



CAT CORNER

The Merced SPCA Newsletter

OUR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from *Cynthia Kelly*

BUSY but BLESSED... Volunteers Make it All Possible

It seems as if our work is never done. From TNRs, to rescues, to taking in foster cats and kittens and educating our community about the importance of pet care, we have just stopped to realize how busy we've been.

Since January 1st, we've trapped, neutered or spayed, vaccinated and released almost 500 cats; we've provided daily care and monitoring for over 550 cats; we've spayed and neutered 350 pets; we've vaccinated over 100 cats and kittens; have fostered and rescued over 200 kittens and cats; were part of over 13 community events and have brought our message of pet and animal welfare into 26 elementary school classrooms and *WE STILL HAVE three months to go! We are busy but blessed.*

Our Merced SPCA volunteers are the lifeblood of the organization. Without our trappers, colony caretakers, fosters, transporters, and event hosts, we would never be able to accomplish everything that supports our mission of caring for Merced's abandoned and homeless animals. Volunteering is not always easy: it can be messy, taxing and sometimes heartbreaking. They've seen the best animal of rescue and the worst, and yet, they continue to dedicate themselves to ensuring that Merced's street cats are treated with respect and compassion. It's a thankless job – no one knows their names or gives them more than a passing glance as they go about the important job of animal rescue and care. But they don't do it for recognition or accolades. It's a passion - a heart-driven need to show our community cats love, to make sure that their bellies are full, and that they are just a little safer in their small, but fragile world.

We are busy but blessed. No truer words have ever been spoken. In one year, we've seen twenty-seven new volunteers join Merced SPCA. More than ever, animal lovers in our community want to do their part to ensure that the lives of Merced's street animals are improved—whether by providing a meal, a warm place to rest and recover or making sure that there are no new kittens on our streets. These are mothers, fathers, students at UC Merced, students in elementary and high schools.

As I sit here today and reflect on the last few months of our work at Merced SPCA, I'm astonished with all that we've accomplished, and all that there is still to do. One thing I know for certain—none of this would ever be possible without the men, women, boys and girls who volunteer for us. They have made my job as President easier, and they continue to make our organization better each year. With every piece of my heart... **THANK YOU!**

IN THIS ISSUE

Our Volunteers of the Year



Merced SPCA 2025 VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

The past year has been an extremely busy one for the volunteers of the Merced SPCA. Little by little, they are making a difference in the lives of our community cats. We believe that it's important to recognize all of our volunteers and still highlight those that have gone above and beyond in animal rescue. The choices were difficult ones—we have so many amazing volunteers, but the following people were exceptional leaders and an inspiration to all of us on the Board of Directors. Please meet the 2024-2025 Merced SPCA Volunteers of the Year.

JOSIE A. **TRAPPER OF THE YEAR**

Josie is what we call a "rockstar" trapper. There's no cat that she targets that doesn't end up in her trap. From the smallest kitten to the largest tom, she has the most TNRs (trap-neuter-release) in a year with forty-two cats and kittens! That means she has prevented the births of over 3,008 new kittens. Josie and her wife Khris live in Merced and are also fosters, colony caretakers and pet parents.

NATALIE H. **COLONY CARETAKER OF THE YEAR**

Natalie came to the Merced SPCA by accident. In 2024, she trapped a cat for TNR that had already been spayed and released through the Merced SPCA. She called us to ask about the cat and the colony near her home and the rest was history. Natalie took over the care of one of the largest colonies in North Merced, whom she lovingly refers to as "her munchkins". Natalie and her husband are new to Merced and are devoted feline parents.

CINDY T. **FOSTER OF THE YEAR**

What does it take to keep more than fifty newborns alive? Just ask Cindy Thompson. She is our highly experienced bottle feeder and keeps kittens from hours-old to weeks-old fed, warm and cared for. Cindy has been personally responsible for saving over sixty motherless kittens in one year. And she does it with patience, love, and a lot of sleepless nights. Cindy is also a trapper and colony caretaker and lives in Merced with her fur babies.

AVERY AND ELLA L. **JUNIOR VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR**

Meet Avery and Ella. Since elementary school, these twin sisters have had a passion for animal welfare. You can often find them at Merced SPCA events, taking care of adoptable kittens, answering questions or even playing with puppies. In addition, these young ladies often help their grandparents with colony care. They are remarkable young ladies and the future leaders of animal rescue in Merced.

SANDY C. **VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

Sandy is a pit bull dressed in chihuahua's clothing. She is fiercely protective of her colonies, her fosters and her fur babies. Sandy has never shied away from the hard parts of rescue- climbing trees, scaling creekbanks, crawling through mud—all to save an animal in need. Every rescue, every event, every time there's an empty belly, you'll find Sandy rushing to the rescue. Sandy is from Merced and she and her husband Frank provide daily care for Merced's most well known colonies- the Applegate cats.



Josie



Natalie



Cindy



Ella and Avery



Sandy

In Memoriam

Jackie R. in Memory of Jinx; Charlotte M. in Memory of Jesse Blankenship; Andrew V. in memory of Trident and Scotch; Denise B. in Memory of Kitty Dawn; Dave P. in Memory of Droolius Cesar; Bill C. in Memory of Pete Bandoni.

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ABOUT US

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