



Our Animals

The Magazine of the San Francisco SPCA

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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:



At the San Francisco SPCA, our mission is to ensure every companion animal has access to quality medical care, compassionate shelter, and a loving home. At the heart of this commitment are the tireless efforts and steadfast dedication of our volunteers.

From animal care and adoptions to administration and advocacy, volunteer support is integral to everything that we do. Each contribution, like a pebble's ripple in a pond, amplifies our impact within the shelter, our communities, and beyond.

This issue of *Our Animals* is dedicated to the volunteers who make our work possible year after year. Read on to learn more about the many roles volunteers play at the SF SPCA, their enduring impact, and what they gain along the way. You'll meet Tina Mitchell, who oversees our team of Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) volunteers; Legacy Society members Steve and Hiromi Reichardt; and shelter cat Narwhal, who found her final forever home after her original guardian passed away.

We would also like to introduce the new Chair of our Board of Directors, Curt Kirschner. A longtime animal advocate, Curt joined the Board in 2018. He and his husband Nick have rescued and cared for a menagerie of animals over the years, including cats, dogs, llamas, and more. A retired labor and employment lawyer, Curt also serves on Lambda Legal's National Leadership Council. He's also a mediator for the Northern District of California federal court and a longstanding board member at the SF Symphony.

With deep appreciation, we recognize Curt and every member of our Board of Directors, who generously volunteer their time and expertise to help guide our organization's strategy, maintain oversight, and uphold accountability.

To all of you, and most especially our volunteers, thank you for your ongoing dedication and heartfelt support for the SF SPCA, our mission and vision, and our animals.

Jennifer Scarlett, DVM
CEO

Volunteers Make Our World Go Around



SF SPCA volunteers provide love, enrichment, and hope to shelter animals awaiting their forever families.

The loud roar of an oversized pickup's engine interrupted the afternoon calm as attendants from the SF SPCA Mobile Vaccine Clinic packed up for the day at Candlestick Park. Stuber, one of the program's regular volunteers, looked up from his work to see the truck pull up to the now half-disassembled clinic. The driver's window lowered, revealing a man with a look of harried desperation on his face—and a cab full of six squirming Pit Bull puppies. “He had just driven three hours to reach us,” Stuber said, “we couldn't turn him away.”

The team unpacked and administered free vaccines along with flea and tick medication to all six puppies. Stuber said, “They peed all over me as I held them for their injections,” Stuber said. “But I didn't care. This man was overwhelmingly grateful. It was such a great experience to be part of helping someone feel so supported and cared for.”

Stuber is one of nearly 1,200 SF SPCA volunteers who make lifesaving programs like the Mobile Vaccine Clinic possible. As shelters and communities face a severe shortage of veterinarians and access to veterinary care dwindles nationwide, many shelters take in more animals than they can adopt out. “Volunteers quite literally help us save lives,” said SF SPCA CEO Dr. Jennifer Scarlett, “together, we're giving animals a chance to have a good life.”

Volunteers power our purpose

“At the SF SPCA, volunteers are sewn through everything we do,” said Chief of Rescue and Welfare, Anne Moellering. “Without them, we simply would not operate.” Every day, hundreds of volunteers perform an array of duties that contribute to our impact and help save lives.

Animal lovers from all walks of life volunteer their time to help care for kittens, puppies, cats, and dogs—from calm,

easy-going animals to those with challenging behaviors. Volunteers wipe down windows, do laundry, clean kennels, provide enrichment activities, help with outreach and events, and much more. Some receive specialized training to assist with veterinary care, and others foster animals in their own homes.

Ringworm program volunteers suit up for duty

Few California shelters possess the volunteer power to provide resource-intensive interventions like the SF SPCA Ringworm Program. Each day, these specially trained volunteers don full-body protective gear to treat and help socialize animals (mostly kittens and cats) infected with ringworm. This highly contagious condition requires a four-to six-week quarantine period, during which patients are treated twice daily with a noxious topical dip.



