

VENTURA COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

Saving Lives Each And Every Day



2022 Annual Report

600 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010 | 670 W. Los Angeles Ave., Simi Valley, CA 93065

www.vcas.us | 805.388.4341 | info@vcas.us | [@vcanimalservices](https://www.facebook.com/vcanimalservices) [f](#) [@](#) [t](#) [v](#) [d](#)



A message from the Director...

We had another highly successful year at Ventura County Animal Services! We found loving homes for thousands of animals while we continued to grow and build new innovative, life-saving programs. Of the numerous successes this year, I would like to share a few highlights that reflect our department's dedication to the animals in our care and to the Ventura County community:

- The Simi Valley Animal Shelter fully reopened to the public for adoptions from its temporary closed due to the pandemic.
- Of the 3,970 adoptions, fifty (50) were long-term dogs who had been in our care for between 100-500 days! This was a huge win as it reflects the our department's deep dedication to saving lives.
- Adopted out a record-breaking twenty (20) rabbits during our 2-day St. Patrick's Day weekend bunny promotion.
- Raised an impressive \$51,510 during the #BettyWhiteChallenge for which we received news coverage from NBC Los Angeles.
- VCAS partnered with the Humane Society of the United States and was awarded a 3-year grant from the Ventura County Community Foundation to implement our participation in the innovative Pets4Life program which is designed to provide assistance to animals of low-income households in targeted areas of our county.
- Held a "Dog Bed Donation Drive" where 208 Kuranda beds were donated by the public. That was enough beds to replace all dog beds at both shelters in Camarillo and Simi Valley! We then held a Build-A-Bed event where community members helped assemble all 200+ beds. This was a highly successful community event!
- Awarded a grant from California Department of Food and Agriculture to provide spay and neuter services to low-income families.



- Able to provide spay and neuter services to 129 dogs and 13 cats through our "Going Home with a Cone" program which is designed to provide this essential procedure to dogs and cats being reclaimed by their owners who could not afford it otherwise.
- Welcomed 448 new volunteers and 51 new foster parents to the Ventura County Animal Services family.
- Held a Kitten Food Drive resulting in the donation of 5,582 cans of food.
- Held an intensive four-day training from Dogs Playing For Life (DPFL) to implement daily off-leash playgroups.

There were just a handful of our numerous successes. I am extremely grateful to everyone who supports our daily efforts. We could not do what we do without the residents of Ventura County. Thank you for supporting our life-saving mission!

With much gratitude,

Jackie Rose



About Us

Ventura County Animal Services (VCAS) provides an array of services to the residents and animals of Ventura County. Some of these services include pet adoptions, lost & found services, rabies suppression, animal sheltering, access to field services, cruelty investigations, low-cost vaccination clinics, pet licensing, volunteer and foster opportunities, and emergency disaster response.

VCAS operates (2) two open-admission, life-saving, municipal shelters. The main shelter is located in Camarillo and houses the Administrative Offices and Veterinary Hospital and has a 300-animal capacity which can more than double during declared natural disasters.

The second shelter is located in Simi Valley. This is a smaller facility which can house up to 40 animals and offers many of the same services and programs as the Camarillo Shelter, such as the intake of stray animals, pet adoptions, pet licensing, and the reclaim of lost animals.

VCAS provides contract services to the residents of: Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Simi Valley, Ventura, and all unincorporated areas of Ventura County. VCAS is dedicated to improving the lives of the animals in our care, and in the community.



WE PLACED
93.3%
OF THE ANIMALS
IN OUR CARE.

2022 Highlights

6,629	TOTAL ANIMAL INTAKE
5,489	• Stray Pets
509	• Surrendered Pets
1,288	Lost Animals Reunited
3,970	Pet Adoptions
42,970	Pet Licenses Processed
28,362	Volunteer Hours Donated
60,523	Foster Care Hours Donated

