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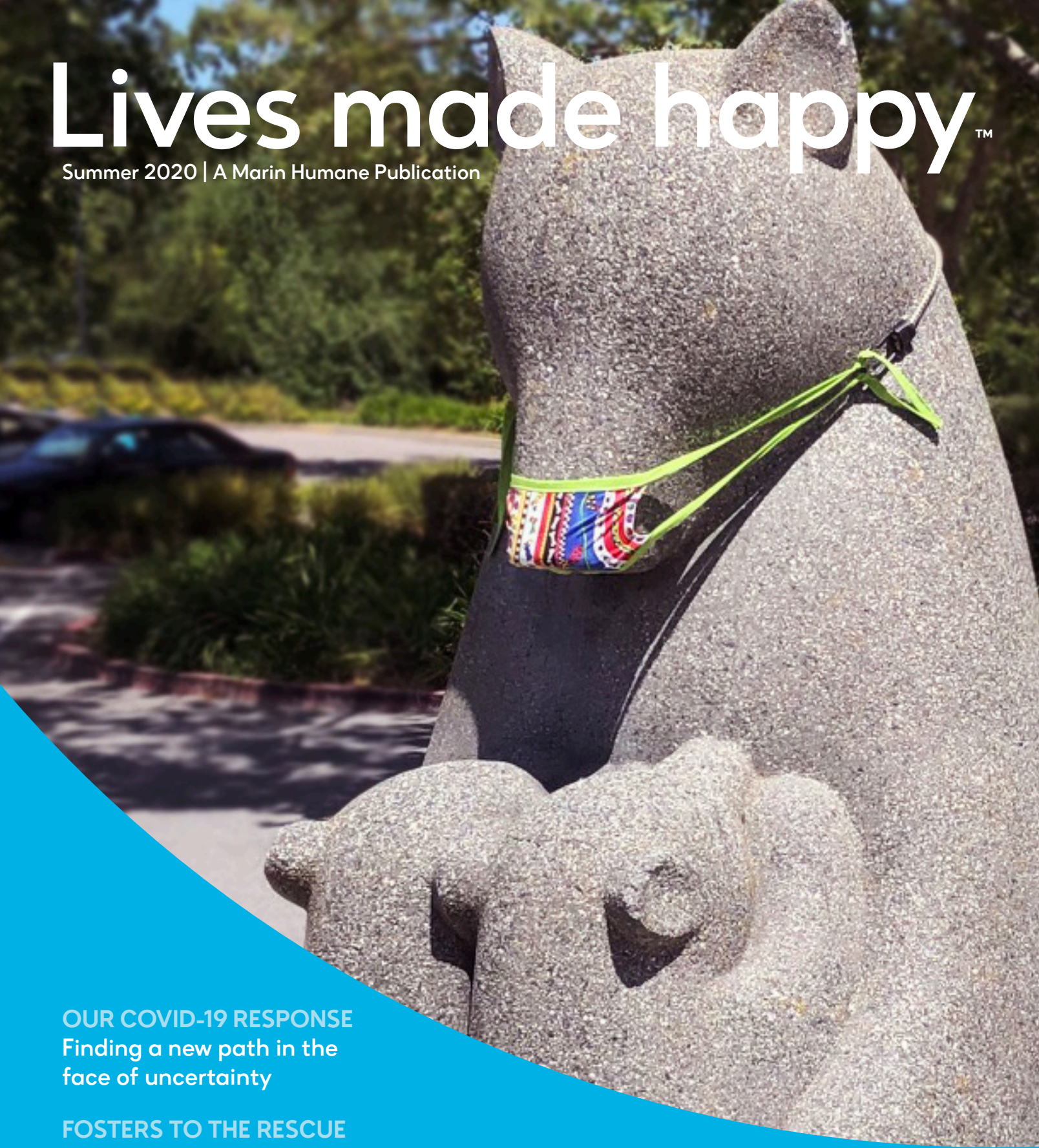
Summer 2020 | A Marin Humane Publication



OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE
Finding a new path in the face of uncertainty

FOSTERS TO THE RESCUE
Volunteer heroes welcome adoption animals during shelter-in-place

ASK THE EXPERT
Q&A with Behavior & Training

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THE McKENNEY MINUTE

Marin Humane has experience in disaster response; we've dealt with earthquakes, wildfires, and power outages and yet, COVID-19 added a new and challenging dynamic to serving the community.

