

# **PAWS** FOR *Thought*

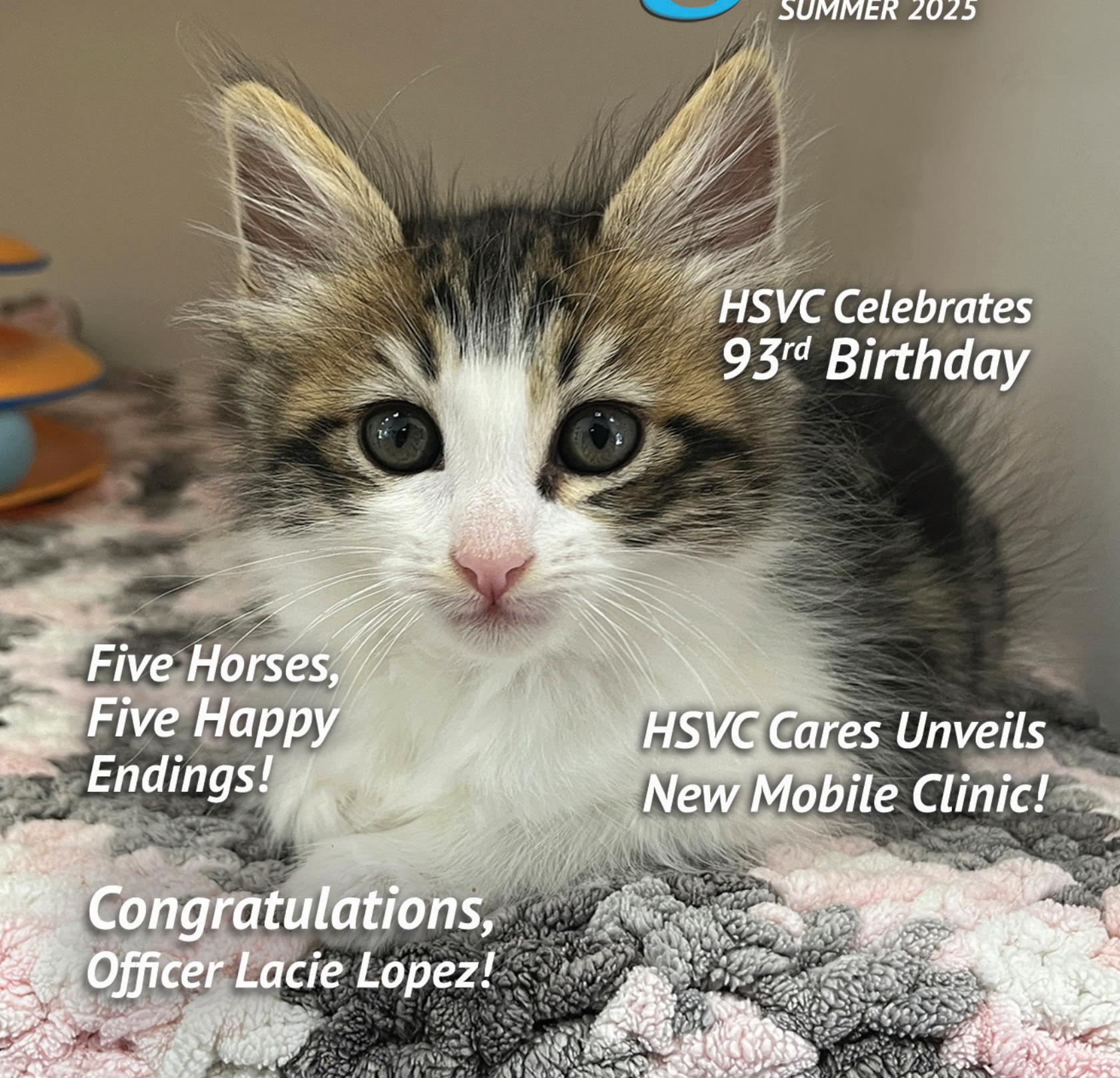
SUMMER 2025

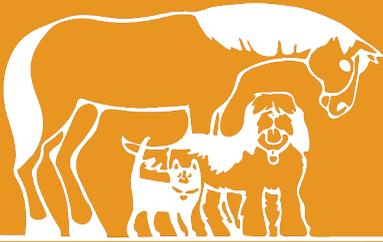
*HSVC Celebrates  
93<sup>rd</sup> Birthday*

*Five Horses,  
Five Happy  
Endings!*

*HSVC Cares Unveils  
New Mobile Clinic!*

*Congratulations,  
Officer Lacie Lopez!*





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## **Featured Furry Face: Meet Tundra!**

Tundra is a 17-year-old Grey Arabian gelding who arrived at HSVC on December 23, 2022, after being rescued by our Humane Officers in a case of abuse and neglect. Despite his past and medical issues of metabolic and thyroid problems, Tundra has a sweet personality and doesn't let his setbacks stop him from trotting around. This cuddly boy adores people! You'll often see him in his stall snuggling with staff or giving kisses. He would need time to acclimate to new horses, but Tundra would love to be someone's pasture buddy.