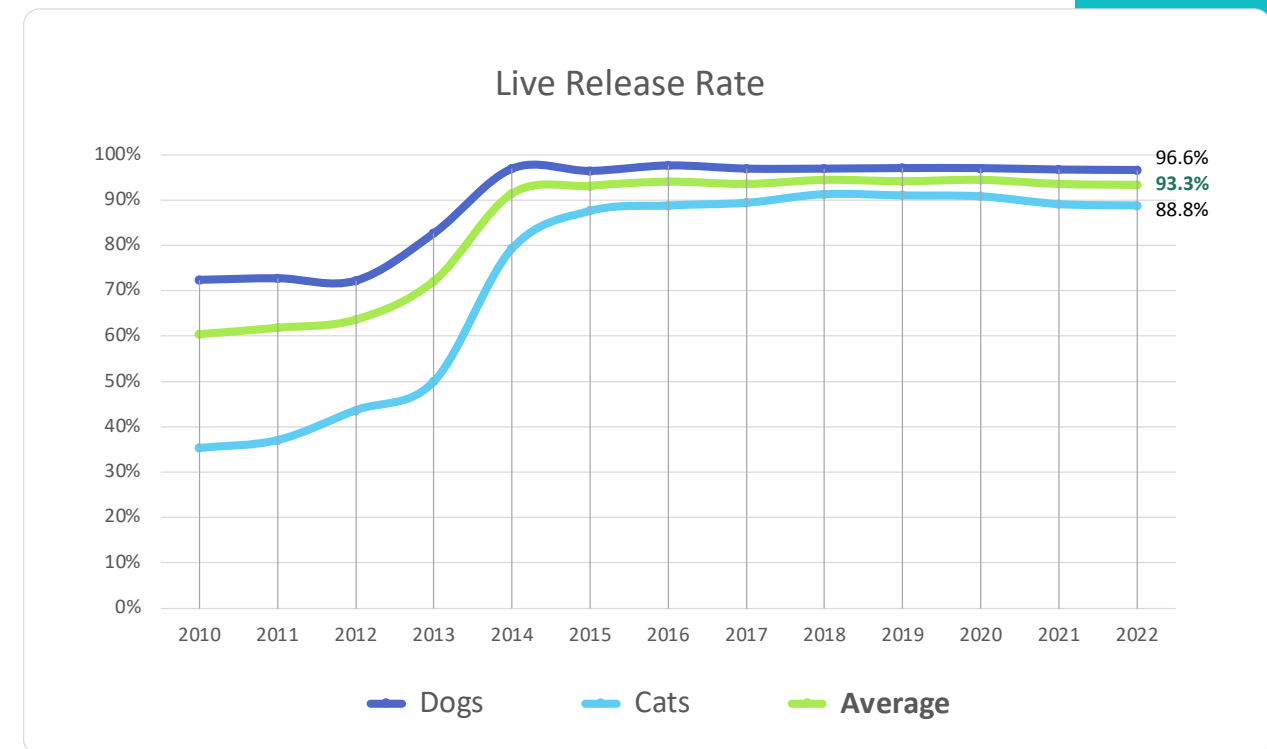


Our Life-Saving Mission

Ventura County Animal Services' life-saving mission guides our every day activities. Decisions are made with the best interest of our animals in mind. To support this mission, we have built an impressive array of programs designed to ensure our animals remain healthy and happy during their stay.

A common metric used to help measure success is the Live Release Rate (LRR). We are proud to share that VCAS achieved an average LRR of **93.3% in 2022** and we have not moved below 90% since we began our life-saving journey in 2014. But this is only one data point. An LRR is not an end-goal to reach, but rather the commitment to hard work, innovative programing, and a firm dedication to saving lives.

Though we are extremely proud of what we have accomplished, we continuously strive to enhance our programs and build new pathways to increase live outcomes.



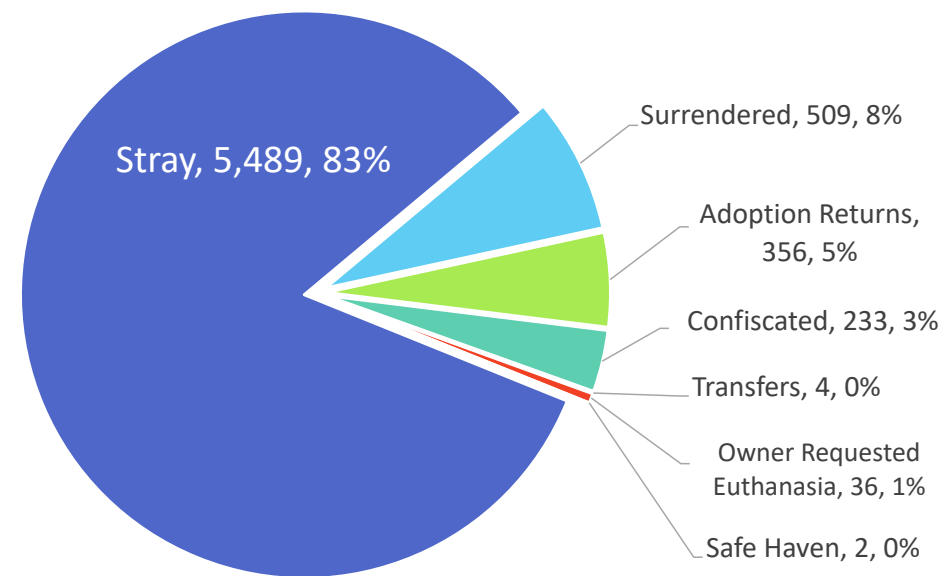


New Arrivals

Approximately eighteen (18) animals entered our care each day in 2022. Our compassionate staff ensured each animal was treated with respect, and all major health issues were promptly addressed by our dedicated Veterinary Team.

When animals enter our care, they are vaccinated, flea-treated, weighed, and have their picture taken to help ensure their parents can find them as easily as possible. All animals are spayed or neutered and microchipped prior to their adoption.

INCOMING ANIMALS: 6,629



Approximately 83% of animals who entered our care in 2022 came to us as lost or stray, somehow getting loose from their home. Owner surrendered animals make up only 8% of our department's animal intake. The reasons behind an owner's decision to surrender their cherished pets are difficult, complicated, and vary greatly. The most common reasons for pet surrender are housing issues and medical concerns. We are proud to be able to help hundreds of families keep their pets through the efforts of our **Pet Retention Program**, but those we are unable to help are in good hands when they enter our care.

When surrendered animals enter our shelter system, we gather as much information about them as possible to help us match them with a new, loving families. We are fully transparent about all aspects of the animal's health, personality and background. This practice has resulted in wonderful matches that last a lifetime.



🐕 - Dog 🐈 - Cat 🐰 - Rabbit 🐾 - Other Species





Lost Animals & Reunions

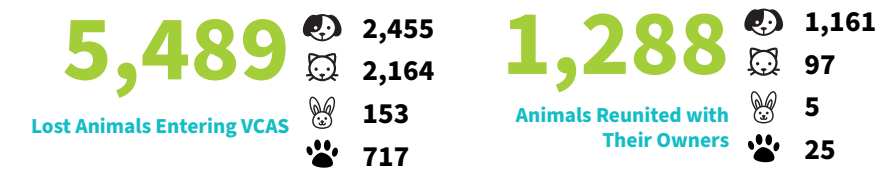
Our happiest moments are when we are able to reunite lost pets with their families. In 2022, we reunited an impressive **1,288 animals** with their families! This high success rate was due to the diligent efforts of our staff and volunteers. They ensured photos of animals quickly appeared online, researched microchip and ID tags, and made Lost Pet videos.

