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.

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT

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ABOUT THE COVER

It's time for bright sunny days, blooming bouquets, and bunnies. Yes, bunnies. A relatively new addition to the SF SPCA Mission Adoption Center, bunnies are great pets. They're smart, social, curious, and frisky — in short, a bunny might just be your perfect companion. Hop on down to the SF SPCA to meet your new bunny buddy.

Did You Know?

› The SF SPCA receives no tax dollars or funding from the government.
› We’re independent and not affiliated with any national rescue group or animal welfare organization.
› We’re local, so when you donate to the SF SPCA, your dollars go to work right here in San Francisco to help save, protect, and provide care for homeless animals that are ill or in need of an advocate.
› Charity Navigator rated us as the top large animal welfare organization in the United States.
› GuideStar awarded us the Platinum Seal, its highest level of recognition.
› The San Francisco Chronicle named the SF SPCA the top Bay Area charity.
› Your donation matters. We rely on the generous support of our donors to improve the quality of life for animals and their human companions.

If you’re thinking about giving to your favorite charity, we encourage you to first check out rating organizations like Charity Navigator (we’re proud of our four-star rating, including our 100/100 financial score). Financial information can be found in our annual reports online at sfspca.org

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Welcome to sunny days at the SF SPCA!

Spring and summer tend to usher in a sense of reflection and renewal so, in the spirit of the season, I want to do a little of both by taking inventory of our successes over the past year before embracing a fresh narrative for the new year and beyond.

Looking back, I’m sure most of you will agree that 2016 was a rather tumultuous year. Amidst all the highs and lows, the San Francisco SPCA was busy breaking records — we helped more than 5,200 animals find forever homes, performed more than 50,000 exams at our hospitals, provided more than $4 million in charitable care, welcomed more than 400 new volunteers, made more than 100,000 Animal Assisted Therapy visits, hosted 7,000 budding animal advocates at our camps, and changed more lives than ever before. We couldn’t have done all this without our amazing volunteers, donors, and staff, and we’re extremely lucky to have such a dedicated, compassionate, generous group helping us make a real difference in the lives of the animals of San Francisco.

This time of year also tends to leave us charged with a new energy, and we’re capitalizing on that to make some big changes around the SF SPCA. We’re building a new park, adding new programs like AAT@Home and a feline science symposium, improving our technology, and upgrading our medical equipment — all while we’re getting ready to celebrate our 150th anniversary next year.

That same transformational spirit permeates all we do — whether it’s the Herculean effort by our Community Cares team (page 12) to bring medical care, services, and training to people and pets in areas of the city that might not otherwise have access to it; a program like Canine Connection (page 9) with its power to compel real change in veterans’ lives; or the efforts of super volunteers like Sue LaPlaca (page 10) who, day in and day out, make a real difference at the Society on a more individual level.

We’re embracing the spirit of spring to take action and transform the SF SPCA. We hope you find inspiration in this issue and that it sparks a transformation all your own.

Sincerely,

JENNIFER SCARLETT, DVM
President
Dr. Jeannine Berger

As one of only a handful of double board-certified veterinary behavior and welfare specialists in America, Dr. Jeannine Berger helps animals — and their guardians — live happier, healthier lives. Her unique understanding of both behavior and veterinary medicine allows her to provide pets with behavioral care while also addressing the medical issues that can cause or contribute to behavior problems.

Dr. Berger first joined the San Francisco SPCA in 2011 as the Director for Behavior Resources, taking on all aspects of behavior within the Society from one-on-one consultations with private clients to designing behavior treatment plans for shelter animals with special needs. Recently she accepted the position of Vice President of Rescue and Welfare and will provide even broader support for animals in the SF SPCA's care.

“As far back as I can remember, I have been drawn to animals and them to me — and even as a small child in Switzerland, I would help out the animals in my neighborhood. As I grew up, it became clear that the best way to become an advocate for animals was to pursue a career in veterinary medicine,” said Dr. Berger. She followed that dream and, in 1991, received her veterinary degree from the University of Zurich.

