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Report

Senior Pet and Animal Rescue Digital Marketing Strategy

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Executive Summary

I based the enclosed report on information gathered from my client, Senior Pet and Animal Rescue (SPAAR) of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On September 11, 2019, I consulted with a representative of SPAAR, one of the founders, Laura Brocklebank. I developed the following information as a means to modernize SPAAR's corporal and online presence, showcasing four pages of a refreshed website design, suggestions for consistent story engagement across their online media, and a marketing strategy with tips and pointers for effective communication.

As SPAAR is committed to helping senior animals of Pittsburgh, I am committed to designing with the organization. Time calls for modernization, to set goals and begin strategies that facilitate growth. Through the result of careful research on the organization's history, overarching purpose, marketing objectives, and long-term plan, I feel that the following report highlights the best possible procedure for SPAAR's digital marketing strategy. The content of this report should reflect the previous plan and communicate the persona (brand) and goals of SPAAR as it moves forward.

This report was prepared by Ana Karina Van Nortwick, a graduate student at Carnegie Mellon University.

Overview

Objectives and Growth

Senior Pet and Animal Rescue is a 501 (c)3 non-profit that rescues, re-homes, rehabilitates, and provides hospice care for senior pets in need. Located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, SPAAR commits to educating the community about the advantages of adopting a senior animal. Founded by Jennifer Brown and Laura Brocklebank in 2015, SPAAR continues to help the Pittsburgh community. Along with foster and adoptions, SPAAR also provides funding for ailing senior pets and their families. They are a reliable support system for this unique community.

OBJECTIVES

SPAAR's representative recounted the 2015 launch and how their marketing strategy assessed and guided the organization through the beginnings of a non-profit that catered to senior animals and their families (including pre/post-adoption). The previous plan highlighted the importance of utilizing social media platforms as the organization kicked off.

The thoughtful plan supported the mission of what would become the center of SPAAR's functionality; a 501 (c)3 non-profit that rescues, re-homes, rehabilitates, and provides hospice care for senior pets in need.

Informed by my meeting with SPAAR in September and in much the same way as the previous plan, I identified four objectives for my redesign:

- Modernize SPAAR's online presence to generate new awareness with consistent branding and visuals through a refreshed website
 - Provide useful and organized webpages that adhere to information architecture
- Compose structured and informative content for the multiple needs of their audience, comprising of new content and suggestions for communication
- Create a clean and concise user experience that serves as a framework for future content and development, focused around a marketing strategy for effective engagement
- Generate new web traffic and increase their digital footprint; advertising SPAAR as an organization, including social media, and partnering opportunities

As the place where SPAAR's persona connects with their audience, the rhetorical function of these materials should strengthen the narrative structure for the organization's digital and corporal presence.

Audience Profiles

Users

A short take on the audience profiles I created to illustrate the services a user may look for on the SPAAR website.



Sara Jane Roland Senior Pet Owner

and is looking for guidance on from UT Austin. He moved to a local public high school. She's where to find hopsice care for her recently ill Old English Sheepdog in the Pittsburgh Area.



Grant Whittaker

Sarah is a retired business woman Grant is a recent graduate student Naj is a pre-college advisor from Pittsburgh for his tech start-up, he's a loving home.



Naj Thomas Potential Donor

interested in finding local charity looking for a companion that needs opportunities that cater to her love of helping and animals.

Based on my research, I created three user profiles that represent some of the groups I understood as SPAAR's core audience: a senior pet owner; an adopter; and a potential donor. I used these user profiles to direct my changes for the site, basing adjustments on what they may wish to accomplish.

USER PROFILES

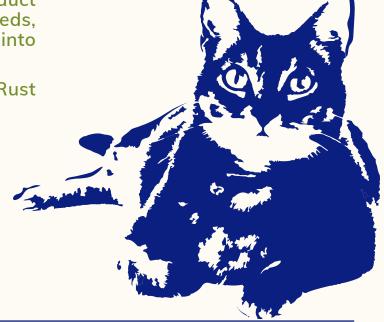
It is important that SPAAR have a website that is easy to navigate and useful to gather information. Based on my resreach, I identified SPAAR's central users as:

- Families in need of services or funds for their senior pets
- Volunteers that want to dedicate time and services to the organization
- Fosters that wish to help the senior animals directly
- New owners looking to adopt
- Supporters such as donors, board members, or sponsors

I determined that these groups would want and then created characters with a specific sets of goals to represent the top three groups. I focused on these goals for the redesign in order to (1) create a coherent structure to support the expectations of diverse user groups, and (2) balances informationseeking needs with the overarching marketing goals for SPAAR.

