



North Bay Pets

a publication of the sonoma humane society



A LONG WAY HOME

Love is in the numbers...
2012 Annual Report

**Creating a
safe haven** pg.10

*Get the SCOOP
on Community Cats*

www.sonomahumane.org

How We Create a Safe Haven for Animals

With this edition of North Bay Pets, I'm thrilled to share all the progress that we're making as we continue to embrace all that it takes to be a no-kill shelter for Sonoma County. Our annual report, which you will find on page 7, demonstrates our success in sheer numbers. But our true success is found in the individual stories of each animal we meet. Our animal rooms are filled with unique tales of arrival and turn-around. Within and amongst these, Willis' story stands out.

Is it his fortitude? His improvement? His utter cuteness? Or the fact that without the Angels Fund that directly supports medical care for our shelter animals, his survival may have been a bit dodgy? You decide.

Willis arrived on a rainy morning in March, inside a cardboard box that sat in the entrance to our lobby. When we opened the box, a shivering black cat bellowed from inside.

Willis (as we so named him) was gathered up in warm towels and brought into our hospital for closer examination. Within moments, the veterinarian team discovered that his urinary tract was blocked by an infection, causing him great pain to the point where he could barely walk. On the spot, blood work and a urine analysis was performed as Willis was given emergency anesthesia to help relieve the pressure on his hardened bladder. After his surgery, Willis was in intensive care on IV fluids for a week, where he was closely monitored and given daily doses of tender loving care as he healed.

For Willis, this care must have seemed heaven sent – and that's almost true! Together, the Angels Fund and our medical team gave Willis the emergency care he needed to fully regain his health.

Today, his sweet, affectionate nature and affinity for head-butts make him an attractive candidate in our adoption program. He waits patiently with dozens of other delightful kitties to make that special connection with a like-hearted human.

Consider becoming an Angel. Your donations will directly support animals like Willis—and give them the second chance they deserve.



Kiska Icard

Kiska Icard, Executive Director

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The Sonoma Humane Society – ensuring every animal receives protection, compassion, love and care. We are a locally founded, locally funded nonprofit organization supported through donations from our community. Tax ID# 94-6001315

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On the Cover:

Meet Courage and Foxy, a bonded pair of Australian Cattle dogs. Smart, energetic and uncharacteristically timid, these two have been through extensive behavioral training here at SHS. Find out more about their journey on page 4.

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**A LONG
WAY HOME ...**

**WITH A LITTLE HELP
FROM OUR FRIENDS**

(sung to the tune of 'Home on the Range')



Oh, give me a space

Where I can race

With a dozen heifers or more

'Cause it's in my blood

Leaping puddles of mud

And in time for dinner on the back door

Imagine being a free-roaming dog on a large tract of land you call home. Then one day, the land changes hands and you're whisked off to the Humane Society. You've never stepped a paw inside a house before, let alone walked through a large building with hard floors, unfamiliar noises, strangers and other animals ...

As nice as the Sonoma Humane Society's Center for Animals is, if you were a frightened dog, you wouldn't see it that way at first. And that's what happened to Courage and Foxy—two cattle dogs in our care.

Underexposed to the daily activities of the world at large, it took Courage and Foxy over six weeks just to adjust to leashed walks without diverting into the shrubs or leaping at a bird. Frozen in terror when we tried to assess each one during behavior evaluations, it was evident that both of these sweet, loving dogs would

need plenty of patient encouragement to transform into candidates for adoption.

Attempts at temporary separations didn't go well for either dog, so we rolled with the anti-stress value of keeping them near one another as much as possible. Our spacious rooms allowed Courage and Foxy to share an adoption room together. Views of the courtyard in bloom amidst gently streaming sunlight make this arrangement extra nice for them. "This bonded pair would suffer greatly if separated," said Suzanne Kernek, Director of Behavior and Training at SHS.

In the ensuing months, both Courage and Foxy have learned a tremendous amount of good doggie behavior while settling in here and preparing for their new lives. They've also learned what it feels like to be loved hour by hour, day by day. Foxy enjoyed the loving

so much, she showed us by oozing into our laps, settling herself in for endless cuddling. “She’s just yummy!” said one volunteer. “Like a cheese sandwich?” joked another. Foxy’s ears prick up at the sounds of our chuckling—companionship is her life.