“One of the first times I truly understood the importance of behavior was during one of my first emergency calls as a young veterinarian in Switzerland. I was focusing on large-animal medicine at the time, and I received a panicked 2 am call from a horse owner whose two-year-old Arabian had cut himself. It was pouring rain, the horse was bleeding, and no one could catch him. At first, I was worried about the technical skills — like how to stitch the wound and what pain medication to use — but then I realized that none of it mattered if I couldn’t catch the horse first. To even begin to help, I needed to understand animal behavior

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so I could catch, handle, and sedate the horse and keep him at ease while I worked. And after the initial treatment, I had to provide the owners with behavior tips so they could keep him calm every time the bandages needed to be changed.”

In 1998, Dr. Berger had the opportunity to move to California to pursue research at the University of California, Davis. The original plan was to stay for a year, but Dr. Berger soon became immersed in UC Davis’ extensive behavior program. By 2007, she had completed the behavior residency program and earned her board certification, and her career in behavior began.

“In 2010, the SF SPCA invited me to come and take a look at their behavior program, which was already impressive,” Dr. Berger explained.

“I spent a year working as a relief veterinarian, and by the end of that year I had a better understanding of what I could contribute to the team, and I decided to join.”

Behavior issues are the primary reason pets are surrendered to shelters. Dr. Berger’s work is twofold: by helping pet guardians work through problems, pets are able to stay in their homes where they belong. Dr. Berger also diagnoses and treats shelter animals, including many that might be at high risk for euthanasia in other shelters. By working directly with these shelter animals, she can help them overcome behavioral challenges so they can find the loving forever homes they deserve.

“Working with shelter animals allows me to touch so many lives. I’m blessed to have an amazing team and great support. The SF SPCA also encourages me to continue pursuing my education, which is something that’s very important to me.” In 2014, she received board certification with the American College of Animal Welfare.

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“I love the work that I’m doing. Every single person who is at the Society, whether they’re a volunteer or staff member, is working to promote animal welfare and enhance the human-animal bond. It doesn’t matter if someone is cleaning cages or working as an adoption counselor; each and every one of them is contributing to the bigger picture and supporting the SF SPCA’s mission. Just being a small piece in that bigger picture is humbling.”

To learn more about private behavior consultations, visit sfspca.org/behavior
The call came in on a chilly day: a mama dog and her six nursing puppies needed help. They were warm and dry at animal control in Merced, California, but that was just a temporary solution. In no time, the entire canine family was under the watchful eye of the San Francisco SPCA and its dedicated staff and volunteers.

Each puppy weighed less than half a pound — about the size and weight of a russet potato — so they soon became known as the “potato puppies.” Our staff and volunteers meticulously weighed and monitored their growth and progress as they began to open their eyes and explore their cozy bedding.

Animals in need of foster care come to the SF SPCA in a variety of ways. Some — like the potato puppies — come to us from out-of-county shelters. Others are humanely trapped by our Community Cares Program (CCP) staff and volunteers. And some are transferred from San Francisco Animal Care & Control (SF ACC).

Martina, Ellen, and their four littermates are a few of the lucky kittens that came to the SF SPCA through our partnership with SF ACC. Since the SF SPCA has a special nursery for feral cats still nursing their baby kittens, SF ACC reached out about a cat and her six babies. Mama Patty couldn’t produce enough milk to feed all her babies, so our CCP staff provided supplemental bottle and syringe feeding to help the kittens grow. As the kittens were weaned, they were transferred from the CCP nursery to the CCP graduation room, where volunteers socialize and care for kittens before they find a temporary foster home. Martina and Ellen were the last of the litter to leave Mama Patty and graduate to foster.

The Foster program and its 415 volunteers play an integral part in saving more than 1,700 lives each year. Heela Homman, Foster Coordinator, explained, “Our foster volunteers literally save lives. By taking foster animals into their homes, our volunteers allow us to expand our reach beyond our physical building, help prevent the spread of disease, and provide vital socialization to prepare puppies and kittens for adoption.”

The SF SPCA adopts out more than 5,200 animals annually, and 34 percent of them were in foster care. We’re happy to report that all of the potato puppies as well as Martina, Ellen, and their littermates were adopted into loving homes.

Donations from generous supporters like you make all these programs for underage animals possible. Visit sfspca.org/donate today to help more animals like the potato puppies, Martina, and Ellen.
Gloomy weather didn’t stop the San Francisco SPCA’s Heart of Gold donors from celebrating at the St. Francis Yacht Club. Spectacular views of the Golden Gate Bridge, some Grgich Hills wine, and amazing stories made everyone forget about the soggy weather and the wet umbrellas left at the door.