According to the **Shelter Animal Count** (a national database for shelters), on average at shelters across the nation, 40.7% of stray dogs and 5.1% of stray cats are typically reunited with their owners. We are thrilled to share that VCAS exceeds the national average having reunited **47.3% of stray dogs and 8.3% of stray cats in 2022.**

According to the **American Veterinary Medical Association** (AVMA), nationwide **52.2%** of dog reunions at animal welfare organizations are due to a microchip implant compared to only **21.9%** of unmicrochipped dogs. Additionally, the AVMA reports, "...animals that weren't returned to their owners, most of the time it was due to incorrect (or no) owner information in the microchip registry database..."

Ventura County Animal Services would like to remind pet owners that although collars with ID tags are essential, they can slip off while microchips are permanent. If you are in need of a microchip implant for your pet, please contact your local veterinary hospital or clinic.

If you have lost your pet, please visit www.vcas.us/lostandfound for tips to help you locate your pet faster.





Adoptions

Ventura County Animal Services is well-known throughout the community for making wonderful adoption matches! Due to the pandemic in 2020-2021, we pivoted to an online adoption sign-up format which resulted in the adoption of **thousands** of shelter animals! Given this new model, our Adoption Counselors are able to provide comprehensive counseling to ensure the best possible matches were made. As always, we were fully transparent regarding the animal's behavior, temperament, activity level, and medical needs. Through these thoughtful conversations, we successfully matched **3,970 animals** with new, loving families in 2022.

Those wishing to adopt a shelter pet can easily view available animals online at www.vcas.us/pets, and can learn about our adoption process at www.vcas.us/adopt.



Pet Retention

Our Pet Retention Program (or Safety Net Program) is designed to help low-income families keep their pets by connecting them with community resources, providing assistance with temporary boarding fees, behavior training, and veterinary expenses. This program is funded through the Animal Services Foundation of Ventura County, the non-profit organization that supports the lifesaving efforts of VCAS. Since 2016, VCAS has helped an astonishing **8,183 animals** remain with their families who would have otherwise entered our shelter system.

If you, or someone you know, is in need of Pet Retention services, please visit www.vcas.us/petretention or contact us at keepmypet@ventura.org.





An Adoption Story

George, a very sweet 4-year-old Pit Bull mix was beginning to show signs of kennel stress. To help relieve some of that stress, he was provided daily enrichment activities, walks, and participation in playgroup where he could play with other shelter dogs. But George was still displaying key indicators of stress, so we brought him into a quiet office space to decompress. While there we **streamed a live broadcast of George on social media** in hopes of finding him a foster family or, better yet, a permanent placement.

Laura and Paul, a Ventura couple, happened to be watching the broadcast, and remarked that George reminded them of a their previous dog. They came to the Camarillo Shelter to meet George to see if he would be a good fit for their lifestyle. Within just a few short minutes, they knew he was the one they had been waiting two (2) years for. They decided to make it official and took George home as the newest member of their family!

Laura works from home and is able to be with him all day! Said she, “We’re going to spoil him so much!”



When my soul dog passed in July 2022...



She followed her heart 2,640 miles.

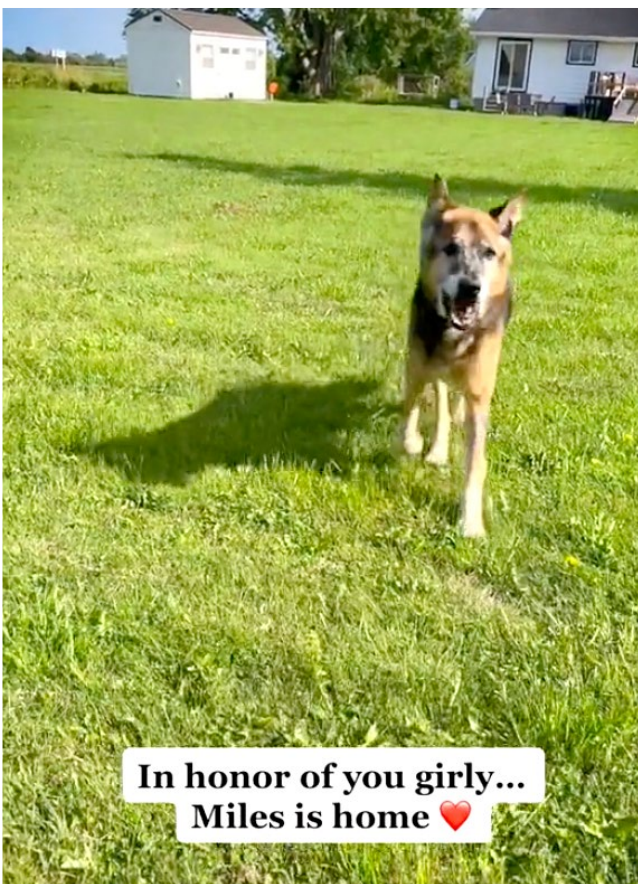
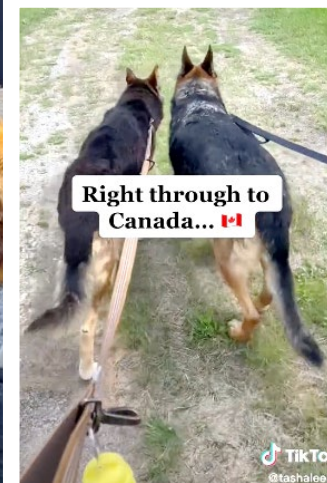
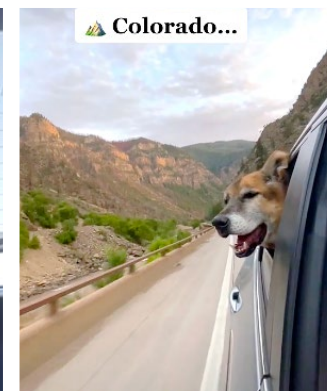
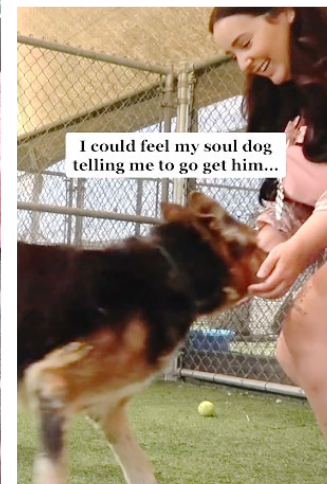
Social media influencer and Canadian resident Tasha Leelyn lost her beloved German Shepherd, Girly. She shared her grief with her followers as a way to help cope with her loss. An animal rescue group who follows both Tasha and Ventura County Animal Services, messaged her through Instagram telling her about Miles, an 11-year-old German Shepherd at our Camarillo facility who she might be interested in adopting. Tasha was still deeply mourning Girly, but could not stop thinking about Miles. So, she followed her heart and flew **2,640 miles** to meet him in person with every intention of adopting him. When they met, she instantly fell in love! After the adoption paperwork was completed,

