

# **PAWS** FOR *Thought*

FALL/WINTER 2023

***Santa Paws is  
Coming to Town!***

***Ways to make  
a difference in  
the new year***



***Celebrate Giving  
Tuesday with HSVC***





I have the privilege and the honor of working here at HSVC, and with that comes the reward of watching dedicated staff and volunteers get increasingly better at what they do by helping others on a daily basis. They help each other, they help the animals, they help community members, and they help other animal welfare organizations. The staff and volunteers make sure that when an animal needs extraordinary care, that animal receives extraordinary care. They fully embody the HSVC new-era philosophy of “How Can We?”

The length of stay of our animals is decreasing, and the number of adoptions is increasing. Our capacity for animal medical care is expanding to six days a week, and in 2024 we will begin having public animal vaccination clinics on Saturdays. We’re providing more training and building capacity for the animal care staff, and we’re making improvements to the facilities that house our animals. Our adoption models and processes are updated, and staff are having meaningful conversations with adopters to better ensure strong matches between animals and forever homes.

This amazing team has achieved much in 2023. Not only that but what has been achieved has also set us up for success in 2024 and beyond. Their work has positioned the Humane Society of Ventura County to continue on a trajectory of steady growth in the area of our positive impact.

Thank you to the donors who keep us in the business of saving lives. Thank you to the dedicated staff, volunteers, and Board who deliver the mission daily. Thank you to those who adopt from HSVC and every other shelter and rescue.

As an independent 501(c)(3) that depends entirely on the generosity of individual donors just like you, we at HSVC are grateful daily for the financial support from our community. It is because of you, our animal-loving supporters, that we can accomplish our mission and move into the future where we’ll make a more meaningful impact than ever before. From all of us at HSVC, thank you for all that you do and all that you continue to do! Cheers to even more success in the new year!

- Eric Knight, Executive Director



## Letter from the Executive Director



## Community Connections

Support Pantry 4 Paws!

Pantry 4 Paws is a countywide program operated by the Humane Society of Ventura County. Our program is dedicated to feeding animals and keeping them in their homes. The dedicated staff and volunteer team supports and distributes much-needed pet food to underserved areas of the county and focuses on the needs of the unhoused. In addition to our shelter's food pantry in Ojai, we partner with other like-minded organizations. This year, we already have distributed over 50,000 lbs. of pet food!

During this season of giving, please consider supporting HSVC's Pantry 4 Paws 12 Days of Christmas Pet Food drive. Look for details on our website soon. You can also support our program by making a tax-deductible cash donation or by dropping off unopened/unexpired bags of dry or canned pet food at the shelter, located at 402 Bryant St. in Ojai. Another way to support us is to purchase items from our Amazon or Chewy.com Wishlists.

For more information or if you are a welfare agency, nonprofit, or business that offers assistance to the unhoused community in Ventura County, please contact me, Steve McCurry, Community Development Manager, at [SteveM@hsvc.org](mailto:SteveM@hsvc.org) or 805-299-6351. As a private nonprofit, we do not receive any government funding and we're not affiliated with any national animal welfare organizations. Please help us keep pets in their homes and out of the shelter by scanning the QR code (right) to donate our Pantry 4 Paws program today. Thank you for your support!

- Steve McCurry, Community Development Manager



**HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF VENTURA COUNTY**

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402 Bryant St. • Ojai, CA 93023  
805-646-6505 or  
805-656-5031

### Mailing Address

PO BOX 297 • Ojai, CA 93024

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# Clinic Corner

## Welcome Associate Veterinarian, Dr. Melodie Degen!



The Humane Society of Ventura County is excited to welcome a new Associate Veterinarian to the team, Dr. Melodie Degen! Dr. Degen is a 2022 graduate of the University of California Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. After working for a year in private practice in Northern California, she and her partner decided to relocate to our beautiful coastal city of Ventura. She immediately began searching for a position in the area as a shelter veterinarian, knowing that shelter medicine is what she is most interested in pursuing as her career.