To make sure that product decisions reflect real world needs. the customer must be brought into the design process.

- Roland T. Rust



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Marketing Strategy

Branding

Before starting your marketing strategy, it is important to come up with a comprehensive plan that ties in with a variety of components. These components range from branding and modernization to medium (i.e., social media or websites).

By implementing a comprehensive strategy, you eliminate uncertainty between your audience, materials, and medium. Once a plan is in place, it helps to achieve a member or team to handle marketing moving forward.

Use communications channels that fit the best need for your organization. Multiple channels allow your organization to market and get your message across to your audience.

BRANDING

Persona or brand is the purpose behind an organization; through it, organizations highlight their mission, values, and present/future goals. From my research, I have labeled SPAAR's persona as open, nurturing, hopeful, and narrational, which allows it to evoke positivity and engagement.

As an organization, SPAAR's brand serves as the narrative structure of their digital and corporal presence. It generates the non-profit's message and reflects as the tie between various content, working to guide audiences.

No longer in preliminary stages, SPAAR's persona embodies a progressive mindset that focuses on growth and showcases the need, accomplishment, and care of the organization. Keep this in mind as you implement your marketing strategy, utilize your strong points, and avoid overusing one element, so your materials showcase variety but cohesion.

EXAMPLE MARKETING STRATEGY

- 1. New Logo Reveal (Web) Mid December
 - a. Start by introducing your new Logo, it's a great way to advertise your organizations "modernization" to your audience. Social media is a great medium for smaller marketing segments such as a reveal.
- 2. Holiday Photo Contest (Event) December or January
 - a. Photo contests are useful in creating marketable materials. They provide photos for communications, messages, and media development. Depending on the holiday you can hold the event in December or January to promote audience engagement.
 - a. A possible reward could be to offer professional photos of the winning pet for the family and organization to use.
- 3. New Merch Release Date (Media) January
 - a. Advertise new merchandise for your audience, both on the website and social media. If you have a new logo, print some shirts or bandanas to sell, with proceeds going to one of SPAAR's funds for senior pets in the community.
- 4. Monthly Newsletter (Letter) Mid January
 - a. Laura mentioned bringing back a newsletter. To do that it would be best to keep it either montly or every two months. SPAAR should avoid asking for donations in this letter, it's primary use is to inform audiences of future events or recent accomplishments for SPAAR.
- 5. Website Launch (Web) Late January
 - a. Introduce the Website through social media to direct new audiences to the refreshed pages. Previous users should be told in a newletter or update of the impending changes so they are not surprised by any changes or shutdowns while the website updates.
- 6. Partner Event (Social) February
 - a. I spoke with a fellow student at Carnegie Mellon who runs a start-up (Pupcycled) that creates sustainable pet clothing. She would be willing to do a partner event with SPAAR. Partner events like this are a good way to incorperate your community and advertise SPAAR.

MARKETING STRATEGY POINTERS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

No matter what you are marketing, six elements are integral for effective marketing strategies. Below you will find a compilation of the six critical elements for future use.

- 1. Start with Stories: As a Non-profit, the appeal and mission resonate closely with audiences when relayed in a story format. Your story should be compelling and information, building up effective marketing through elements of irresistible stories.
 - a. Focus on the character (someone that relates to your target audience) and build their challenges (the hardships or pain) and counter with their desired outcomes (the motivation or goal).
 - a. Then follow up with the obstacles that stand between them and their desired outcomes.
 - a. Before you wrap up the story, remember peak with the climax (either a solution to a problem or the value of your audience's engagement) and then deliver the conclusion (the values or goals accomplished).

Once you have developed your story, construct the central message that relays why your services are necessary and why your audience is essential in furthering these services. Provide stories that captivate or discuss the broader mission, then work to condense your information into a tailored and framed (reframed) message for your audience.

"If you are not using storytelling as an essential element in your nonprofit marketing and communications, you are robbing yourself of one of the most effective tools available to you."

- Kivi Leroux Miller

2. Integrate Voice: Communication pieces that are tailored to your brand's voice empower connections between audience and organization. Remember that members of your organization help contribute to your unique brand and work to strengthen your voice.

