

# THE BOND



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

Greetings everyone,

We have welcomed Shelley Smith aboard as our new AAI Coordinator! She will begin scheduling for JUL-DEC 2019 soon. In the meantime, we have some upcoming projects and events.

You may have noticed staff using Animal Assisted Interactions (AAI), in lieu of AAT. I will delve further into this change later in this newsletter, but I wanted to highlight the shift for volunteers and facility contacts, especially, because you give your time and support to fellow San Franciscans by bringing the benefits of engaging in the human-animal bond to those who cannot access it on their own. You are our best representatives and we could not accomplish our goals without the commitments of volunteers and contacts, who are in the field, seven days a week, sharing love, providing comfort, facilitating visits, and helping build skills essential to actively engaging in community. The change will happen over the course of this calendar year, and possibly into the next, as we work to update everything from forms to signage.

Another big project on our horizon will promote the welfare of therapy animals worldwide. The San Francisco SPCA is now part of an advocacy campaign creating international standards of best practices in AAI!

Currently, I am working with colleagues, both domestic and international, to build guidelines for certifying, maintaining, and ensuring the health and welfare of therapy animals in a variety of settings. As a member of the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations, [IAHAIO](#), we not only want to provide a safe therapeutic visit experience for clients, but we also want to promote animal welfare in our practice of service to our SF community. This is all part of IAHAIO's One Health/One Welfare initiative. I have agreed to be on their Task Force to investigate current practices, consult with a variety of animal and human health experts, and, ultimately, propose standards advocating for and protecting both animal and human health and welfare while engaging in human-animal interactions.

This is an enormous project, so we have divided places animals serve and types of service into five committees. I am leading one of these committees, whose focus is the wellbeing and quality of life of in-residence small animals. In this case, "small animals" range from fish to dogs. Other committees are exploring One Health/One Welfare issues for visiting animals, in-residence farm animals, equines, and non-traditional or exotic animals.

At this point, I am gathering information, reading research, and compiling input from the members of my group. They are AAI practitioners, a veterinarian familiar with AAI, AAI program creators, and an infection control specialist—all scattered around the globe. I am excited to collaborate with such a diverse, knowledgeable group! By the end of July, I will compile and submit our proposed best practices surrounding human-animal interactions with animals kept in residence at mental and physical healthcare, and educational facilities.

Speaking of best practices, you will read more about this year's round of recertifications (done biennially for all canines) further in the newsletter. Please remember [these are mandatory](#)

(biennially) to continue working in the field, including the upcoming schedule for July-December 2019. In addition, I cannot resist an opportunity to remind Volunteers to submit their therapy animal's health form annually. If you register(ed) for recertification, feel free to bring your updated health form! We appreciate your diligence in keeping your pet visit ready.

Switching gears, much like last year, AAI will have a considerable presence in the April 30 SF SPCA Gala, which will be at our Mission Campus. We have secured a dozen canine teams, our porcine team, and one feline team. If you are interested in welcoming patrons to our annual event, please reach out to me directly (ASAP) at [JHenley@sfsPCA.org](mailto:JHenley@sfsPCA.org).

Lastly, we are able to host an abbreviated lecture series this spring:

- **April 4: Anne Snowball** on the benefits of practicing Tellington Touch.
- **May 9: SF SPCA President, Jennifer Scarlett, DVM** discussing the larger Society's next strategic vision.
- **June 9: Ask the Dog Trainer Lunch** teams and contacts can ask questions and get recommendations for getting the most out of visits for volunteers, animals, staff, and, of course, clients.

I hope this finds everyone healthy and happy throughout 2019. Enjoy your visits!

-Jennifer

### Serving Youth on the Autism Spectrum

The Puppy Dog Tales Reading Program (PDT) is now in its twelfth year and we continue to find new ways to support literacy acquisition and inspire a love of learning. Since last year, we have been working one-on-one with youth on the autism spectrum. Currently, Team Bruce (whose guardian is David Miller) reads roughly once a week with this year's student, Keith. They have even set up a little library in our space!



Keith reading to attentive listener Bruce Miller in our AAI Classroom

Not only did I think their story is a great one to hear, but Stephen, who initially contacted our AAI Program Support Specialist Diane Parker (who oversees @Home and PDT, primarily), and connected us with Keith, has some tips to share with teams working with people on the autism spectrum.