The timing could not have been more perfect, as the directors team and board members at HSVC recently decided that we needed more help in the clinic. This was due to the expansion of our foster program, increased kennel population, HSVC Cares community outreach, vaccination clinics, and high demand for spay/neuter and TNR surgeries.

Dr. Degen will be in training under the supervision of myself, Dr. Christina Sisk, Director of Veterinary Services, through the end of the year as well as taking an advanced surgical training program this October. After January 1<sup>st</sup>, our vaccination clinics will move from Thursdays, twice a month, to every Saturday, under the supervision of Dr. Degen.

Dr. Degen has a strong interest in animal behavior and hopes to improve the mental health, behavior, and adoptability of the dogs at our shelter by working with our Behavior and Enrichment Manager, Erica Jackson. While not at the shelter, she enjoys exploring Ventura and surrounding cities with her partner, working in her garden, and playing board games. Dr. Degen shares her home with three cats and two dogs. Welcome, Dr. Degen!

- Dr. Christina Sisk, Director of Veterinary Services

*"I'm thrilled to join the HSVC team and be able to continue pursuing my passion for shelter medicine and animal welfare. I can't wait to get started!"*

*- Melodie Degen,  
Associate Veterinarian*





## Foster Furiends

### Thank You Community Trappers and Foster Caregivers!



We are pawsitively amazed by our exceptional foster caregivers, who have been supporting our tiniest, most vulnerable residents in monumental ways this kitten season. We are proud to share that since the beginning of 2023, we placed 135 kittens in loving, attentive foster homes, and 99 foster kittens were adopted by furever families!

Many of our purrfect furiends come to us from our lone trapper, Jayme Grubbs, founder of Ventura County Feline Trap & Rescue. Jayme's steadfast determination to rescue felines is impawssible to overstate - she forages in bushes, debris piles, attics, and other bizarre places to retrieve adorable baby cats! Jayme and her assistant Madison have brought an array of precious pawkit panthers ready to be served and swooned over, many in need of careful monitoring and medical attention. She exhausts all options to trap queen mother cats and unneutered males and bring them to our clinic to be fixed.

Gratefully, five foster families were grandmoth-ered in and were ready and willing to provide stellar care for our animals when we began in spring. We are elated to continue expanding our foster family and have onboarded and trained 15 new fosters, who have proven to be great temporary pawrents. Still,

we need patient kind people to place our precious animals with, and would love to introduce you to our beloved furiends right meow! Contact me, Cheney, HSVC Foster Coordinator, at [foster@hsvc.org](mailto:foster@hsvc.org) to learn more and begin your foster journey!

- Cheney C., Foster Coordinator







# SANTA PAWS IS COMING TO TOWN!

ONE DAY ONLY! MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**DECEMBER 3RD**  
**10AM-2PM**

**HUMANE SOCIETY OF VENTURA COUNTY**  
**402 BRYANT ST. OJAI, CA 93023**

BRING YOUR WELL-BEHAVED PETS  
TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED WITH SANTA

**\$25 PHOTO SITTING FEE**  
**INCLUDES 5-8 IMAGES ON A FLASH DRIVE**

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE. SPONSORSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE.  
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: AMBER LANDIS AT  
AMBERL@HSVC.ORG OR 805-665-0345





# Dear Donors

## National Philanthropy Day: Celebrating YOU and All You Do For HSVC!

National Philanthropy Day is celebrated annually on November 15<sup>th</sup> and as a nonprofit fundraiser, it is a day that holds a special place in my heart. It is a day that signifies the importance of coming together and doing good for our communities.

Years ago, I heard a unique definition of the word “philanthropy.” The word comes from two Greek words – philein, meaning to love, and anthropos, meaning humankind. So, philanthropy can be defined as the “love of humanity.” I think that is a beautiful definition and a good reminder that our philanthropic deeds come from acts of love and our desire to make our communities and our world better.