Consider the opinions and values of people that dedicate their time to the organization, they may not write the content, but their voice helps improve trust between your organization and its members, as well as with your audience and community.

3. Build with Technical Expertise: With numerous messaging channels rising, the number of systems for proper integration also grows. As an organization, you should have more than a beginning in understanding the technologies involved in the socially modernized world. Understanding allows you to establish data that manage your marketing strategy.

It is useful to implement a team (when possible) that invest time in knowing technology and educates themselves on effective marketing strategies that are more long term.

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- 4. Coordinate your Messages: Marketing efforts should focus on creating a unified system that offers consistency in communication across any user-facing material. Each section is a part of a whole and therefore centered around dynamic and compelling content.
 - a. Digital Content (websites)
 - b. Social media
 - c. Corporal Content (Thank you Letters)

Creating messages that are not tied together cohesively creates a disjoint between the user and the organization. Meaningful communication is essential for marketing, especially in the digital sector; therefore, adhering to consistency and cohesion will benefit your message in the long run.

5. Lead with Content Strategy: Content is the center of most marketing strategies and should remain authentic whenever possible. Content is your organization's brand and persona exemplified and should, therefore, avoid existing solely for the sake of having content.

Collect your audience's values and connections generated by members in your organization that illustrate the same passion. When creating content, it should be relevant and tailored to your specific brand (image), adding values that align between audience and organization in your communications.

6. Conversation over Selling: Storytelling is the center of your marketing strategy; above all, materials, services, or products you may offer, stories are what captivate people and draw them to your organization. You should aim to resonate with audiences that have similar values and illustrate connections between your organization and the community you serve.

Remember that strategic storytelling is what shows the lives of community members that live in connection to your organization. Instead of telling, illustrate them with (written) imagery that is impactful and meaningful to your mission.

For more tips on Do's and Don'ts of non-profit marketing see **"Appendix A"**.

Communications Plan

Stories and Messaging

"Telling stories makes the needs and the successes of your organization real to your supporters. Nonprofits are story goldmines."

- Kivi Leroux Miller

Bring storytelling to your organization. SPAAR already has a good start in storytelling and messagin its audience, now to bring it up in every area SPAAR should focus on the following tips for stories and messaging.

STORIES

Stories are what relate the organization to its audience. Stories set the tone for communications to show the values, goals, and accomplishments. Without well-developed stories, messages have a harder time getting across to the reader.

It's essential to create content that is meaningful and relevant. Audiences can tell when stories are generic and when they are authentic. Stories that come from a relatable moment, such as a member's accomplishments or a success story, are the most powerful in delivering the message.

When creating stories, it's a good idea to identify techniques and moments that guide communication to your overall strategic goals. Remember that the function of storytelling sits between your audience and the values of the organization; therefore, you can find content worth telling in almost every aspect.

For more information on storytelling see "Appendix B".

FRAMING

When you start building your message, it is important to count in external influences or factors such as a biological or cultural difference that create different filters and reactions to the content.

It is in your organization's best interest to take into account the way your audience thinks, interacts or has experienced an issue.

MESSAGING

As an organization, it is essential to remember your values, but the values of your audience as well. The beliefs and core behaviors of people derive from frames. These frames shape how the audience sees and interacts with our messaging.

External factors are integral in creating your audience's point of view or structures and will influence preferences to types of messages and issues. It is essential to find and tie together your organization's values and audience.

For rules on strategic messaging see "Appendix C".

"...stories work because they provide both simulation, which is the knowledge about how to act, and inspiration, which is the motivation to act."

- Kivi Leroux Miller

Digital Redesign Modernization

As an organization, SPAAR connects pets with their future homes. They also support families that need hospice care or funding for a beloved senior pet. With the care and attention they bring to their animals and the intrinsic nature of their work, SPAAR deserves a digital footprint and strategy that works alongside their mission and goals.

The objectives of this redesign, analyze the proposed structure and changes for the website and why these changes were made.

The overall purpose is to produce unique and engaging media that will grow with SPAAR as an organization. After evaluating the organization, I came to the conclusion that their rhetorical situation calls for a response that promotes a refreshed and modernized website and strategy.

As a revitalized take on the old website, my design takes into account the situational needs of SPAAR's services and the importance of clear communication, to create easily accessible information. As the place where SPAAR's persona connects with their audience, the rhetorical function should strengthen the narrative structure for the organization's digital and corporal presence.