they knew that flying home would be stressful for Miles, so they began their 30-hour drive home to Canada.

This was an emotional and heartwarming story that led a grieving pet parent on an international journey to rescue a senior animal in need of a soft landing and loving home.



Watch Miles going home from the shelter!



Transformations



BEFORE TREATMENT

Shiloh, a 3-year-old lost dog, was found wandering the streets of Oxnard. He was discovered by a Good Samaritan who brought him to Ventura County Animal Services for care. He had obvious medical concerns as both of his eyes were protruding and he was unable to see.

A medical exam sadly determined that his eyes could not be saved, and our Veterinary Team performed a Bilateral Enucleation which is the removal of the eyes. The pain and discomfort Shiloh had been experiencing for quite some time was now gone. While in recovery, his

bold personality began shining through and he soon became a favorite amongst our Veterinary Team. He captured the hearts of all who met him and he was joyfully adopted just a few days following his surgery. A Veterinary Team member said, "Watching Shiloh become more comfortable and still having his boisterous spirit was amazing. We are so happy to see him thriving in his new home."



AFTER TREATMENT



SHILOH IN HIS NEW HOME

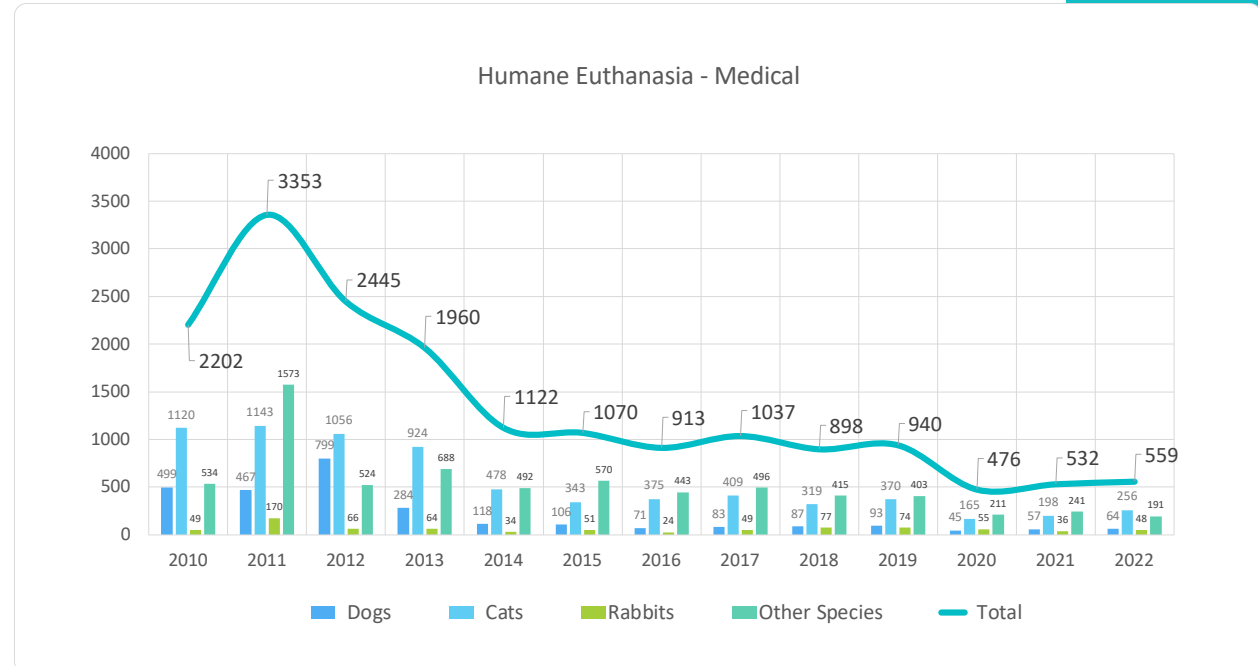


IN 2022,
WE PLACED
93.3%
OF THE ANIMALS
IN OUR CARE!