I joined the HSVC team last November, in fact, Giving Tuesday was my second day on the job and I’m soon coming up on my one-year anniversary. I have had so many wonderful conversations and connections with many of you. I look forward to continuing our conversations and meeting more of you. Please feel free to contact me for a tour of the shelter or to schedule a time to have a coffee. I would love to hear about your animals and what HSVC means to you.

Philanthropy comes in many different forms, from charitable giving and volunteering time to donating goods or services. It is all appreciated and needed to keep nonprofits going.

As we approach the holiday and giving season, I along with Eric, the staff, and the Board of Directors, thank you for your support. Your acts of kindness, generosity, and service are vital in supporting our mission and saving homeless animals’ lives. For more information on the many ways you can support HSVC, please scan the QR code below.



- Amber Landis, Director of Development



# Humane Investigations

## Humane Officer R. Gonzalez Officially Joins the Team!



2023 has been a year of growth and change shelter-wide. With change always comes challenges, and I have absolute faith in the HSVC team. We are looking to the future and how we can be effective, efficient, and ethical in all we do. To help achieve our goal, the Humane Investigations Department welcomed the addition of officially sworn-in Humane Officer R. Gonzalez on October 25th, 2023.

While attending Ventura College, Gonzalez focused his studies on Criminal Justice. In June 2012 he graduated from Ventura County Sheriff's Reserve Academy where he received his Police Officer Standards and training (P.O.S.T.) certifications 2 and 3. Since becoming part of the HSVC team in December of 2022, Gonzalez has completed the Humane Law Enforcement Academy hosted and presented by The United States Service Command



in January 2023 and continues vigorous training in animal welfare. With a 16-year background experience in customer service and a lifetime pet parent, he is excited to start his new career working in his community and being an advocate for animal welfare.

You may remember back in Spring of this year I announced we had two candidates for the Humane Officer position. Our second candidate, A. Derringer, decided her future is not within the department and has withdrawn from the program. She remains a vital part of the HSVC team, and we wish her nothing but the best in her future endeavors.

We aim to start the recruitment process for an additional officer in early 2024. My goal is to expand our department to fit the ever-growing needs of Ventura County. As of September 30th, 2023, we were averaging 44 cases per month with one full-time badged field officer and me, the Humane Investigations Director. We are well on the way to finishing the year with approximately 520 cases or more at the end of 2023. Increasing the number of officers in our department will directly impact our ability to respond to animal cruelty and neglect complaints.

As the capacity and ability for animal neglect and cruelty response expands, so does our need for a larger vehicle fleet. My goal is to add a vehicle to our fleet that will increase the capacity for animal transport and case response. This vehicle will be another asset added to our disaster response capabilities.

The impact we have on Ventura County is directly affected by you. The HSVC does not receive any funding from the government or any other national animal welfare organization. As a private nonprofit, we are only able to provide humane investigations thanks to the generosity of our community.

- Kendra King, Humane Investigations Director





**Dahlia, 6-years-old  
Female Mule**



**Ophelia, 2-years-old  
Female German Shepherd**



**Maya, 4-years-old  
Female, Pit Bull Terrier**

# Pet Gallery

Check out some  
of our adoptable  
furry friends!



**Tweddle-Dum, 5-month-old  
Male Domestic Shorthair**



**Bebe, 9-month-old  
Male Domestic Shorthair**



**Dakota, 25-years-old  
Male Quarterhorse**





## Volunteer Opportunities

We are not horsing around: HSVC's new Equine Volunteer Program!



HSVC is excited to offer a new volunteering opportunity: Equine Volunteers! This is a special and much-needed role for those in our community who have horse experience and are willing to help our Equine Manager care for and socialize with the many horses that we have at our shelter. How much experience does someone need to volunteer?

At least six months - one year according to Christina Malleck, our Equine Manager. "Volunteering is a great opportunity for horse lovers who currently don't have a horse to call their own," said Christina.

