



# Our Animals

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**The San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**

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## OUR MISSION

The mission of the San Francisco SPCA is to save and protect animals, provide care and treatment, advocate for their welfare, and enhance the human-animal bond.

## ABOUT THE ISSUE

**Senior Writer and Editor:** Elyce Berrigan-Dunlop  
**Creative Designer:** Niki Noll

## OUR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT

Printed by a Forest Stewardship Council-certified printer.

I'm thrilled to share this issue of *Our Animals* with the very community who makes our work possible. Thanks to your incredible support, the past year is one of innovation, adaptation, and paws-on-the-ground legislative action.

It's been a year of changes and challenges, but ultimately, it's been a year of achievement. Our programs have been restructured to meet the needs of clients throughout the pandemic and our services have remained at the gold-star standard you expect. Our Shelter Policy and Legal Services (Shelter PALS) team has made significant gains in animal welfare legislation, including the recently signed Pet Blood Bank Modernization Act.

This is a landmark edition of *Our Animals* as it debuts our new branding, which you'll notice across all of our platforms. I hope you enjoy reading about the evolution of our branding and how this refreshed, modern imagery positions us for our next bold steps in animal welfare. Thank you for being a friend to animals, for your commitment to our lifesaving work, and for being an advocate for homeless cats and dogs across our state.

Jennifer Scarlett, DVM  
President

# Shelter PALS Paves New Roads for Animal Welfare



During this year's state budget process, Shelter PALS lobbied alongside other animal advocacy organizations to secure a total of \$60M for California's shelter animals (\$50M) and pets of people experiencing homelessness (\$10M). This funding includes the biggest ever state investment in animal shelters and will help California's under-resourced communities invest in solutions. This funding will ultimately reduce the number of pets being surrendered to shelters and increase lifesaving, positively impacting hundreds of thousands of animals over the next five years.

*Diane, Diego, and Steve enjoy time at home together [left]; Diego and Steve catch some sunshine [right]*

Brandy is elated about these wins and the positive impacts they will have on the state's most vulnerable pet populations. "Communities who were facing the strongest headwinds before COVID will likely face the toughest storm going forward," said Brandy. "Now more than ever, Shelter PALS is needed to facilitate increased resilience for all shelters and to address inequities that result in poor outcomes for animals in our state."

Building on this success, in May, Brandy took the reins on a bold new action and the SF SPCA sued the California Veterinary Medical Board under the First Amendment right of free speech to lift restrictions imposed on veterinary telemedicine. (See page 6 for more on this critical lawsuit.)

Said Brandy, "With a growing pet population, it is the San Francisco SPCA's top priority to ensure access to veterinary care for all animals in California. By limiting telemedicine, this law is restricting equitable access to animal care among California's diverse people and geographic regions."

**"Now more than ever, Shelter PALS is needed to facilitate increased resilience for all shelters and to address inequities that result in poor outcomes for animals in our state."**

While this critical lawsuit is still pending, Shelter PALS continues to tackle legal roadblocks for animal shelters. With so many accomplishments already achieved in their first two years, the team is grateful for the support of their volunteer partners and the generous donors who support the program. "We can only do this work because of the people who make it possible," said Brandy. "Shelter PALS is still a new program and its successes take a lot of ingenuity, tenacity, and resources. We are so fortunate to have supporters who believe in what we're doing."

If Diego could voice his appreciation, he would do it loudly. After arriving at the SF SPCA, he met Linda who was helping to find the perfect furry companion for her sister, Diane. Since the pandemic had just upended life as usual, Linda went to meet Diego and his foster family outdoors.

"The pandemic made it a little harder," said Linda. "But Diane and Steve knew he was the dog for them." Today, Diego is loving life in Arizona. Diane can't say enough good things about him. "Although Diego might be considered a rescue, it was Diego who rescued us," she said. "Life during lockdown was challenging, but he was our bright light. We are so grateful for Diego. He came to us at the perfect time."

Shelter PALS continues to be a driving force in the animal welfare world. As we navigate the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, we are optimistic about the future and the power of animal advocacy. You can learn more about this lifesaving program and how you can become a voice for animals at [sfspca.org/pals](https://sfspca.org/pals)

In March 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic was transforming life as we knew it, five-year-old Diego was waiting for a forever family. A pure white Siberian husky, he was a happy 55-pound boy living in a partner shelter in Tulare, and he had no idea the world was facing a crisis. Luckily, Brandy Kuentzel, SVP of Advocacy and Public Policy and General Counsel of the SF SPCA, sprang into action. Founder of the SF SPCA's Shelter Policy and Legal Services (Shelter PALS) program, she and the team were ready and positioned to help on his behalf.