Humane Euthanasia

Since VCAS became a life-saving animal welfare organization in 2014, no healthy or treatable animals have been euthanized due to time or space, a fact of which we are very proud. However, for those animals who are medically suffering and/or have behavioral concerns which pose a significant public safety risk, our team provides compassionate humane euthanasia in a respectful, loving and peaceful manner.

We are equally pleased to share that the overall humane euthanasia rate continues to be very low. In 2022, **we placed 93.3% of animals** in our care! This success is due to our continued commitment to progressive and innovative programming which leads to positive outcomes.

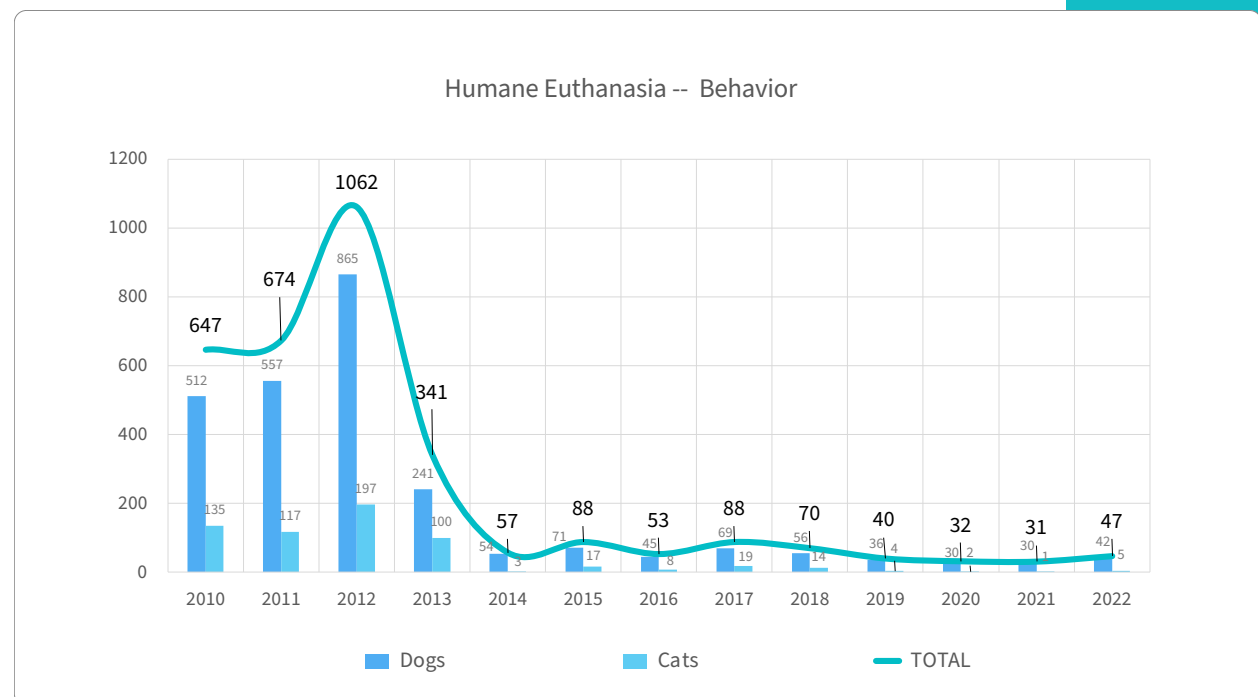
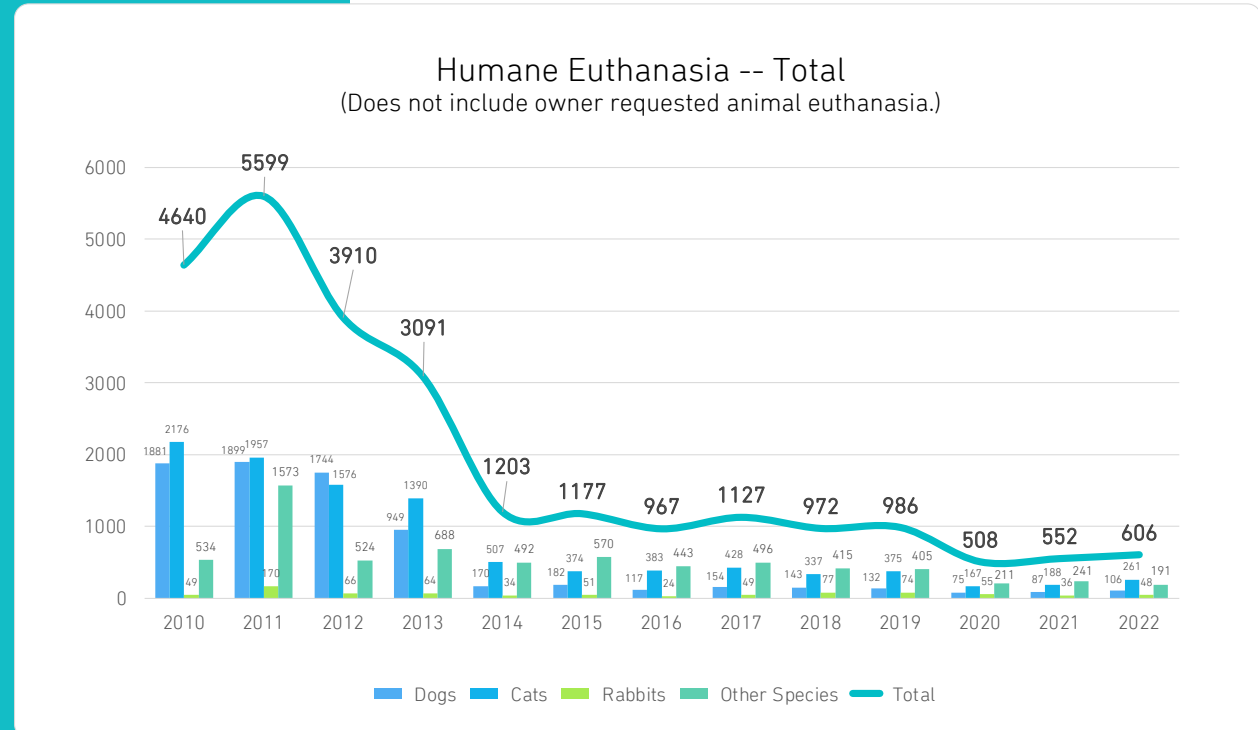


