

AKC CANINE HEALTH FOUNDATION

# Annual Report

2019



AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB  
**CANINE HEALTH  
FOUNDATION®**  
PREVENT TREAT & CURE®  
SINCE 1995



**Dear Canine Health Supporter:**

In 2019, the AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF) demonstrated another year of growth in funding canine health research and programs that benefit all dogs and their people. As we look forward to 2020, we will celebrate twenty-five years of leadership in the advancement of canine health. As detailed in this Annual Report, our terrific progress is made possible by the dedication of CHF’s founders and the ongoing commitment of our many supporters and partners.

CHF awarded \$2.9 million in 48 canine health research grants in 2019. Research initiatives in epilepsy, canine cancer including hemangiosarcoma, and tick-borne diseases are making significant advances for dogs as researchers unravel the complexities of these all-too-common diseases. The American Kennel Club/AKC Canine Health Foundation/Theriogenology Foundation Small Animal Theriogenology Residency Program continues to thrive, educating new experts in canine reproduction. Additionally, four more CHF Clinician-Scientist Fellowships were awarded. We are dedicated to investing in future generations of canine health professionals and achieving progress in important research, companion animal reproductive practice, and clinical genetics.

Again in 2019, CHF earned a consecutive highest possible four-star rating from Charity Navigator and the Platinum Seal of Transparency from GuideStar. Together, through our investments in the best science and programs, we work to ensure a future where our dogs can live longer and healthier lives alongside us.

As we highlight the Foundation’s annual achievements in this report, the CHF Board of Directors and staff sincerely thank you for supporting the AKC Canine Health Foundation and our work to prevent, treat and cure canine disease.

J. Charles Garvin, MD, FACS  
Chairman of the Board

Diane Brown, DVM, PhD, DACVP  
Chief Executive Officer/Chief Scientific Officer

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# Who We Are

## Mission

*The AKC Canine Health Foundation is dedicated to advancing the health of all dogs and their owners by funding scientific research and supporting the dissemination of health information to prevent, treat and cure canine disease.*

## Vision

*Our vision is to address the health needs of all dogs across their entire lifetime by focusing on all aspects of their physical, mental, and social well-being. We embrace the One Health model as a critical tool to achieving our vision.*



Photo credit: Joanne Simoneau

## 2019 Scientific Review Committee

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Chief Scientific Officer

**Coady Egan**

Executive Assistant

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Accounting Specialist

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**Rebekah Borgert, MS**

Programs Specialist

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# Our Partners



In 1995, the American Kennel Club (AKC) founded CHF to advance canine health research. The AKC's cumulative investment of nearly \$28 million in financial and in-kind support helps to further the mission of CHF. The AKC partners with CHF to support the AKC/AKCCHF/TF Small Animal Theriogenology Residency Program. In 2019, the AKC again matched donations through CHF's Canine Cancer Research Initiative, CHOICE (Canine Health Opportunity to Impact Care) Program, and for new and lapsed donors providing valuable funds for canine health research. The AKC is a champion for dogs and canine health.



For over 20 years, Purina has partnered with CHF, investing more than \$14 million to promote canine health research. Purina sponsors CHF's biennial National Parent Club Canine Health Conference in St. Louis, Missouri and also supports CHF through the Purina Parent Club Partnership Program. In addition, Purina provides the opportunity to memorialize and honor dogs, people, and organizations with a personalized brick paver that benefits CHF on the Walk of Champions or Path of Honor at the Purina Event Center in Gray Summit, Missouri. To learn more, visit [akcCHF.org/bricks](http://akcCHF.org/bricks).



Elanco Animal Health has generously supported CHF research and programs on numerous canine health topics including dermatology and allergic disease, immunology and infectious disease, oncology, and tick-borne diseases. They were a session sponsor of the 2019 AKC Canine Health Foundation National Parent Club Canine Health Conference and received the 2019 AKC Canine Health Foundation President's Award for their dedication to improving the health of all dogs.

## Parent Club Conference

The AKC Canine Health Foundation hosted the 2019 National Parent Club Canine Health Conference on August 9-11, 2019. The biennial conference, sponsored by Purina, provides a unique opportunity for canine health researchers, parent club members, veterinarians, and veterinary students to interact and discuss the latest findings in canine health research. This year's conference included lectures on Nutrition & Disease, Autoimmune Disease, Infectious Disease & Cancer, and Genetics & Genetic Testing.