When the first shelter-in-place order was announced, we moved quickly. Shelter animals were sent to the loving homes of our foster parents, as most staff and all volunteers were instructed to stay home. Operations were reduced to core services like animal emergencies but new needs emerged like a huge spike in the number of people needing pet food and supplies in the wake of job losses, and pet behavior consults for those working from home.

Two big cancellations were particularly sad for us – Woofstock and Humane Summer Camp. Both bring hundreds of new faces to our campus, in celebration and for learning. Both also represented significant revenue for the organization so their cancellations are even more acutely felt.

In the months ahead, our operations will look different. Some programs and services may be suspended or altered while others are expanded to adapt to the changing needs of people and their pets. But despite several months of significant decline in our operational revenues, we remain committed to our mission: Transforming lives through exceptional animal care, humane education, and advocacy.

We're so grateful to our supporters. Thank you for being there for us and for enabling us to be there for the animals and people of our community.

Gratefully,

Nancy McKenney, MNPL, CAWA
CEO & President

Lives made happy™

Our Mission
We transform lives through exceptional animal care, humane education, and advocacy. Every day, we inspire compassion and positive relationships between people and animals.

Marin Humane does not endorse or guarantee any products, services, or vendors mentioned in Lives made happy™.

Lives made happy™ is a bi–annual publication of Marin Humane
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Animal Emergencies
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Marin Humane responds to animal emergencies 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

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ON THE COVER The famed Bufano Bear sculpture at our main campus takes precautions for COVID-19.

COVID-19 RESPONSE AT-A-GLANCE

The pandemic affected Marin Humane like no other event before it. Within moments of the first shelter-in-place order, we sent animals to trusted foster homes, began deliveries of pet food and supplies to those who would need it most, and restructured our operations to ensure we could still care for the animals of Marin while doing our part to keep the community safe. And, in the midst of all the uncertainty, many dedicated staff members donated their paid time off to a special fund to keep their colleagues' wages as close to normal during the uncertain period.

Here's a look at our response in the first two months of the shelter-in-place order.

WHEN SOME HOARDED, OTHERS HELPED

By Carina DeVera

On March 16, the day before shelter-in-place went into effect, residents rushed to stores to buy supplies. We all saw stories about people stockpiling toilet paper and hand sanitizer. But what rarely showed up in the news, was a simultaneous display of compassion.

Almost immediately, we began receiving frantic calls from residents seeking help from our Pet Safety Net program, which provides free pet food, supplies, access to veterinary care, behavior support, and more to families facing financial hardship.

Normally, these clients would come to the shelter to pick up food and supplies, or we'd send volunteers to deliver them. But with volunteers not allowed to come to the shelter, staff delivered a month's worth of supplies to our most vulnerable clients in the Pet Care Assistance program who depend on ongoing support. Our Pet Safety Net is usually a one-time assist to get through a hard time and this need has increased tremendously. In fact, in the first four weeks, our deliveries grew by 158%. And we expect that trend to continue.

Even in this time of crisis, so many people stepped forward to help. Staff from many departments assisted with deliveries. Volunteers and community members donated funds or purchased items from our Amazon Wish List to help us replenish our depleted supplies. And generous in-kind donations from our long-time partner and sponsor Hill's Pet Nutrition allowed us to increase our impact even further.

To expand our reach and work more efficiently, we partnered with local food banks as well as the Marin City Senior Center and the county-run shelter at Motel 6. We're now working with several agencies as well as private distributors, some located in churches, mobile home parks, the Canal district, and remote places in West Marin.

Thanks to private grants as well as donations from people in our community, the pets of Marin residents will have nutritious meals and much-needed supplies during these difficult times. And not only do these deliveries provide direct relief and keep local pets fed, happy, and with their families instead of in the shelter — it also allows their guardians to remain safely at home.

While we all hope to return to our normal lives soon, one thing is already certain: Marin's most vulnerable pets will continue to need our assistance in the coming months. If you'd like to support our Pet Safety Net program, please make a donation today at marinhumane.org/safetynet.