First, our reader and the tutoring program that sent him our way: Keith's tutoring is coordinated through the nonprofit [Community Education Partnerships](#), whose mission is "to increase the learning opportunities and enhance the academic achievement of homeless and highly mobile youth."

When I reached out to Stephen, who works for CEP, he emphasized that Diane, Keith's mom, is his best teacher and advocate. This didn't surprise me because in my more limited experience with persons on the autism spectrum, often family play a crucial role in getting their loved one assessed, acknowledged, and supported. When I asked Diane what she noticed from Keith reading to Team Bruce, she replied, "his reading has improved, he's started to say hi to everyone. He looks forward to his visits with David and Bruce."

Apart from the heightened confidence and interest in learning Diane sees in her son, there are also regular assessments of CEP students in a variety of subjects.

When he first started reading to Bruce, Stephen assessed Keith's reading level as falling between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Since reading (for most of the weeks this academic year) with Team Bruce, he has improved his sight words to a 5<sup>th</sup> grade level. Stephen notes that Keith's best strategies for learning, due to his being on the autism spectrum, is recursive and tactile. In other words, they work with the same materials, repeated over the course of several months. Moreover, if there is a tactile opportunity to pair lessons with or a break where Keith can expend some energy, we see considerable improvement in not only his reading, but also math skills. This could be the presence and sensation of petting a dog while reading/doing math, but also involves taking regular breaks to inject some exercise/physical activity into the learning experience.

In addition to Keith-specific tips, Stephen says when working with persons with autism, recursive learning is ideal, and it can seem like a participant might "motor through" after working with the same materials for months, but, in his experience with those navigating autism, "it's not "memory" like {neurotypical persons} experience. It's not that he *remembers* the story so much as patterns and repetitive actions become a "map"...they act like a series of familiar lighthouses" that can mentally guide the learner.

Another great tip is, when doing PDT or psychosocial skill building with youth (or adults) on the autism spectrum, it is best to streamline content and simplify. In Keith's case, Stephen says, "typically, I'll select the books and test them out with him. Once I settle on about three books, I put him through the paces on those same three books for up to three months or more." What this might look like elsewhere in the field is your PDT team asked to stick with one to three books for the bulk of the semester. In addition, "focus, and re-focus, and re-focus is a repetitive pattern" that helps students like Keith learn.

Another great tip from Stephen is to use "mini exercise breaks to help with focus and math/counting skill set." With reading, reinforcing the participant's work by having him "spell the word and use his phonics to sound it out" will build confidence in the student that s/he can tackle any material presented or that is of interest.

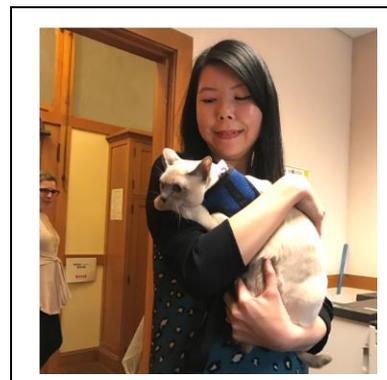
Thank you Diane, Keith, Stephen, and Team Bruce for bringing this service to our AAI Classroom several Thursdays a month. While Keith is learning to meet challenges, so, too, we are learning how to best support persons on the spectrum. Our traditional/General program does not currently work with centers specifically for those with Autism Spectrum Disorder, but between Team Bruce and [Treehouse Tribe](#) (which you read about in our Winter 2019 issue) using our classroom, I feel like we're finally able to start addressing the needs of a significant group in our community. I hope that we will continue our current work and we are always open to exploring new opportunities to support those with mental, physical, and/or learning differences.

## AAI News and Upcoming Events

### Welcome to AAI!

***This quarter we are delighted to welcome the following teams:***  
Sandy, Jude and Ramona with Nimbus (Tonkinese cat)  
Ted O'Connell and Kip  
Aine O'Connell with Bailey (grey and white shorthair cat)  
Brian Sherry with Liberty Bell  
Jen Morris with Tiger (orange tabby cat)

For the first time that I can recall, I am delighted to announce not one or two, but *three* felines have qualified for visitation this past quarter! Nimbus even went with me to City Hall to visit the Board of Supervisors. We're excited to have all of these great new feline teams on board and how adorable are our two new dogs, Liberty Bell (the Cavalier) and Kip (the Aussie)!?!



## In Memoriam

Over the past few months, we said goodbye to one of our fantastic therapy dogs, Mikey. He did visits through the Puppy Dog Tales Reading Program and the General Program, bringing joy to thousands of our community members of all ages. Thank you, Erica, for sharing the love of your little one! We miss him already.