There wasn’t a dry eye in the house as keynote speaker Dede Wilsey, longtime volunteer and donor Christopher Davies, Salesforce.org CEO Rob Acker, and Emeritus Director Austin Hills shared their stories with the crowd. Later, as the wine flowed and the appetizers were passed, Heart of Gold donors were introduced to some special four-legged friends — a Miniature Poodle and five Dachshund mix puppies named Diane, Dede, Austin, Christopher, Wilsey, and Rob in honor of our honorees. And the best part? Three of the puppies found forever homes that evening!

A special thanks to all of our Heart of Gold donors, the honorees, Grgich Hills Estate, Merial Insurance, First Republic Bank, James Sakamoto Design, and Flowers Claire Marie for their generous support and for giving us plenty to toast on a dreary night.
Step inside one of the Humane Education classrooms at the SF SPCA’s Mission Campus, and you’ll see why kids can’t wait for summer camp to start. Filled with brightly colored, hand-drawn signs promoting animal welfare, along with boxes of crayons and markers, lots of games, and happily dozing small animals, anyone would be thrilled to spend time learning and growing in the Humane Education classrooms.

Summers are an extremely busy time for the Humane Education team, but that doesn’t mean they take the school year off. All year long, the SF SPCA’s tireless humane educators offer programs designed to turn animal lovers into champions for animal welfare through dynamic learning opportunities. From interactive, long-term volunteer opportunities to programs built for a couple weeks of classroom study to day-long service projects or camps, there are plenty of occasions for children to learn about animal welfare.

One popular program is Humane Heroes, a corollary to the SF SPCA’s robust volunteer program. People under 18 years of age can become a Humane Hero by attending a special volunteer orientation and putting in hours caring for animals, educating the public about the lifesaving work the SF SPCA does to provide shelter for animals, and coordinating donation drives.

“Our department gets phone calls and emails weekly from parents who want their children to get involved and volunteer with the SF SPCA. Because walking adoptable dogs isn’t necessarily a great fit for a six-year-old child, we decided to start a program where kids of all ages could volunteer and make a difference. The Humane Heroes program allows youngsters to volunteer in their own communities while earning points for the SF SPCA,” said Maggie Amiano, Humane Education Manager. Humane Heroes participate in many activities to raise public awareness and encourage compassion toward animals. Maggie continued, “Kids participate by hosting a bake sale, running a wish list drive, distributing flyers on adoption, promoting adoptable animals online, cleaning up poop or foxtails from local parks, and more. Kids come in monthly to drop off donations, tell us about their experiences, spend time with one of our education animal ambassadors, and get some SF SPCA schwag for the points they’ve earned.”

For young people who cannot commit to a long-term volunteer position but are eager to be champions for animals, Humane Education coordinates single-day volunteer sessions. Kids in grades 6 through 12 can sign up for a Community Service Day to enrich animals’ lives during their stay at the SF SPCA, participate in the care of pets waiting to be adopted, and craft pet toys and adoption materials.

Humane educators also go beyond the boundaries of the SF SPCA’s campuses and into classrooms through HEART and Sit, Stay, LOVE! HEART, or Humane Educators Advocating Responsible Thinking, is a three- to four-session program that teaches animal welfare through critical thinking and creative problem solving. Volunteers with Sit, Stay, LOVE! read and discuss animal welfare-related books in kindergarten, first-, and second-grade classrooms in order to teach empathy and literacy. According to Maggie, Sit, Stay, LOVE! was started to “increase our reach of compassion education throughout San Francisco.”

Humane Education is committed to teaching compassion. Maggie explained, “Humane education extends beyond the walls of animal shelters by teaching children empathy and kindness.” Through engaging programs and a dedication to teaching animal welfare, the SF SPCA’s Humane Education department is encouraging the next generation of empathetic adopters, volunteers, donors, and animal advocates.
Canine Connection: Veterans Helping Veterans

Through our Canine Connection program, we’re working to give back to those who have given so much to our country. The program is a newly revised partnership with the San Francisco Veterans Administration Medical Center. Participants first learn how to train certified therapy dogs, then take those dogs on visits with fellow veterans in the VA Health Care System. All of the Canine Connection lessons have real-world applications outside the classroom, and veterans enthusiastically welcome the opportunity to bond with the dogs.