COVID-19 initially immobilized animal shelters across California, leaving vulnerable agencies at a standstill. However, within only three days of the shelter-in-place mandate, Brandy leveraged Shelter PALS, in cooperation with Governor Gavin Newsom's office, and had shelter staff deemed "essential," effectively reopening lifesaving rescue operations throughout the state. Shortly after this success, Shelter PALS worked with Dr. Jeannine Berger, SVP of Rescue and Welfare, to develop

shelter protocols on how veterinary medicine and animal transport could continue without compromising the highest level of care. Quickly circulated by the California Department of Public Health, these procedures are now the standard guidelines for many other California shelters.

Always looking forward, Brandy focused Shelter PALS on the expansion of veterinary telemedicine in California during the pandemic, which made remote veterinary care a possibility for millions of animals despite the shelter-in-place order. Over the past eighteen months, the advocacy team has never slowed down, and in fact, is paving new roads for animal welfare every day. Brandy has built a network of legal firms also committed to animal welfare. This groundbreaking progress is thanks in large part to the legal support of Latham & Watkins, LLP and O'Melveny & Myers LLP, premier law firms whose attorneys have donated thousands of hours in pro bono work.

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## Veterinary Visionaries: Dismantling Restrictions & Creating Direct Access to Care

For many dogs and cats, the road home—and the road to accessible veterinary care—remains obstructed by funding roadblocks, a lack of resources, and outdated legislation. Additionally, we are dealing with a national veterinary shortage and an enormous backlog of appointments created by COVID-19. These obstacles are a **call to action** and we're working rapidly to address this lifesaving gap by creating ways to provide direct service to animals and their people.

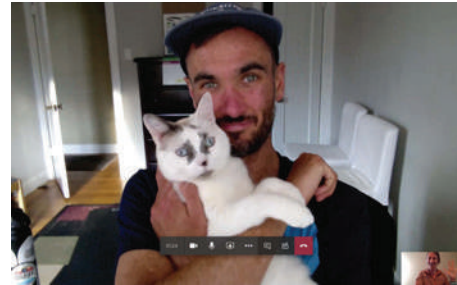
In May, the SF SPCA Shelter Policy & Legal Services team (Shelter PALS) sued the California Veterinary Medical Board under the First Amendment right of speech. The lawsuit seeks to lift restrictions imposed on telemedicine that limit access for millions of pet guardians. While telemedicine doesn't solve these problems overnight, it does have the power to change how people find and receive much-needed care.

About 70% of patients waiting in emergency vet hospitals (often for hours) are not experiencing true emergencies. They may need simple guidance or they may be facing outside factors that make

standard appointments impossible. For so many in our community who do not have a regular veterinarian for ongoing care, the emergency room is their only option, and that is one of the reasons we launched a partnership with third-party vendor Vet Triage, a video tele-triage service that connects pet guardians with veterinarians for emergency guidance.

Our Call-Ahead Clinic and Mobile Vaccine Clinic are also helping to reduce the number of ER visits; however, in order to truly solve the lifesaving gap, we need to increase funding and resources in communities with the highest needs. On pages 4-5, you will read about our most recent legislative victory that provides \$60M of support for shelter animals and pets of guardians experiencing homelessness. Thanks to collaboration with other animal advocacy organizations and the governor's office, this bill will be the largest ever investment in California's animal shelters.

Today, we have another new legislative success to celebrate! AB 1282, the Pet Blood Bank Modernization Act, was recently signed by Governor Newsom and



### VET TRIAGE

it will end California's restrictive blood-collection laws and introduce a more humane community-sourced blood-donation system. This bill will allow pet guardians to volunteer their pets as blood donors to help other animals in need. Until now, California was the only state prohibiting this community system, even though it reflects the same standards in place for human blood collection.

Staff members Dr. Jeannine Berger, SVP of Rescue and Welfare, and Brandy Kuentzel, SVP of Advocacy and Public Policy and General Counsel, worked closely on this bill for years, striving to dismantle outdated laws that limit access to veterinary care. We are thrilled that the new bill is now going to expand access to lifesaving blood transfusions and introduce a more humane system for animals.

