

HC Animal
Shelter
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This is Jill Duffy, with Community Comment

There are times it's enjoyable to take a stroll down memory lane, and reflect upon how a change of direction that seemed daunting and uncertain at the time can ~~look~~ today as a success.

be viewed

Ten years ago county animal control was handled by the County Ag Department, and the county and cities contracted shelter services with Sequoia Humane Society. A bill passed in 1998 which created additional mandates for local government that extended minimal holding times, expanded owner reunification efforts, veterinarian care, and more stringent adoption requirements. Due to a number of factors the County opted to go down a new path and into the animal shelter business, and transferred animal control to the Sheriff's Department.

At the time there was tremendous public criticism to the proposed capital investment, the long term operation and maintenance obligations, questions as to whether the Sheriff's Department was deemed 'sensitive' enough, and whether they'd be receptive to working with a variety of local animal rescue organizations.

Despite the skepticism, and thanks to some amazingly creative, resourceful and dedicated individuals, relationships were forged, and over time a strong bond of trust developed.

Today the shelter accepts stray animals, evaluates and holds them as long as possible. A priority is place upon reunification of lost animals and their owners and a website is regularly updated with all the animals who have entered into the system.

The County is committed to not euthanizing animals except in rare circumstances- but all the dogs and cats coming into the system can't be held indefinitely. And this is where the invaluable work of the private organizations steps in.

Sequoia Humane Society, Miranda's Rescue, Companion Animal Foundation, Bless the Beasts, and K9Angels accept animals that the shelter can't take, and accepts animals from the shelter when the shelter is overcrowded. There are a wide variety of rescue animal networks in county and state so that adoptable dogs have more time to get adopted. It's a Dog's Life sets about finding local foster homes for pit bull and American Staffordshire dogs and work to place the right animal with the right owner. Redwood Pals Rescue spreads the word during overcrowding, and It's a Dog's Life finds transportation outside the county to new homes. The Spay Neuter Network helps provides for spay and neuter assistance.

Numerous community members volunteer to spend time with the animals to ensure they are socialized, exercised and receive basic obedience training...because, let's face it... a dog who jumps on a perspective family is generally going to be less adoptable than the dog understands basic commands and can sit.

Thanks to the work of many folks we can look to the Humboldt County Animal Shelter as a wonderful example that resulted from a strong public/private partnership.

Ultimately, the shelter is successful because of you, our community. Support the activities of the volunteer organizations and please continue to support the shelter, by donating canned food, blankets, toys, leashes and collars. And especially – if you are looking for a pet, stop to see any of the 40+ plus dogs and cats eagerly awaiting a new home.

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