Tundra has been saddled and is working with our staff to become more comfortable being ridden. He just needs a confident, patient owner who will move slowly with him until he's relaxed. Tundra is also looking for an owner who will be mindful of his gut health and can supply his metabolic supplements and thyroid medications for the rest of his life. In return, he will be your forever companion!

Those interested in welcoming Tundra into their herd can reach out to HSVC's Equine Manager, Christina, at ChristinaM@hsvc.org or by calling 805-364-1150. Help us find our longest resident a home!

# Letter from the Chief Executive Officer



Dear Team, Volunteers, and Supporters,

As we reach the midpoint of 2025, I feel proud and thankful for what we have achieved together. The last seven months show our hard work and commitment to improving lives, connecting with our community, and finding new ways to support animal welfare. Your dedication to our mission drives our success and makes a difference in the lives we touch.

## **Outstanding Initiatives: Making a Tangible Difference**

Our efforts are making a real impact. Thanks to our Animal and Customer Care teams, we've placed hundreds of animals in loving homes. In the past five months, we celebrated 220 adoptions, bringing joy to families across Ventura County and highlighting the importance of matching pets with the right owners. Our offsite clinics are vital for underserved communities. Recently in La Colonia, we provided care to many pets, administering 89 vaccinations, performing 22 spay and neuter surgeries in our new mobile Pet Wellness Clinic, and implanting 25 microchips. The gratitude from pet owners underscores the importance of our services.

Our Humane Investigations and Education programs are essential for protecting animals in Ventura County. Appointed by our organization, our Humane Officers enforce California's animal protection laws. They work on cases like Bella and Canela, two horses rescued in May 2023 after suffering from neglect. Their journey to loving adoption, following nearly two years of rehabilitation, highlights our dedication to animal care and community safety.

Additionally, our pet retention and outreach initiatives, including the Pet Pantry program, help keep pets with their families, providing resources and preventing surrenders. We appreciate the community's support, which helps maintain our pet food bank and remote distribution centers across Ventura County.

## **Innovations & Training: Building a Stronger Future**

We strive for continuous improvement. Our staff participates in advanced animal behavior training, including workshops on canine body language and playgroup dynamics. These programs enhance our animal care and adoption success, resulting in happier pets and more successful placements. Our strategic partnerships enhance our impact. Collaborations with organizations such as Ventura County Animal Services, Ventura Housing Authority, Interface Children and Families, 211, and the ASPCA enable us to host free vaccine clinics. These partnerships show our commitment to a united approach to animal welfare throughout the county.

## **By the Numbers: Our Impact So Far**

We maintain a high Live Release Rate of 99.5%, celebrating every adoption and success. Thank you! Every act of kindness, adoption, and training session helps build a kinder community. I look forward to what we can achieve together on this journey.

- Tim Blaylock, Chief Executive Officer



## Celebrating 93 Years of Animal Welfare Service in our Community

When I joined HSVC back in November of 2022, I was tasked with creating a development plan. In reviewing past fundraising efforts, it became clear to me that HSVC is a well-loved organization, and it is the oldest animal welfare agency in Ventura County. Historically, in June, the shelter celebrated its anniversary with a fun open house offering tours, cake, and a chance to meet the team and shelter animals. I had a “light bulb” moment and thought, let’s take this celebration and turn it into a fundraising dinner. With a small budget, less than six months to plan, and a goal of getting 100 guests to HSVC for dinner, the Birthday Bash Dinner was born! The following year, in 2024, we expanded the event committee, had a larger budget, a full year to plan, and a goal of hosting 200 supporters for dinner.

