

PAWS FOR *Thought*

A Publication of the Humane Society of Ventura County
A Compassionate Care Shelter

WINTER 2020

SINCE
1932!

**Holiday
Pet Safety**

**Santa Paws
CANCELED**

**Introducing
HSVC's Emergency
Response Team**



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Letter from the Director

This past year has been anything but ordinary; we've all had to adapt to life in a pandemic. The Humane Society of Ventura County has not been spared from this adjustment. It hasn't been easy, but we choose to end the year on a note of gratitude. We give thanks to our staff for coming to work under adverse conditions. From all of the HSVC staff, we want to thank our supporters for continuing to keep us in their thoughts. We give thanks to Sara Bayless for giving us the property and the means to build an animal shelter in our little corner of Ojai.

Though the HSVC organization has been around since 1932, it wasn't until 1982 that we relocated to 402 Bryant Street. Our original dog kennel has safely sheltered the thousands of dogs that have come through our doors. However, we feel it is time to rebuild and we need your help to do so.

We are looking to start fresh and build a state of the art dog kennel that will serve us in a much more meaningful way. The lessons from the past three years of disaster response have shown us that we need to increase our capacity. We also need a more comfortable space for the dogs and visitors despite the weather extremes. We are currently in the design phase of this project. Architectural Designer John Turturro has done an impressive job imagining the impossible: designing this space within our limited budget. We need your support to complete this massive but necessary kennel expansion. And as we look toward 2021, we offer our gratitude once again. Without you, we would not be able to serve those in need.

- Jolene Hoffman, Shelter Director



Oliver's Report

The holidays are here, hip, hip, hurray! But the sad thing is that we are still closed to the public. We have no idea how long this might last, but I am happy to see my friends getting adopted. I want to say a special thank you to whoever brought me cases of peanut butter crackers! Wow, I am in peanut butter heaven! What, no Santa visiting this year? This will be the first time in 34 years that we have not celebrated the Santa Paws Fundraiser. I am looking forward to a healthy 2021. Happy Holidays!



Santa Paws Canceled

With a heavy heart, we announce our annual Santa Paws Holiday event has been canceled due to circumstances related to COVID-19. This year would have been the 34th year our shelter hosted the Santa Paws Fundraiser. Instead, we will be offering a Selfie Holiday Photo Booth complete with festive attire for your four-legged friends. The booth will be set up on the patio in front of our main office located at 402 Bryant St. in Ojai. Stop by and show your holiday spirit all December from 10 am – 4 pm. While we are disappointed we can't spread holiday cheer in person this year, the Shelter is in need of your support now more than ever. As a private nonprofit, the HSVC relies 100% on private donations to provide our services. Please consider donating to our Shelter so we can continue providing quality care to animals in need. Visit hsvc.org/donate for more information.





Humane Education Advocating in a Virtual World

The Humane Society of Ventura County relies on kind donations from our community. Clare Gurrola at St. Patrick's School in Thousand Oaks empowered her students and her school to rise to the occasion.

I had the pleasure of meeting students from Mrs. Gurrola's classroom virtually. Students participated in their classroom at school, and others participated in their homes. To engage her students with the unit about animals, they learned how to properly care for companion pets from HSVC's presentation, Pet Care & Responsibility. It was wonderful seeing how engaged the students were, with thoughtful questions and loving comments about their pets at home.

After the presentation, the students were called to action. The school participated in a donation drive to help out the animals at the Shelter. They collected items from our Wish-list in addition to monetary donations. Head of School, Mrs. Nancy Whitson, says, "The St.

Patrick's Day School in Thousand Oaks has a fully developed Service Learning program which guides children to understand the importance of giving to others and being helpers in their community. As one of our annual service projects, the second graders collect donations for the Humane Society in Ojai, which they have been doing for the last four years. Students also learn what it means to be advocates and spread the word about the great services the Shelter provides." From all of us at the HSVC, we want to extend a big thank you to Mrs. Gurrola, her 2nd-grade class, and students of St. Patrick's Day School for their generosity!

