A PLACE FOR US

Animals. People. Community.

COUNTRY OF SANTA CLARA ANIMAL SERVICES
WE TAKE THEM ALL — almost 4,000 beating hearts each year. We are the County of Santa Clara Animal Services Center, an open-intake shelter that accepts every stray and abandoned animal in our service area, from Stanford to Gilroy. We take in homeless pets and reunite them with their families. We facilitate adoptions and engage volunteers who share our mission. We care for the sick and injured, and reduce pet overpopulation through affordable spay and neuter services. We investigate complaints, cruelty, and neglect. We rescue livestock-in-need and assist with injured wildlife. We serve people and animals in disaster. We partner to save animal lives, enriching human lives in the process. Four-legged, feathered, hooved, horned — we take them all, proudly standing as a “no-kill” shelter since 2013. And we do it from a modest, outdated, undersized facility in San Martin. We do it with dedication, compassion, optimism — and the support of people like you.
THINGS ARE GETTING EVEN BETTER. Recognizing that our 70-year-old building cannot serve our growing human-animal community, the County of Santa Clara has constructed a spacious, light-filled, animal-centric, community-friendly place for us — all of us. In June 2019, we broke ground on a 37,000-square-foot home, on eight acres of land, opening in early 2021. This new facility is a game-changer — expanding our footprint, supporting modern shelter standards designed to keep animals happy and healthy, creating a better environment and a better experience for adopters, volunteers, staff, and visitors. For the first time, we’ll have a barn, making us the only facility in the region designed to house livestock. For the first time, we’ll have a space for advanced veterinary care, and room for our exceptional staff and volunteer corps. And for the first time, the people we serve in rural Santa Clara County will have a place to gather, celebrate, and experience the special bonds humans and animals can share — a true community space in San Martin.

AT 37,000 SQUARE FEET ON EIGHT ACRES OF LAND, our new home will be a place for animals, for people, and for community.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO MAKE ALL THIS HAPPEN? The support of people like you. Although the County of Santa Clara has funded construction, more is needed to equip specialized spaces and implement the programming needed to make us a prominent center for animal welfare. To make our Animal Services Center a place for all, we need you.
FULL CLINIC WITH 2 SURGERY SUITES
SPACE FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS
MULTI-USE COMMUNITY SPACE
PATIO AND LAWNs
BARN WITH 10 STALLS AND PASTURES
MODERN VENTILATION AND LIGHTING
LEED SILVER STANDARD FOR “GREEN” CONSTRUCTION
WELCOMING ADOPTION SPACES
MODERN DOG DORMS
FREE-ROAMING CAT CONDOS
SPECIALIZED DOG AGILITY YARDS
SMALL ANIMAL ROOM
JEREMY SELBACH, animal services officer and shelter manager, got a call about a horse on April Fool’s Day. The situation was no joke: A young gelding had fallen down a hillside into a deep drainage ditch. Jeremy arrived to find the terrified animal on its back and struggling in the dark. The horse was panicking and sinking deeper in the mud. Working with firefighters and a large-animal evacuation team, Jeremy put his training to work. He comforted the horse and directed the 20-person effort to pack the mud with hay so the animal could gain traction and help himself. With Jeremy serving as a horse whisperer, the team positioned a strap around the horse, righted him, and hoisted him out of the ditch. For Jeremy, the best part was seeing the horse, uninjured, reunite with his grateful owner. “Every rescue is different,” Jeremy says. “And every rescue is rewarding.”

You probably think of us as the shelter on Murphy Avenue in San Martin. But did you know we can be everywhere from rural south county to the Stanford University campus? Our rescue mission is mobile, taking us wherever in our service area there are animals in need.

Picking up lost dogs, hustling a stray bull off the highway, freeing a buck with its rack caught in a hammock, busting illegal rodeos where animals are endangered, taking in exotic birds when their home burns down, rescuing 80 cats trapped in a Winnebago, investigating a neglected pony, reuniting people and pets when disaster strikes — our dedicated animal services officers do it all. And soon they will have a modern home base to work from.

Our new animal center will support rescue work as never before, providing officers with access 24/7. Our animal holding area will have separate spaces for 110 cats and 60 dogs, including special-hold areas for victims of neglect and cruelty. A 2,500-square-foot barn with 10 stalls, plus a pasture, will support horses, goats, pigs, sheep, and other large livestock. Community space will advance our mission to educate people about animal care. And when someone surrenders a pet, that animal will find safe haven in an environment built to modern, life-saving shelter standards.
FELIX KIRCHNER loves taking care of pets — so much that, although his family includes one feline and two canine members, Felix couldn’t resist the chance to help rescued animals at the County of Santa Clara Animal Shelter. Every Tuesday, Felix volunteers through a partnership with Social Vocational Services, Inc., an organization that creates community-based opportunities for adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. At the San Martin center, Felix provides essential backup — tidying the dog play area and constructing fresh litter boxes for cats. He’s proud that his efforts help keep pets happy, healthy, and adoptable. He loves working with his animal advocate colleagues. And he especially appreciates supporting a “no-kill” shelter that takes every animal, because, as Felix says, “animal lives are precious.” The best part, Felix says, is seeing someone come in searching for a pet, and leave with a forever friend — a precious thing, indeed.

