



# Our Animals

The Magazine of the San Francisco SPCA

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## Table of Contents

- 3** CEO's Message
- 4** Increasing Access to Spay/Neuter is Critical to Animal Welfare
- 6** Making a Difference: Improving Access to Veterinary Care
- 8** Happy Tails: Bella Finds Her Forever Home
- 10** Celebrating the Human-Animal Bond

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

201 Alabama Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 | (415) 554-3000  
Founded April 18, 1868

## Our Mission

Our mission is to ensure every companion animal has access to quality medical care, compassionate shelter, and a loving home.

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## CEO's Message:

There are so many reasons that organizations like the SF SPCA continually underscore the importance of spay and neuter programs. It's how we reduce unwanted litters, overcrowded shelters, and euthanasia as a means of population control. For pet guardians, it's a way to improve overall pet health and lower health-care costs.

In this issue of *Our Animals*, we dig into why it's so important for us to spay and neuter our pets—and for shelters and communities to work together to expand access to this essential service. Making spay and neuter programs more available and affordable to everyone is key to improving animal welfare in our state.

We also share an update on how we're improving access to veterinary care in California's Central Valley, and you'll meet Kylie Ramos, our new Community Engagement Manager who's spearheading our work there.

We're so grateful for our "SnipSeptember" funding, awarded last year by California for All Animals to help us promote spay and neuter access. And, of course, none of this would be possible without you, our cherished SF SPCA community.

Thank you for being there with us for animals.

Jennifer Scarlett, DVM  
CEO



*Dr. Divya Ravichandran performs surgery at the SF SPCA high-quality, high-volume spay/neuter clinic.*

# Increasing Access to Spay/Neuter is Critical to Animal Welfare

Across the state, a shortage of veterinary professionals has bottlenecked adoptions, leaving many shelters overcrowded, understaffed, and limited in their ability to serve their communities. Even more alarming, struggling shelters are increasingly left with no other option than to euthanize adoptable animals.

Last year, we led a statewide survey that found 68% of shelters cannot provide consistent onsite access to spay and neuter services, which are required in California for animals to be adopted. Compounding

the problem, 78% are unable to provide services for their communities, accelerating a downward cycle of more unhoused cats and dogs and animals surrendered to shelters.

At the SF SPCA, we're committed to expanding access to spay and neuter services in San Francisco and beyond. Every treatable and adoptable animal in our shelter receives the care they require (including spay and neuter) to be placed in loving homes. We provide affordable surgeries for the public at our high-quality, high-volume spay/neuter clinic, where no

San Francisco pet is turned away for lack of funds. And we're working with our partners to alleviate overcrowding in under-resourced shelters in California's Central Valley.

### **Saving lives and elevating communities**

Shelter overcrowding taxes financial and human resources, contributes to the spread of disease, and increases the likelihood that adoptable animals will be euthanized.

According to SF SPCA CEO, Dr. Jennifer Scarlett, "When you increase spay and neuter services that are accessible, it lowers shelter intake and euthanasia. When you have fewer animals in a shelter, you have more resources to help the animals that are there find a home."



Lowering the number of animals entering shelters has a cascading positive effect on shelter animals, staff, and communities. "With fewer animals coming in," said SF SPCA Community Engagement Manager Kylie Ramos, "staff can spend more time on those at the shelter, community outreach, and programs like public spay/neuter. This way, shelters can become a hub of resources to the community, versus simply a shelter."

### **Benefits to animal health, behavior, and your budget**

Spaying and neutering pets is the best way to prevent unplanned litters. SF SPCA Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Jena Valdez, points to the additional health advantages as well as the financial benefit of avoiding costly health conditions. "Along with vaccinations," she said, "spaying or neutering your pet is the most impactful thing you can do to ensure they live a long, healthy life."

Pet guardians are often surprised to learn that spaying reduces a female pet's risk of breast cancer and deadly uterine infections, while neutering males helps avoid testicular cancer, certain types of hernias, and prostate issues.

Unaltered males and female cats in heat are at greater risk of escaping and being injured. And anyone who has lived with an unaltered cat may have experienced a male's unpleasant spraying and urinating or the challenging behavior of a female feline friend in heat.