GOALS

Below are the goals I previously stated at the start of this report and should be referenced when looking at the following redesign.

- Modernize SPAAR's online presence to generate new awareness with consistent branding and visuals through a refreshed website
 - Provide useful and organized webpages that adhere to information architecture
- Compose structured and informative content for the multiple needs of their audience, comprising of new content and guidelines for best story building practices
- Create a clean and concise user experience that serves as a framework for future content and development, focused around a marketing strategy for effective communication
- Generate new engagement for web traffic and increase their digital footprint; advertising SPAAR as an organization, including social media, and partnering opportunities

Follow the povided <u>LINK</u>, for an interactive demonstration of the redesigned website and social media posts.

"Our mission is to help keep senior animals with their families and rescue, re-home, rehabilitate and provide hospice for those senior pets looking for a family of their own."

- Senior Pet and Animal Rescue

WELCOME: HOMEPAGE

My goal for the redesign was to bring out the aesthetic of SPAAR's personality by utilizing vibrant colors to create a homepage that illustrated an open, bright, and caring organization. I configured the homepage to show audiences a preview of the resources and support that SPAAR offers. As the first page that audiences see, I want it to cater to every audience with an easily accessible layout. Even as a first-time visitor, they should find a direct path to necessary information.

I moved the mission statement to the frontpage and displayed it in large text to help define who SPAAR is and what they do for the community. I then changed photos found from their social media and webpage to make images for the webpage that was fun but still showcased SPAAR's love for animals.

I threw in splashes of green to create a new ambiance. The home page is a map guiding users to information as clearly as possible without limiting interaction.

There are many new features that I added to the home page, which allows audiences to see the many ways SPAAR helps the community.



CALLOUT

I chose to emphasize SPAAR's commitment to aiding senior animals, a significant differentiation from other peer organizations. I wanted to articulate SPAAR's mission, setting expectations while inviting them to learn more about SPAAR. I wanted SPAAR's persona and brand to be immediately "findable" – a mission that audiences cannot miss.

PHOTO

The homepages photos are animal focused that visually reinforce the organization's purpose, the lives of the animals they help. I wanted the images to mean something for the SPAAR community but create a fresh look that popped and did not clash with varying colors.

LABELING

Language is always central in practical design. A labeling system is even more critical for interested and information-seeking audiences. When a visitor comes to the site, labeling serves as a set of guideposts that helps users along the way.

STRUCTURE

While the user will rely on the navigation bar to find their way around, I wanted to provide multiple wayfinding strategies that allowed users to find their respective pages. With some of the main pillars of the organization on the front, users can be assured that SPAAR is the right place for them— confident in where they are going next.

HOW TO HELP: DONATE

In revising the "Donate" page, I fleshed out the overall structure that already existed on the original pages. My target user is a donor looking specifically to make personal donations (for any other donor types, it would be easy to copy this structure with some variation).

I wanted them to come away with a clear sense of what their donation does for the organization, with a way to set up monthly donations and a preview (with consent) of previous donors.

I combined the single donate page with the monthly donation information. I felt this allowed less travel time (clicks to the page) for users to find relevant information (i.e., donations). I added a small section describing SPAAR's need to inform the user that may be looking for a bit more information before donating.

Laura Brocklebank expressed that she wanted something fresh for their untouched website, so I added a photo in a pop of green to accompany the new information and structured layout.





WHAT SPAAR DOES: ADOPTIONS

I created a sample page featuring the adoption page. I added this page to my final submission, as I felt it was essential to showcase one of SPAAR's primary functions. I wanted this page to provide a more in-depth discussion before adopting a senior pet. The page serves as a landing page before moving into the individual categories (with space to add for other animals should the need occur).

My pathway page describes SPAAR's overarching rules and guidelines in regards to adoptions, with steps that are important throughout the process. This page is accessible by clicking on the Adoptees tab in the navigation bar. This pathway page functions as a Table of Contents and "before you go" section, allowing users to find information and the pet they hope to find.

WHAT SPAAR HAS ACCOMPLISHED: HAPPY TAILS

After visiting the existing page, I tested the fluidity of the page with a user. They expressed that the stories were endearing, but the overall structure was very long, and after a point, the stories became lost in a "blur of scrolling." For this reason, I restructure the happy tails page to contain boxes or "storyboards" of three.