FOSTER FAMILIES TO THE RESCUE

By Julia Lamont

When the official order to shelter-in-place was made, our first concern was for the animals. With adoptions on hold and a limited staff, how could we make sure they got the attention and care they needed? We put the call out to our foster volunteers and were awestruck by the quick and enthusiastic response from those willing to welcome animals into their homes.

Josie, who fostered a little dog named Frankie, remembers the high emotions of that day: "I was driving away from the shelter with Frankie in the backseat, thinking about how crazy life had become in an instant and how uncertain we felt about the future. Meanwhile, I thought of little Frankie, her life completely disrupted, and now, in a stranger's car, headed who-knew-where!"

Luckily, many foster families gained a sense of stability and comfort for themselves by providing the same to the animals in their care. Fosters found solace in having the set routine of regular feedings and walks, and many were able to relax despite the prevailing anxiety as they got to know their new animal friends.

All this one-on-one attention has major benefits for animals who were previously struggling in the shelter environment. Macchiato, a senior kitty with a few extra pounds, has made positive strides, thanks in large part to how much time she spent playing. Her foster parent, Belinda, reports, "She's lost a little weight and has more energy to play. When I ask, 'Do you want to play?' she nudges the fleece toy to get me to pick it up!"

Kim fostered two Chihuahua mixes named Poppy and Melvin who had recently been rescued from a hoarding situation. When Poppy and Melvin first arrived at the shelter they were shy, and struggling to eat enough food to gain some much-needed weight. Thanks to their time at Kim's home, both dogs' appetites improved, they became confident, and learned new skills like walking on a leash.

Foster families are a lifeline for so many animals in the best of times. That lifeline is even more crucial now. Thank you to all of the fabulous foster families that opened their doors and their hearts to our animals!

MARKING MILESTONES

By Julia Lamont

Anne Oliver didn't know that when she responded to a "help wanted" ad in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1990, she'd still be with the organization 30 years later. She's worn many hats during that time: Licensing Supervisor, Front Office Supervisor, Director of Customer Service, and now, Director of Volunteer Services.

Anne loves her current role, as she gets to match people with volunteer roles that are a good fit all around. "Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. They never cease to inspire and amaze me."

Her favorite aspect of her work? "It would have to be the variety of people, animals, and situations I get to work with every day. I love being an ambassador for Marin Humane and of course, I get to be around animals every day!"

With so much experience under her belt, Anne

is a source of wisdom for many. When asked for the most important lesson she's learned in her 30 years, Anne explains, "I've learned that taking time to listen to people, to understand them, is the key to beginning and deepening positive relationships built on trust."

We're immensely grateful to Anne for dedicating so many years to improving the lives of both animals and people with her positive attitude, her commitment, and her hard work.

Twenty-five years ago, John Reese began his career at Marin Humane in a pretty tough role. As Field Services Technician, his job was to remove deceased wildlife around the county. But John appreciated the entry position for allowing him to both serve his community and get to know the many neighborhoods around Marin at a time when he was new to the county.

