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Humans Society volunteers Rachel Dinsmore, left, and photographer Shelley Gogan work to get a picture of Bruce outside the Capital Area Humane Society, which closed this weekend after a water main break caused water damage in certain areas of the building.

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By [Alissa Widman Neese](#)

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A frozen pipe burst and flooded the second-floor ceiling, buckling it and sending a deluge crashing into the rooms below.

Rachel Finney, the Capital Area Humane Society's executive director, couldn't help but get choked up when describing the devastation the shelter suffered this weekend. No people or animals were harmed, but extensive water damage forced the Hilliard-area nonprofit to close Saturday and Sunday as a disaster-cleaning service rid the building of water and debris.

"When you see that level of devastation in a space where so many people put their time, energy, love, compassion and dollars, it's just awful," Finney said Sunday.

"I can't really put it into words, how I felt when I saw the ceiling coming down."

The shelter will reopen Monday at 2 p.m. to offer adoptions and limited intake of animals. It will continue to investigate all allegations of animal cruelty, but its Animal Support Center will offer limited services by appointment only.

There is still plenty of work left before the Capital Area Humane Society is fully operational again, and December is typically its busiest time of year, both for animal intakes and adoptions, spokeswoman Mary Hiser said.

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The shelter cares for an average of 225 animals daily — dogs, cats and "pocket pets," such as hamsters, rabbits and guinea pigs.

Animals are housed in a separate area that was not affected by flooding. The pipe that burst early Saturday morning was part of a sprinkler system in a ceiling located above a second-floor training room. When it froze and ruptured, an alarm system notified Columbus firefighters of the problem. They shut off the water and then contacted Finney and other humane society staff members.

Water gushed down the stairs and into the first floor, damaging the building's lobby, adoption area, retail store and animal hospital. Shelter services have been temporarily relocated to the building's unaffected areas. Staff members are still sorting through what's salvageable.

The shelter hasn't outsourced any animal's medical care yet but that could be a possibility, depending on the damage in the hospital area.

"Our animals are safe, warm, clean and well-cared-for, and we'll make sure they stay that way," Finney said.

The shelter has received an outpouring of support on social media.

The best way people can help is to donate funds to help with repairs, Finney said. Donations are accepted on the organization's website, www.caahs-pets.org. It's not yet known if insurance will cover all of the costs to repair damages.

Central Ohio business Harvest Pizzeria, which has three central Ohio locations, announced it will donate all of Monday's profits to the shelter. The restaurants are located at 2885 N. High St., Clintonville; 45 N. High St., Dublin; and 495 S. 4th St., German Village.

The Capital Area Humane Society was founded in 1883. More than 92 percent of its funding is provided by donations and fees for services. Its current facility at 3015 Scioto Darby Executive Court was constructed in 1992

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