This year, we welcomed 350 animal lovers and supporters to the shelter on June 14th to celebrate our 93rd anniversary. We raised over \$100,000! Each year this event has grown, and it is lovely to see

the outpouring of support for our programs and the animals we serve. From all our beloved sponsors to the ticket buyers and businesses that donated items to make this event successful, I’m in awe of your support and love for animals. I’m also very honored to work with the most amazing committee, led by committee chair, Debbie Guerra. This group brings incredible passion and lots of ideas for maximizing our event efforts. They work hard to secure donated items for this event – everything from centerpieces to wine, beer, signature cocktails, desserts, auction items, party favors, and more!

The dinner held on our property featured a welcome reception, silent and live auctions, a wine pull, and a short program featuring adoption stories and musical performances by Eric Lumiere and Waylan Tolmie. Kimberly Hunt, a 13-time Emmy award-winning anchor for ABC 10News in San Diego, emceed the event, and our auctioneer was the very entertaining Assistant Sheriff Andrew Salinas.





Events like these truly take a village, and I must express my heartfelt thanks to this fantastic event committee: Debbie Guerra, Val Gallagher, Aurora Albright, Steve Miller, Nora Davis, Cheri Iadevaia, Betsy Stix, and Katrina Carl. I also want to recognize my awesome Development Team, who work tirelessly on this event, and ALL year long to ensure we raise the needed funding to keep our programs and services going. Amy King, Natalie Landeros, Mollie Ganser, Astrid Derringer, Betty Jo MacCaughtry, and Kate McGurn: thank you for your dedication, time, and love shared for this event. It is an honor to work with all of you!

To our supporters and donors, thank you for believing in our work and mission. We can't do it without you. We hope you can join us in June 2026 to celebrate 94 years of animal welfare services in Ventura County. - Amber Landis, Director of Development

## Thank you, sponsors!

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# Humane Investigations

Growing Knowledge to Better Serve Our Community



The HSVC Humane Investigations Team is thrilled to officially welcome Lacie Lopez as our newest Humane Officer! Officer Lopez joins a compassionate and committed team that works to protect animals by investigating reports of abuse and neglect, educating the public on responsible pet ownership, and

supporting local communities through our Pet Pantry Program. Her dedication will help further our mission to keep pets safe, healthy, and in loving homes.

Lacie joined the Animal Care team in March 2024, bringing with her a strong passion for animal welfare and training. By November, she advanced to the role of Humane Officer Trainee, aligning with her goal to become a dedicated advocate for animals.

Her love for dogs began at age 12 and deepened through early experience assisting her aunt, who trained service animals for veterans. Prior to joining HSVC, Lacie worked briefly at the San Diego Humane Society, gaining valuable experience with animal rehabilitation and adoption. Her knowledge and prior experience in animal welfare and sheltering make her a huge asset to our team.

Lacie is especially skilled in working with fearful and reactive dogs, using her training expertise to build trust and confidence. She hopes her efforts will help more animals find the loving homes they deserve. In addition to her work with dogs, Lacie is eager to expand her knowledge of horse care and training, further strengthening her abilities as a Humane Officer, educator, and animal advocate.

- Kendra King, Humane Investigations Director



# Volunteer Spotlight

## Hours That Make Tails Wag

Every April, our shelter takes time to celebrate Volunteer Appreciation Month and honor those who dedicate their time to helping the animals in our care and throughout Ventura County. In 2024, our volunteers spent over 3,200 hours volunteering. Around 3,000 of those hours were spent at HSVC, and the remaining 200 were spent in the community at offsite HSVC Cares vaccination clinics and adoption events.

Our volunteers spent over 500 hours with the dogs in our care. Thank you to John Chille, Carol Davis, and Julie Olvera, who each spent over 110 hours with our dogs!

In 2024, our volunteers spent over 600 hours with our cats. We want to give special thanks to former volunteer, now employee Andrea Rapp, for spending over 450 hours with our cats! We are thrilled to have her join our team!

HSVC also has over 30 volunteers who spent over 500 hours with cats and dogs during their visits to the shelter. Thank you, Beau Jones, Sharon Blom, The Simpson Family, and Ava Monaco!

Our shelter is very fortunate to have an equine volunteer program as well. Even though this program is still growing, our equine volunteers spent over 400 hours in our barn. We would like to give a huge thank you to Greg Van, who spent over 350 hours with our horses. We would like to thank Kali Brooks and our friends at Oaks Restorative Ranch for all their hard work with our ongoing barn renovation projects.

This year, we had two rock star volunteers. These amazing volunteers both volunteered over 100 hours in their first year as a volunteer at our shelter. Thank you to Lucy Dane and Julie Olvera!

Finally, thank you, Greg Van. In his five years as a volunteer at our shelter, Greg has volunteered over 1500 hours helping the animals in our care—the most in our shelter's recent history. Way to go, Greg!

