The app
Help a Paw is a (currently) informal volunteering organization that aims to help animals in need. Currently our single focus is the app by the same name. Its idea is to help injured stray animals. When someone sees an animal that needs urgent help (hit by a car, stuck in on a tree or in a shaft, etc) but is unable to provide the needed help at the moment they can submit a signal through the app. Then other people that have the app and are nearby receive a notification. In this way the app acts as a mediator in an informal network of volunteers that help animals. Each signal has a description, location, author and date. Optionally it can have a photo. There is also a status with 3 levels: "Help needed", "Somebody on the way" and "Solved". People can also submit comments about a signal (e.g. someone is there but needs transport, a ladder or something else).
Currently there are apps for iOS and Android which can be found in the respective app stores.

The future
However, there is a lot more to be desired in terms of new features and improvements. Our current challenges are:
- ~~More reliable notification mechanism~~
- ~~Push notifications about signal updates~~
- ~~Different types of signals (for wild animals, for lost animals, for blood donation requests, etc.)~~
- ~~Show nearby vet clinics~~
- ~~Sign-in with Google and Apple (in addition to Facebook)~~
- ~~General UX improvements (adding a user profile screen, password reset, multiple photos in signals, etc.)~~

We are also in the process of developing a web app, too. This will enable users to share links to the signals in social networks. This in turn will greatly improve the visibility of both the individual signals and the app as a whole, hopefully bringing in a lot of new users. Having a large user base is central to the app being effective (i.e. you want a lot of people to have the app installed so when someone submits a signal a lot of people are nearby and at least one responds).

The technologies
Both apps are native (iOS is a mix of ObjC & Swift, Android is Java). There are no plans for rewriting the apps in Swift/Kotlin but new components will/can use the new languages.
For the backend the apps use a backend-as-a-service (BAAS) solution called Backendless. It offers user management, database storage, has REST API and dedicated SDKs for the most popular platforms. There is also a good documentation on the site.

The management
For project management of development tasks we use GitHub Projects which is a simplified digital kanban. There you can create notes and issues (which are the same issues that you can see in the Issues tab). When you create a PR on a particular issue - it moves automatically

along the board columns. This is the board for the web app:
https://github.com/HelpAPaw/WebApp-React/projects/2

For faster communication we have a dedicated Slack workspace that can be found at
https://helpapaw.slack.com/
You need invitations for both so let Milen know if you don't have access.
The project is open-source and the code is on GitHub: https://github.com/HelpAPaw
We use Git Feature Branch Workflow: make your changes in a feature branch from the
development branch and create a Pull Request when you think you are ready. Then other team
members review and test the changes and finally the PR is merged.

This is a live document so don't hesitate to ask questions and suggest improvements!

Here's to a great collaboration and a lot of saved lives!
Milen Marinov
Help a Paw founder