### **Removing barriers to access for spay/neuter surgeries**

The cost of neutering a cat or dog is out of reach for many, which is why California animal welfare

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 7**



### **EXPANDING ACCESS TO SPAY/NEUTER IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY**

In California's Central Valley, animal shelters struggle to keep up with ever-increasing numbers of homeless pets and shelter overcrowding. In this vast, mostly rural region, many pet guardians live far from veterinary resources, are unable to access or afford care, or find there's simply not enough availability of services to meet demand.

In 2022, UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program's California for All Animals awarded more than \$10 million to shelters across the state, including the SF SPCA, to help increase capacity for spay/neuter services.

Thanks to this generous funding, we're collaborating with animal services in the Central Valley to augment spay/neuter capacity through veterinary assistance, specialized training, and acquisition of much-needed medical equipment.

# Making a Difference: Improving Access to Veterinary Care

**KYLIE RAMOS**

Central Valley Community Engagement Manager

## How long have you worked at the SF SPCA?

I was hired in July 2023.

## Do you have pets?

Three dogs, named Harper, Tally, and Angus, and two cats, Gunther and Otis.

## What one word embodies the SF SPCA for you?

Compassion.

## What led you to a career in animal welfare?

I couldn't think of anything else I would rather do than spend my time with animals, in any capacity I possibly could.

## Why did you decide to work at the SF SPCA?

I saw a job posting online, and the experience and skills oddly matched this weird mashup of experience I've had in my career: shelter medicine, shelter operations, and outreach. It seemed too good to be true, so I went for it.

## What's a typical day like for you at the SF SPCA?

My main focus right now is identifying veterinary staff to help expand access to low-cost spay and neuter procedures in Central California. My days involve a lot of collaborating with people from all over the organization, plus our contacts in the Central Valley. It's a lot of working together to solve the problems we're addressing.



*Kylie Ramos helps the SF SPCA tackle statewide animal homelessness by connecting with providers in the Central Valley.*

## How does our focus on access to care impact your work?

My position is rooted in access to care. I enjoy using my creative side to figure out how we increase access for the community that I'm lucky enough to be a part of.

## What else do you want people to know about the SF SPCA?

This organization is so forward-thinking. We're figuring out how to make spay and neuter more accessible, and it's going to solve a lot of problems here [in the Central Valley]. We're communicating with community members, clinicians, and city and county leaders. We're working with our partners—not coming in and trying to “fix” their problems. We're true collaborators. 🐾

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A PART OF THE SF SPCA COMMUNITY?**



The SF SPCA is full of people like Kylie who are passionate about animal welfare. Explore our rewarding career and volunteer opportunities at [sfspca.org/join-our-community](https://sfspca.org/join-our-community).

## SPAY & NEUTER CONTINUED

organizations try to make spay/neuter procedures affordable. To ensure that every San Francisco pet has access to essential spay and neuter services, the SF SPCA subsidizes at least 50% of our public surgeries each year.

Our veterinarians and vet techs perform more than 10,000 spay and neuter procedures annually. Of those, around 4,000 are performed internally for our shelter animals, as required for adoption in California, while approximately 6,000 take place at our public-facing, high-volume spay and neuter clinic.

In 2022, SF SPCA was awarded a grant from California for All Animals, part of the state's investment to achieve the goal that no adoptable or treatable dog or cat should be euthanized. Thanks to the generous support of California for All Animals, we are expanding access to spay/neuter services in the Central Valley. There, we're partnering with shelters like Tulare County Animal Services to improve lives for growing numbers of sheltered and homeless animals throughout the region's remote agricultural communities.

### Beside themselves with gratitude

In San Francisco's Excelsior District, community members access low-cost medical care (including referrals for low-cost spay/neuter services) at our

Community Veterinary Clinic. Recently, a pet guardian living in the neighborhood stepped in to inquire about spaying their dog. Community Medicine Senior Program Manager Anika Alvarado recalled, "When I quoted them the cost, they kind of backed away."

Anika discovered the individual qualified for a free spay procedure for their pet. "They were beside themselves with gratitude," she said. "I told them, 'This is what we're here for, don't even sweat it.'" She added, "It's a common story."