My design solution allows visitors to read about the success stories and leaves room for further development. The containers enable information flow, without blending into the next.

As an integral part of non-profit communication, it is important to let audiences see and read the accomplishments of the organization. I also provided a section for story building that helps keep consistency throughout each new post.

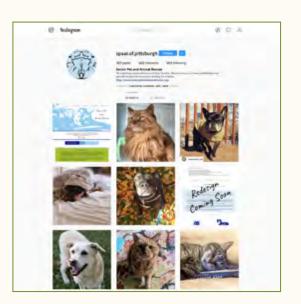


SOCIAL MEDIA: INSTAGRAM

The Instagram section illustrates one-way SPAAR can connect with a younger or broader audience. While advertising the modernization of the website upsets the grid layout slightly, it's important to note that it can help boost foot traffic across all of SPAAR's content. I incorporated a new logo (also featured on the website) to showcase how various suggestions expand across the medium.

I also provided a few samples of "posts" to illustrate how SPAAR can create upbeat messages and communication pieces about new adoptees, content, or events, as seen in the potential partner event with Pupcyled Pet Fashion that I mention previously in this report.

The website is a chapter in a novel, telling SPAAR's story piece by piece, the social media interactions area haikus, explaining the story in a brief, relevant, and impactful way.









BEFORE I GO

Pittsburgh has long been known as the City of Bridges. SPAAR embodies an ethos of connectivity and progress. As a nonprofit whose mission forges connections and builds support networks, SPAAR deserves a website that supports its values by welcoming users in, showcasing all the organization's valuable efforts, and inviting users to seek services and get involved.

In my redesign, I worked to make these goals possible. My color scheme and layout were based on a clean, bright design aesthetic curated to welcome the community. The menu bar and feature boxes on the homepage provide users with multiple pathways to the information they need while broadcasting some of SPAAR's core services. Any generated copy material is intended as a bridge to a full website redesign: providing users with the information they are seeking.

I was excited and honored to work with SPAAR this semester. I approached the redesign with a commitment to SPAAR's mission and the determination to build a website prototype that does justice to SPAAR's hard work. I thank you for this tremendous opportunity!

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Appendix A

Marketing

Appendix B

Stories

From Miller's chapter 10.

DO'S

Focus on the positives (who you serve what you cause is)

Tailor to your invested and/or interested audience

Highlight your call to action

Assemble casual and friendly events and messaging

Invest in meaningful and highquality photographs

Maintain a budget for communication pieces

Utilze services and data for future marketing strategies

DON'TS

Avoid discussing struggles the organization may face

Steer clear of giving to much detail, concision is key

Skip lengthy messaging

Bybass expensive auctions or gifts, allocate funds properly

Shirk away from responsibility and truthful communication

Give up on good messaging and useful data gathering

CONNECTING WITH A CAUSE

Focus your materials and marketing to your audience. Remember that people who are interested and invested are there for your cause, and building on what has worked can help your reach more audiences.

Establish an online presence to stay in touch with your audience. With a consistent brand you remain visible and recognizable to your audience and connect on multiple platforms.

CHALLENGE PLOT

The challenge plot typically has a 3 arch story that starts with getting to know the protagonist. Once the character is developed you fall into the downbeat or the lowest point for your character. To create impact, you follow with an upbeat as your third arch. The upbeat is where the character finds success. It does not have to be complete success, but a step towards resolution.

Major Points:

- Appeals to our courage and strength
- Empowering for donors and volunteers
- Ends with success/ resolution

CREATIVITY PLOT

The creativity plot takes an old problem and frames it in a new light. It can create a breakthrough where another method has failed. One plot method is creating a potential "What if?" story. Where you encourage your audience to think about the problem in a creative and new way. This plot is best used when your organization is advocating for a different approach to a well-known problem.

Major Points:

- Resolves a problem in a new and creative way
- Innovate approaches where old solutions aren't working
- Results with creativity

CONNECTION PLOT

The connection plot is known as the hardest, but most emotionally powerful. It bridges the gap, making unlikely connections between small and unimportant events. As the story progresses, you notice a greater connection between the character, story, and audience. The plot's effectiveness comes from the surprise twist that reveals the human experience or lesson of the story.

Major Points:

- Bridging the gap
- Small inconsequential event that leads to a surprise
- Reveals a universal truth or lesson



Stories

6 TIPS FOR STORYBUILDING

Short: Tell only what you have to. Keep to 500 words or 2 minutes for videos.