If you would like more information about our virtual presentations, FREE distance learning lesson plans, and virtual field trips, please contact Angie Sagliani at Education@hsvc.org or call 805-364-1350. I look forward to meeting you virtually until we can meet again in person.

-Angie Sagliani, Humane Educator

Success Story: Jake the Rancher

Four-year-old Jake came to the HSVC in the fall of 2017 after being rescued in the field by Humane Officers. The adorable Australian Cattle dog quickly found a new home, but his new owner was forced to return him to the Shelter a week later after he did not get along with her other dog, Cecile, a friend of Jake's former owner,



began spending time with Jake after he returned to the HSVC. She quickly fell in love with his sweet personality and decided to make him a part of the family in November of 2017. "He went to every ranch I worked on and everyone instantly fell in love with him. I spent a lot of time training him so that he stays safe around the horses and wildlife. He is great and listens like no other dog I've ever had," said Cecile.

Cecile and her fiancé Jared recently moved their family from Ojai to Montana and are now living the ranch life full time. Cecile says that Jake has taken to their new outdoor lifestyle better than she could've imagined. "Jake has always had a wild heart. It's more clear now than ever before. It's not that he belongs to the mountains, it seems the mountains belong to him. I've never seen him as happy as he is when he gets to spend the days and nights out in the mountains with his little brother, the horses and I. I couldn't imagine life without him!" said Cecile.

Meet the Staff

Welcome Audra Lucas, Volunteer Coordinator

For her lifetime, Audra Lucas has been an ongoing advocate for animals and a cheerleader for underdogs. For the last ten years, she has contributed to Volunteer Management and can also be recognized through her volunteerism with local agencies and grassroots organizations. Audra has worked with The Coalition To End Family Violence as the Volunteer and Training Coordinator. She developed the community and staff Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Crisis Counseling Training while also managing their volunteer program and internships. In addition, Audra has experience in the music festival industry, creating volunteer training protocols and fun team building exercises for groups of a few thousand. Her favorite work in Volunteer Management was consulting with the Burning Man Organization and having the opportunity to work with creative people all over the world.



While our Volunteer Program is closed due to COVID-19, we are hosting CEOs, Contactless Engagement Opportunities, for our volunteers. If you missed our first one, the “Donut Think We Forgot About You!” donut and coffee event, not to worry, more are coming. If you would like to receive invitations for future CEOs, please sign up via our website or email Volunteer@hsvc.org to be added to the volunteer email list. Stay tuned to our Volunteer Facebook page to find out when the next event will be. We will continue to host safe and fun CEOs as we prepare for our Volunteer Program to reopen. Our volunteers are essential to the shelter, and we know we would not be able to do what we do without them!

- Audra Lucas,
Volunteer Coordinator



“As a Ventura local, I am looking forward to bringing my skills, experience, passion for justice, and genuine excitement to the HSVC as the new Volunteer Coordinator.”
- Audra Lucas



To say that 2020 has been a challenge would be an understatement. The Humane Society of Ventura County shut its doors to the public on March 21st, which meant no more adoptions, no more low-cost spay and neuter clinic, no more volunteers, and certainly no more casual strolls for the public to visit the animals.

Even though our door sign said closed, we were anything but. Our Humane Officers kept responding to calls of animal abuse and neglect. Our Adoption Counselors kept answering the phones. Our Kennel staff kept feeding and socializing the scores of animals under our care. Our clinic staff kept a close eye on our animals' medical needs and kept up alteration surgeries for those in need. Our Humane Educator shifted her entire curriculum online to accommodate the families and schools participating in distance learning.

Herein lies the challenge! How do we continue to offer our services without your support? The truth is our services have been in more need since the Pandemic. Thank heavens, we were in a position to help the Purkey family who evacuated from the Creek Fire and sought out sanctuary for their 14 pets at the HSVC. Thank heavens, we were able to assist the 21 dogs rescued from a hoarding house in Lompoc. Thank heavens, we were able to find forever homes for dozens of cats, dogs, and horses and reunite numerous lost pets with their owners. We were even able to keep our Pet Food Bank open, offering free pet food to those in need. We are certainly not going to let the pandemic stand in our way of fulfilling our mission.