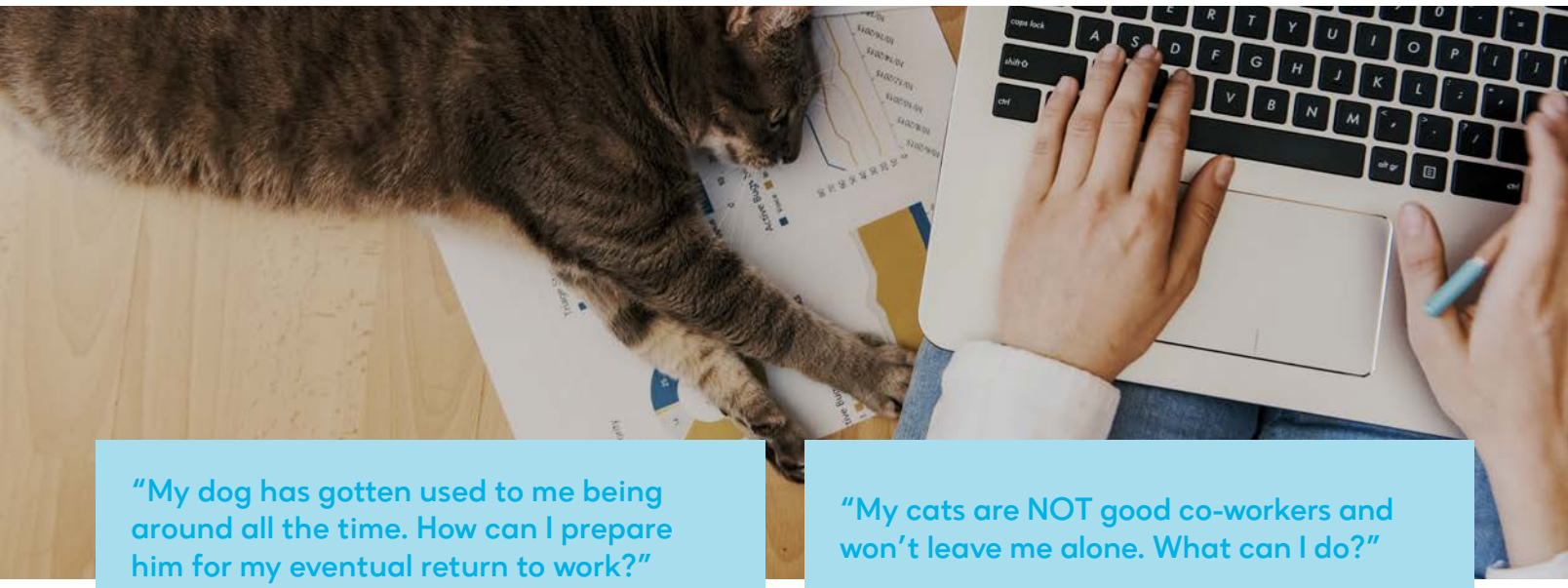
After moving on to roles in the public relations department, including director, John is now Chief Administrative Officer, where he oversees several departments. One of the bigger challenges he faces is overseeing the maintenance of the shelter's facilities. "I like taking a building that's over 50 years old and not only trying to maintain it, but improve it where we can," John says.

The sheltering world and Marin Humane has changed quite a bit over the years. One of the changes John appreciates most is how "much of our work is done out in the community now, versus at the shelter. We're not just an animal shelter that houses strays and does adoptions - we're so much more."

Thank you, John, for dedicating 25 years to helping Marin Humane evolve into the organization it is today!

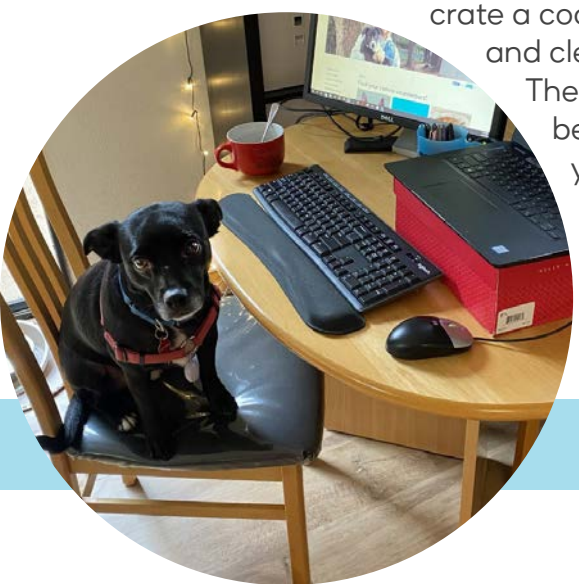
ASK THE EXPERT

Quick questions for the Behavior & Training Department about how you and your animals can adjust to life with shelter-in-place orders.



"My dog has gotten used to me being around all the time. How can I prepare him for my eventual return to work?"

The simplest, yet sometimes most difficult way to make sure your dog won't have trouble adapting to a schedule change is not to change your schedule. Awaken, feed, and exercise your dog at the same times you normally would. When you'd normally be at work, ensure your dog has his own down-time. Strengthen your dog's "alone time" skills, particularly if you have a dog who is prone to anxiety. Crate-train your dog which, done properly, is simply a cue to "chill" and take a nap. Start feeding your dog from a frozen Kong, which extends his mealtimes and provides mental and physical stimulation. Even better, feed your dog his frozen Kong in the crate — which makes the crate a cool place to be and cleanup a snap. These skills can be useful when you ease back to work.



"My cats are NOT good co-workers and won't leave me alone. What can I do?"