*Dr. Anita Oberbauer receives the award from Dr. Mary O. Smith*



Note: Registrants may fall into more than one category.

At the conference, Dr. Anita Oberbauer was awarded the Asa Mays, DVM Excellence in Canine Health Research Award. Named for Dr. Asa Mays, a member of the AKC Canine Health Foundation's first Board of Directors, the award is presented to an investigator who demonstrates meritorious achievements in furthering the mission of identifying, characterizing, and treating canine disease and ailments. Dr. Oberbauer received the award in recognition of her work on the genetic basis of disease in dogs.

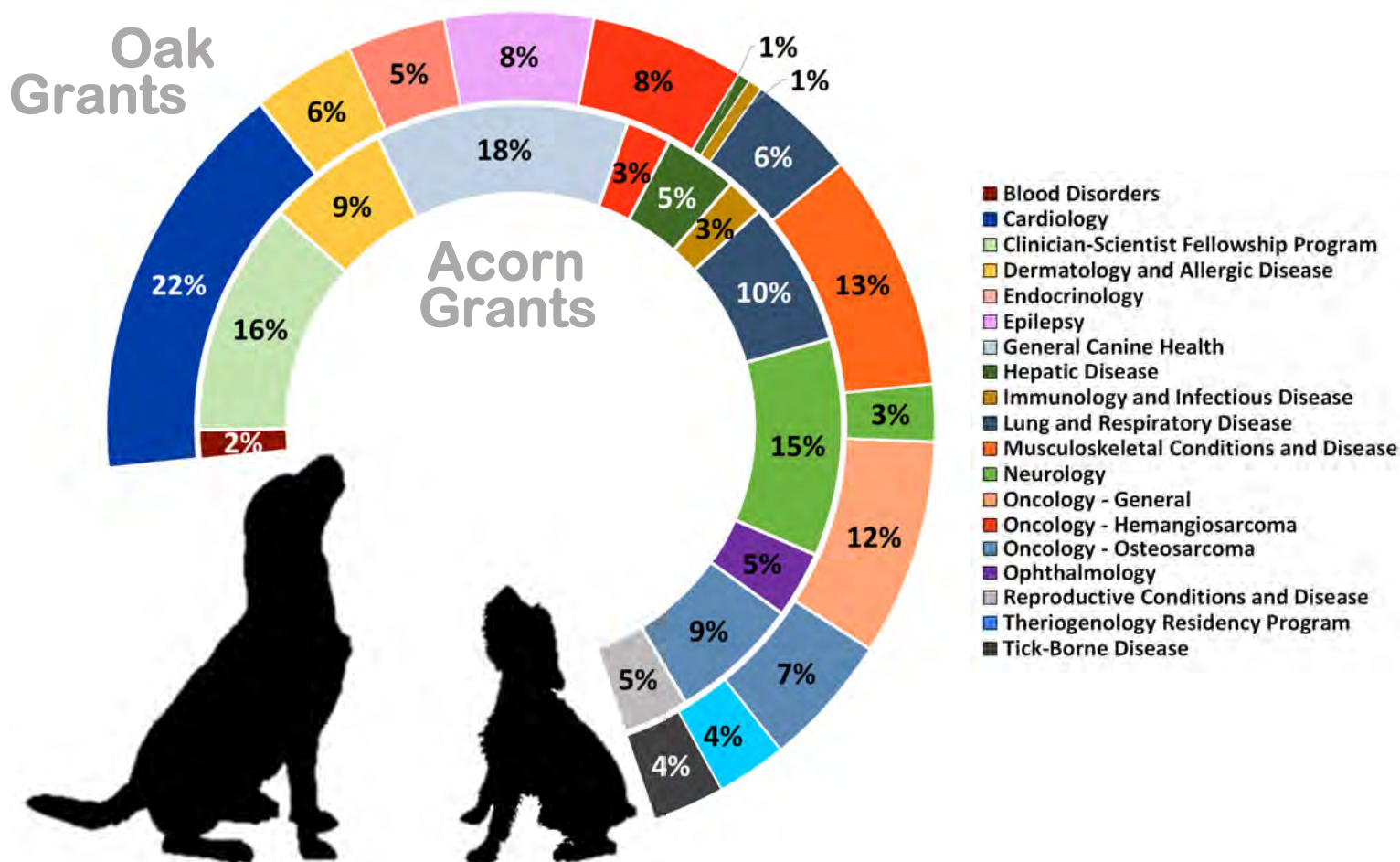
# Investments in Research

CHF awards scientifically sound research grants to top investigators across all disciplines of canine health following a rigorous peer review process. The Foundation strives to add depth to its research portfolio in the health areas of greatest need. AKC Canine Health Foundation grants are categorized by Research Program Area and grant applications must be submitted in response to specific Requests for Proposals (RFP). Research Program Areas allow dog lovers to support specific health concerns. Grants include pilot studies or Acorn Grants (award amount  $\leq$ \$15,000) and Oak Grants (award amount  $>$ \$15,000).