However, our financial support has significantly decreased since the start of the pandemic. Despite this, we continue to provide for those in need. We are grateful for all of our supporters, volunteers, and community partners who have kept us in their thoughts. May 2021 be even better.

- Greg Cooper, Director of Community Outreach



Angus' Journey Thank You Search Dog Foundation!

One-year-old Angus came to the HSVC as a stray in early August. A black Lab/Retriever mix, Angus loved playing with toys and running around in our agility yard. It was as though the peppy

pup had endless energy! After noticing Angus' toy drive, the staff reached out to our friends at the Search Dog Foundation (SDF) located in Santa Paula to see if

he might be a good fit for their program. SDF is a national organization that recruits and trains rescue dogs and then partners them with fire fighters and first responders during disasters.

We were thrilled to welcome

Sylvia Stoney, SDF's Director of Canine Recruitment, to the Shelter in Ojai to meet Angus. Sylvia spent time with Angus in our agility yard and performed a quick assessment to see if he had some of the quali-

ties SDF looks for in their trainees. One of these qualities is an innate toy drive, as SDF uses toys as rewards when the dog completes a task. She also tested his nerve

strength and agility when navigating uneven surfaces. Angus proved to be very agile after being led up and down our ramps and balance beam bridges without hesitation.

After passing the first round of assessments, Sylvia took Angus

to the SDF campus to test his skills further. However, his full performance evaluation revealed he was more interested in making new friends at SDF than passing his tests. Though he was not meant to be a search dog, Angus will still find his perfect forever home through SDF's Lifetime Care Program. We have no doubt that he will find his forever home soon!



"We ensure lifetime care for every dog in our program: once rescued, these dogs never need to be rescued again."

- Search Dog Foundation



Clinic Corner

Persevering During the Pandemic



"With the end of the year in sight, the HSVC clinic has no plans of slowing down! Since the pandemic hit back in March, the constant themes of change, adaptability, and safety is our concern, but finding creative ways to help, learn, and serve our community remains our top priority."

- Dr. Christina Sisk, Director of Veterinary Services

Spay/Neuter surgery has been busier than ever, and not just because of the 20+ Chihuahuas from the case in Lompoc, none of which had ever been to a vet! Our partnership with Foundling Kitten Society, in addition to our regular intake, had us treating, spaying or neutering, and caring for a constant stream of cats and kittens.

We treated a kitten with a severe leg fracture that required amputation, multiple cats with such severe eye problems they required removal, and even a kitten with a rare thyroid disorder! Although the shut-down derailed our kitten foster program, we are

ready to hit the ground running for kitten season in 2021! We are proud to have further increased our involvement with our local community cat trappers, rescues, and helpers. This year we were able to start a trap-loaner program for locals interested in trapping community cats on their property. We also had our first-ever virtual cat trapping seminar with a local expert on November 21st!

We were able to spay/neuter our highest number ever of community cats this year. When possible, we take in the more social community cats for adoption. Such was the case with little "Bartok,"

a one-pound orange tabby from a colony of over 40 cats. He was missing so much of his hair, he looked more like a bat than a kitten! He was immediately diagnosed with sarcoptic mange, a mite infestation that is transmittable to people. He had to quarantine in my office for a month while receiving treatment, including daily "toothbrush massages." He stole our hearts with his playful nature and loud purrs. It was a bittersweet day for us when he was cured and adopted!

At the end of the day, I am grateful for the challenges and learning opportunities this year has brought me. I am profoundly grateful for my clinic staff, the fantastic technicians who support our patients and me every day with their love, dedication, knowledge, and laughter! And to the rest of the HSVC staff who work tirelessly to care for and enrich our Shelter animals' lives and to help our community during this difficult time.

- Dr. Christina Sisk

Director of Veterinary Services





Humane Officers

Lending a Helping Hand in Our Community

This year brought new challenges for our Humane Officers. They have continued to investigate hundreds of animal abuse and neglect cases throughout Ventura County during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our officers are first responders who are routinely asked to work during disasters, including pandemics. Like everyone else, they have to remain diligent and safe by wearing masks, social distancing, washing their hands, and disinfecting their equipment and vehicles.