SF SPCA volunteer Walt Brown treats kittens infected with ringworm

“Ringworm is a completely curable disease,” said ringworm program volunteer Walt Brown, “but it takes time, resources, and staff to treat these animals. At the SF SPCA, we’ve pioneered a treatment program so these kittens can become



SF SPCA volunteer Susan Hall helps socialize pint-size pups in the Small-Dog Play Group.

healthy and go out into loving homes, which I think is absolutely wonderful.”

Human interaction improves chances of adoption

One of the most impactful ways a volunteer can support shelter animals is by engaging with them. Human socialization is proven to reduce animals’ stress, acclimate them to human contact, and improve their chances of adoption. In fact, one recent study led by researchers at Virginia Tech showed that dogs taken on 40-minute outings were up to five times more likely to be adopted.

Our own observations at the SF SPCA shelter confirm the connection between human interaction and improved chances of adoption. Animals with challenging behaviors benefit especially from continuous human contact. Volunteer Engagement Specialist Lynne Voelker said,

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Making a Difference: Sharing the Healing Love of Animals

TINA MITCHELL

Volunteer Engagement Coordinator, Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) Program

How long have you worked at the SF SPCA?

I started here in January 2016.

Do you have pets?

I have two dogs, Goat and Dolly, both of whom I adopted from the SF SPCA within my first year of working here.

What one word embodies the SF SPCA for you?

Compassion.

What led you to a career in animal welfare?

I always wanted to work with animals in some capacity. I started off in people-oriented jobs, like customer service and office administration, and then I worked at a doggy daycare. I decided I wanted to work in animal welfare, and that's when a job opened here with Volunteer Engagement. It just seemed like a perfect fit. I have the best of both worlds here; I'm working with people and animals.

What service does the AAT program offer?

Spending time with animals has many mental and physical health benefits, so we provide access to people who can benefit from those interactions and people who don't otherwise have access to pets. We send our volunteers to 150 different locations throughout the city, including hospitals, transitional housing, mental health hospitals, schools from Pre-K to grad school, and everything in between.



AAT Volunteer Engagement Coordinator, Tina Mitchell, shows off her dog, Goat.

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

Every day is different, but it's basically about supporting our volunteers and our community. Usually, I promote the program, match our animals to where they're needed, and offer classes to help our volunteers go out in the community. I love to go on visits with our teams and meet the people we work with all around San Francisco.

What do you love most about managing the AAT program?

I've been on visits myself, and I see how people light up. They're so excited to meet not just our animals but our volunteers as well. People really appreciate having someone new to visit with who really cares and wants to share their animals with them, even if for a short amount of time.

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

There are a lot of interesting and wonderful programs here that benefit both animals and people in our community. 🐾

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



The SF SPCA is full of people, like Tina, who are passionate about animal welfare. Explore our rewarding career and volunteer opportunities at sfspca.org/join-our-community

VOLUNTEERS CONTINUED

“We notice a huge difference when they go out to foster for just a few days to a week. They come back noticeably more relaxed, and we’re able to share fun photos, videos, and notes with potential adopters.”

According to Ringworm program volunteer Walt Brown, the extensive handling and attention cats receive in his program also pay off. “Once they go to the adoption center,” he said, “they are rarely there more than a couple of days, because they’re so used to being around people and are so well socialized. They just steal people’s hearts away.”

Puppy Posse and Small-Dog Play Group

Human interaction is essential to the growing number of puppies in California shelters—a problem more acute in rural areas like the Central Valley, where access to veterinary care (and essential spay and neuter services) is scarce. “Because of how crowded shelters are right now,” said Chief of Rescue and Welfare, Anne Moellering, “there are young pups being born in the shelters, which normally doesn’t happen. They’re growing up in the most stressful possible environment and need more help than we would typically provide.” Thanks to volunteers, the SF SPCA has responded to this challenge with our “puppy posse,” which provides essential human interaction, enrichment activities, and supervised playtime with other pups.

Another shelter population in need of extra TLC is small dogs. Longtime SF SPCA volunteer Susan Hall, who leads the Small-Dog Play Group, said, “We have some really shut-down dogs, and some of them have never been out on walks.”

