinary hospital and a residence for visiting veterinary students, is now entering its operational phase, positioning us to deliver a level of care and community impact never before possible in Cotacachi.

**\$ 1,250,000 GOAL**

**ACTUAL COST \$1,338,012**

**100%  
RAISED**



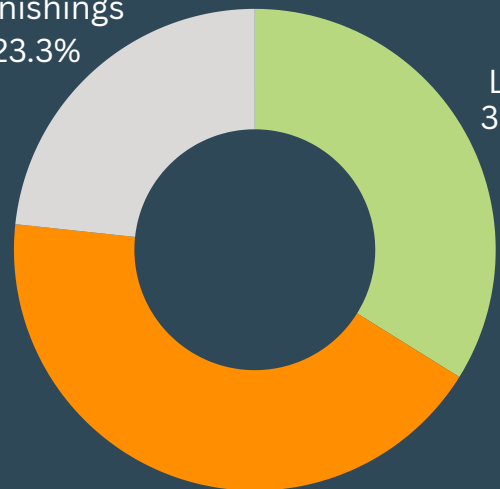
The effort to raise funds for our new hospital began in 2024 with a series of intimate house parties hosted by extraordinary friends and supporters who opened their homes to our mission. What started as small gatherings filled with enthusiasm and hope grew into a powerful movement, fueled by a community that believed deeply in the importance of expanding access to care. This momentum ultimately culminated in the transformative generosity of major donors who shared our vision and invested boldly in our dream. Their commitment, combined with the grassroots passion that sparked this campaign, made it possible to turn aspiration into reality.



Equipment and  
Furnishings  
23.3%

Land  
33.9%

Hospital Construction  
42.8%



# Our Team

At the heart of Amici Cannis is a dedicated veterinary team committed to delivering compassionate, high-quality care to the animals of Cotacachi and the surrounding Indigenous communities. Our hospital staff brings together skilled veterinarians, veterinary technicians, animal care specialists, and community outreach professionals who share a deep belief in the power of humane, accessible veterinary medicine.

Every day, our team works on the front lines, performing lifesaving surgeries, providing preventive care, responding to emergencies, and supporting families whose animals are part of their daily lives. Beyond clinical expertise, our staff embodies patience, empathy, and cultural sensitivity, ensuring that every interaction honors the people and traditions of the communities we serve.

Together, they form a resilient, passionate group whose commitment makes our mission possible. Their work not only improves the health and well-being of animals but also strengthens the connection between animal welfare, public health, and community resilience.



**Dr. Heather Steyn**

Founder +  
Medical Advisor



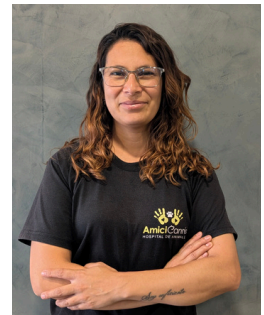
**Dr. Phillip Steyn**

Founder +  
Medical Advisor



**Alexandra Rothlisberger**

Executive Director



**Paola Gonzaga**

Program Coordinator

## NUMBER OF ANIMALS AND FAMILIES ASSISTED IN 2025

**6,462**

ANIMALS SPAYED/  
NEUTERED &  
VACCINATED

**8,423**

SICK & INJURED  
ANIMALS TREATED

**198**

STRAY DOGS & CATS  
SERVED

**3,790**

INDIGENOUS  
FAMILIES ASSISTED

# Our Doctors, Techs, and Admin Team



**Top row**, from left to right - Hospital team: Paul Morales - technician, Matias Ruiz - technician/educator, Emerson Andrés Simba - technician, Cristhian Rivera - technician, Gabriel Andramunio - technician, Leonel Vaca - technician, Guillermo Ruiz - hospital manager. **Bottom row**, from left to right: Jefferson Cunguan - technician, Dr. Carolina Villamarin - lead associate veterinary, Dr. Karla Borja - associate veterinary, Cristina Andramunio - administration, Dr. Estefany Quina - associate veterinarian, Dr. Kerly Alvarez - medical director, David Gualacata - technician.



Hospital volunteers, to whom we owe so much; *from left to right*: Bif Fink, ER RN; Marie-France Hebert: veterinary assistant; Kathleen Wilson: veterinary technician; Antonella Perugachi; Marnie Musser; Martin Miño.

# Stay in Touch



Stay up to date with news about our work and our programs by signing up to receive our newsletter [here](#), or by emailing us at [info@amicicannisusa.org](mailto:info@amicicannisusa.org)

Follow us on social media and help us raise awareness by sharing our posts and our videos. Join us in spreading the word about animal welfare in Ecuador.



AMICI CANNIS IS A REGISTERED 501 (C) 3.  
YOUR DONATIONS ARE  
TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.  
EIN#: 47-5463065

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