

# THE BOND



## NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN FRANCISCO SPCA ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY PROGRAMS

Greetings teams, contacts, and supporters,

We have a lot going on in AAT as usual! In this issue you will find information about our upcoming events and those hosted by SF SPCA Volunteer Services in recognition of Volunteer Appreciation month. I hope to see many of you in the coming weeks to celebrate the service of our amazing teams and learn about how we are expanding services to non-traditional populations. See our lectures and events listings for details.

I'm also excited to share that this afternoon we restart our MESCAAT (Mastery, Empathy, and Social Conscience through AAT) program with eight participants from the SF Veteran's Medical Center. Special thanks to Linda Messitt (Oliver), Nicole Gottwald (Dexter), Christine Liu (Ollie), Kelly Sims and Susan Blanchard (Chedda Cheese), Stephanie Chen (Coco), Randall Adviento (Mochi), Dr. Echo Love (Poe), and Brittany Masuda (Sampson) for lending us your amazing dogs for MESCAAT!

One last note, this is also the time of year we typically gather data from surveys to our teams and facility contacts. Please look for those to be sent via email by the end of March. Christina, Jeff, and I use your feedback to address any concerns, strengthen programming and review training. Thank you in advance for helping us better serve our community!

Best wishes to everyone on visits and have a joyful spring,

~Jennifer

### Meet LiLou, Our Therapy Pig!

Yes, you read that right: we now have a pig going out on AAT visits! Our department has a history of welcoming different species, including chinchillas, a bearded dragon, a turtle, guinea pigs, and a Moluccan cockatoo. LiLou is, so far as we know, the first pig since we started in 1981. LiLou isn't just any pig; she's a Juliana breed and her mom, Tatyana Danilova, is quick to point out she's a city pig. This unique team completed AAT training in November and joins 300 current dog, cat, and rabbit teams serving our San Francisco community.



At a minimum, AAT pets must be solicitous and fully comfortable with handling. In other words, pets must be interested in and eager to approach people and accept handling, regardless of the person's age, gender, race, size, mobility equipment usage, and apparel. As with all of our AAT teams, Tatyana and LiLou went through our full training and evaluation before starting visits. Jeff Murray, AAT Dog Trainer, covered the same basics as canine assessment, and LiLou was in a training class with three dogs. Thanks to Tatyana actively socializing her from the start and working with her throughout the series to shape AAT skills, LiLou passed with flying colors and the team was ready for mentored visits to round out our training requirements. We had high hopes, but it was impossible to predict how the visits themselves would go.

Those high hopes were more than satisfied on their most recent mentored visit to Buena Vista Manor. Tatyana and LiLou were met with smiles, curiosity, outstretched hands, and lots of "oohs" and "aahs" when she showed off her piano playing skills! LiLou went through her repertoire of tricks (10+) and soaked up praise from the clients. Dianne Bates, AAT Mentor, found "most people have never had the opportunity to meet a pig, and literally everyone wanted to interact with her." That came as no surprise to Tatyana, who is accustomed to fielding questions while people marvel at her smiley Urban Pig

on their daily walks. Of the visit itself, Tatyana shared her favorite thing “was the fact that we could bring a feeling of a pleasant surprise to people who have most likely seen a lot throughout their lives.”

Meeting LiLou makes people imagine having their very own companion pig. As with any pet, the decision to bring a pig into your life is a big one, so Tatyana advises people do thorough research before taking the plunge. For Tatyana, her cat allergy, schedule that wouldn't match well with a dog, and desire to come home to a cuddly friend, prompted her to explore pet pig ownership. Tatyana invested time talking to other pig owners—which she strongly encourages—and educating herself on pig care and behavior. What she learned is enough to fill books, of course, but a few highlights include:

- There is no such thing as a “teacup” pig. Julianas are the smallest breed, and not to be confused with the more widely-known potbellied pigs, but their average weight is 50-70 pounds.
- Pig intelligence is comparable to a 2-year old child, which means you will need to baby proof your home before bringing them home and offer lots of training and mental stimulation to avoid boredom and destructiveness. As with dogs, consistency is key to shaping behavior and clicker training is encouraged.
- Spaying/neutering is a must and will eliminate a lot of behavior issues.
- Be prepared to do extra legwork to find a walker, sitter, and veterinarian. It is important to find a vet ahead of time and learn about your pig's health and care.
- Pigs are different from cats and dogs and owner expectations need to be different as well. For example, they are prey/herd animals with instincts that have to be taken into account. Pigs easily sunburn, have more complex dietary and care needs, and, of course, they can be pigheaded.
- Pigs are neither dirty nor smelly, but they do love to root around in blankets and other materials.



Pig education and sharing the human-animal bond are both important to Tatyana. She loves introducing people to LiLou and seeing how much joy and comfort her girl brings to others. Still, Tatyana is firm in cautioning that “pig ownership is not for everyone. While pigs are cute and adorable, they do require extra time, consistent discipline, responsibility, and reasonable guardian expectations.” When that commitment can be made pigs have much to offer as

companions and therapy pets. In Tatyana's case, it has been a perfect match. “It has been a wonderful experience for me,” she says. “I absolutely love my LiLou and I know she loves me

too! We are very excited to bring more smiles and positivity to our community, as well as be the Urban Pig Ambassadors!”

We're excited, too, and look forward to learning more about LiLou and hearing their tales from the field. For more information on pig guardianship, Tatyana suggests these sources:

- American Mini Pig Association or AMPA provides useful information before and while you have a pig: <http://americanminipigassociation.com/>
- Facebook groups:
  - Mini Pig Education <https://www.facebook.com/groups/121536148041812/?ref=bookmarks>
  - Just Mini Pigs <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Justminipigs/>
  - The Mini Pig Pen <https://www.facebook.com/groups/120540741442218/>

To keep up with LiLou's adventures as an Urban Pig, follow her on Instagram: lilou\_sfpiglet or you can also find her by #sfpig.

## AAT News

### Welcome to AAT!

***This quarter we are delighted to welcome the following teams to the AAT Programs:***

Carmen Brooks with Phoebe	Jan Hepper with Jackie
Katie Cheng with Chompers	Eddie Ngai with MoMo
Val D'Orito with Lou Doggs	Nina Leva and Piper
Treasure de la Cruz with Jupiter	Patricia Lawton and Frankie
Kristin Monfredini and Indiana	Lyle Sweeney and Murphy
AshleyRose Harwood and Benga!	Emily Co and Poe (staff pet)
Maura Kintzer with Broadway Jack	
Erika Tunick and Cous Cous (staff pet)	

Congratulations on completing your training and we look forward to working with you for many years to come!

### Upcoming AAT Events

#### Lecture Series III: “AAT and Incarcerated Clients”

**When:** Wednesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30-7:30 PM

**Where:** AAT Reception and Classroom, 201 Alabama Street

**RSVP:** Affirmative only to [AAT@sfpsca.org](mailto:AAT@sfpsca.org) or 415.554.3060

Come learn more about working with this unique population. Our guest speaker is Alissa Riker, Director of Programs at the San Francisco Sheriff's Department. At least one of our current visiting teams will share their experiences working at this new site, too. We hope you can join us!

#### Lecture Series IV: “Demystifying DISH”

**When:** Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30-7:30 PM

**Where:** AAT Reception and Classroom, 201 Alabama Street

**RSVP:** Affirmative only to [AAT@sfpsca.org](mailto:AAT@sfpsca.org) or 415.554.3060

Delivering Innovation in Supportive Housing (DISH) provides high-quality, permanent housing to 450 San Franciscans who suffer from serious health issues. Join Ariel Fortune, DISH's Community Project Manager, for a chat about the invaluable benefit her tenants receive from interactions with the community outside of their building. Many tenants are disconnected from family, friends, and loved ones, living isolated and lonely in the Tenderloin and Mission neighborhoods of SF. DISH's tenants have complex and vivid stories, all with the hope to rebuild and stabilize.