### What you can do to help

Our work to make spay/neuter services more accessible will help end euthanasia of adoptable cats and dogs and fulfills our mission to ensure every companion animal has access to quality medical care, compassionate shelter, and a loving home.

In addition to donating, you can support this work by choosing the SF SPCA for all your veterinary needs. Every full-fee service performed at our high-quality, high-volume spay/neuter clinic and veterinary hospital helps subsidize programs for San Francisco pets in need. Spread the word about our veterinary services and options to provide access for all San Francisco pets. Visit us at [sfspca.org/veterinary-care/](https://sfspca.org/veterinary-care/) to learn more and help change lives for generations to come. 🐾



## Help Us Save More Lives

Giving Circle members provide crucial funding for lifesaving programs and services by contributing \$1,000 or more. Without this vital funding, many animals will suffer.

Join a group of dedicated animal advocates—email [development@sfspca.org](mailto:development@sfspca.org) to learn more.



[sfspca.org/givingcircle](https://sfspca.org/givingcircle)



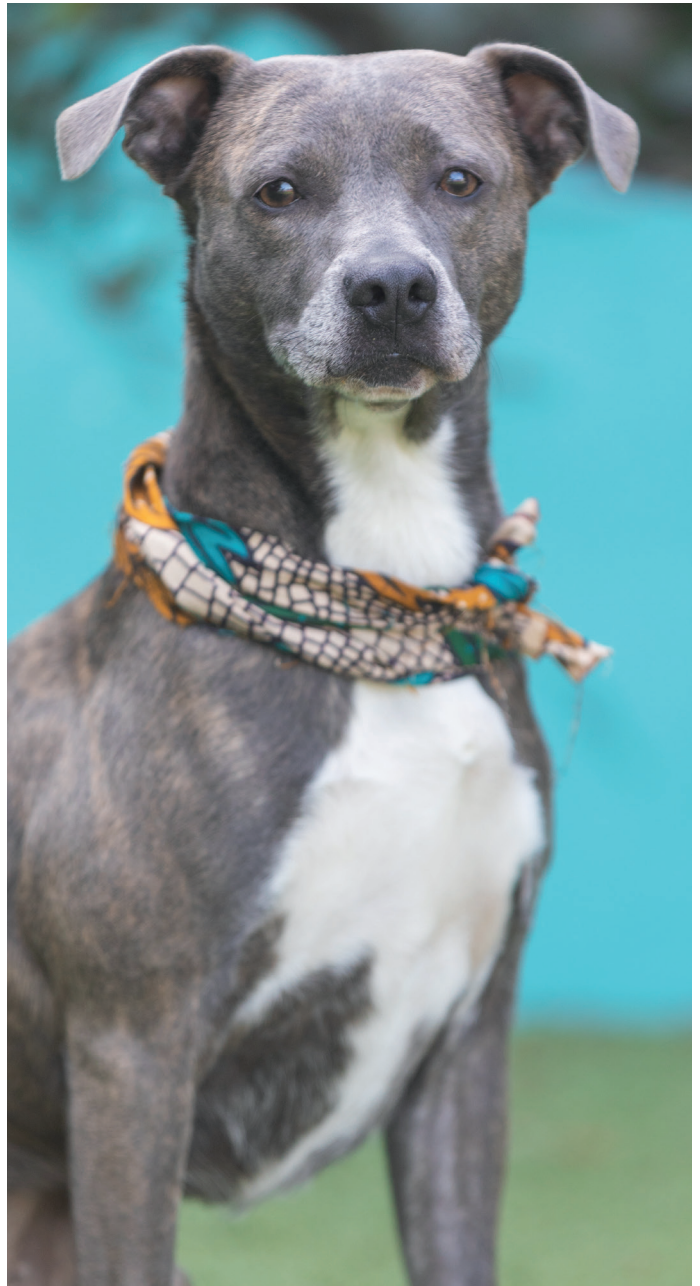
**SFSPCA**

# Bella Finds Her Forever Home

Sweet Bella is a petite Pit Bull Terrier mix who arrived at the SF SPCA with a dislocated hip, a fractured thigh, and dental disease likely due to trauma. A transfer from Tulare County Animal Services in the Central Valley, it was clear this friendly, gentle dog had been through a lot. Her intake examination revealed a gunshot wound to her shoulder, which appeared to have healed on its own without any medical care.