**Mikey Haims** (as remembered by AAI Volunteer Erica Haims)

Mikey was originally a rescue from Muttville. We do not know much about the first eleven years of his life, other than he must have been loved a lot because he had so much love to share. He enjoyed having the opportunity to be an AAT dog for the SF SPCA; he was so happy at every visit. Mikey's last two and a half years he gave out countless kisses and received thousands of pets from so many people.



## Change is upon us!

In coordination with one of the internationally recognized leaders in our field, the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations' (IAHAIO) White Paper's 2018 update—to read the latest approved edition in English click [here](#)—we are adjusting our department name to **Animal Assisted Interactions**. NB: You can read the White Paper in other translations and learn more about its history and development [here](#). In addition, you can learn more about the work of IAHAIO by going [here](#).

For those who want to learn more, the “why” of our name change is as follows: Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) is one of a number of types of Animal Assisted Interventions; each type of intervention has defining criteria to meet. AAT, properly speaking, only happens when a professional, credentialed/degreed in his/her mental, oversees the visit or physical healthcare field, and is concurrently documenting in each client's medical record the effects of the visit. The vast majority of our visits are Animal Assisted Activities (AAA): visits where there is likely no documentation, not directed by a degreed professional in the patient care/academic field, and we

are simply sharing the benefits of engaging in the human-animal bond. We also do a fair amount of Animal Assisted Education (AAE), which, again, requires a degreed professional lead the sessions, as well as documentation of participants' progress toward goals; e.g. reading fluency, prose literacy, numeracy, symbolic literacy, or the development of psychosocial skills.

All of that is to say that the bulk of what we do does not qualify, technically, as AAT, but is typically AAA or AAE. We want to be in line with our international colleagues and the IAHAIO White Paper—especially in light of it being the hope of the group's members to propose internationally acceptable guidelines and standards for engaging in animal assisted interventions that promote and protect both animal and human welfare and health.

## Recertifications

Several dates in March and April are blocked off for us to do canine recertifications for teams. Between our three Dog Trainers, Jeff Murray, Michelle Martens, and Shelley Smith, we will have two trainers and a Program Administrator (Diane Parker or myself) present for every evaluation. Plan to pay by cash or check (\$35) as we cannot accept credit cards.

[Here](#) is a link to the video to see what recertification entails.

[Here](#) is the link to sign up for recertification. Please contact us if you have trouble registering.

If you are unsure whether your team must recertify this year, please reach out to [DParker@sfspca.org](mailto:DParker@sfspca.org) to confirm either way.

**If you have been with us for a while and do *not* plan to continue beyond June 30, 2019, please let us know your retirement plans so we can avoid spamming you with recertification emails ☺**

## Spring Lecture I: Anne Snowball

**When:** Thursday, April 4, 6:30-7:30 PM

**Where:** TBD, depending upon number of interested teams

**RSVP:** email [AAI@sfspca.org](mailto:AAI@sfspca.org) or [JHenley@sfspca.org](mailto:JHenley@sfspca.org)

**Anne Snowball** is a certified Tellington TTouch ([touch.com](http://touch.com)) and craniosacral therapist, whose experience spans over 20 years worldwide.

These modalities ensure optimum health, confidence, and body-mind connection. Private clients, animal rescue groups, zoos, and the San Francisco SPCA are a few of the arenas where you will find her working to help guardians and companion animals continue to strengthen their bond.



You may reach Anne at either [callingallanimalssfo@gmail.com](mailto:callingallanimalssfo@gmail.com) or phone 415.786.8289.

**More on TTouch®:** Developed by internationally recognized animal expert [Linda Tellington-Jones](#), Tellington TTouch® Training is a specialized approach to the care and training of our companion animals, horses and exotic animals, as well as for the physical and emotional well-being of humans. Tellington TTouch is a method based on circular movements of the fingers and hands all over the body. The intent of the TTouch is to activate the function of the cells and awaken cellular intelligence - a little like "turning on the electric lights of the body."

*Light refreshments offered and certified therapy pets welcome!*

SPRING 2019

## Spring Lecture II: Vision 2030

**When:** Thursday, May 9, 6:00-7:00 PM

**Where:** TBD, depending upon number of RSVPs

**RSVP:** [AAI@sfspca.org](mailto:AAI@sfspca.org) or [JHenley@sfspca.org](mailto:JHenley@sfspca.org)

Join us in May for a discussion with **SF SPCA President, Jennifer Scarlett, DVM**. This is an opportunity to learn more about vision 2030, which will shape the direction of our organization for the next ten years, how we plan to curb animal abandonment even further in our city, and what key roles you can play, not only as representatives of the practice of animal-assisted interventions, but also representing the greater Society.