There are currently two levels of volunteers: General and Ambassador. General Volunteers work with staff with cleaning stalls, throwing feed, and can help staff/ambassadors groom horses. Ambassadors handle tasks that require more skills/experience similar to what staff can do but must be working alongside a staff member.

While the HSVC has always had horses, they were always cared for by our animal care staff until May of this year. The impact of having a dedicated group of volunteers has been huge on the horses! How does one become an equine volunteer? To become an equine volunteer, please reach out to Christina Malleck, Equine Manager, at [ChristinaM@hsvc.org](mailto:ChristinaM@hsvc.org) or call the shelter at 805-646-6505. We are currently looking for volunteers Monday through Friday who can commit to at least one hour per shift.

- Jennifer Grimm, Volunteer Coordinator



**Pictured: Horse Ambassador Volunteer Aletheia Gooden with 25-year-old male, Dakota. He is currently at the shelter looking for his forever home!**



## Success Story: Harold and Kumar's Underdog Journey

In mid-August of 2023, our Humane Officers investigated a case of potential animal neglect with two dogs, now known as Emma and Bartolo, and their two puppies. The puppies, named Harold and Kumar by our staff, were about 5-months-old. The animal owners had previously tried to get the two adult dogs altered but were unable to schedule an appointment before Emma fell pregnant. After working with Humane Officers, the owners agreed it would be in the best interest of the animals to be signed over to the HSVC.

"This case was a prime example of an animal owner not having resources readily available to them. They were doing their best with what they had and ultimately put the dogs' welfare before their affection and love because they knew it was the best option for them to be surrendered," said Humane Investigations Director Kendra King.

Shelter staff helped Emma and Bartolo settle into the kennels upon intake. As unvaccinated puppies,

Harold and Kumar were housed separately in our grooming room until their intake vaccines could take effect. However, the puppies began exhibiting common symptoms of Parvovirus within a few days. Unfortunately, they tested positive for the virus.

Shelter staff quickly determined that Harold and Kumar's best chance of survival was to transfer them to Horizon Veterinary Specialist in Ventura to receive 24/7 care. The petite pups spent nearly a week together at Horizon. Kumar, the sicker of the two pups, stayed an additional week for further treatment. Their treatment totaled in nearly \$16,000 in care expenses. HSVC cannot thank Horizon enough for their superb care of these puppies!

We are thrilled to report that after two weeks of diligent care, both Harold and Kumar cleared the Parvo virus and were adopted into two loving, forever homes! Their parents, Emma and Bartolo, also found forever homes for their own. It's a happy ending for all, and we couldn't be happier for them!







# GIVING TUESDAY

NOVEMBER

28

5-8 PM

OJAI VALLEY  
BREWERY

307 Bryant St.  
Ojai, CA 93023

**Join us for a night of fun  
celebrating our HSVC alumni  
while raising money for  
shelter animals in need!**

-  **Photobooth**
-  **Silent & Online Auction**
-  **Food & Beverages Available for Purchase**

**Can't attend but still want to support HSVC?  
Scan the QR code below to donate now!**

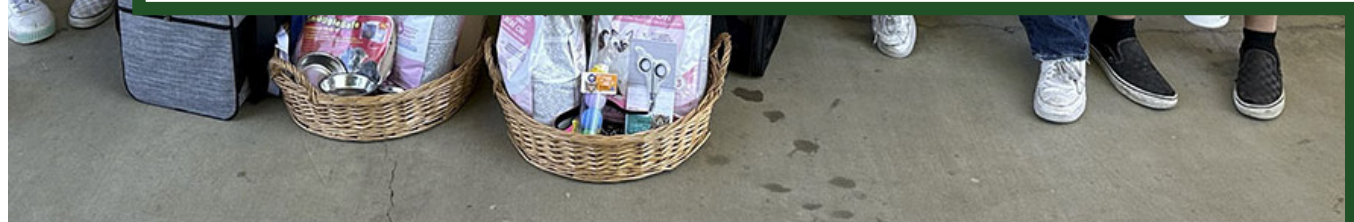






# Humane Education

Engage with H.E.Y. Programs this 23'-24' Classroom Season



Since the mutual relationship between companion animals and humans began, one thing rings true and that is: with each new adventure we venture outside into our amazing nature spaces. As I walk through our county's beautiful spaces with my companion animals, all I experience is connectedness. Our companion animals interact with neighbors both human and nonhuman, and the ecosystems that sustain life around us.