559
Humane Euthanasia
(Medical)

- 64
- 256
- 48
- 191

47
Humane Euthanasia
(Behavioral)

- 42
- 5
- 0
- 0



Volunteers

VCAS volunteers participate in every department within our agency. They train animals, provide enrichment, take dogs out on the town, work with challenging animals, provide comfort to frightened pets, assist our veterinary team, take pictures and video for marketing purposes, rescue animals during declared natural disasters, and **so much more!**

In 2022, volunteers donated **28,362 hours** on-site at the Camarillo and Simi Valley Animal Shelter, equivalent to **13.5 full time** staff members! We are successful because of our dedicated volunteers. We could not be a lifesaving agency without their kindness and dedication to animal welfare.

For information regarding volunteer opportunities, please visit www.vcas.us/volunteer.

 **28,362**
Volunteer Hours Donated



Foster Program

VCAS is very fortunate to have such a dedicated county-wide network of foster parents who open their hearts and homes to thousands of animals each year! The majority of our foster parents care for underage or underweight kittens who often require around-the-clock care. We are equally fortunate to have foster parents who care for animals who have special medical and/or behavioral issues, or for animals who simply need a quiet place to rest. Foster families are **100% essential** to the success of our life-saving mission!

We're always looking to expand our network of animal-loving families! For more information about our foster program, please visit www.vcas.us/foster.

 **60,523**
Foster Care
Hours Donated

 **1,176**
Animals Entering
Foster Care

	119
	998
	51
	8



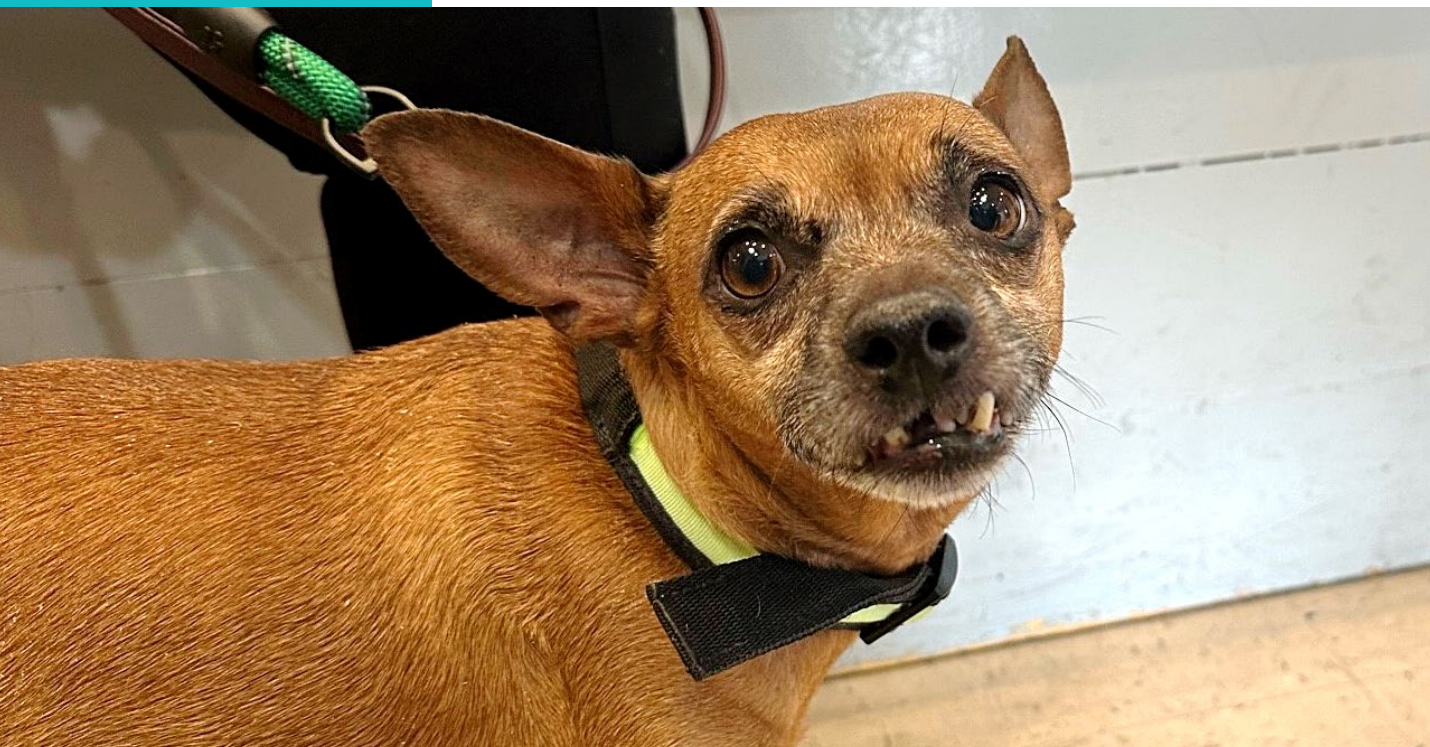
Foster Photos



Pets for Life

Pets for Life is a program designed by the Humane Society of the United States to address inequity and lack of access to pet resources that people in under-served communities experience, and Ventura County Animal Services is thrilled to bring this program to our community.