Humane officers are routinely asked to assist other law enforcement agencies here in Ventura County and outside our county. So far this year



they have assisted other agencies 30 times, with the most recent request coming from Santa Barbara Animal Services.

On Thursday, October 22nd, SBAS officers investigated a call from a concerned citizen regarding a potential case of dog hoarding. Upon arrival, the officers were met with over 100 Chihuahua mixes inside the Lompoc home. The owner decided it was in the dogs' best interest to sign them over to SBAS.

SBAS quickly realized that they would need help to find safe and loving homes for the 104 dogs in their custody. They reached out to local shelters and rescue partners, including the Humane Society of Ventura County. "We were more than happy to help in any way that we could, so our officers were sent to Santa Maria to pick up 21 of the dogs," said Shelter Director Jolene Hoffman.

Our staff has been great in making all 21 dogs now in our care feel safe, comfortable, and cared for. With the help of our staff they are adjusting to their new surroundings and getting more comfortable each day. Some have even found their forever homes!

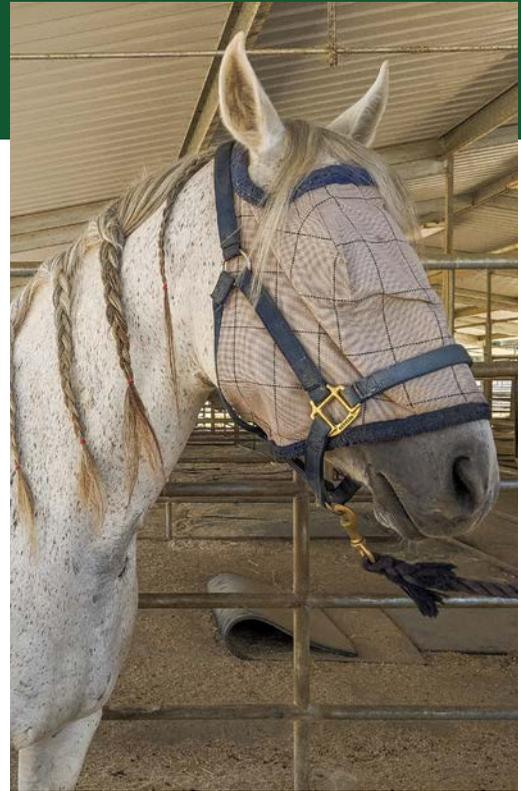
- Jeff Hoffman, Director of Investigations



Featured Pet Wendy Nova



Wendy Nova is a 13-year-old Quarterhorse and Arabian mix. She came to the Shelter in 2008 after being rescued in the field by Humane Officers during an abuse and neglect case. She was adopted out briefly and returned to the Shelter in 2018 through no fault of her own. While she is not broke to ride, Wendy Nova has a great foundation of ground work and is very respectful of her handler. She would make a great pasture horse for anyone looking for a sweet and friendly companion. Plus, look how gorgeous she is! If you are interested in making Wendy Nova a part of your equine family, visit our website and click the orange "Let's Get Started" button to fill out an adoption appointment request to meet her!



Holiday Pet Safety Protecting Your Animals This Holiday Season

The holidays are right around the corner! During this magical time of the year, it is important to watch for hazards that could harm your pet. Check out these holiday safety tips to protect your pets this festive season!



Food: Many holiday foods can be toxic and even deadly for pets. Keep all sweets away from your pets. For dogs, chocolate can cause a variety of health issues and even death. Nuts and candies containing Xylitol are very dangerous for all animals and should be avoided. Do not share table scraps with pets, especially items containing yeast or unbaked dough.

Bones: Bones can easily splinter, causing an obstruction or lacerations in the digestive tract of your furry friend.

Decorations: Tinsel, icicles, netting, garland, and decorative rope can become entangled in the intestines if ingested and can be fatal if not treated quickly. Keep candles out of reach of pets, as they could burn themselves or start a fire.

Electrical Cords: Biting into an electrical cord can cause shock or even prove to be fatal to pets. Be sure to turn off all lights and unplug them when you are not home.