Bella required surgery to remove fractured and loose pieces of bone, allowing the hip joint to form scar tissue and heal. Dr. Emily Young, who was part of Bella's veterinary care team, was impressed by Bella's unstoppable spirit. "This is a pretty big-deal surgery," she said. "But did that hold her back? Absolutely not! Within just a few days, she was bouncing comfortably down the hallway, wiggling and wagging her entire body with the joy of seeing any of the people caring for her in the shelter."

After a speedy recovery, Bella burst onto the adoption floor, where she was quickly adopted—then later returned due to incompatibility with a family dog. Fortunately, her future forever home was just around the corner.



*Bella plants a big smooch on SF SPCA adopter Clementine.*

## Bella finds her forever home with Clementine

For years, SF SPCA community member Clementine had been dreaming of her own special canine friend. "I've always wanted a dog," she said, "but when you're renting, it's really hard to convince a landlord to let you have a dog. I pitched the idea for a year. Finally, my landlord looked at me and said, 'I think we can talk about you getting a dog.'"

The landlord, who had become a friend, took Clementine to visit the SF SPCA, where they were introduced to Bella. Clementine said, "She had a plastic cone on her face, but her little brown eyes were so piercing. We both looked at her and said, 'That's our dog.' When they brought her out, she ran and started kissing me."



## A life of snuggles, smiles, and squirrels

Today, Bella and Clementine are inseparable. They enjoy long walks together, and Bella's calm and gentle personality warms hearts wherever they go. "She changes people's perspective of Pit Bulls," Clementine said. "People are surprised when they see she's so sweet. Even cars will honk and yell, 'I love your dog!'"

At home, Bella has a large back yard full of squirrels and birds to chase. "She's a piece of a puzzle that I've been missing," said Clementine. "When I wake up in the morning, I'm happy to see her face, and when I get off work, I'm so happy to see her, and she's happy to see me too."

"I have this beautiful creature who sleeps on my chest and snores. Outside of my brothers, I feel she's the best thing that has ever happened to me."

## Looking for your missing puzzle piece?

If you're ready to welcome a furry friend into your heart, look no further than the SF SPCA. Visit [sfspca.org/adoptions/](https://sfspca.org/adoptions/) to meet our dogs, cats, puppies, and kittens who can't wait to find their forever homes. 🐾



*Clementine and Bella share their favorite snuggle spot.*



Facebook:  
[@sfspca](https://www.facebook.com/sfspca)

### WANT MORE HAPPY TAILS?

Follow us on social media to read more of our amazing adoption stories and DM us to share yours!



Instagram:  
[@sanfranciscospca](https://www.instagram.com/sanfranciscospca)



## Drive Support for Animals in Need

Donate your vehicle to the SF SPCA and receive a charity tax deduction to help animals in need—ensuring that they have access to quality medical care, compassionate shelter, and loving homes.



[sfspca.org/donatevehicle](https://sfspca.org/donatevehicle)



**SFSPCA**

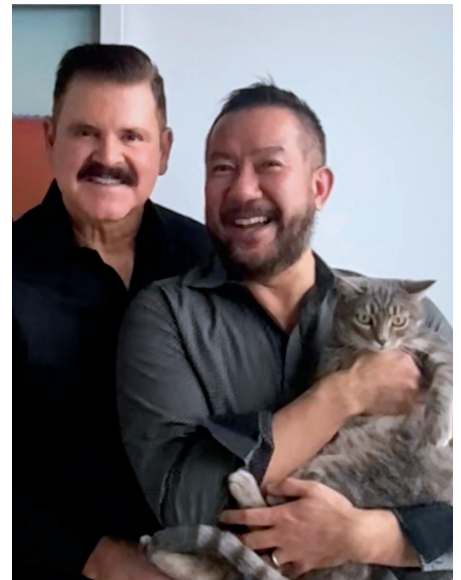
# Celebrating the Human-Animal Bond

The love of animals is a gift; always effortless, joyful, and sincere. Here, our community members talk about the pets who inhabit their homes and hearts and what those relationships mean to them.