The first Canine Connection series took place in October, after a successful pilot program in the spring 2016. Five veterans participated, each paired with an Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) dog. Throughout the six sessions, veterans learned about body language, managing frustration, assertive versus aggressive communication, grooming

as bonding, and personal accountability. Lastly, participants are taught the basics of taking dogs on therapy visits.

Once the six training sessions were complete, participants took the dogs to visit with fellow veterans receiving inpatient care at the main VA hospital, as well as those receiving services at the downtown clinic. Many of the patients receiving services at the downtown clinic are homeless, and providing comfort to those individuals through therapy visits was especially meaningful to Canine Connection participants.

The program concluded with a graduation ceremony at Fort Miley.

“In Canine Connection we focus on cultivating skills of mastery, empathy, and social conscience,” said Dr. Jennifer Henley, AAT Manager. “We want to give veterans an opportunity to learn while connecting with their community. We hope that their experiences in the program will continue to inspire them for years to come.”

Our second Canine Connection series took place in November 2016 at the VA Clinic in downtown San Francisco, and we have three more programs scheduled for 2017.

We look forward to continue working with veterans in our San Francisco community.

Canine Connection was funded by generous grants from Kenneth and Anna Zankel and the Wells Fargo Foundation. To learn more about AAT, visit sfspca.org/aat.

ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY (AAT)

We have an amazing group of people and pets (288 dogs, six cats, three rabbits, and one pig) that work with us to promote the power of the human-animal bond.
VOLUNTEERS ARE LIFESAVERS!

Our lifesaving work simply wouldn’t be possible without our extraordinary team of volunteers who give their time, talent, and energy on a daily basis. From Animal Assisted Therapy to feral cat trapping, volunteers play a crucial role in nearly every department at the San Francisco SPCA.

Currently we have more than 1,080 SF SPCA volunteers, and last year alone they contributed more than 102,000 hours of service. That’s the equivalent of approximately 80 full-time employees!

“More than 5,200 animals are adopted from our two shelters every year, and volunteers help in nearly every step of the process,” said Liora Kahn, Volunteer Services Director. “We have Shelter Medicine and Foster volunteers who care for animals long before they reach the adoption floor. Adoption Center volunteers help keep animals happy during their stay, and matchmaking volunteers help them find their forever homes.”

There are many roles outside the shelter environment as well. Last year alone, our team of Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) volunteers visited more than 108,000 people in hospitals, schools, nursing homes, and veterans facilities across the Bay Area!

“AAT volunteers bring their certified therapy animals to locations throughout the city,” said Dr. Jennifer Henley, AAT Manager. “They share the joy and comfort of companion animals with those facing physical, emotional, or mental challenges.”

If you’re interested in becoming a volunteer, the first step is to attend an orientation session. To learn more or view upcoming dates, visit sfspca.org/volunteers.

Volunteer Spotlight:
Sue LaPlaca

In 2011, Sue volunteered as a greeter at our Macy’s Holiday Windows event. She found the enthusiasm contagious and decided to start volunteering at the shelter.

“I signed up for as many classes as possible so I could explore the multiple opportunities offered,” Sue explained.

Today, Sue helps with shelter dog playgroups, assists at mobile vaccine clinics providing veterinary care to underserved neighborhoods, and even participates in our Animal Assisted Therapy program.

“I love the camaraderie and the genuine compassion my fellow volunteers show to both animals and their human companions. It truly makes daily miracles. Staff and volunteers are a widely diverse group of individuals who meld together perfectly for one common cause. Collectively they generously share their talents. There are no egos.”