Plants: Plants and flowers may add cheer, but a single leaf from any lily variety is lethal to cats. Other plants to avoid include Poinsettias, Holly, pine needles, and Mistletoe.



Harley, 23-years-old
Female Quarterhorse



Nova, 9-years-old
Siberian Husky



Max, 4-years-old

Anatolian Shepherd Mix

**Pet
Gallery**

Check out some
of our adoptable
furry friends!



Lili, 12-years-old

Domestic Shorthair



12

Phil, 8-years-old
Domestic Shorthair



Shakira, 3-years-old
Siberian Husky

Disaster Preparedness

Introducing the Emergency Response Team



The devastation of natural disasters is felt throughout the state of California every year. Ventura County has witnessed and suffered through the Thomas fire of 2017, the Hill and Woolsey fires of 2018, and the Easy and Maria Fires of 2019. For years, the Humane Society of Ventura County has become an evacuation center for animals in need of refuge from California's wildfires.

During such emergencies, our Shelter has relied heavily on volunteers to provide extra helping hands in the midst of chaos. These

dedicated people work tirelessly to provide care for the multitude of animals seeking sanctuary.

It was the hard work of our staff and volunteers during emergencies that inspired Humane Officer King to develop the HSVC Emergency Response Team. With this program, our most experienced volunteers, many of whom were already Animal Ambassadors, will be trained directly by staff to provide extra support and assistance during emergencies.

Members of the ERT program (ERTs) are trained in two teams.

One team will be trained to assist our office staff with evacuee animal intake and data entry during a natural disaster. The second team will learn how to clean and care for the evacuated animals to assist our kennel staff.

With the HSVC still closed to the public due to COVID-19, our ERTs have to follow strict guidelines to keep themselves and staff safe when coming to the Shelter for training. ERTs are only allowed at the Shelter during their scheduled training time to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Upon arrival to a training session, each ERT must have their temperature taken by a staff member before entering the building. During training, ERTs must wear a mask, practice social distancing, and sanitize their hands each time they enter a building or touch a piece of equipment.

"The development of the ERT program will help our Shelter prepare for a disaster before the disaster hits. We are so proud of all the hard work Officer King has put into creating this program, and so proud of our chosen volunteers for rising to the challenge to help those in need during such difficult times," said Shelter Director Jolene Hoffman.

"My goal is to train the ERTs so they can provide much-needed support for the staff at the Shelter during natural disasters. We get busy so quickly during an emergency, it is often overwhelming for the staff. With more hands on deck, we will be able to provide support to those in need in a more organized and timely manner,"
- Officer King, Humane Officer

Favorite Fundraisers

This year has been different than any other due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We want to give a special thanks to those who have supported us during this challenging year. Here are just a few of the many people and organizations that have contributed to our success in helping animals in need in 2020!



Thank you Minna!

Minna and her friends formed the All Things Natural Club over the summer with the hopes of making a difference in their community. This group of nature lovers raised money by selling plants at their roadside plant stand. All of the proceeds were donated to the HSVC in support of Bagel the cat's surgery. The All Things Natural Club continues to sell plants and donates the proceeds to a different local charity or nonprofit each week. From the entire staff, we want to say thank you to Minna and her friends for their donation and their kindness to animals!



Thank you St. Mary's!

Special thanks to St. Mary's Catholic School in Spring Lake, Michigan for their donation of over \$1900 to the Humane Society of Ventura County! Each year, the staff, faculty, and students of the school choose a nonprofit to make a donation in connection to the celebration of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, which takes place on October 4th. The feast commemorates the life of St. Francis, who was born in the 12th century and is the Catholic Church's patron saint of animals and the environment.



Thank you Richard!

Santa Paula native Richard has been successfully trapping feral cats over the last couple of months and bringing them to the Shelter to be altered. To date, Richard has brought seven feral cats to our spay/neuter clinic for TNR (trap, neuter, return) surgeries. With each visit to the clinic, Richard donates \$50 to the Shelter, making his total donation \$350 so far! We would like to extend a huge thank you to Richard for his excellent work in helping reduce the overpopulation of feral cats in our community and for his donations to the Shelter.



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Winter Hours:
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