Over the past eight months, here’s what this fab duo has learned:

- Becoming comfortable in different environments—no small task for a couple of outdoor-centric dogs who’ve never been trained a day in their life—that is, until they came here!
- Becoming confident while loading and unloading in the car—something they were both terrified of in addition to the abject fear of being in a car.
- Basic obedience training which includes polite on-leash walking and the perennial ‘sit to say please’ (STSP)—specific training designed for dogs to sit with full attention on the dog walker at all doorways, during all sorts of greeting interactions and for being an all-around, well-behaved chap (or chapette).

And finally ...

- Well-matched agility training for Courage to get his ya-yas out. You should see him leap!

Courage and Foxy are living examples of lives rescued and turned around for the better. They exem-

plify our passion for this work ... and how far we go for the animals in our care.

And now for the wonderful ending ...

Courage and Foxy were recently adopted into



COURAGE

be a well-matched fit—including their understanding and willingness to continue working with our positive training methods—we realized we had a green light. “They came here and just fell in love,” said Suzanne.

Tears of joy couldn’t be hidden on their adoption day ... and here’s what our Behavior and Training Manager shared with all of us:

“My favorite shelter dogs have gone to an amazing home! I have spent a great deal of time with these adopters ... and the bottom line is these folks are wonderful and they seem to really understand the special needs of these two sweet-hearted dogs. The best part? They live right around the corner from me!”



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Really? You don't Say!



**Yup, it's official—
SpayPAL is
now accepting
doggies!**

Launched in February of 2012, Sonoma Humane Society's SpayPAL (Prevent a Litter) program has grown to serve over 2,500 animals (2,506 to be exact!) since opening last year. Our gratitude goes to the Salatko Animal Welfare Fund of Community Foundation Sonoma County and all the donors who helped match their \$50,000 Spay and Neuter Challenge!

Move over kitties ... make room the doggies! For SpayPAL cats & dogs in Sonoma County, call VIP Petcare to schedule your appointment (800) 427-7973. We would like to give special thanks to VIP Petcare Services for providing us with call center and appointment setting services.



Legacy Gifts of Enduring Love and Compassion

Each year, gifts from wills and trusts ensure that the Sonoma Humane Society will remain a safe haven for animals long into the future. We are deeply grateful to have been remembered by the following kind and generous benefactors, whose dedication to animals surpassed their lifetimes. These cherished donors leave behind a legacy of love and compassion.

Between November 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013, the Sonoma Humane Society received distributions from the following trusts and estates:

*Nora Jane Frelin Trust
Everett H. Gregory Trust
The Inger M. Henninger Trust
The Estate of Janet Ann Johnson
Thomas B. Mikkelsen Trust
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an inspiration to everyone.**

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Together we'll go far



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**Together, we give every star
the chance to shine.**





sonoma
**HUMANE
SOCIETY**

A Safe Haven for Animals

Simone 3-year-old Tabby dreaming of her forever home. Photo: Sumner Fowler

ANNUAL REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

January 1 through December 31, 2012

Our Mission: To ensure every animal receives protection, compassion, love and care.



Every animal deserves a loving home

• Total number of animals rescued	2,237
• Strays	592
• Owner Surrenders	976
• From other shelters/rescue organizations	584
• Fospice Care	25
• Foster Care	564
• Animals returned to their guardians	153
• Live Release Rate	97%
• Shelter capacity	200

2,237 animals were given a second chance at life.



3,024 dogs, cats and rabbits were spayed or neutered last year.

New Caption Needed

• Low-cost feline spay/neuters	2,044
• Public hospital spay/neuters	542
• Shelter hospital spay/neuters	438



Compassionate communities start here

1,684 children learn humane lessons of love.

• Summer/Winter Camps	208
• Mentoring and Community Service	150
• Library and Reading Dog Program	506
• Youth Tours and Outreach	820
• Total children served (ages 7-18):	1,684



A little love goes a long way

35,452 volunteer hours make our work possible.