## AKC Canine Health Foundation

### 2019 Research & Educational Grants by Program Area

Since 1995,  
AKC Canine Health Foundation has  
supported canine health  
research with over  
**\$54 million** in grant funding.





## Research Initiatives

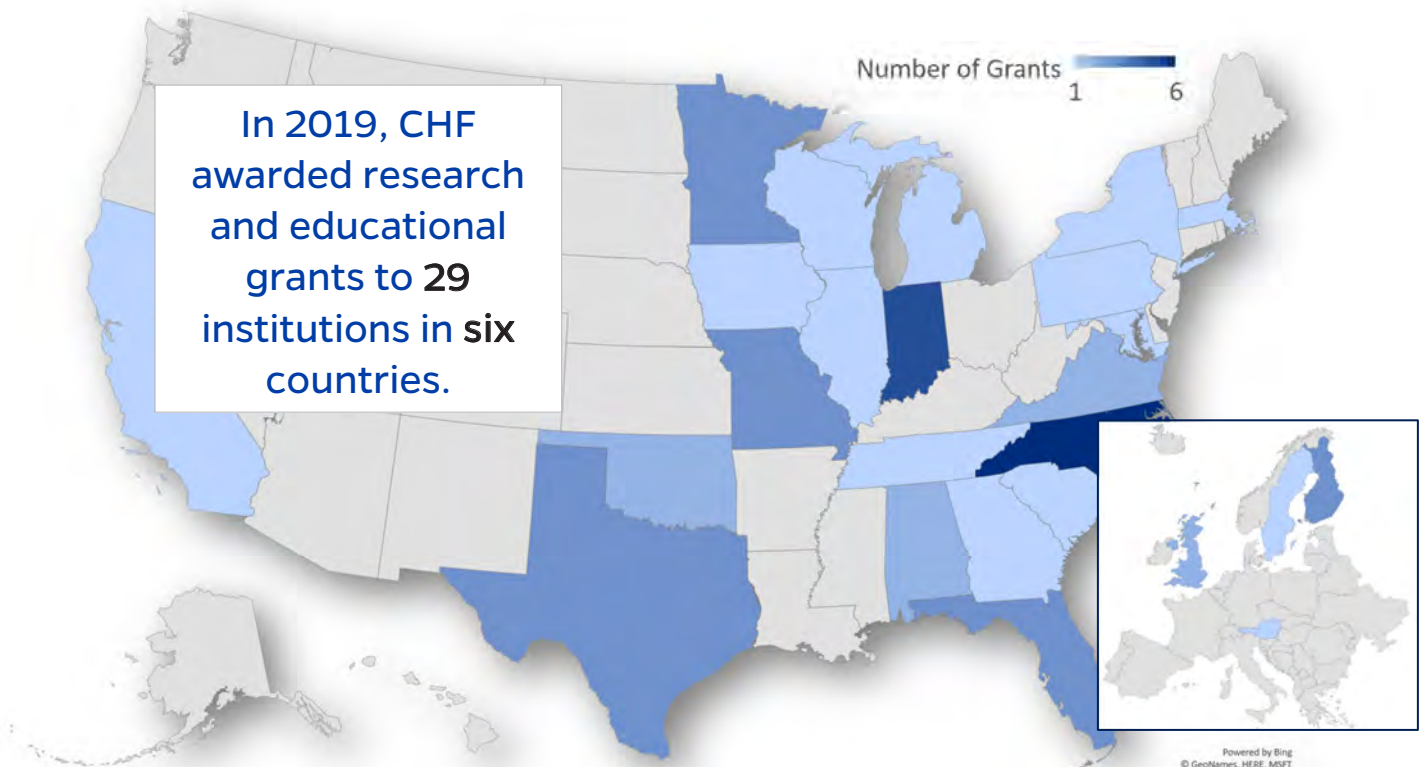
Focused research initiatives allow CHF to target fundraising and research funding to the highest priority conditions in all dogs and across all dog breeds. In 2019, seeking breakthroughs and new diagnostics, preventives, and treatments, CHF and its donors tackled hemangiosarcoma, tick-borne diseases, epilepsy, and much more ([akcchf.org/research](http://akcchf.org/research)). Thanks to the support of many dog clubs, foundations, and individuals, progress continues across the following active research initiatives:

**Hemangiosarcoma Research Initiative** — Since 1995, CHF and its donors have invested \$2.6 million in 22 grants in understanding mechanisms and causes, new targets for treatment, and early diagnostics for canine hemangiosarcoma, an aggressive cancer in dogs. CHF, along with its donors, continues to address this devastating disease through this initiative launched in 2018 ([akcchf.org/hemangiosarcoma](http://akcchf.org/hemangiosarcoma)).

**Tick-Borne Disease Research Initiative** — Launched in 2016, CHF has invested over \$750,000 in ten tick-borne disease research grants ([akcchf.org/ticks](http://akcchf.org/ticks)). Current grants explore better methods to detect tick-borne diseases and recognize new pathogens, plus improve our understanding of how ticks locate dog hosts and how the canine immune system responds to tick-borne infections.

**Epilepsy Research Initiative** — The CHF Epilepsy Research Initiative addresses the most common neurological condition of dogs. Since 1995, CHF and its donors have invested more than \$1.46 million in 19 grants to study canine epilepsy ([akcchf.org/epilepsy](http://akcchf.org/epilepsy)). Ongoing studies are exploring the use and effects of dietary supplements in the treatment of canine epilepsy, underlying genetics and disease mechanisms, and the role of the gastrointestinal tract and microbiome in the development and treatment of this disease.

## Global Reach



## One Health and Genetics



In 2019, **27%** of all grants awarded incorporated a One Health approach, helping dogs and their humans through **translational and interdisciplinary research**.

Similarly, almost **30%** of 2019 grants had a genetic component, working to tackle breed-specific issues along with diseases affecting all dogs.



## Publication Highlights from CHF-Supported Projects

Through peer-reviewed publications, CHF-funded research outcomes are broadly shared with donors, researchers, veterinarians, breeders, and the dog-loving public to bring about better treatments, more accurate diagnoses, and an improved understanding of the mechanisms that cause disease. In 2019, CHF-supported investigators published 45 new peer-reviewed publications in high impact scientific and veterinary journals, contributing to the 794 CHF peer-reviewed publications to date. This total body of work has been cited more than 31,000 times in other research.

### **Neurology - Grant 02324-E - Clinician-Scientist Fellowship**

North Carolina State University

Investigators found that Golden Retrievers and Wirehaired Pointing Griffons are among the breeds that develop steroid responsive meningitis-arteritis, a painful inflammatory disease of the central nervous system of young dogs, and that treatment with high doses of corticosteroids was associated with more severe adverse effects without benefit to outcome.

(Lau, et al. 2019) DOI: [O.1111/JVIM.15543](https://doi.org/10.1111/JVIM.15543)

### **Oncology - Osteosarcoma - Grant 02527-E - Clinician-Scientist Fellowship**

University of California, Davis

Investigators found that metastatic osteosarcoma lesions are infiltrated by greater numbers of the same types of immune cells present in the primary tumor. Biomarkers identified in a primary osteosarcoma tumor provide new information for immunotherapy.

(Withers, et al. 2019) DOI: [10.1111/VCO.12459](https://doi.org/10.1111/VCO.12459)

### **Oncology - General - Grant 01557 - Narrowing the Search for the Genetic Basis of Histiocytic Malignancies**

North Carolina State University

Investigators discovered complex genetic changes associated with histiocytic malignancies, an aggressive form of cancer affecting the immune system. Mutations were found that result in fewer tumor suppressor genes, higher levels of pro-tumor proteins, and a wide variety of tumor chromosome numbers. These factors help explain the aggressive nature and treatment resistance of this cancer.

(Kennedy, et al. 2019) DOI: [10.1007/S10577-019-09606-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/S10577-019-09606-0)

### **Behavior - Grant 02518 - The Effects of Early Life Experience on Working Dog Temperament and Cognition**

University of Arizona

Investigators found that two standardized temperament tests were beneficial in identifying the 20% of service dog candidates least likely to succeed in that role. Behavioral and cognitive testing can help refine the pool for successful working dog candidates as they progress through each phase of training.