*Light refreshments offered and certified therapy pets welcome!*

## Spring Lecture III: Annual Trainer Lunch

**When:** Sunday, June 9, 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM

**Where:** TBD, depending upon number of RSVPs

**RSVP:** [AAI@sfspca.org](mailto:AAI@sfspca.org) or [JHenley@sfspca.org](mailto:JHenley@sfspca.org)

Come chat with **Jeff Murray**, our longstanding AAT Dog Trainer, and learn tips for deepening your team bond, while ensuring your therapy animal remains visit ready. We may also be able to include our recertification trainer(s), so please let us know if that is of interest.

Historically, we have offered this for AAI teams only. **This year I would like to extend the invitation to any Facility Contacts with questions about working with our teams and/or helping facilitate the best visits possible for clients.**

*Light lunch included and certified therapy pets welcome!*

## HS Students: Taking the SAT 1 Fall 2019?

**When:** Wednesdays, June 12—August 14, 10:00AM—12:00PM

**Where:** SF SPCA Community Room (201 Alabama Street)

**Registration:** email [AAI@sfspca.org](mailto:AAI@sfspca.org) to request an application.

This summer, once again, we will have Dr. Clifton Luke and his therapy dog, Jackson, on campus to review mathematics concepts for college-bound sophomores and juniors in preparation for the SAT I math section. We recognize the prevalence of math-related anxiety and the significant impact on performance it can have. For these sessions you will work through problems, take practice tests, and (hopefully) both reduce anxiety related to the test and improve your score. We have shown that as little as four sessions can make a statistically significant difference in both measures!

Not only will you get to tackle the SAT 1 math component with more confidence, you will also get to snuggle as needed with a wonderful Golden retriever! To get more information and to register, contact us at the email above or stop by 201 Alabama Street and ask to connect with the AAI department.



**The Sido Program ensures that your pets will be lovingly cared for if they outlive you.**

For more information, please contact Jessica Sananes, Planned Giving Officer 415.544.3027 or [JSananes@sfspca.org](mailto:JSananes@sfspca.org)

## SF SPCA News and Upcoming Events

### Volunteer Services' Pancake Breakfast

**When:** Sunday, April 7 from 9:00-11:00 AM

**Where:** Gerald Building, off the 250 Florida St lot (@16<sup>th</sup> street)

**RSVP:** [volunteers@sfspca.org](mailto:volunteers@sfspca.org)

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month at the SF SPCA! This year we will be honoring volunteers at our two annual events. The first is a fan favorite: the pancake breakfast! Come celebrate another year of volunteering with the SF SPCA and enjoy some delicious pancakes served by SF SPCA staff.



### Volunteer Services' Annual SF SPCA Party

**When:** Friday, April 26 6:30-9:00 PM

**Where:** SF SPCA Multipurpose Room (243 Alabama Street)

**RSVP:** [volunteers@sfspca.org](mailto:volunteers@sfspca.org)

Please join us for this wrap up of Volunteer Appreciation Month at our annual SF SPCA-wide volunteer appreciation party, which will be jungle themed. As always, we will provide tasty food, cocktails, and entertainment. We will also do the Society-wide annual recognition of milestone anniversaries for volunteers serving in increments of five years.

Michelle and I loved toasting your accomplishments with you last year and Shelley, Diane, and I are looking forward to doing the same again this year. *NB: of course, at your discretion, certified AAI animals are welcome to attend with you.*



## Free Advice from Behavior Veterinarians!

Does your pet have unusual, funny, or concerning behaviors you want to better understand? Bring your questions to open office hours with two of our behavior veterinarians: Dr. Sung and Dr. Liu.

This **free** service is the second Tuesday of every month, 10:30 AM-12:00 PM, with question time limited to 10 minutes per client. **No RSVP needed, just show up!** Behavior and Training is located at 201 Alabama Street, and a signup sheet will be at the hospital front desk. Street parking is available on Alabama.

**NB: Humans only, no pets please!** Any questions? Reach us at [behaviorinfo@sfspca.org](mailto:behaviorinfo@sfspca.org).