Volunteers take their time with shy animals, first sitting with them and then putting them near other small dogs in pens. “It can take a while,” said Susan, “but just seeing us interact with the other dogs, they become brave enough to come out of their shell.”

Foster volunteers make room for around-the-clock care

Every volunteer, no matter their role, contributes to saving lives. When a volunteer opens their home to temporarily foster shelter animals, this service offers a clear, measurable impact. “Fostering expands our life-saving capacity,” said Dr. Scarlett. “Every animal that’s in foster creates more space in our shelter.”

Foster homes also offer focused human contact that’s especially helpful for animals who are too young for adoption, receiving behavioral support, or recovering from medical procedures. “When you foster, you are touching many, many lives,” said Dr. Scarlett. “These are animals who need round-the-clock care like they would receive in a home. They’re getting all the socialization they need, and it’s a more controlled environment, so it’s really good for young and medically compromised animals who are strengthening their immune systems.”

Volunteers build community

According to Chief Medical Officer Dr. Jena Valdez, volunteers—especially those who serve for long periods

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Join Our Amazing Volunteers!

Supporting our shelter and community programs helps keep pets in their homes and saves lives.

Watch our volunteering video and learn more at sfspca.org/join-our-community/volunteer



Corporate Partner Enterprise Mobility™ Helps Fuel Our Impact

SF SPCA corporate partnerships, program and event sponsorships, workplace-giving donations, and corporate volunteer events are vital to our lifesaving work. Companies can become corporate partners by donating directly to the SF SPCA or by creating opportunities for their employees to contribute through giving programs, which are often matched for an even greater impact. Employees of corporate partners can also volunteer onsite at the SF SPCA or at their offices as part of team-building opportunities.

We're stronger together

Enterprise Mobility, and its Bay Area team members, support the SF SPCA through their annual *Stronger Together Employee Giving Campaign*. Since 2022, Enterprise Mobility team members have raised more than \$130,000 for the SF SPCA through Stronger Together, thanks in part to the Enterprise Mobility Foundation™, which matches 50% of all team member contributions.

“We’re thrilled to partner with the SF SPCA through our *Stronger Together Employee Giving Campaign*,” said Jennifer Fickel, Group HR Manager with Enterprise Mobility. “Enterprise Mobility is dedicated to strengthening the communities in which we live and work, and the SF SPCA’s mission and impact on the animals and people of the San Francisco Bay Area supports that goal.”

A powerful partner for animals

Enterprise Mobility’s “My Purpose. My Time.” program also provides opportunities for employees to spend a workday volunteering onsite at the SF SPCA. Teams of 15–20 visit the SF SPCA campus regularly to help with landscaping projects, socializing kittens, folding laundry, as well as special projects, such as installing reactivity barriers in the new Fritz Cope Dog Park.

Patrick Dauphin, Regional Vice President for Enterprise Mobility’s San Francisco Group said, “I’m proud to support the San Francisco SPCA through Stronger Together and through team volunteer events supporting the shelter. The



SF SPCA corporate volunteer events offer team building opportunities with hands-on projects.

SF SPCA’s work to provide care for cats and dogs, both in the shelter and out in the community, is close to my heart.”

“It’s been an enormous partnership from the outset,” said SF SPCA Director of Institutional Giving, Madeleine Crow. “The volunteers from Enterprise Mobility are lovely,

hands-on people who are really dedicated to supporting the SF SPCA work. It's a wonderful example of a corporate partnership in action—one that incorporates team volunteering, employee engagement, and workplace giving.”

How your company can get involved

Companies are increasingly looking to partner with local organizations and causes that their employees are passionate about supporting. If you'd like your company to get involved, the SF SPCA welcomes new partners and corporate volunteer groups year-round.

For team volunteer opportunities, we request an initial donation commensurate with your group size to help offset materials and staff costs. Group volunteer events are an amazing opportunity for team building while giving back to the community. Contact us at partnerships@sfsPCA.org to learn more. 🐾



Corporate volunteers from partner Enterprise Mobility make enrichment toys for SF SPCA shelter animals.

Inspire Your Team.

Build a culture of philanthropy through employee wellness events, workplace giving, matching gifts, and team volunteering.