## Super Bowl 50 Superstars!

Our airport program, the Wag Brigade, was especially busy over the super bowl weekend. We want to thank the following teams for adding more visits and/or extending their regularly scheduled visits to provide stress relief and a huge welcome to travelers at SFO:

### Extra shifts:

Frances Nuss and Moxie	Linda Gordon and Brixton
Linda Holden and Bailey	Marsha Hanson and Carson
Shari Marks and Toby	Jessica Johnson and Kirk
Mary King and Zippy	Lesley Gordon-Mountian and Tzigan

### Super Bowl Weekend/Extended Hours Friday—Monday:

Mary King and Zippy	Jane Twomey with Prancer & Dasher
Linda Holden and Bailey	Nancy McFarland and Marisol
Jessica Johnson and Kirk	Hilary Hedemark and Kona
Cindy Wu and Walter	Lesley Gordon-Mountian and Tzigan
Frances Nuss and Moxie	Terese Sladowska and Cooper
Clive Lazarus and Judd	Linda Gordon and Brixton
Lynda Locke and Poquito	Marsha Hanson and Carson
Shari Marks and Toby	



Frances and Moxie



Nancy and Marisol

## In Memoriam

### Sawyer Reyes Lovrin

A team that was truly bonded at the heart, Barbara and Sawyer were quite the pair. They visited UCSF Children's Hospital and Sawyer sat quietly with the children undergoing treatment. He had a special calming effect that was almost magical and really put everyone at ease. When visiting as part of the SFO Wag Brigade, he proudly displayed his "bling" collar and pranced around, giving everyone the chance to pet and hug him. He was a shining light and will be greatly missed. *Photo by Mark Rogers*



### Smokey Goldstein Kamras



For many years Smokey visited the folks at Buena Vista Manor. He was a gentle giant—a big Lab/Rotti mix with a heart just as big. He gave a lot of love to the people he visited—this was like a second home to him! We thank him and his mom,

Samantha, for his many years of loyal service to AAT and Buena Vista Manor.

### Taz Brewer



We love our Corgis and Taz was no exception. He made people smile wherever he went—the airport, campus visits and many more places as part of the General Program. He was a delight to have scurrying around with

big ears and floppy tongue. Thank you Taz for the great work you did with us in AAT!

### Popeye Boothby

We miss you Popeye Boothby—the big, loveable American Bulldog that was one of our staff pets and part of our AAT program. You'd always smile when you saw his goofy grin and he would not let you pass up an opportunity to give him a treat! His dad runs our IT department, so Popeye knew everyone here at the SPCA—and everyone loved him. We will miss him terribly, but we know he's running, swimming, and eating lots of his favorite treats over Rainbow Bridge. Love to you big guy!



## UCSF Special Thanks!

The UCSF Memory and Aging Center thoroughly enjoys our volunteer visitors. Pictured are four of the many volunteers that visit our clinic bringing joy and delight to our patients, families and our staff. Petting the dogs and chatting with their owners gives everyone a break from daily stress and a chance to enjoy sharing stories about pets. ~Jennifer Merrilees, RN, PhD, Clinical Nurse Specialist and Health Sciences Associate Clinical Professor



Carol and Gunner



Martin and Marley

NB: We welcome photos from facilities for inclusion in our newsletter. Please contact Jennifer Henley directly with submissions: [JEmmert@sfsPCA.org](mailto:JEmmert@sfsPCA.org)

## Thanks for Supporting AAT!

AAT would like to extend a special thanks to [Sports Basement](#), [the Cake Gallery](#), and [artist Angela Cooper](#) for helping us celebrate our team's achievements. The space, the cake, and the special gift for a longtime volunteer were all fantastic. Everyone had a wonderful time and we can't wait for next year's fête!