Thank you, volunteers, for everything you do! We couldn't do this without each and every one of you! If you are interested in joining this special group of animal lovers, visit our website at [hsvc.org/volunteer](https://hsvc.org/volunteer) or contact me at [AstridD@hsvc.org](mailto:AstridD@hsvc.org).

- Astrid Derringer, Volunteer Coordinator



# The HSVC Cares Program

Supporting Pet Owners Experiencing Homelessness in Ventura County



The HSVC Cares Program, strengthened by the addition of our mobile Pet Wellness Clinic, has significantly expanded access to veterinary care for underserved communities in Ventura County. This mobile outreach initiative not only supports low-income neighborhoods but also extends vital services to one of our most vulnerable populations—individuals currently experiencing homelessness.

In early 2025, a pivotal partnership was established with the Ventura Housing Authority, supported through a generous grant from Ventura County Community Foundation. Together, we are providing consistent, on-site veterinary visits to affordable housing communities where pet owners require assistance to remain united with their pets.

Extensive research shows the critical role pets play in the lives of those experiencing homelessness. They provide companionship, emotional support, increased feelings of safety, and often reduce the risk of harmful outcomes such as depression, substance use, and interactions with the criminal justice system. Preserving these bonds creates a bridge to stabilization.



Key components of this collaborative initiative include:

## **Pet-Friendly Housing**

- Offered by the Ventura Housing Authority

## **Safe Accommodation that Welcomes Pets**

- Ensures individuals are not forced to choose between shelter and separation. This allows for greater access to employment opportunities, health services and other interventions essential to transitioning out of homelessness.

## **No-Cost Veterinary Care**

- Delivered through the HSVC Cares Program. Many people experiencing homelessness often express deep devotion to their pets. Numerous studies show their pets are generally healthy, well-adjusted, and receive attentive care, which often surpasses that of the general population. Our veterinary outreach ensures these pets remain in good health, reducing preventable suffering.

## **Pet Food Support**

- Provided by the HSVC Pet Food Pantry. Misconceptions about homeless pet ownership often overlook the sacrifices these individuals make. Many go without food themselves to ensure their pets are fed. Our pantry helps eliminate that impossible choice.

We extend our gratitude to supporters of the HSVC Cares Program—your generosity fuels compassion-driven solutions that uplift both people and pets in need.

- Dr. Christina Sisk,

Director of Veterinary Services

HSVC's Dr. Christina Sisk and Veterinary Assistant Gaby Goldberg pose with Sergio Arias, Community Services Coordinator for the Housing Authority of the city of San Buenaventura.

## Success Stories: Thirteen & Ariana

These two found their forever homes thanks to the support of the Hogan Family Foundation. They have been welcomed with open arms at Rancho St. Francis, where they will be living alongside their fellow HSVC alums, Sadie Mae and Juniper.



Thirteen



Ariana



Canela



Bella

## Bella & Canela

Canela was adopted by Elisabeth, the same kind, compassionate soul who adopted her beloved "sister" Morena, now Marina, in 2023. Her mom, Bella, is embarking on an exciting new chapter with her new best friend, Amaya. These two gals are heading off to attend Feather River College together!

## Prieto aka Mr. P

Prieto arrived at our shelter in fall of 2023. He arrived in critical condition, severely underweight, neglected, and in need of TLC. Over time he got his strength back, and eventually the 28-year-old Quarterhorse found his forever home with Chari. Affectionately nicknamed Mr. P by our staff, the sweet gelding formed a beautiful bond not only with Chari but also with her other horse, Banche. The pair of equines are two peas in a pod. Congrats and happy trails, Prieto!



Prieto



## A Community United: The Heartwarming Partnerships Supporting the Humane Society of Ventura County

Nestled in the heart of Ventura County, an incredible partnership thrives, showcasing our collective spirit of community and care. The Humane Society of Ventura County (HSVC) stands as a shining beacon of hope for countless animals, and this success is a testament to the power of collaboration. Together, we're making a real difference and transforming lives every day!

Every day, the HSVC opens its doors to animals in need, providing them with shelter, medical care, and a chance at a better life. Behind every wagging tail and purring kitten is a network of dedicated individuals and organizations working tirelessly to support this mission.

Local businesses, schools, and volunteers come together to form a community of support that is both heartwarming and essential. From fundraising events to donation drives, the community's involvement is the lifeblood of the HSVC. These partnerships ensure that the shelter can continue its vital work of rescuing, rehabilitating, and finding loving homes for animals.