This program is funded through a generous multi-year grant from the **Ventura County Community Foundation**, a non-profit organization committed to promoting and enabling philanthropy in our community.



IMPACT STORY:

Ana and Rafael are proud parents of Coco, a lively and energetic Chihuahua mix who brings much joy to their lives. But a tragic event befell Coco when he was kicked in the face by a delivery person. The couple was shocked and devastated by what happened to their beloved pet. Sadly, due to lack of evidence, local authorities could not pursue charges.



Feeling helpless and frustrated, Ana and Rafael were at a loss as to how they could help Coco given their situation. That's when they met Rafael Castellanos, the Pets For Life Program Coordinator at Ventura County Animal Services. He listened to their story and immediately took action. He helped them schedule a veterinary appointment for Coco and he assured them that the Pets for Life program would take care of any necessary veterinary fees.

The couple received the news that Coco's upper jaw had been degloved when he was kicked. Results of his vet exam also revealed a heart murmur and recommended that Coco get his heart checked prior to any further procedures. The vet prescribed pain medication and antibiotics to alleviate his pain and discomfort. The next day Coco had a second exam which confirmed he had degenerative heart disease and a possible enlarged heart. Given his condition, it was decided that the best course of action was to continue with medication and focus on making him as comfortable as possible.

Although Ana and Rafael were devastated by the news, they were grateful for the support they received through this new program. They knew that they would do everything they could to ensure Coco was cared for, no matter what the future held. And despite everything, Coco continues to be a source of comfort and joy for his owners, even in the face of adversity.

The Betty White Challenge

Betty White broke barriers and entertained millions of people spanning multiple generations. In addition to her illustrious career in entertainment, she was a staunch supporter of animal rights. She was an advocate for the fair treatment of animals, and, like so many of us, she had unconditional love for shelter animals.

When the news was announced that Betty White had passed away, a viral challenge swept across social media spurred by Hollywood stars. It was called the Betty White Challenge. It asked supporters to donate \$5.00 to their local animal welfare organization on January 17th, on what would have been her 100th birthday. We announced our participation in the challenge and set an initial fundraising goal of \$1,000. NBC4 learned about our campaign and reached out wanting to highlight

our efforts. Shortly after their reporting, donations poured in! After just a few days, we raised an impressive **\$51,510!**

In celebration of Betty White's memory, we waived all pet adoption fees from January 14th - 16th and found loving homes for several of our shelter animals.

Betty White's life and legacy continues to be an inspiration.



Build-A-Bed Event

Every few years VCAS holds a Dog Bed Donation Drive to help replace all of our raised Kuranda dog beds. Within just a few days of launching this drive, we surpassed our goal with **208 beds** donated by members of the public! These beds had a collective value of **\$17,708**.

Beds arrived unassembled, so we held a **Build-A-Bed Event** where community members could come and help put them together. Participants also wrote messages to the dogs on the underside of the beds using non-toxic markers, and the messages they left were very touching! There was such an overwhelming response from the community that all 208 beds were assembled in just over one (1) hour! Truly amazing!



Build-A-Bed Video



Field Services

Ventura County Animal Services is a comprehensive community animal resource center. Our front office and phones are staffed by highly knowledgeable individuals who possess extensive subject matter experience. In 2022, our phone room received approximately **54,000 phone calls** from individuals living within our eight (8) contracted cities and all incorporated areas of Ventura County. Of these calls, **7,608** required an Animal Control Officer to be dispatched to render assistance. These calls ranged from welfare checks to the capture of aggressive dogs. Our highly trained field officers are on the front lines, providing excellent service to the residents of our county. They cover a service area approximately **2,150 mi²** in size.



 **7,608**

Calls Responded to by an Animal Control Officer

- 1,669 Rabies Quarantine**
- 721 Deceased Animal Pickup**
- 11 Cruelty Investigations**
- 435 Nuisance Investigations**
- 502 Leash Law Patrols**
- 434 Welfare Checks**
- 539 Aggressive Dog Pick Up**
- 414 Nuisance/Barking Complaints**
- 2,883 Other Calls for Assistance**



Community Service

VCAS leads numerous community service efforts and events throughout our county each year. These efforts primarily provide low-cost or no-cost service to low-income families, seniors, individuals with disabilities, unhoused individuals, and other at-risk or under-served groups. These services include, but are not limited to:

1. Providing temporary pet food assistance to low-income or at-risk groups through our [Pet Pantry Program](#).
2. Providing comprehensive veterinary services for lost and surrendered animals brought to our facility.
3. Provide wellness exams and other veterinary care to the animals of unhoused families and individuals through our partnership with [Mercy House](#).
4. Provide low-cost rabies vaccination clinics at various locations throughout the county.
5. Sponsor no-cost spay and neuter clinics.
6. Provide the spay and neuter component to feral/community cats through our county's Trap Neuter Return (TNR) program.
7. Host pet adoption events where the adoption fee for a shelter animal is waived.
8. Offer half off pet adoption fees for adopter who are 55 years of age or older.
9. Respond to and provide rescue support, medical care and temporary housing for animals affected by natural disasters.