(Bray, et al. 2019) DOI: [10.3389/FVETS.2019.00049](https://doi.org/10.3389/FVETS.2019.00049)

### **General Canine Health - Grant 02529 - Understanding the Genetics of Adverse Drug Reactions in Sighthounds: Phase II**

Washington State University

Investigators identified a genetic mutation responsible for slower drug metabolism in Greyhounds and several other breeds. They now hope to create a test for this genetic mutation that will allow veterinarians to tailor the use of anesthesia and other medications to best suit each canine patient.

(Martinez, et al. 2020) DOI: [10.1038/S41598-019-56660-Z](https://doi.org/10.1038/S41598-019-56660-Z)

### **Oncology - Hemangiosarcoma - Grant 02519 - Prevalence of *Bartonella* spp. Infection in Dogs with Cardiac and Splenic Hemangiosarcomas**

North Carolina State University

Investigators found that 73% of dogs in this cohort with confirmed hemangiosarcoma had *Bartonella* DNA (an intracellular bacteria) in their tumor tissue and non-tumor tissues. Additional research is needed to determine the mechanism by which *Bartonella* may contribute to tumor development and aid preventive strategies against *Bartonella* infection.

(Lashnits, et al. 2020) DOI: [DOI.ORG/ 10.1371/JOURNAL.PONE.0227234](https://doi.org/10.1371/JOURNAL.PONE.0227234)

**CHF-funded research has resulted in 794 peer-reviewed publications cited over 31,000 times.**

# Educational Grants

## AKC CHF Clinician-Scientist Fellowship Program

The AKC Canine Health Foundation Clinician-Scientist Fellowship Program encourages and supports the next generation of canine health researchers. Students are selected based on their promise and enthusiasm for pursuing a career in canine health research. Through these fellowships the AKC Canine Health Foundation's mission to prevent, treat and cure canine disease will endure for years to come.

### Class of 2020



**Shelby Gasson, DVM: Texas A&M University**

**Mentor:** Brian Saunders, DVM, PhD, DACVS

Dr. Gasson is continuing her work as the AKC Canine Health Foundation GCHP Hill Country's Let's Get Ready To Rumble "Rumble" Clinician-Scientist Fellow ([akcCHF.org/rumble](http://akcCHF.org/rumble)). Dr. Gasson's work focuses on the development of tissue engineering constructs for treatment of osteochondral (joint) defects.

*This fellowship is generously sponsored by Rumble's owners, Carolyn and Gary Koch, breeders Kristy and Kevin Ratliff, and handler Esteban Farias.*



GCHP Hill Country's Let's Get Ready to Rumble



**Liza Crissiuma Gershony, DVM, PhD: University of California, Davis**

**Mentor:** Anita Oberbauer, PhD

Dr. Gershony's work focuses on the current state of genetic testing for dogs in order to more accurately inform disease pathogenesis and aid genetic test development.



**Sarah Murphy: Clemson University**

**Mentor:** Leigh Anne Clark, PhD

Ms. Murphy is a PhD candidate at Clemson University. Her work focuses on the genetics of congenital idiopathic megaesophagus (CIM) in German Shepherd Dogs and Great Danes, to develop a genomic prediction tool to help breeders.

*This fellowship is generously sponsored by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals.*



**Pradeep Neupane, MS: North Carolina State University**

**Mentor:** Edward Breitschwerdt, DVM, DACVIM

Mr. Neupane is a doctoral candidate at North Carolina State University. His work focuses on serodiagnostic testing options for infection with *Bartonella* spp. and evaluation of the association between *Bartonella* infection and hemangiosarcoma in dogs.

*This fellowship is generously sponsored by the American German Shepherd Dog Charitable Foundation, Inc. and Briard Club of America Health and Education Trust.*

**To learn more, or to support this program, visit [akcCHF.org/clinsci](http://akcCHF.org/clinsci)**



# AKC/AKCCHF/TF Small Animal Theriogenology Residency Program



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The Theriogenology Residency Program is a collaboration between the American Kennel Club, the AKC Canine Health Foundation, and the Theriogenology Foundation to increase the number of trained practitioners in companion animal theriogenology and clinical genetics. Since 2016, seven companion animal reproductive specialists have been trained through this program.