With its tiny footprint in a converted old house, our old facility had little room for humans. Yet we are a magnet for people. Each of the 1,800 animals adopted last year left with a new family. And many folks who haven’t adopted (yet) visit during regular operating hours.

Then there are our volunteers and foster team, nearly 400 strong. These dedicated animal advocates are essential to our work: exercising dogs, socializing cats, cleaning kennels, grooming horses, and freeing staff to concentrate on complex animal care. Fosters play a critical role by opening their homes and hearts to animals we couldn’t save without them. But our current facility has no space where we can welcome groups of volunteers or prepare fosters for their important work.

Our new home will have room for these gatherings and more. Key features include a spacious multi-use area, with an outdoor patio, and room for up to 300 people. There we will be able to host meetings, workshops, agriculture training for the south county farming community, and other non-shelter events, attracting people who might not otherwise visit us. In rural San Martin, where there are few places to connect, we will be an even better community resource.
A Place for CARE

We take all animals in need, regardless of their condition. That means many of our animals need special care to overcome illness, injury, neglect, abuse, or the sheer stress of being homeless. Examinations, vaccinations, medicine, microchipping, spay or neuter — all are part of our preadoption care for thousands of animals each year. And our rural service area brings unique challenges: large livestock requiring special accommodations; strays with broken bones from vehicle strikes; thousands of tiny, vulnerable felines during peak kitten season.

Our small care team, with two veterinarians, heroically manages it all. For lack of space in our main facility, staff worked in a trailer repurposed as an animal clinic and surgery suite. From the quality of care our animals experience, you would never suspect such humble facilities and limited resources. But our community needs more from us.

Our new home will have room to provide the best care in an environment that is healthier for animals and people — integrating cutting-edge practices for disease, odor, and sound control; promoting wellbeing; reducing stress. With a fully equipped clinic and two surgery suites, we'll have room for more than two veterinarians, and dedicated space in which our animal-health champions can do what they do best: save lives.

DR. ELIZABETH KATHER, shelter veterinarian and miracle worker, doesn’t give up. Not during kitten season, when litters come in fast and furious, bringing ringworm and upper respiratory infections, and plenty of spay/neuter surgeries. And not when a little boy’s favorite pet chicken arrives with life-threatening injuries from a dog attack. Where others might see a sad ending, Dr. Kather saw a life, and quickly performed emergency surgery, in a humble trailer repurposed as a surgical ward. Most miraculous of all, Dr. Kather does this kind of thing every day, for all kinds of animals: an elderly pit bull riddled with tumors (recovered, adopted); a cow collapsed by the roadside (now grazing forever-home pastures); a lost dog, back legs so broken a private vet gave up on him (homed and healed). "I want to give everyone a chance," Dr. Kather says. Soon, in a new animal services center equipped with an advanced, modern clinic, she’ll be able to do just that.
ELAINE JELSEMA failed at fostering, in the best possible way. Fourteen years ago, she fostered Teddy, a dachshund-chihuahua mix so tiny he had to be handfed. But Elaine just couldn’t say goodbye. So Teddy stayed. Elaine felt the same way about foster Joey, a chihuahua-terrier mix with special needs. So Joey stayed. Then came Cara, a young papillon mix, and three kittens — Sandy, Patches, Missy. Elaine met and adopted all four after becoming a shelter volunteer, a role that finds her doing everything from serving as a kitten climbing post to walking horses. Along the way, Elaine grew closer to our cause: As a generous donor, she became a partner in the future. “This shelter is small but mighty,” she says. “They do so much to help animals. And they operate on a shoestring. They deserve all the support we can give.”

Forty years ago, when we moved into our old facility, shelters were designed to warehouse animals for a short, required holding period. Euthanasia rates were high. Animal welfare was a low priority.

Over time, we’ve risen above these limitations to achieve one of the highest animal live-release rates in California. Today, nearly 100 percent of the animals that come into our care go to homes. We work with an extensive network of partners that helps find the best placement for each pet. For every animal, there is hope.

But our community is growing, and we must grow with it. It’s time the County of Santa Clara had a modern animal center, built to provide a future for every animal. Unlike our current facility — stretched beyond its limits — our new home fully embraces our all-animals approach. In an environment built to reduce boredom, minimize stress, and promote social interaction, animals will behave more naturally, and their chances for adoption will increase. People seeking animals will find a welcoming adoption center with comfortable, natural spaces in which to get to know animals, and a park for checking out potential canine companions. Our new home will be a place for animals, a place for people, a place for community.
New Animal Clinic
A place for healing
New Community Space
A place for gathering
New Cat Social Area
A place for play
New Dog Dorms & Interior Park
A place for fun
New Barn & Pastures
A place for roaming
When we look at plans for our new animal center, there’s only one thing missing: You. Funding designated for our new facility by the County of Santa Clara provides a foundation — and creates a unique opportunity for anyone who cares about animals, people, and community to help us build a better future.

Together we can transform the new Animal Services Center into the best public animal welfare organization in the United States, a rescue, care, and collaboration at its finest. We can create a place for all of us.

To learn more or make a gift, please visit aplace4animals.com or contact us at (408) 201-0661.