



Emma, a former sled dog



This puppy, House, fell out of a truck and needed surgery.

Want to run an animal shelter when you grow up?

We chatted with **Wendy Davies**, manager of the BC SPCA South Peace Branch in Dawson Creek. She told us all about the rewards and challenges of running an animal shelter.

What made you want to work for the BC SPCA?

I started my journey with the BC SPCA as a volunteer almost nine years ago. Working for the BC SPCA allows me to help animals by working toward changes that make the world better for them. At the BC SPCA, we are always looking for ways to improve the lives of animals – both in our communities and in our shelters.



Wendy and Emma

What do you do at the BC SPCA?

I have been managing the South Peace Branch for eight-and-a-half years. As a branch manager, I wear many hats! Some of my duties include:

- Finding new families for thousands of homeless animals
- Helping hundreds of injured, abused and neglected animals recover and learn to trust people again
- Teaching people in our community about cool animal facts and how to be safe around and care for animals
- Enforcing and improving animal bylaws
- Working with local government and RCMP as a team to protect animals in our region from cruelty

If you had pets growing up, can you tell us about one memory that sticks out for you?

I grew up with cats, dogs and horses. As a child, my cat, Misty, always snuggled in with me when I went to sleep at night. She always made me feel safe and warm.

Can you tell us a little bit about your professional background?

I used to work with preschool children, helping to improve their speech development using play and positive interactions. I find that the patience and positive energy required to work with young children is also a valuable skill when working with animals.

What's your favourite part of your job?

Watching dogs and kittens play. Snuggling cute pets. Helping scared animals feel safe again.



Miss Shivers had frostbite.



Wendy and her staff rescued this baby beaver when her family's dam washed out during a flood.

Above: Winter is one of the biggest challenges of running a shelter in the northern part of B.C. Wendy and her staff have to work extra hard to make sure the animals outside are safe when it's very cold.

Below: The BC SPCA is building a new shelter in Dawson Creek! Wendy is most looking forward to having more space for volunteers and for the community to get involved — through youth reading programs and other activities for kids.

Is there one case that sticks out in your mind?

On New Year's Eve four years ago, we rescued 19 extremely neglected sled dogs. Volunteers flooded in and we were able to help the dogs recover and learn how to become wonderful pets.

One of the dogs was so scared that she wouldn't even eat while at the shelter. I fostered and then adopted sweet Emma. Today, she is nearly 14 years old and spends all of her days warm and cuddled on the couch. Emma is the sweetest, most sensitive dog I have ever met. She reminds me every day that the work we are doing is important and does change the world for many animals.

What is the most unusual animal you've helped?

A baby beaver! Her family's dam was washed out during a flood and she is now recovering at Wild ARC (the BC SPCA's wildlife rehabilitation centre on Vancouver Island). From what I understand, she will be returned to Dawson Creek and released where she was found sometime over the coming year.

What keeps you excited to do your job every day?

Seeing the happiness of the animals when I come in each day. Adoption days. Watching animals heal and get both emotionally and physically better when they have been

through tough times. The mornings here are full of puppy smiles and purring kitties. It's a check-in I do each day that tells me that we are doing a good job.

What is one piece of advice you would give kids who want to make a difference for animals?

Choose to do something to make the world a better place. Don't just talk or complain about problems you see! Take action. Volunteer. Fight for something you believe in. When you see a problem, think about ways to make it better and work on it! It's amazing how often you are able to change things when you put your mind and heart into it.

Your career path... to becoming an animal shelter manager

- ✓ Graduate high school
- ✓ Post-secondary school (preferred)
- ✓ B.C. driver's license
- ✓ Management experience
- ✓ Leadership, communication and organizational skills
- ✓ Knowledge of the Five Freedoms and animal welfare
- ✓ Experience in an animal shelter, managing volunteers or fundraising



Buzz, a rescued stray