Contact us at partnerships@sfsPCA.org or (415) 554-3071 to learn more or plan your event.

Narwhal Finds Her Forever Home

Sweet Narwhal arrived at the SF SPCA severely obese. Tipping the scales at 27 pounds, she was almost three times the weight of an average cat. The extra pounds put pressure on her joints, and she was unable to move freely, clean herself, climb inside a litter box, or play. Despite her discomfort, she purred loudly with every pet and cuddle.



Foster fail Narwhal (pictured with Sunny) is making a splash with her forever family, Sunny and Olivia.



Nothing says, 'I love my cat' like Narwhal body art.

Our Shelter Medicine team put Narwhal on one of our most unusual weight-loss plans: a new diet, several medications, and weekly workouts on an underwater treadmill. This form of exercise is ideal for gradually and gently losing weight and helps prevent further health complications.

Today, Narwhal's troubles are water under the bridge. Sunny and Olivia, her faithful foster parents and unofficial swimming coaches fell in love with Narwhal and her fighting spirit. So, this water baby's story ends with a heart-warming foster fail.

Looking for your pet soulmate?

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

WANT MORE HAPPY TAILS?

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



Facebook:
@sfspca



Instagram:
@sanfranciscospca

VOLUNTEERS CONTINUED

of time—build bridges between the SF SPCA and our community. They are often the first veterinary-care provider to interact with a pet guardian. “The experience they curate,” said Dr. Valdez, “can sometimes be the difference between pet guardians realizing veterinary care is accessible to them, or ‘Nope, I don’t want to deal with that.’”

Whether it’s onsite or at one of our mobile clinics, volunteers build trust, especially when they’re familiar with the people we serve. “I can’t emphasize enough the importance of consistency and having volunteers who are from the community,” said Dr. Valdez. “They help us know more about what people are facing, and, if they are someone their neighbors recognize and speak the language they speak, our volunteers help build a greater level of trust.”

Volunteering feeds the mind, body, and soul

There is a saying that giving is its own reward, and it’s certainly true for many of our volunteers. They share a range of perks, from the simple pleasure of being around animals to cultivating a sense of purpose. “I really do enjoy working with the dogs,” said Small-Dog Play Group volunteer Susan Hall. “It’s rewarding to see them come out of their shells and get adopted.”

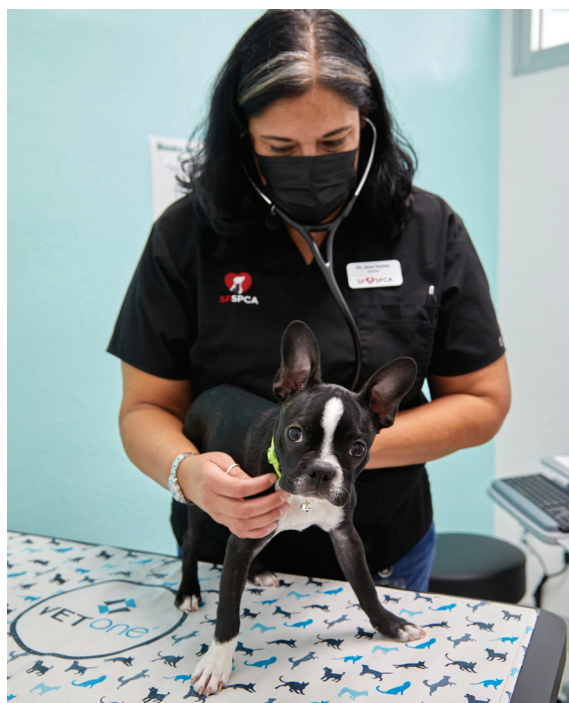
“I was looking for ways to contribute to the community and keep busy in my retirement,” said Ringworm program volunteer Walt Brown. “Normally, I’m not a super-outgoing

person. Being with other animal lovers provides me with an opportunity to socialize.” Mobile Vaccine Clinic volunteer Stuber shared the sense of purpose he’s gained from volunteering. “This whole experience has enriched my soul,” he said. “A lot of housing requires vaccinations and flea and tick treatment, so in some cases, the mobile vaccine clinic is keeping families together. That really struck a chord for me, because we’re not only helping animals and their guardians, we’re helping the community.”