## Always here for Animals: Heroes of Shelter Medicine

After more than a year and a half of navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, we have watched our heroes jump into action again and again. Whether it's generous donors rising to meet a funding challenge, foster volunteers stepping up to care for homeless animals, or tireless staff restructuring programs to ensure services continue, the heroes of the SF SPCA are making miracles happen. One of the most inspiring examples of heroism can be seen every day in our Shelter Medicine department.

Thanks to Shelter PALS' critical legislation allowing animal transport during the pandemic, we continued to take in dogs and cats from our under-resourced partner shelters in the California Humane Animal Transit Team (CHATT). This meant that Central Valley shelter animals who needed veterinary care could be transferred to our hospital. For four-year-old miniature poodle Maru, who was transferred from Fresno Humane Animal Services, getting to our hospital was the difference between life and death.

Maru arrived with severe injuries to his ears and cheek, and he suffered from distemper, a potentially fatal virus. "His case was extreme," said Shelter Medicine veterinarian Dr. Amie Knieper. "He

was in the ICU, he got specialized care, I.V. antibiotics, ongoing nursing care, and then he went into foster care. It's incredible that we can offer this type of service." Dr. Knieper noted that part of what made Maru's care possible was collaboration, not only between SF SPCA departments, but also between our partner shelters.

"Maru came to us through our transit partner in Fresno," said Dr. Knieper. "A lot of these shelters don't have veterinary care, and if they do, it's not enough to reach all of the animals. Bringing an animal here where we have the resources, it helps the shelters in two ways. It brings these animals who need medical care here to the SF SPCA and it creates space for their healthy population at the partner shelter." Of the more than 2,000 animals transported from partner shelters in FY2020-2021, 20% of them required specialized care.

The day after his surgery, Maru was matched with longtime foster volunteer Caroline Doyle. However, during Maru's three-month foster stay, Caroline was called out of town for a week. He was then introduced to Naomi Vann, a foster volunteer who had recently lost her dog. Though she had fostered animals before,

she'd never cared for a pet with medical needs and the experience proved to be life-changing, both for her and Maru. "When I was first going to foster Maru, I was told he was a very special boy," said Naomi. "That could not have been truer."

Though Maru returned to Caroline's care for the remainder of his recovery, the connection between he and Naomi was unbreakable, and she adopted him as soon as he was ready. "The best part about having Maru in my life is seeing him get better and living his best life," she said. "Coming home from work and having him run up to me with his little wiggly body is the best thing. I am so grateful to everyone that helped Maru on his journey and feel very fortunate to be his forever home."

Over the past eighteen months, our hospitals treated 21,000 emergency cases and completed over 7,000 spay/neuter surgeries. Over the past year, we have given close to 4,000 exams in our Shelter Medicine Hospital alone. The heroes in the SF SPCA story are found in every department and throughout our community of support. We applaud our Shelter Medicine staff for their heroism, and we thank you endlessly for yours.



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FREEWILL 



Maru recovered from his injuries thanks to the SF SPCA Shelter Medicine team [left]; Today, Maru is living life to the fullest [right]

# Positioned for the Future:

## Our New Branding Delivers a More Joyful World for Animals and Their People

You may have noticed this issue looks a little different. The logo of the San Francisco SPCA has a refreshed, modern look, and it's taking us into the future!

Now that we've accomplished our first full year of Vision 2030, we are excited to be introducing a bolder look for our branding that positions us for the bold moves up ahead. At the SF SPCA, we help shift the odds in animals' favor by advancing advocacy, delivering shelter best practices, and showing how to expand access to high-quality veterinary care. Our team-members have a deep understanding of the needs at hand and the possibilities ahead. This sense of possibility is reinforced every time a pet guardian welcomes a dog or cat home, or any time an animal receives the medical attention required for a healthy and full life.

With our eye on the possibilities ahead, we find motivation in our past accomplishments, and FY20-21 proved to have many. Our Adoption team matched 3,403 animals with forever homes. Our foster volunteers welcomed 2,314 animals in need (more than double than the prior year) by providing shelter, enrichment, socialization, and medical care. Our Mobile Vaccine

Clinic also celebrated a milestone by seeing 245 patients in a single day—the highest number in its 11-year history!

With this progress comes a progression of our branding. For more than a hundred years, the symbol of the SF SPCA was an avenging angel, a logo originally created by the British Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The powerful and timely symbol showed an angelic figure calling an end to violence against working animals, and

Original Seal



Logo introduced in the 1970s



New Logo



it was embraced by local societies as they emerged. In the 1970s, we transitioned to the red heart outlining a dog and cat, showing that our focus had evolved from protecting equine and industry-focused animals to the safeguarding of companion animals.