- Number of volunteers 470
- Number of volunteer hours 35,452
- Full time employee equivalent (persons) 17-3/4
- Equivalent employee compensation \$336,794



Kindness to animals = kindness to self and others

- Total children served 400
- Number of agencies served 12

400 at-risk youth attended Forget-Me-Not Farm's animal-assisted and horticultural therapy programs.



We give hope to every animal

14,261 animals with better health and better manners.

- Shelter medical cases treated: 1,345
- Hospital Clients Served 11,732 (dr. appts, vaccine and S/N clinics)
- Charity Medical Services \$35,366
- Number of public dogs trained 709
- Number of shelter dogs trained 475

Donate With Confidence

82 cents of every dollar goes directly to support animal programs!

Income:

Donations, events, grants and bequests:	\$1,872,266	54%
Hospital/Adoption/Training and Service Fees:	\$1,314,408	38%
Pet Supply Shop Sales:	\$116,853	4%
Grants & contracts:	\$143,606	3%
Investment & Rental Income/Loss:	\$31,198	1%
Total:	\$3,478,331	100%

Expenses:

Adoptions and Animal Care	\$1,926,872	63%
Education, Outreach & Abuse Prevention:	\$316,681	10%
Management & General:	\$291,329	9%
Donor Development & Fundraising:	\$278,876	9%
Cost of Sales:	\$264,857	9%
Total:	\$3,078,615	100%

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At the Sonoma Humane Society, every dollar is put to work for animals in need. From providing vital life-saving medical procedures to behavior, training and finding great homes for awesome animals—we devote 82 percent of every dollar donated directly to animal programs.

As a donor-supported safe haven for animals, our roots are firmly planted in the Sonoma County community. We receive no government funding and no financial aid from any other humane society or shelter.

Rescue. Rehabilitate. Re-build.

Your donations stay local to help animals in our community experience a quality of life and love that every animal deserves.

Your donations help to rescue, rehabilitate and re-build a life for animals who have been abandoned. Through medical care, spay/neuter surgeries, behavior training and adoption counseling, rest assured that your charitable contributions are always hard at work providing compassionate care for the animals who need our help.

Join us.

With your support, every animal has a hope for a brighter future! Contact Cindy Roach, Development Director, at 707.577.1912 or email Cindy at croach@sonomahumane.org.

Feeling inspired? Donate online. Visit our website—sonomahumane.org—and click on DONATE. It's that easy to make a difference in an animal's life.



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Tax ID# is 94-6001315

Making our Community a Safe Place for Animals

In July of 2012, the Sonoma Humane Society was certified as a no-kill shelter by the No-Kill Sonoma County Chapter. For many in our community, the philosophy surrounding the no-kill movement and the true meaning of this certification may not be clear – but one thing is: **for animals, the future has become bright with promise.**



What does No-Kill Mean?

A no-kill philosophy is about saving animals' lives wherever possible while at the same time recognizing that—just like us—every animal has a life expectancy. It's a heartbreaking truth that shelters must make life or death decisions for animals who have painful and terminal medical conditions as well as for those who pose a safety risk to the community. It is also true that most animals can be saved, if given the time, resources and rehabilitation necessary.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand the meaning of no-kill is to think about the decisions you would make for your own pet. If your dog barked and dug up the yard, or your cat had ringworm, would euthanasia be a consideration for you? Most likely not. However, what if your pet was suffering from a painful and terminal illness? Or your dog's behavior presented a danger to society? What decisions might you make then?

These are the same difficult decisions we face and agonize over every single day. In a no-kill organiza-

tion, animals are treated with the same care and consideration that you would give your own pet. And this means going the extra mile for all but the most dire of scenarios.

Really, how Far is that Extra Mile?

In 2012 just over half of the animals at the Sonoma Humane Society arrived healthy. Healthy and behaviorally sound animals receive a health exam, vaccinations, spay or neuter surgery (if they're not already sterilized), and a micro-chip. Then they head right for our adoption program.

For the other 1,000+ companion animals, we start down the extra mile path.

Some of those first steps are easy; treatment for ringworm, upper respiratory, or parvo virus; training for doggies who need better basic manners. We almost take this level of treatment for granted these days. But making the no-kill commitment means pushing a lot harder than this: pushing our resources, our boundaries and

everybody on the team.