Volunteering can also be a way to explore animal care as a career, Dr. Valdez added. “There are people interested in animal welfare or veterinary work, but they don’t quite know how to start. We’ve had people join our staff who have dipped their toe in by doing volunteer work here, and that’s how they started on their path.”

A ripple effect for animals, people, and communities

The impact of volunteering goes far beyond the immediate act of walking a dog, administering medication, or folding laundry. Every day, in countless ways, SF SPCA volunteers support our mission to ensure that every companion animal has access to quality medical care, compassionate shelter, and a loving home. 🐾



San Francisco SPCA Legacy Society

When you join the SF SPCA Legacy Society, you help secure our lifesaving work with cats and dogs for the next 155 years and beyond.

Enroll today for exclusive member benefits.

sfspca.org/legacy



Life in Perspective

A conversation with Steve Reichardt, a Legacy Society Member with his wife Hiromi

How did you learn about the SF SPCA?

In 2011, I needed some advice about doggie daycare, so I stopped by the SF SPCA. I met some wonderful people and saw their love and care for the well-being of the animals there. I knew then that I wanted to become a part of their mission.

Can you share how you and your family support the work of the SF SPCA, including any volunteering efforts?

Ever since I became a monthly donor, my mother, who is also an animal lover, decided to volunteer every holiday season. She handmakes and donates beautiful blankets with patterns such as paws, dog bones, cats, etc. It's such a joy to bring them to Rescue Row and share the holiday spirit of giving with this wonderful team and the animals they love and care for.

What inspired you to name the SF SPCA as a beneficiary in your estate plans?

I finally reached a point in my career where I could afford to start giving back. Helping animals in any way has always been close to my heart, so I started out with a small monthly donation and then increased my contributions several times over the years. When the reality of stage 4 kidney failure hit me, I started my estate planning. Taking care of my family—and the SF SPCA—was my top priority in that process.

What impact do you hope to achieve as a member of the SF SPCA Legacy Society?

My first goal is to do my part in keeping this institution and its mission moving forward. I also hope this commitment inspires others to join the Legacy Society and start estate planning soon. None of us knows when our last day on earth will come, but being prepared in advance makes it a little easier.

Is there anything else you want people to know about creating a legacy for animals with the SF SPCA?

As I approach retirement, I think more and more about what to do with everything I've earned over my career. After



Legacy Society members Steve and Hiromi Reichardt named the SF SPCA as a beneficiary in their estate plans.

taking care of my family, I thought “Why not also give to the animals? Their love, loyalty, and joy have never once let me down...especially through tough times and illnesses.”

I highly recommend that when the time comes to put your affairs in order, you consider the lifetime of joy and love that animals provide, and consider the wonderful people at the SF SPCA who are doing the work of angels every day. 🐾

JOIN THE SF SPCA LEGACY SOCIETY

The Legacy Society was created to honor its members for their commitment to saving and improving the lives of animals. If you would like to learn more about the benefits of membership, or if you are a Secret Admirer who has already included the SF SPCA as a beneficiary in your estate plans, **please contact June Hom at (415) 430-3251 or jhom@sfsPCA.org**



The Benefits of Giving in Your Will or Trust

You probably know a will or trust is important for distributing your assets to the people and causes you care about, but did you know that creating one has personal benefits as well? This is especially true when you use it to give a gift to a cause you love, such as the SF SPCA.



Benefits of Including a Gift in Your Will



It can lessen anxiety. Thinking and planning ahead can make it less daunting to talk about what should happen after you're gone. How? It offers the reassurance that those close to your heart are taken care of.



It can lend perspective. Taking stock of what's important is deeply personal and reflects your values, beliefs, and priorities. Your generosity will leave a lasting impact on the causes and individuals that are meaningful to you.



It sets an example. Your gift can have a ripple effect on your loved ones and inspire others to support causes near and dear to you.



It feels good. Giving is often its own reward. Research shows that the act of giving reduces stress-related activity in one area of the brain while increasing reward-related activity in another.

