



SPRING 2025



CAT CORNER

The Merced SPCA Newsletter

OUR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from *Cynthia Kelly*

A RESCUE OF LOVE... A COMMUNITY UNITED

In January, the Merced SPCA was put on stand-by to assist with the rescue of cats from the Eaton and Palisades fire areas in California. We all waited patiently as we watched in horror at the growing tragedy and the cost of human and animal lives in Los Angeles.

Then the message came. Late in the afternoon on January 16th, the email said—**CAN YOU COME ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 18TH? UP TO 39 CATS NEED EVACUATION.** In less than 24 hours, our volunteers were prepared to mobilize. We had 30 foster homes ready, an overwhelming amount of supplies and financial assistance donated by our community, 5 transporters and 40 carriers. We had Kailin from Los Angeles, who saw our desperate plea for volunteers on social media and put together a team in LA to help. We had our board members, trappers, fosters, community volunteers and colony caretakers all ready to jump in and do whatever was necessary to receive the LA Fire Rescue Cats.

We brought back 15 cats. All traumatized—some with physical injuries, including burns – others just terrified and confused. With the love of their fosters, patience and time, these cats were nursed back to health. They were taught not to be afraid. They were given the space they needed, the meals they craved and the love they missed. All of this, because a community united to support a rescue of love.

In just a few short months, 10 of the 15 Los Angeles cats have been sent to our rescue partner: The Nine Lives Foundation in Redwood City. Almost all have been adopted and have gotten their second chance in a forever home. This is why we don't hesitate to offer assistance when asked. Every year, millions of cats end up in shelters, and sadly, not all of them find homes. Shelters often face overcrowding, and when they're full, animals may face euthanasia. We couldn't allow these previous souls, who lost so very much, to suffer that fate.

Today, as I look back on that rescue, I am critical of the minute details (as I usually am after a large project). Was there something we could've done differently? Should we have waited until we were better prepared? Could we have left some cats behind for other rescues to take? Today, I can wholeheartedly say, the Merced SPCA would again immediately respond when called to save even ONE life in peril. And why? *Because I know that OUR community will unite once more for another rescue of love.*



In This Issue

2024

YEAR-IN-REVIEW

When Love Becomes Heartbreak

The loss of an animal is the hardest thing a foster parent has to go through, and unfortunately for those of us who foster kittens, it is something that does happen. Even with wonderful care it's important for anyone fostering kittens to know that if you experience loss, you are not alone. Here are a few tips from our experienced fosters who have suffered the loss of a loved foster pet:

• **Remember the Positive Impact:** Reflect on the time you spent caring for the animal and the positive difference you made in their life.

• **Be Gentle with Yourself:** You may feel a deep sense of injustice that the kitten's life has been cut so short. You may feel angry that the kitten suffered. You may feel confused about what caused the kitten to decline. You may feel anxious about what to do now. Recognize that you were truly the best thing that ever happened to that kitten, because your home is where it found love and comfort, even for a short period of time.

• **Lean on Your Foster Organization:** Talking to other and more experienced fosters is the best way to help you through this. We can relate to what you're going through. Talking to people who have shared this experience can help you feel less alone.

• **Focus on Future Fosters:** If you plan to continue fostering, remember that your experience with this pet has made you a more knowledgeable and compassionate foster parent. Loss is not failure. Loss is, in fact, a tremendous opportunity to grow your knowledge and skillset to save more lives in the future. The truth is that those of us who have lost foster kittens are often the best situated to save more kittens in the future.

Merced SPCA 2024 Year In Review

The past year was an extremely busy one for the volunteers of the Merced SPCA. Little by little, we continue to strive to make a difference in the lives of our community cats. Here's a glimpse of some of the work we completed in 2024 to improve the lives of the homeless cat population and reduce the euthanasia rate of strays in our community. This was only made possible by your generous donations.

- ❖ 589 cats were trapped, neutered or spayed, vaccinated and released.
- ❖ 17,250 kitten births were prevented through our TNR program.
- ❖ We rescued over 155 animals in need.
- ❖ We treated over 100 cats for illnesses and injuries.
- ❖ We sent 177 cats and kittens to rescue. 175 of which have been adopted.
- ❖ We welcomed 11 new volunteers to the Merced SPCA.
- ❖ We sponsored 8 community events and participated in an additional 5 events in Merced County.



In Memoriam



The Denno Family for Joyce Sweeney; Mike Goncalves for Lucky; Jennifer Brewster for Jazzy Brewster; Debrah Reyes for Carmen Bracamontes; Elizabeth Traynor for Ruff and Tinkerbelle



2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Vice-President
Treasurer
Secretary
Membership

CYNTHIA "CINDY" KELLY
FRANK CIENFUEGOS
KELLY SIZEMORE
LYRICAL ADAM
FLORENCE LAMBERT

The Merced SPCA is a local chapter and not affiliated with any national programs. We are an organization of volunteers that believes that we can build a community where people value animals and treat them with respect and kindness. To become a member of Merced SPCA, please contact us. Donations can be made online at www.mercedspca.org or mailed to: Merced SPCA P.O. Box 929, Merced, CA 95341 or email us at merced.spca@yahoo.com

The Merced SPCA \$5 Challenge

Merced County Animal Services has the 2nd highest kill-rate in California at over 38%. That means **almost 40% of the pets and strays that enter the doors of our shelter will NEVER leave.**

(animalrescuesforchange.org /2020-2024)

Statistics have shown that almost 90% of strays, homeless and abandoned animals in Merced County are a direct result of unaltered pets.

The Merced SPCA is committed to finding solutions for decreasing the number of unaltered pets in our communities. We have had great success with our low-cost spay and neuter programs for cats and dogs. Unfortunately, those programs are funded by grants and when the funding is spent, the program ends.

This year, we are challenging you to support a continuous low-cost spay and neuter program for pet owners in Merced County to help us decrease the overwhelming number of unaltered animals on our streets.

For a one-time gift of \$5.00 (the price of a Starbucks or Dutch Brothers drink), **you can support our ongoing effort to eliminate the loss of lives in our local shelter.** No animal should have to die, just because they were born.

If every adult in Merced County donates today, we can fund this program for **FIVE YEARS.**

Your one-time gift of \$5.00 will save a life.

PLEASE DONATE TODAY at www.mercedspca.org or by scanning the QR code below.

gofundme



Scan to donate to Cynthia's fundraiser
"The Merced SPCA \$5.00 Challenge"