## SF SPCA Volunteer Appreciation Events

### Pancake Breakfast

**When:** Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9:00-10:30 AM

**Where:** SF SPCA Multipurpose Room, 243 Alabama Street

**RSVP:** Evite from Volunteer Services to follow. Volunteers will RSVP by responding to the Evite. Those without email will receive a phone call.

This is a special pancake breakfast cooked and served by SF SPCA staff in honor of all the great work you do in our community.

### Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner

**When:** Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-9:00 PM

**Where:** SF SPCA Multipurpose Room, 243 Alabama Street

**RSVP:** Evite from Volunteer Services to follow. Volunteers will RSVP by responding to the Evite. Those without email will receive a phone call.



This event sponsored by Volunteer Services includes a light dinner, bar, and the annual SF SPCA milestone anniversary recognition ceremony. We hope as many AAT teams as possible can attend!

*\*\* Your trained therapy pet is also welcome; please consider elimination needs prior to entering and during the event\*\**

## Get Involved: SF SPCA News and Events Foster Volunteers Needed!

Kitten season is upon us and our Foster department is looking for volunteers able to open their hearts and homes to kittens and puppies! Many of our animals come into the shelter underweight or in need of some TLC before being spayed/neutered and adopted out. If you love kittens or puppies, but can't make the commitment to getting a new pet, this might be the program for you!

To get started, here are upcoming dates for classes:

**Kitten 1:30-3:30 PM**

Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>

Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>

Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>

Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>

Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup>

**Puppy 1:30-3:00 PM**

Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup>

Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup>



For class registration and questions please email [foster@sfspca.org](mailto:foster@sfspca.org) and a Foster Representative will be in touch!

*My how they've grown! Foster kittens Catapult and Cindy, who were originally found by CCP (Community Cares Program) and then bottle fed by foster volunteers for 2 months until big enough to be adopted*

## What's Wrong with the Prong?



As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, both of our campuses will be prong collar-free environments! Visitors whose dogs are wearing prong collars will be asked to remove them while they're on the premises—we will provide you with a humane alternative.

Prong collars are designed to inflict pain and discomfort, and we want your dog's visit to be as pleasant as possible. Vet visits can be stressful for some dogs even without a prong collar.

Despite what some trainers or pet store employees might say, prong collars are not safe or humane. The skin on a dog's neck is significantly thinner than human skin, and prong collar injuries are quite common. They also hurt your relationship with your dog and can lead to serious, long-term behavior problems.



To learn more about our new campaign, visit [sfspca.org/prongs](http://sfspca.org/prongs)

## Other News

**Canine Science Symposium:** On April 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> the Behavior team is hosting the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Canine Science Symposium in MPR at the Mission Campus. Researchers and experts from around the country (including our own Dr. Berger) will be presenting on a variety of topics related to the latest in canine behavior science. *Staff and volunteers are welcome to register at the discounted price of \$100!* Visit <https://www.sfspca.org/css2016> and use code **HAPPYDOG** to receive the discount. Contact Ariel Stephens at [astephens@sfspca.org](mailto:astephens@sfspca.org) with questions.

**Adopt T-Shirts:** The SF SPCA teamed up with local clothing company Adapt to promote animal adoption through stylish shirts. 100% of net proceeds benefit the SF SPCA, so buy yours today online at <http://adaptclothing.com/collections/spca-san-francisco> or in-store at 2801 Judah Street, San Francisco.

## Pass It On

The Animal Assisted Therapy department seeks to assist all members of the San Francisco community wishing to engage in the human-companion animal bond.

For information or to be placed on our distribution list contact:

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415.554.3060

[AAT@sfspca.org](mailto:AAT@sfspca.org)

[www.sfspca.org/programs-services/animal-assisted-therapy](http://www.sfspca.org/programs-services/animal-assisted-therapy)

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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.