One of the most inspiring aspects of this partnership is that it brings people together. Families, friends, and neighbors unite for a common cause, creating bonds that extend beyond the shelter walls. It serves as a

reminder that when we work together, we can achieve extraordinary things.

As we look to the future, HSVC invites you to be part of this incredible journey. Whether you have time to volunteer, resources to donate, or simply a love for animals, there is a place for you in our community. Together, we can continue to make Ventura County a haven for animals in need.

So, are you ready to join the party? Let's come together and make a difference, one paw at a time. Visit our website at [hsvc.org](http://hsvc.org) or call 805-646-6505 to speak with a staff member and learn more about how you can get involved with our shelter.

- Tim Blaylock, Chief Executive Officer



# Staff Development

## Empowering Dogs Through Playgroups With Dogs Playing for Life

We were honored to host Dogs Playing for Life (DPFL) for an intensive, hands-on training focused on the transformative power of dog playgroups. This multi-day session, tailored for our staff and volunteers, went beyond skill-building. It renewed our dedication to providing the best behavioral support and enrichment for our dogs.

Led by Max and Kylie, DPFL's Lead Trainer and Presenter, the training covered safe dog introductions, reading canine body language, and managing playgroup dynamics. Their expertise and passion highlighted playgroups as more than just playtime for our shelter dogs. They're a vital tool for understanding behavior, easing stress, and improving adoptability. Plus, it allows our dogs time to just be dogs!

Through a mix of classroom learning, live demos, and hands-on work, our team gained deeper insight into each dog's energy, social skills, and communication style. These lessons will help our staff build better behavioral profiles, make stronger adoption matches, and identify dogs needing extra support. Volunteers also left with greater confidence and clarity, ready to play a more active role in our enrichment efforts.

We're deeply grateful to DPFL for their time, expertise, and heart. Thanks to their training, playgroups will be a consistent, intentional part of our daily routine—helping dogs de-stress and gain confidence. Thank you, Max, Kylie, and DPFL, for sharing your knowledge and making a difference for our animals!





## Staff Spotlight: Officer Kaelyn Viacava

Kaelyn joined the team in February 2024 as a Humane Officer Trainee, marking the beginning of a journey she has long dreamed of. She dedicated herself to her position, successfully completing the CalAnimals Officer Academy in March 2024. Since her badging, Kaelyn has already made a great impact in the lives of both animals and pet owners in need. Most recently, Kaelyn has taken on the lead role with our Humane Education program, expanding her impact even further.

## Humane Education Educating the Next Generation

This Spring, students at Juanamaria Elementary School in Ventura received a special visit from our dedicated team of Humane Officers. Humane Investigations Director Kendra King, Officer Lopez, Officer Viacava, brought with the young animal lovers important lessons in animal welfare, pet responsibility, and kindness. The visit was part of our ongoing community outreach humane education program, designed to educate and empower the next generation of animal advocates. Thanks for having us, Juanamaria Elementary!

During the presentation, students learned what it means to be a responsible pet owner. Lessons included how to provide proper food, shelter, and medical care and how to give pets the love and attention they deserve. Our Humane Officers also spoke to the students about humane law enforcement's vital role in protecting animals from abuse, neglect, and cruelty, and promoting compassionate care within our community.

The eager learners had the opportunity to ask questions, share stories about their own pets, and learn how they can help animals in need. By the end of the session, each youngster walked away with a deeper understanding of the human-animal bond and the importance of treating all creatures with kindness, compassion, and love.

There's no better time to get your class on the schedule for the new school year! If your youth organization is interested in hosting our Humane Officers for a presentation, please reach out to Officer Kaelyn Viacava at [OfficerViacava@hsvc.org](mailto:OfficerViacava@hsvc.org).

# Spreading Love, One Paw at a Time

## Mellow's Pet Therapy Journey

Mellow is the quintessential therapy dog. True to his Golden Retriever nature, he is loyal, warm, empathetic, and loving. He has an innate ability to sense when humans (or other animals) need comfort. He initiates contact with those who seek his loving presence. He is always receptive to hugs and petting, and patiently is present when humans cry into his fur. Mellow loves his role as a therapy dog at senior centers, hospitals, and schools. He just recently earned his 100-hour pin from Los Robles Hospital, where he visits with staff, patients, and their families.