Vaccination and wellness clinic for low-income pet owners.



So yummy...

Enrichment

Animal enrichment activities are designed to stimulate animals physically and cognitively. Our team of Animal Care specialists have developed an array of enrichment activities which have a profound impact on the wellbeing of the animals in our care. These activities can be done inside an animal's kennel, outside on the shelter property, and even off-site at a location in the community. These activities range from simple walks around the property, to advanced Nose Work training classes where dogs search for specific scents hidden amongst a field of empty containers. Here is a list of a few of the enrichment activities in which our animals participate. We rotate through these activities so there's something different each day.

1. **Busy Buckets** - A small container is filled with a varying combination of: broth, vegetables, kibble, fruit, yogurt, peanut butter, then frozen and hung in their kennel for a dog to slowly enjoy throughout the day.

2. **Hound on the Town** - Taking dogs out for a fun time in the community: going on hikes, getting a "pup cup" from Starbucks, walking along the beach, etc.
3. **Kongs** - Hard rubber toys that are filled with kibble, wet dog food and capped at both ends with peanut butter, the frozen.
4. **Mutt Manners** - Teaching manners to dogs using treats and positive reinforcement.
5. **Nose Work** - Dogs search for treats hidden among a field of empty containers. This activity provides cognitive stimulation and activates an animal's innate hunting instinct.
6. **Pack Walks** - Dogs learning to walk well around other dogs and are rewarded for good behavior.
7. **Peanut Butter Frisbees** - Frisbees are smeared with peanut butter, then hung in a dog's kennel for them to enjoy.
8. **Playgroups** - Dogs playing off-leash in our puppy playground. This supervised activity provides numerous benefits, from physical activity, to learning appropriate behavior.
9. **Puzzle Feeders** - Puzzle feeders are usually small plastic puzzles filled with kibble. They are mainly designed to provide mental stimulation and also activate an animal's natural foraging instincts.
10. **Rescue Readers** - A popular activity where parents and guardians bring their children to the Camarillo facility to read to shelter animals.



Volunteer engaged in Mutt Manners enrichment activity.



Carmen Ramirez

Heartbreaking news struck our county on August 12th when Supervisor Carmen Ramirez was suddenly and tragically taken from us in an automobile accident. For decades, Supervisor Ramirez fought for civil rights, woman's rights, environmental justice, and championed numerous causes which shaped the lives of Ventura County resident. She was a passionate animal lover who sat on our VCAS Commission supporting all of our life-saving efforts. A memorial bench now sits in remembrance of her life and legacy.





Jane Gordon

The passing of Ventura County Animal Services staff member, Jane Gordon, was felt far and wide within the VCAS family. Jane (or “Janie”) began working for Animal Services in the 1980s and held numerous roles during her decades of service. She was an Animal Control Officer, Rescue Coordinator, educator, and friend to all. She was a highly knowledgeable subject matter expert, having taught numerous workshops on a variety of topics. Jane also provided training to new kennel staff to ensure they had the tools needed to be successful in their positions. Jane is most remembered for her kind smile and witty sense of humor.

Jane’s enduring spirit continues to be a strength and she will always be in our hearts.



Euan Slidders

Our VCAS family suffered the loss of a cherished VCAS volunteer, Euan Slidders. Euan joined our family in 2015 as a member of our VCAS Bunny Brigade. He was known for his, drive, energy, and welcoming personality. He participated in every function of rabbit welfare, from cleaning kennels and being the Saturday Lead Volunteer, to providing bunny education and conducting adoption counseling. He did it all!

Euan was always the first to offer help when needed. He helped build bunny kennels, trained volunteers to become adoption counselors, and was an active foster parent. Euan will be greatly missed as a cherished volunteer and his legacy of leadership will continue to live on.





VENTURA COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

www.vcas.us | 805.388.4341 | info@vcas.us

Camarillo Animal Shelter
600 Aviation Drive
Camarillo, CA 93010

Simi Valley Animal Shelter
670 W. Los Angeles Avenue
Simi Valley, CA 93065

    
@VCAAnimalServices

Join the Team!

If you have a special place in your heart to care for animals in need, please join us on our life-saving journey. If you're looking to work directly with shelter animals, come volunteer or foster for us! If you're unable to volunteer or foster, please consider making a tax-deductible donation. Your gift helps ensure our life-saving programs have the critical supplies needed to keep our animals healthy and happy until they have found a loving home.

Ways to help:

1. Visit www.vcas.us/Volunteer to sign up to be a volunteer at either animals shelter in Camarillo or Simi Valley.
2. Visit www.vcas.us/Foster to temporarily care for shelter animals in your home.
3. Visit www.vcas.us/Donate to make a monetary gift.
4. Visit www.vcas.us/AmazonWishList to purchase specific items we need. Items purchased from our Amazon Wish List can be shipped to:

Ventura County Animal Services
600 Aviation Drive
Camarillo, CA 93010

Visit www.vcas.us/ways-to-help to learn of other ways you can join the team and help save lives! Thank you for your dedication to our life-saving mission! We could not do what we do without your ongoing support!

Be well and stay safe,
Ventura County Animal Services





“Animals are such agreeable friends. They ask no questions, they pass no criticisms.”

GEORGE ELLIOT