*Dr. Wailani Sung, MS, PhD, DVM, DACVB (left) with Reven, and Dr. Sophie Liu, DVM, Behavior Resident with Ipa (right)*

## Get Your Ticket to the SF SPCA Gala Today!

As I mentioned in my opening letter, on the evening of April 30, the San Francisco SPCA will transform with Metamorphosis, our first-ever major fundraising event at our Mission campus. Metamorphosis celebrates the daily healing transformations animals undergo at the San Francisco SPCA, and the many ways in which dogs and cats enhance people's lives. To learn more or purchase tickets, please go to [www.gala.sfspca.org](http://www.gala.sfspca.org).



## SF SPCA Leads the Way to Protect Pets in New Divorce Law

by Brandy Kuentzel, General Counsel

When spouses go through a divorce, the items and assets they have acquired during their marriage are divided. The dispute over who gets the couple's pet or pets—like that over who gets the human children—is often contentious and emotional.

In order to reduce the chance that the interests of pets are forgotten in those battles, the San Francisco SF SPCA partnered with fellow animal lover California Assembly Member Bill Quirk to introduce a bill to increase the status of pets in divorce proceedings. We are thrilled to report that our efforts were successful, with Governor Brown signing the bill into law in October 2018.

The new Family Code section 2605, which went into effect January 1, 2019, is important both in substance and symbolically. In short, it is a declaration by the citizens of California that pets are not just “property” to us, and that they deserve unique consideration and focus from judges dealing with divorce cases.

Pets (in fact, all animals) are considered property under the law of every state. In the divorce setting, this means that they are usually treated no differently than a car, television, or couch, and that neither the pet's nor the guardians' interests regarding the pet are factored into any decisions that a judge might make about who gets Fido.

However, whether we have pets or just know someone who does, we all know that many Americans consider their pets to be family. More and more, the parties to a divorce are upset and surprised when they are told that the family pets are just going to be split up along with the rest of the community property, as if the pets have no interests of their own, as if the pets cannot be affected by that decision, and as if the human-animal bond that exists is not a factor to be weighed in determining where pets go.

Fortunately, with the SF SPCA leading the charge and with support from other animal advocates, California has now changed so that the needs and interests of the pet may be considered. With an estimated 60 percent of marriages in California ending in divorce, the impact of this change is widespread.

There are two separate aspects to the new law. First, it allows a judge to order one party to care for the pet during the pendency of the divorce proceedings. This ideally prevents any accidental or intentional harm to the animal while the case is moving through the court. Second, as long as one of the parties asks, the judge must be “taking into consideration the care of the pet animal” when deciding whether to order joint custody to the splitting couple, or sole custody to one of the two.

Those simple nine words quoted above shifted the judicial landscape for pups and cats and all the other furry, winged, scaly and shelled animals we love and live with, should things get to the point of legal separation. While before this law, pets were just “things” to be split up in a numbers game, judges can now give them the fair evaluation they deserve.

Congratulations, Californians, we continue to move the ball forward for our animal families.

## SF SPCA Pacific Heights Campus Update



Now that we have finished remodeling portions of our Pacific Heights Campus, we will be offering Saturday events (beginning March 19) and Tuesday adoptions (beginning March 23)!

Click [here](#) for the full list Saturday events at the Pacific Heights campus—opportunities include paint your pet and pet yoga.

Adoptions will be available on Tuesdays 12:00-5:00 PM.

Both Saturday special events and Tuesday adoption hours will continue through June.

## Pass It On

The Animal Assisted Interactions department helps members of the San Francisco community engage in the human-companion animal bond (HCAB), which has therapeutic benefits for those in mental and physical healthcare and educational settings. Our 275 cat, dog, rabbit, and pig teams, along with SF SPCA staff, serve over 100,000 SF community members annually in hospitals, nursing homes, psychiatric centers, transitional housing units, post-incarceration programs, schools, libraries, the SF Jail, the San Francisco International Airport, and more!

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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.

To be on our distribution list, email [AAI@sfpca.org](mailto:AAI@sfpca.org)



**ARE YOU OUR SECRET ADMIRER?**

**SHARE THE LOVE!**

Have you named the San Francisco SPCA  
in your will and not told us yet?

Let us know and we'll include you in our Legacy  
Society for special benefits, newsletters, events,  
and recognition.

**EMAIL US AT [DEVELOPMENT@SFSPCA.ORG](mailto:DEVELOPMENT@SFSPCA.ORG)**