Today, our updated brand continues this commitment to companion animals and extends to all of the ways we create joy through the human-animal bond. With the new logo, we are focused on problem-solving and positioned for the critical work of moving the focus of animal welfare from awareness to action. The SF SPCA community is dedicated to finding innovative solutions and delivering joy, whether it's through our Call-Ahead Clinic, our Adoption program, or even through the hard work of aligning our staffing with the needs of the community during a veterinary shortage.

In the new branding, you'll see the softer, warmer red is reflective of this joy. The lighter shade of charcoal replaces

the standard black, imbuing a more thoughtful and welcoming color palette. The shelter dog and cat lovingly embraced in a heart are now more alert, looking engaged with their humans and more connected. The font is more contemporary, giving our name more visibility. All of these changes combine to position us as an agency of animal welfare devoted to creating a joyful world where both animals and their people thrive.

These are bold initiatives and we believe that the SF SPCA is boldly different in how we find and create solutions. We know we can only accomplish these dreams with you by our side, and so we are also grateful for the community that surrounds us.

Our new branding will appear more over the coming months. We hope you enjoy watching it come to life!

*Be a voice for animals!*

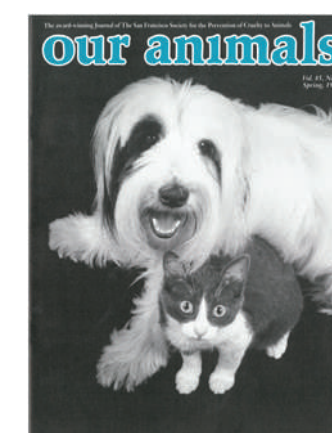
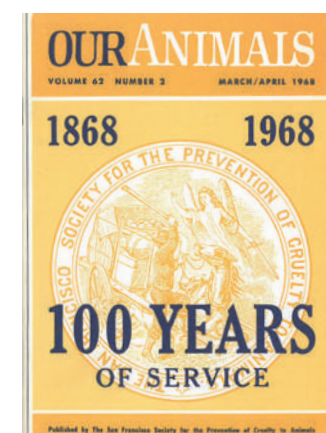
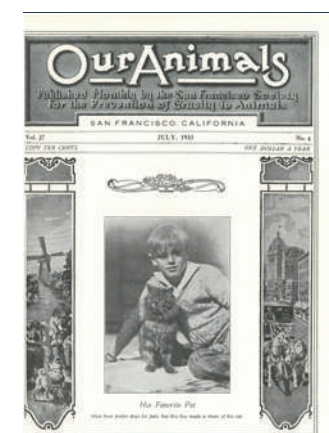


**SHELTER PALS**

**Join the future of animal welfare: SF SPCA's Shelter Policy & Legal Services**

Shelter PALS is the country's first and only legal aid organization dedicated exclusively to the needs of shelter animals.

**DONATE AT [SFSPCA.ORG/PALS](https://sfspca.org/pals)**



*The evolution of the SF SPCA is visible in our branding, as is represented in the history of this very magazine.*

Two-month-old Celene will be matched with a forever home as soon as she recovers from surgery.

## Emergency Action: Responding to the Tulare County Fires



This summer, the Tulare County wildfires spread quickly, endangering our partner shelters and the animals in their care. Their call for help was swift and our emergency response was immediate. Tulare County Animal Services urgently needed to create space in their shelter for evacuated dogs and cats and those who got lost in the midst of the disaster. It was incumbent upon us to quickly transport the healthy, adoptable Tulare shelter animals to our Adoption Center so they could be rehomed as soon as possible.

Our rescue operations are continuing, with 24 animals currently transferred into our care. Of those 24 dogs and cats, 14 have already found forever homes. Our Intake team continues to make weekly trips to Tulare, bringing supplies and returning with animals like two-month-old kitten Celene.

Discovered with her sister, Celeste, Celene came to the SF SPCA in September requiring urgent medical treatment for a corneal ulcer (an open sore on the outer layer of her eye). Shelter Medicine Director Dr. Bridgid Twomey said, “When Celene came to us, we knew she had a ruptured eye and that it needed to be removed, but she was just too small and underweight for surgery. So we placed in foster care with her sister until she was big and strong enough for the procedure.”

Of the nearly 2,419 animals who were treated by our Shelter Medicine team last fiscal year, 818 required specialized medical

care. That’s nearly 34%. Despite the nationwide vet shortage, our team of veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians (RVTs) are working tirelessly to provide the highest standard of care for suffering animals.