Theriogenology is the branch of veterinary medicine concerned with reproduction, including the physiology and pathology of male and female reproductive systems, and the clinical practice of veterinary obstetrics, gynecology, and andrology. The two- to three-year residency program provides specialty training in all aspects of companion animal reproductive medicine and surgery, clinical genetics, as well as clinical practice related to male and female reproduction, obstetrics and neonatology. To learn more, or to support this program, visit [akcchf.org/therio](http://akcchf.org/therio).

## Residents Active in 2019



**Jamie Douglas, DVM: Auburn University**

**Residency Coordinator:** Robyn R. Wilborn, DVM, MS, DACT

Dr. Jamie Douglas received her DVM from Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine in 2014 and her master's degree in animal science (focus: reproduction) from Southern Illinois University Carbondale's College of Agricultural Sciences in 2015.



**Alyssa Helms, DVM: Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine**

**Residency Coordinator:** Julie T. Cecere, DVM, MS, DACT

Dr. Alyssa Helms attended the University of Tennessee for both her undergraduate degree in animal science (summa cum laude) and her veterinary degree. She has extensive experience in dog training and works with canine breeders to educate on the preservation of purpose-bred dogs and canine reproductive medicine.



**Karen Von Dollen, DVM, DACT: North Carolina State University**

**Residency Coordinator:** Scott Bailey, DVM, MS

Dr. Karen Von Dollen attended Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania and earned her DVM degree from the University of California, Davis. She earned her board certification in theriogenology in 2018 and completed a master's degree on canine pyometra research in 2019; she completed her residency in 2019.



**Kate Withowski, DVM: North Carolina State University**

**Residency Coordinator:** Sara Lyle, DVM, PhD

Dr. Kate Withowski completed her veterinary degree at St. George's University School of Veterinary Medicine after receiving her Bachelor of Arts from Stony Brook University. Dr. Withowski completed a theriogenology internship at the University of Georgia prior to starting her residency. She breeds and competes with Weimaraners.

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*The Golden Retriever Foundation is a Champion Sponsor of this educational program.*

# Financial Statements

## Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2019

### Assets

2019

Cash and cash equivalents	\$3,810,422
Investments	22,603,487
Contributions receivable	469,083
Other receivables	7,410
Prepaid expenses	55,767
Fixed assets, net	13,465
	<hr/>
Total assets	<u>\$26,959,634</u>

### Liabilities and Net Assets

#### Liabilities:

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$73,686
Grants payable	<u>3,967,822</u>
Total liabilities	<u>\$4,041,508</u>

#### Net assets:

Without donor restrictions	
Unrestricted	\$2,786,454
With donor restrictions	
Temporarily restricted	16,098,970
Permanently restricted	<u>4,032,702</u>
Total net assets	<u>\$22,918,126</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$26,959,634</u>

The American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation, Inc.'s financial statements, audited by Williams, Overman & Pierce, LLP, are available at [akcchf.org](http://akcchf.org).

## Summarized Statement of Activities

Year ended December 31, 2019

Revenues and Other Support	2019
Contributions	\$8,624,889
Contributions from related parties	2,128,097
Grant management income	12,288
Interest and dividend income	589,334
Net unrealized and realized investment gains	2,337,277
Sponsored events and conferences	144,305
In-kind donations	640,018
Royalty Income	304,266
Miscellaneous income	<u>25,829</u>
Total revenues and other support	\$14,806,303
<b>Expenses</b>	
Canine research and education	\$4,014,874
Fundraising	520,796
General and administrative	<u>385,707</u>
Total expenses	<u>\$4,921,377</u>
Increase in net assets	9,884,926
Net assets – beginning of year	<u>\$13,033,200</u>
Net assets – end of year	<u><u>\$22,918,126</u></u>

*In 2019, AKC Canine Health Foundation earned a highest four-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator, and a Platinum Seal of Transparency from GuideStar. These ratings indicate that CHF exceeds industry standards for fiscal responsibility, accountability and transparency, and outperforms most charities in its category.*





# Contributors

## 2019 Honor Roll

The Honor Roll of donors recognizes cash contributions of \$500 or more made between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019. Space prohibits us from listing all donors; we are deeply grateful to all who support the CHF mission.

### DIAMOND BENEFACTOR

(\$1,000,000 +)

Anonymous

### BENEFACTOR

(\$500,000-\$999,999)

American Kennel Club  
Purina

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(\$100,000-\$499,999)

Mrs. Nancy Corbin  
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Australian Shepherd Health and Genetics  
Institute, Inc.  
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