Volunteer Highlights

- 73 Medical Fosters
- 415 Active Foster Homes
- 57 Nursing Moms with Litters Fostered
- 1,080 Active Volunteers
- 102,687 Volunteer Hours Worked
- 1,617 Animals Fostered
- 1,287 Kittens Fostered
- 218 Puppies Fostered
- 36 Fospice
- 416 New Volunteers
- 3,290 Number of hours our shelter volunteers spent helping our Shelter Medicine staff
It was late July 2016, and Belinda Getler, a Leadership Gift Officer here at the SF SPCA, was returning from lunch. She couldn’t help but notice an irresistibly cute tri-colored puppy being carried by an SF SPCA Mission hospital nurse. With three dogs in her household, Belinda had trained herself to put blinders on whenever she left her office, knowing all too well she already had a full house. But there was something about this puppy’s trusting, innocent, and soulful stare that stopped her in her tracks — Belinda knew immediately this little guy would be the fourth and final addition to her canine family.

Lost and afraid, Jasper was suffering from a broken femur and a nasty flea and tick infestation. Found abandoned in Stockton, most likely having been hit by a car, Jasper was driven by a volunteer from our “sister” shelter in Stockton to the SF SPCA. Arriving late at night, Jasper was taken to the home of Dr. Jean Goh, Director of Spay/Neuter Surgery at the SF SPCA, where she kept him comfortable overnight. The next morning, Dr. Goh brought him to our Mission hospital for emergency surgery performed by veterinarians David Sierra and Murali Gadde, who came in on their day off to set his leg with a state-of-the-art surgical plate. True to form, Jasper came out of surgery as sweet as ever.

Belinda bought a doggie stroller and, for two months, she transported Jasper to work in the buggy so his leg could heal. Sue LaPlaca, one of the SF SPCA’s incredible volunteers and subject of the feature on page 10, even took Jasper to hydro-therapy swim lessons to strengthen his muscles and joints.

Needless to say, without the remarkably interconnected network of dedicated, caring volunteers, medical staff, and other SF SPCA personnel who all went the extra mile, Jasper’s journey to his forever home would not have been possible. What a lucky fellow!
On a recent warm Saturday morning, a line formed outside the Willie Mays baseball field in the Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco. People with puppies in their arms and cats in carriers waited as the SF SPCA Community Cares team hauled boxes of vaccines, flea treatment, collars, and leashes to the field. Soon enough, the free vaccine clinic that the SF SPCA puts on two times per month was up and running, with volunteers checking in pets and their people and directing the line to volunteer veterinary technicians for free Distemper-Hepatitis-Parvovirus vaccines, flea treatment, nail clipping, deworming, vouchers for free spay or neuter surgery, and so much more.

“Something as simple as monthly flea treatments can be a huge help to a family and ensure that their beloved furry family member can remain in the home,” said Community Cares Program Manager Erin Kerley. After the SF SPCA team left Hunters Point that afternoon, their work continued to reverberate throughout the city.

Free vaccine clinics are just part of what the Community Cares Program does. Their outreach efforts also provide free dog training classes to neighborhoods in the city that don’t typically have access to these services. They also run our Community Cats program which provides TNR (trap, neuter, and return) services to free-roaming, feral cats to ensure they are healthy and not reproducing. These services are all free. Erin Kerley shared, “Every patron of our clinics loves their animals, they just need a little help providing the care their animals need, and we are happy to do it.” Instead of charging clients, Community Cares services are funded entirely by donors’ generosity.

Another way in which the San Francisco SPCA delivers necessary services to people and animals in need is through our partnership with Vet SOS, a part of the San Francisco Community Clinic Consortium that helps people and pets in need. According to Pamela Wilson, Community Outreach Director, “Every patron of our clinics loves their animals, they just need a little help providing the care their animals need, and we are happy to do it.”

Our Community Cares Program continues to reach more people and animals that otherwise might not have access to the services, training, and medical care that we provide.

**COMMUNITY CARES PROGRAM (CCP)**

- **24** Number of mobile vaccine clinics last year
- **2,888** Dogs and cats treated at our free mobile vaccine clinics
- **111** Canine graduates of our free dog training programs
- **1,000+** Spayed/neutered community cats
Programs Manager, “The SF SPCA provides spay and neuter services, pet-sitting while clients are given medical care, and emergency care funding, and qualifying clients of Vet SOS can receive care for their sick or injured animals at no charge.” The SF SPCA is expanding the partnership with Vet SOS in 2017 by lending space at the SF SPCA Mission Campus to Vet SOS so they can host wellness clinics.