Providing for the SF SPCA in your will, trust, or other estate gift means you share a vision with members of our Legacy Society who have made a commitment that extends beyond their lifetime. You'll ensure that animals will continue to receive quality medical care and find loving homes for generations to come.

Celebrating the Human-Animal Bond

An animal's love is pure and unwavering, bringing companionship, joy, and a sense of purpose to our lives. Here, our donors, staff, and volunteers share the pets who live in their hearts and homes.

Shambhavi, Brady, Elsie, & Rheia

Corporate Leadership Council member, Donor, Legacy Society Member, and Volunteer

With two reactive rescues, patience is a lesson we're constantly learning. But they've also taught us that on the other side of any challenging moment is unconditional love. Waking up to their happy, excited tail wags is the best start to the day. The happiness they greet us with when we come home from work, or when we enter a room, is a hit of pure joy.



The Doherty Family & Brady

Board Member, Donor, and Volunteer

Our dog Brady teaches me how to love unconditionally, how to be more patient with our kids, to exercise (i.e., go for walks) even when I'm feeling lazy, and to put human food out of reach for a counter-surfing dog. We were lucky to adopt Brady in 2016 when he was two years old and haven't looked back since. He just makes life better. He always greets us with a smile and his wagging tail. He's a companion through the ups and downs, motivates our family to spend more time outdoors, and brings us laughter with his silly antics, such as ensuring he's always included in any family hugs.

Sus & Gordon

Animal-Assisted Therapy Volunteer

Gordon has taught me selflessness and patience. He's high-energy and can drive me nuts sometimes, but I've learned to embrace the chaos. I've also seen the way he so willingly accepts strangers and brings them joy, which is why I decided to train him for therapy work. He's given me purpose. My job is to give him the best life possible, and his world is only as big as I make it, so I try to bring him everywhere I can. In the process, I have found a love of hiking and the outdoors. He's my adventure buddy.



Sarah, Xavier, Keenan, & Rasheeta

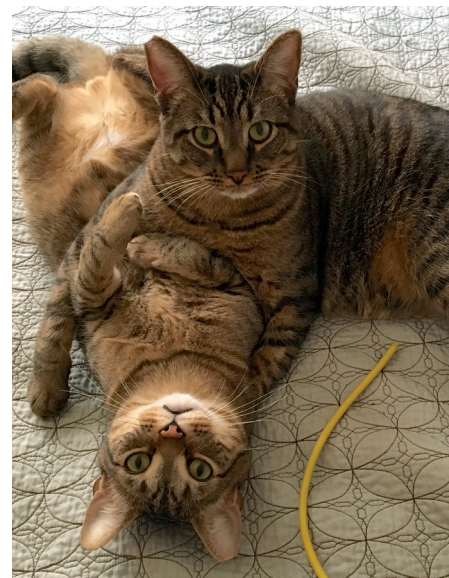
Adopter, Donor, and Volunteer

At our first meeting, Rasheeta showed Keenan and Xavier how she would help us more than we could ever help her, even though we give her more love and security than she will ever need. I had selected Rasheeta to walk on my normal SF SPCA volunteer shift. She accepted me into her life as soon as I opened her door and attached her leash. We swooped her up into our lives, hearts, and family. Rasheeta shows us to slow down and appreciate life, snuggles with us when we're sad, and soothes us with her calming energy. She's our ride-or-die.

Sue, Elliott, & Rudy

Adopter, Donor, Legacy Society Member, Sido Member, and Volunteer

Without Elliott and Rudy, I would just be living in an apartment in a city. With them, I live in a home. As an SF SPCA volunteer, I met the pair while they were still in quarantine. What sealed the deal was the foster mom's note taped to their cage calling them Loverboy1 and Loverboy2. We entertain, soothe, depend on, and annoy each other just like most human families. They have taught me that we should ask for what we want and keep asking until we get "yes." It works for them, anyway. Also, a good cuddle session solves many problems.





201 Alabama Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
Change service requested.



It's that time of the year again—when the puppies and kittens
take over the windows of Macy's Union Square and our adoption center!

sfspca.org/holiday