Straightforward: Clear and concise writing is better. Avoid adding too much or going on tangents.

Personal: Tailor to a specific individual, not a generalized whole. Limit the amount of people in the story. Connect audiences to the character.

Authentic: Connection comes from truth. Audiences don't care or want to hear about perfect people.

Conflict and Imperfections: They bring stories to life and make us care about the resolution.

Ends with a message: Works only when there is a specific goal. Make sure the message is clear, but don't spell it out for the audience.

WHERE TO FIND STORY IDEAS

- Ask the receptionist or marketing team.
- Talk to your clients and supporters
- Search your newsletter and blog archives
- Check out national and local headlines
- Flip through your desk calendar
- Analyze your web stats
- Use news aggregators
- Interview at events, conferences, and programs
- Utilize Twitter and SlideShare
- Delve through social bookmarking sites

Appendix C

Messages

From Bronk et. al chapter 4.

STRATEGIC MESSAGING

- People are not blank slates and have their own perspectives
- Communication should be interactive and focus on the organizations and audiences frame.
- Messages and communication pieces resonate with values and worldviews of each individual audience
- Consider that people will have a default "idea" that they fall back to when reading your cause and message
- Proper direction and order of communication are what change peoples points of view, but not in all cases.

MESSAGING BOX

Start with the main message at the center of your communication piece and declare the overarching goal and purpose. The values, problem, solution, and action are all tied together in a "box" structure. They build off each other and around the main message.

- Values start with the value that embodies the organizations overall efforts
- Problem keep the statement concise and to the point
- Solution state the solution to inform your audience
- Action discuss the immediate and realistic effort audience can make

Appendix D

Original Sitemap

SITEMAPS

As part of the redesign process, I provided two sitemaps: one for SPAAR's current site and one for my prototype. Looking at a side-by-side comparison, these sitemaps help illustrate some of the revisions I've made to SPAAR's labels, organization, and navigational structure.

Current Sitemap:

- Home: SPAAR
 - Donate section
 - Sign-up for Newsletter
- About
 - Our Mission
 - Meet the Team
 - SPAAR Rescue Guidelines
 - Crusha's Hopsice Program
 - Current Hosice Animals
 - Happy Tails
 - Resources
 - Top Ten Reasons to Adopt a Senior Dog
 - Top Ten Reasons to Adopt a Senior Cat
 - Ask the Trainer
 - Ask the Trainer Blog
 - Guest Blog
 - Grief and Loss
 - Surrender

Support SPAAR

- SPAAR Calendar
- Donate
 - Become a Montly Donor
- Sponsor
- Foster
- Volunteer
- Pittsburgh Marathon Fundraiser

Adopt

- Adoptable Animals
 - Cats
 - Cat Adoption Application
 - Dogs
 - Dog Adoption Application

• Ferdinand's Fund

- Support Ferdinand's Fund
- Apply for Help
- Sucess Stories
- Crusha's Hopsice Program
 - Current Hosice Animals
- SPAAR Store
- Events
- Contact
- Cart

Appendix D

Prototype Sitemap

Prototype Sitmeap:

- Home: Senior Pet and Animal Rescue
 - Donate
 - Adopt
 - Support Ferdinand's Fund
 - Ask for Assistance
 - Pittsburgh Marathon Fundraiser
 - Contact Us
- About SPAAR
 - Our Mission
 - Meet the Team
 - SPAAR Partners
 - News and Events
 - Contact
- Our Impact
 - Happy Tails
 - Ferdinand's Success Stories
 - Community News
 - Pittsburgh Marathon

- Support SPAAR
 - Volunteer
 - Donate to SPAAR
 - Donate to Ferdinand's Fund
 - Sponsor Packages
 - SPAAR Store
- Our Adoptees
 - Adopt a Cat
 - Adopt a Dog
- Adoption Form
- Preparation
- Senior Pet Guide
- Aid and Resources
 - Grief and Loss
- Crusha's Hopsice
- Ferdinand's Assistance
- Ask Our Blog
- Emergency Information
- Surrender

The content highlighted in green are noted as sections found on the home page but are not a drop down menu in the navigation bar like the sections show after.



The information in this report was compiled from the Senior Pet and Animal Rescue's website, as well as research provided by Ana Karina Van Nortwick.