Part of the SF SPCA’s mission is providing safety, security, and dignity for all animals, regardless of their human’s ability to pay for services. The Community Cares Program, Vet SOS, and other resources offer a wide range of services in the interest of working with the community to keep animals with their devoted people and promote animal health and wellness. If you’d like to get involved with Community Cares as a volunteer, contact our volunteer office at volunteers@sfspca.org. To help support the Community Cares program, please get in touch with our development office at development@sfspca.org.

Scan On

Every day our veterinarians treat pets with complex medical issues. Because our animal patients can’t tell us what’s wrong, our doctors are required to have exceptional examination skills. To reach a clear diagnosis, vets sometimes have to perform multiple tests, which can be nerve-racking (and expensive) for a pet parent. But the biggest price is paid by the animals who don’t understand what’s happening to them.

Thanks to a generous gift from the Peter Read family, we were able to purchase and install a CT scanner at our Mission hospital, which allows us to deliver better preventive, wellness-focused, and clinical care. The CT scanner uses the most advanced imaging technology currently available, which significantly improves our ability to diagnose and treat patients and save lives.

According to Dr. Lisa Killian, Vice President of Veterinary Services at our Mission Campus, “The CT scanner allows us to provide a comprehensive diagnosis more quickly so animals can benefit from appropriate and timely treatments.”

A big thank you to Peter Read and family — their support allows us to better treat and diagnose the pets that visit our hospitals as well as the thousands of animals that pass through our shelter annually, improving the overall quality of life for the animals here in the Bay Area.

Banfield Foundation / New CT Scanner

Banfield Foundation SUPPORTS TRAINING

Surrendering a dog to an animal shelter is a triple tragedy — the dog loses a home, the family loses a loved member, and a shelter must expend resources to house the dog until a new guardian can be found. The San Francisco SPCA has worked hard to reduce surrenders, helping San Francisco achieve one of the lowest surrender rates in the world. Bayview-Hunters Point (BHP) is a San Francisco neighborhood that faces numerous socioeconomic challenges and lacks access to basic veterinary and related services. We’ve learned that surrender is often a result of unwanted behavior, so we are addressing this by offering free training in BHP, made possible with a generous grant from the Banfield Foundation. This program provides a direct solution to prevent the separation of a dog from its family. The benefits of educating the public on dog training techniques to curb unwanted behavior and prevent surrender is having immediate and long-term positive effects on dogs, guardians, and shelters — a triple win!
“Pit Bull” is a generic term used to describe a number of “bully” breeds that were developed by crossing bulldogs with terriers.

Love-A-Bulls

In the early 1900s, Pit Bulls were known as “nanny dogs” because they were so good with children.

5% of all dogs in the United States are labeled as Pit Bulls, but they make up more than 20% of the shelter population.

Pitties Make Perfect Family Pets

Intelligence: 
Energy Level: 
General Health: 
Playfulness: 

Once considered American’s national dog, Pit Bulls were featured on military recruiting posters in World Wars I and II, prominently featured as corporate mascots, and cast as the ideal family dog in television and movies.
From food to litter, we’re proud to support the pets of the San Francisco SPCA.

We’re proud to support the San Francisco SPCA in their efforts to provide shelter, food, and medical care to animals in need.

Protect Your Pet with the Sido Program

The SF SPCA offers pet owners an innovative way to plan for their pet’s future. When pets outlive their guardians, cats and dogs enrolled in the Sido Program are welcomed into our adoption centers. They will receive exceptional care and attention while we work to place them in their next loving home.

The Sido Program is named for Sido, a dog who was condemned to die in her owner’s will. Over 30 years ago, the SF SPCA led the charge to save Sido’s life and helped pass legislation specifically aimed at saving her life and obtained a court ruling stating that it is illegal for a person to order a dog destroyed in a will.

To enroll your beloved cat or dog, contact the Development Office at 415.554.3029 or development@sfspca.org.
Be your pet’s hero. Give them SF SPCA vet care.

Your cat thinks you’re the best. But you can be even more amazing in their eyes if you take them to the SF SPCA. Our dedicated team of veterinarians will provide the best and most compassionate care available. And by supporting our nonprofit clinics, you’ll be helping animals who wouldn’t otherwise be able to get the care that they need.

SFSPCA.ORG/HOSPITAL
415-554-3030