## Martino, Jonathan, and Sharm

*2023 Photo Contest Winner and Adoption Alumnus*

When we noticed Sharm on the SF SPCA website, it was clear she was more than just a cat; she was a gift. Named in remembrance of our mother, Sharma Lee, and her animal-loving spirit, we found comfort in Sharm's hazel-green eyes and vivacious nature. Her arrival helped heal the sorrow of losing Allie, our beloved 15-year-old cat, two years ago. Sharm, with her boundless joy and hope, has taught us the vastness of love and the peace found in new starts. Her every purr, playful jump, and moment basking in the sun highlight the simple joys of life. Choosing Sharm was not just an adoption but a deep embrace of love and happiness, making every day with her a priceless gift.



## Stuber and Huxley

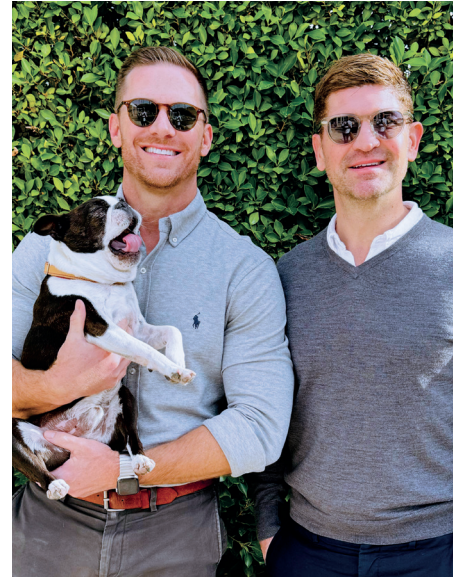
*2023 Photo Contest Winner, Adoption Alumnus, and Donor*

Huxley, more than a pet, has been my life's gentle teacher, showing me that there's a world beyond work, filled with joy and the warmth of family moments. He's my beacon of pure joy, guiding me through life's rough patches with his unwavering love. Yes, he's protective, but it's his way of caring. Despite my initial reluctance after losing my childhood dog, the moment Huxley chose me, curling into my lap, he filled a void I didn't know existed. He's not just a dog; he's a reminder of love's unexpected arrival and the transformative power of companionship.

## Philip, Ryan, and Major

*Board Member and Donor*

As the runt of his litter, Major was tiny, sensitive, and worked hard to find his mojo and grow into his name. When Major entered our lives, we grew from a couple into a family. He has been our steady source of laughter and joy through the ups and downs of life over the past eight years. Major lives 100% in the moment and keeps it simple—food, ball, sun worshiping, running around with dog friends, and some cuddling. Major reminds us to be patient, flexible, silly, and present in our own lives, and to prioritize the simple things that really matter.



## Sally and Lewis

*2023 Photo Contest Winner and Adoption Alumnus*

Lewis, much more than a dog, is the heart of our home and a teacher of patience and self-discovery. His presence has gently guided me to a deeper understanding of care and compassion, respecting his unique nature. Alongside my husband, Mike, and our beloved cats, Jack Black and Mike White, Lewis completes our family tapestry. He's our joyful explorer, leading us down life's delightful paths. Each day with him, and our feline companions, is a cherished reminder of the unbreakable bonds of love we've forged, a journey made possible by the SF SPCA's loving hand in our lives.

## Rita and Layla

*Donor*

Layla teaches me that we can all adapt, no matter our age, and the bond between animals and people is a powerful one. She's my warrior princess who keeps me active and engaged as well as providing me with a great sense of security and contentment. Layla filled the void left by the loss of my previous cat. After seeing her on the SF SPCA website, I knew I had to meet her, and when I did, it was clear that we would fill each other's lives with peace and joy.





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Change service requested.



## Are you our secret admirer?

We'd like to thank you for making the SF SPCA a part of your estate plans by inviting you to attend our Legacy Society Tea on May 3 at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco.

**Please email June Hom at (415) 430-3251 or [jhom@sfspca.org](mailto:jhom@sfspca.org) by April 17, to attend this special event.**

[sfspca.org/legacy](https://sfspca.org/legacy)