“When there is a natural disaster, shelters need all the space they can get,” said Dr. Twomey. “They want to be ready for animals who are injured or have been separated from their families. We help by taking animals who are ready for adoption and some that need medical care as well.”

With California’s wildfires increasing every year, we stand ready with emergency response aid. The lifesaving network of the California Humane Animal Transit Team (CHATT), which includes Humane Society Silicon Valley, Marin Humane, Kings County Animal Services, Tulare County Animal Services, Fresno Humane Animal Services, and Madera County Animal Services, allows us to solve some of the most pressing environmental issues facing companion animals in California.

Celene is growing bigger and stronger in her foster home and will be matched with a loving family right after she recovers from her surgery. We are grateful to our supportive community who enables us to save animals impacted by the recent wildfires and be prepared to intervene when the next disaster strikes.

The SF SPCA is the only shelter in the entire country with two credentialed behavior and medical doctors on staff. That is why we are able to decode the most vexing animal cases. Drs. Jeannine Berger and Wailani Sung assess both emotional and physical health, giving them a complete understanding of an animal’s wellbeing.

## Pawsitive Results!



### CLIENT CASE: Feline Frustration

When eight-year-old cat Oliver noticed there were changes in his household, he was confused. His guardians were experiencing health concerns that impacted daily routines, and Oliver was left frustrated, unsure how to react. With emotions pent up, he began to show aggression toward his sister, Pixie. This surprised his family as Oliver and Pixie were littermates who had always lived together in harmony. Their guardians were worried about the new behavior and didn’t know how to intervene in a helpful, constructive way. That’s when they reached out to the SF SPCA for support.

### RESOLUTION: Everyday Enrichment

Upon assessing Oliver, Dr. Wailani Sung, Director of Behavior and Welfare Programs, recommended a treatment plan to address both his medical and emotional issues.

She suggested the guardians begin to “counter condition” Oliver’s behavior, which meant offering a small treat when he was approached. His family learned to allow him more physical space before interacting and to step back if he hissed or displayed signs of stress (such as ears lying flat, tail raised, or back arched).

Dr. Sung also recommended enrichment tools such as food puzzles, fifteen minutes of daily playtime, and clicker training to teach simple cues like “Sit,” “Touch,” and “Go to Mat.” These cues enabled his guardians to direct Oliver to go to his safe space when he was uncomfortable.

Oliver started on the medicine gabapentin to decrease anxiety and aggressive behavior related to the anxiety. His family also introduced Feliway Multicat, a diffuser that provides stress-reducing pheromones.

Oliver’s guardian said, “Thanks to Dr. Sung’s knowledge and expertise, we were able to remediate the situation both with medicine and instructions on how to manage the cats. Her care and guidance through a difficult time was very valuable and I am grateful for her help.”



DR. JEANNINE BERGER



DR. WAILANI SUNG

## About the Experts

The SF SPCA is proud to have two of the United States’ most credentialed veterinary experts on staff: Vice President of Rescue and Welfare Jeannine Berger, DVM, DACVB, DACAW, CAWA and Director of Behavior and Welfare Wailani Sung, MS, PhD, DVM, DACVB. Offering expertise on hundreds of clinical behavior cases, Drs. Berger and Sung are credited with helping countless families and animals throughout California.



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## More Ways to Give: Make a Gift that Benefits You

We know that your decision to support the SF SPCA comes from the heart. As a bonus, your gift may also bring you significant benefits:

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2. Contribute to or open a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) account and enjoy a tax savings! By using a DAF for your charitable giving, you can save both money and time. Just recommend a grant and your account advisor will take care of the rest.
3. If you are 70 ½ or older, you can make a gift directly from your IRA with a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). Make your gift now to ensure funds are withdrawn from your IRA before the end of the year.



*Reminder: December 31, 2021 is a federal holiday, meaning all US financial institutions will be closed. In order to qualify as a charitable contribution in 2021, stock transfers, DAF grants, and IRA withdrawals need to be completed no later than December 30, 2021*

**Whatever way you choose to give, we are grateful for your generosity that allows us to continue to care for pets and their people in San Francisco and beyond. To learn more about how you can make a difference for animals beyond your lifetime, visit our website at [sfsPCA.org/legacy](https://sfsPCA.org/legacy) or contact June Hom, Director of Planned Giving, at [jhom@sfsPCA.org](mailto:jhom@sfsPCA.org)**