Humane Education for Youth (H.E.Y.) offerings for this classroom season will focus on our beloved companion animals but also offer ways for learners to engage in an updated comprehensive Humane Education or "One Health" approach to caring for animals. This will allow H.E.Y. to share ways that companion animal wellness is connected to human and planet wellness.

In one of the updated classroom presentations, "HSVC Friends", learners will hear more about the ways that youth can engage with their local community of companion animals and ways they can be of direct service to the animals at the shelter.

Learners in all H.E.Y. programs will be invited to:

- Compassionately think of ways to create healthy neighborhood ecosystems for all to thrive
- Share ideas about how their own neighborhood can best care for their animal neighbors while still being kind to humans and our planet
- Reflect on their experiences with companion animals or their service to animals at the shelter

If you would like more information about our program offerings throughout this year, please visit our website at [www.hsvc.org/education](http://www.hsvc.org/education) or contact me, Angie Chupek Sagliani, via email at [education@hsvc.org](mailto:education@hsvc.org) or phone at 805-364-1350.

- Angie Chupek Sagliani, Humane Educator







## A Taxwise Giving Opportunity - Giving from your IRA

If you are over age 70 1/2, the Federal government permits you to roll over up to \$100,000 from your IRA to charity without increasing your taxable income or paying any additional tax. These tax-free rollover gifts could be \$1,000, \$10,000, or any amount up to \$100,000 this year. The gift may satisfy your required minimum distribution for this year. Simply contact your custodian and request that an amount up to \$100,00 be transferred to charity.

You gift to a nonprofit organization like ours will:

- not be included in your taxable income
- may satisfy your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year
- reduce your taxable income, even if you do not itemize your deductions
  - not be subject to the 50% limitation on charitable gifts
  - help the work of our organization

An IRA charitable rollover is a very simple gift to make. Please contact our Director of Development, Amber Landis, at [AmberL@hsvc.org](mailto:AmberL@hsvc.org) or 805-805-665-0345 or your IRA administrator for assistance in completing an IRA charitable rollover gift. Scan the QR code below or visit [hsvclegacy.org](http://hsvclegacy.org) to learn more about planned giving opportunities with the Humane Society of Ventura County!

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# Become a Business Club Member Today!

We are beyond grateful for all of our supporters and businesses who enable us to make an impact on animals in need throughout our community. Each year, thousands of Ventura County residents and pets are touched by the services we provide. As a Business Club Member of the HSVC, you understand the need for our vital services. We invite you to become a Business Club Member so you can further show your commitment to the animals and people we serve. Scan the QR code below to learn more about the benefits of each membership level and how you can become a Business Club Member.



Here are some of our life-saving programs and services supported by generous, animal-loving donors:

- Adoption services and compassionate care animal sheltering
- Humane Officers who investigate cases of animal abuse, neglect, and cruelty
- Disaster relief services
- Emergency & Animal Rescue Teams
- Low-cost spay and neuter, vaccination, and microchipping services
- HSVC Pet Pantry programs to provide free pet food to animals in need

**Thank you Pet Sponsors & Paver Donors: Patricia Valenzuela • HSVC Board of Directors**



## Pet Sponsorship Help an Animal in Need



Here's my/our gift to sponsor an animal for adoption

☐ Pet Friend - \$30

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

We would like to sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

This is a gift for \_\_\_\_\_

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☐ Check OR Please charge my ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Discover

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