Recognizing that every animal's needs are unique, we use creative, solutions-based thinking to help each animal find their next home. Many animals, especially young kittens and older dogs, need a much higher level of dedication and creativity to move down the rehabilitation and recovery road.

Volunteer Homes Expand our Capacity to Save Lives

Even under the best circumstances, shelter environments are stressful for animals. Although most



Turk

animals are incredibly resilient and stoic, stress can promote illness and for some, can create dangerous psychological deterioration.

For years our SHS Foster volunteers have helped give kittens the care they need outside of the SHS facility. By doing so, foster care volunteers help to expand the capacity of the SHS shelter hospital ...and save hundreds of young lives annually. "Our foster care volunteers are literally life-savers," says Aiko Love, Foster Care Coordinator.

Last year, our foster program evolved to help care for animals who are at the opposite end of life's spectrum. Turk is a great example.

Transferred from Sonoma County Animal Care and Control, Turk is a 10 year-old Schnauzer with diabetes. An older dog with a chronic medical condition isn't

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Sampson



likely to be adopted, but he's definitely not a candidate for euthanasia – he's a happy dog who is not in any discomfort. What to do? Turk will receive Fospice care—joining a loving volunteer who will open their heart and home to him during his final years while we continue to provide for his medical needs.

Foster volunteers also have an impact on dogs who need some real-life training experiences in the outside world. It's true that some dogs just act differently in a confined and controlled environment than they will in a caring home. Will a dog who aggressively guards his food in a shelter habitat react differently in a home environment? Maybe, but how can we find this out?

For some dogs, a week or two in the home of a trained behavior assessment volunteer can make all the difference in the world. Able to witness first-hand how each dog reacts in real-life situations, foster trainers will reinforce positive behaviors as a continuing part of the dog's behavior modification program. Valuable information gathered during this foster period is shared with our Behavior & Training team to help guide adoption recommendations.

Bottom line? A robust volunteer and foster program is a key component to saving precious lives.

Medical Support moves Beyond the Shelter

How far into that extra mile are we now? Well, we've still got a couple of laps to go. Some of the animals who arrive require greater intervention; adult cats who are FIV+; puppies who need complicated surgical procedures; any animal who needs prolonged medical care and treatment. They'll need a lot more than a booster shot and a microchip before they'll be ready for adoption.

Take Bindi for example (photo, p.11). Bindi is a 9-year-old Rhodesian ridgeback mix with an incredibly sweet temperament who came to us with a beastly case of heartworm disease and a few questionable cysts. She also needed some basic training under her paws. Since heartworm takes one to two months to resolve, Bindi

began a daily training routine during her treatments. With a healthy heart and new skills, Bindi's eyes shone with joy as she and her new human recently began a new chapter of life together!

And then there's Sampson.

A three-year old Mini-pinscher mix with a wiggly, affectionate personality, Sampson came to us with an odd head tic, a fractured tooth and highly eroded dental enamel. But that was just the beginning. After conducting multiple blood tests, urine tests and x-rays, we learned Sampson's head tic was the result of surviving distemper, so we knew we were dealing with a sturdy soul. Further discovering a heart murmur and kidney disease, Sampson went on a special kidney-friendly diet while receiving valuable doggie training, dental treatments and of course, daily affection. Throughout all this, Sampson has maintained a positive can-do attitude and is ready to start phase two of his life with a loving individual or family.

In some cases, to help increase their chance at finding a home, we provide incentives for adopters considering animals with ongoing medical needs. A reduced adoption fee or special diet provided at our cost can make it easier for local heroes to come forward and adopt.

*For the Sonoma Humane Society,
no effort is too great
when a life is at stake.*



A Safe Haven for Animals

Clearly, giving hope to every animal isn't an easy formula. Each animal needs a custom blend of veterinary care, behavior modification, time, staff and volunteer support with equal parts patience, compassion and hard work mixed in. Oh, and don't forget the donor funding that makes it all possible!

For the animals who need a little or a whole lot of extra time and assistance, our staff, volunteers and supporters are a constant ray of hope that makes our role crystal clear: The Sonoma Humane Society is a safe haven for animals.