Out in public, passersby stop Mellow to share their own pet stories. The most frequent comment is, "Aren't Goldens the best dog ever?!" We heartily agree. We are thankful for the 3-week training Mellow received from Matan's Board and Train in Thousand Oaks. As a young pup, Mellow absorbed lessons that we continue to reinforce daily.

For those interested in following along with Mellow's journey as a pet therapy superstar, check us out on Instagram @mellowsgoldenlife.

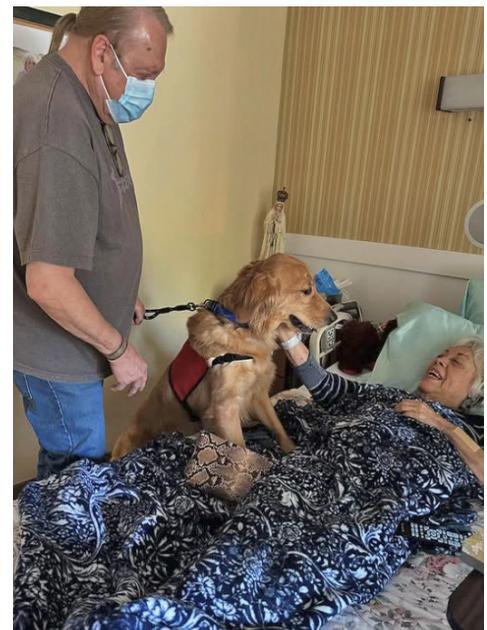


*"My favorite part of being Mellow's human is how much joy he brings to people.*

*I love the time of the day when Mellow does his trust fall onto my body.*

*My favorite experience with him this year was attending Goldie Palooza at Silverado Canyon with more than 1000 other Goldens (and their humans)."*

*- Bruce Velloso, HSVC Pet Therapy Volunteer*



# Foster Furiends

## You can make a difference!

Four-year-old Browser, a sweet, lovable Pittie mix, recently returned to HSVC from a short foster stay. His transformation was remarkable! In just one week away from the shelter, Browser thrived. He basked in couch time, snuggles, and the gentle routine of a peaceful home. His foster family couldn't say enough good things about him: calm, affectionate, easygoing, and happiest when he's near his people.

Browser's story is a shining example of how even a brief break from the shelter can bring out the best in a dog. While in foster care, the sweet pup quickly shed the layers of stress he was experiencing behind the gates of the kennel. He made fast friends with other dogs, and his soulful, gentle nature left a lasting impression on everyone he met in the neighborhood.

Fostering a shelter animal for even just a few days can make all the difference in the direction of their life. It gives pets a chance to decompress, regain their confidence, and connect with people in a calm, loving space. They begin to trust others, learn valuable skills like walking on a leash, and grow their socialization with other animals. Time in a foster home isn't just valuable for the animals! It also helps us learn more about an animal's true personality, behavior, and needs. That information is crucial in finding the right forever home.

Many who consider fostering fear they may get stuck with a longer commitment than they're able to give. We're here to debunk that fear and assure that fostering doesn't have to be a long-term commitment! While we commend our long-term foster parents, there is no pressure to commit indefinitely. A short weekend, a week, or even longer can make a lasting difference in a pet's life.

If you've ever thought about fostering, there's no better moment than now. HSVC provides all the supplies, all you need to provide is the love and space! To get your foster parent journey started, email our Foster Coordinator, Cheney, at [foster@hsvc.org](mailto:foster@hsvc.org) or visit our foster page at [hsvc.org/foster](http://hsvc.org/foster). There is no better feeling than just change a dog's life. Plus, you might find your new best friend in the process!

Please scan the Qr code on this page to learn more about fostering with HSVC.

Following Browser's time in a loving foster home, he was scooped up by a potential family and placed in a foster-to-adopt home! Our foster-to-adopt program allows potential adopters the time and space they need to ensure a shelter pet is the right fit for their home. Over the course of the two week trial period, staff check in, offer tips, and provide guidance to help both the humans and pet settle into their new life together. Countless animals have found their forever homes thanks to this program. We can't wait to see who else will find their happily ever after!





**Letty, 5-year-old  
Female Pit Bull/Lab Mix**



**Anaia, 13-year-old Female, Arabian**



**Ian, 4-month-old  
Male Domestic Mediumhair**

**Pet  
Gallery**

Check out some  
of our adoptable  
furry friends!



**Bubba, 4-year-old  
Male Pit Bull Terrier**



**Big Guy, 30-year-old Male Quarterhorse**



**Nutmeg & Clove, Females  
2-year-old Domestic Shorthairs**



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