The Scoop on Community Cats

"We've entered kitten season," said a hospital staff member.

"Yup, 3 litters of kittens already, and it's just the beginning!" replied another, swaddling an armful of little ones.



Where do all these kittens come from? From breeding cats, of course.

These days however, more and more people neuter their animal companions because they've learned what happens when they don't. Howling. Baying. Spraying. Waking up at 2AM; 3AM; 4AM. That weary look tells your co-workers and friends that things aren't so groovy in your part of the world.

What can we learn from community cats?—those feral or free-roaming cats who live in the community at large that have no true human guardian.

In a nutshell:

From Petaluma to Cloverdale, Sonoma County is the largest geographic region in the Bay Area and home to tens of thousands of family animals. It's also home to several thousand community cats—many of whom are doing well right where they are. Yes, you read that right. Other than spaying/neutering them to keep breeding populations manageable, these cats are a living part of our community.

And now, for some myth-busting.

Myth #1: Feral cats should have indoor homes.

Truth: Unlike dogs, feral cats or free-roaming

cats are at home right under that blackberry thicket or tangle of vines and bushes. Unlike human-socialized cats whose chances of adoption are high, bringing adult feral cats to a humane society or shelter actually puts them at risk of stress and stress-related illnesses. It also places stress on shelters to house cats who have never adapted to structured conditions and thus face an uncertain future.

Better: Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) programs allow feral cats to be temporarily removed from their home in the shrubs; get neutered or spayed, and then re-released to the original area in which they were found. In collaboration with Forgotten Felines, we're excited to be gearing up to offer TNR services this year which will further enhance our current Country Cat program, designed to find creative living spaces—such as barns, ranches, workshops or wineries—for that portion of the feline population who thrive on free-range living.

Myth #2: Taking a free-roaming cat to a shelter will re-unite them with their owner.

Truth: Cats who have outdoor access roam. However, studies reveal that cats rarely roam more than a block from their actual home—whether that's a human-

run home or a thicket of bushes. In fact, despite our best re-homing efforts, just 2-3% of stray cats who are brought into shelters actually become re-united with their families.

Better: If you find a stray cat who appears healthy, post a 'found' sign around your neighborhood block with a picture of the cat and your phone number. Check with neighbors to see if anyone recognizes the cat you've found. Naturally, any stray domestic animal in need of medical attention should be brought to Sonoma Humane Society or your nearest animal hospital.

Myth #3: Feral cats will decimate bird populations—they're better off being taken to a shelter.

Truth: A holistic perspective is the best 'viewing perch' to understand the gestalt of nature. As it turns out, studies show that feral cats spend more time chasing and eating rodents than tracking birds. In fact, where feral cats have been removed from areas, unchecked rodent populations grew, decimating bird populations in greater volume than if the cats (ideally neutered/spayed) had remained there. This is really

something to think about as we expand our perspectives ... and recognize that 'home' for a cat doesn't necessarily equal four walls and a roof.

On a case by case basis, our staff and volunteers are dedicated to giving our community cats the options that are truly best suited to them. To recap, here's what we're doing for this often overlooked population:

- Expanding adoption outreach visibility at more venues and in Spanish;
- Maximizing our spay/neuter programs and partnerships (Compassion Without Borders and the Pet Population Control Fund) that reach under-represented communities;
- Support from donors like you; grants and community funding from organizations like the Community Foundation of Sonoma County; as well as the generous love and time shared by our foster volunteers .

As a donor-supported safe haven for at-risk animals, building community partnerships for animals in need is what will ultimately give these cats—and the environments that support them—a healthy future.



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We depend on donations from our local community.

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*Lately, Mark's commissions have
gone to the dogs...
and cats, birds, and
hamsters, and turtles,
goats, pigs
and...*



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August 16th, 2013

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AAHA!

We did it!

The Sonoma Humane Society's public hospital and
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We are now part of an elite group of hospitals who
go the extra mile where it counts.

(Only 12% in the country are AAHA accredited).

The American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) is a non-profit
national organization that inspects over 900 items to ensure that
accredited hospitals consistently provide the best medical care possible.