Stress and a change of routine not only affects us, but our pets, too. Cats are creatures of habit. Whether it's a new home, baby, or pet, or us being home 24/7, it's a change to their regular routine and they'll need help adapting.

To help your cats become better co-workers:

- Feed them, change the litter box, and play with them at the same times you did when working away from home.
- Tire them out by playing with them before you start your work day. Don't play with them at your desk or work area.
- Take into account the hours you're usually away and don't lavish attention on your cats during those hours.
- "Hunt and seek" games or food puzzles that don't directly involve your presence foster independence.
- Provide an alternative to walking across your keyboard. A shelf or desk nearby with a cozy bed will entice your cats to chill out and rest.
- If you don't have one already, consider getting a "catio." It'll provide hours of safe fun for kitties.

Find more answers at marinhumane.org/oh-behave

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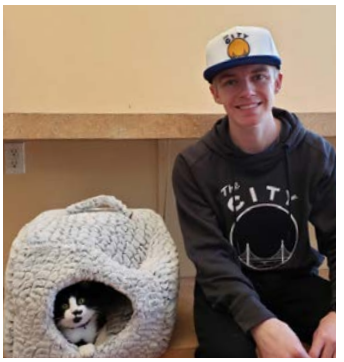

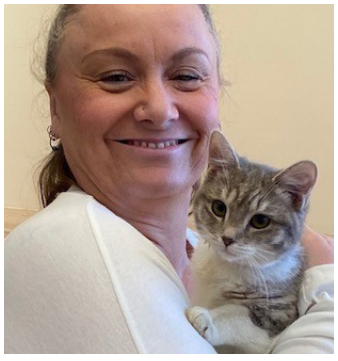

PET TAXI

HOME SWEET HOME

You can't hide the smile behind the masks in these going home photos. Here's a peek at the adoptions so far this year.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON!

Save the Date • September 12

Stay safe at home and help the animals while enjoying all the fun and excitement delivered to your door

Silent and Live Auction

•

Personal delivery of your official Marin Humane Gala Gear kit

•

All Animals Welcome - cats, dogs (even the naughty ones), chickens, bunnies, etc.!

Email gala@marinhumane.org for early-bird specials and updates

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HOW PETS HELP US COPE

By Carina DeVera

This has been a trying time for all of us. Dealing with uncertainty and worry, while also trying to come to terms with a different reality — it all seemed so overwhelming, so unbearably daunting. One morning in particular, I was worried sick and felt incredibly helpless.

Then he nudged my arm, sniffed my ear, and licked my cheek. I am, of course, talking about Simon, the little corgi mix I agreed to foster the day the shelter-in-place order went into effect. Incidentally, his world had also just been turned upside down after being left at the shelter by his lifelong family of seven years.

Simon's persistence got me out of bed that morning, into presentable clothes, onto a small, peaceful trail by a park, and into a much better state of mind. And it's not just me. In his excellent book *Being Mortal*, Atul Gawande shows that caring for another creature decreases anxiety and depression, and tends to instill us with a sense of purpose. Animals in particular tether us to grounding routines and a sense of normalcy during unsettling times. None of this is news to pet guardians, of course — our furry friends seem to have an uncanny sense of our internal lives by being carefully attuned to our emotions, and magically appearing on our laps or by our side just when we need them most.

It's no coincidence that so many people have turned to animals for reassurance and support during this crisis. At Marin Humane, we received an unprecedented amount of offers to foster a pet during the shelter-in-place — thank you! Our animal companions help us navigate uncertainty by encouraging us to focus our attention on the present moment with them, whether it's by rediscovering the simple joy of going on a walk or watching birds from a window together. The fact that these activities can also help decrease blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and triglyceride levels are just an added bonus.

At the time of writing, it's unclear how much longer the shelter-in-place order will be in effect. But until we know more, I'll take a cue from my furry and feathery friends and approach the coming weeks one day at a time, delighting in the extra hours we get to spend together, and enjoying more snacks.

TRIPLE MATCH CHALLENGE

To help us through the COVID-19 crisis, Marin Humane's Board of Directors will TRIPLE your gift through July 31 up to $35,000!
Please make a gift today to help the animals.

Visit: marinhumane.org/triple
Or send to:
Development - Triple My Gift
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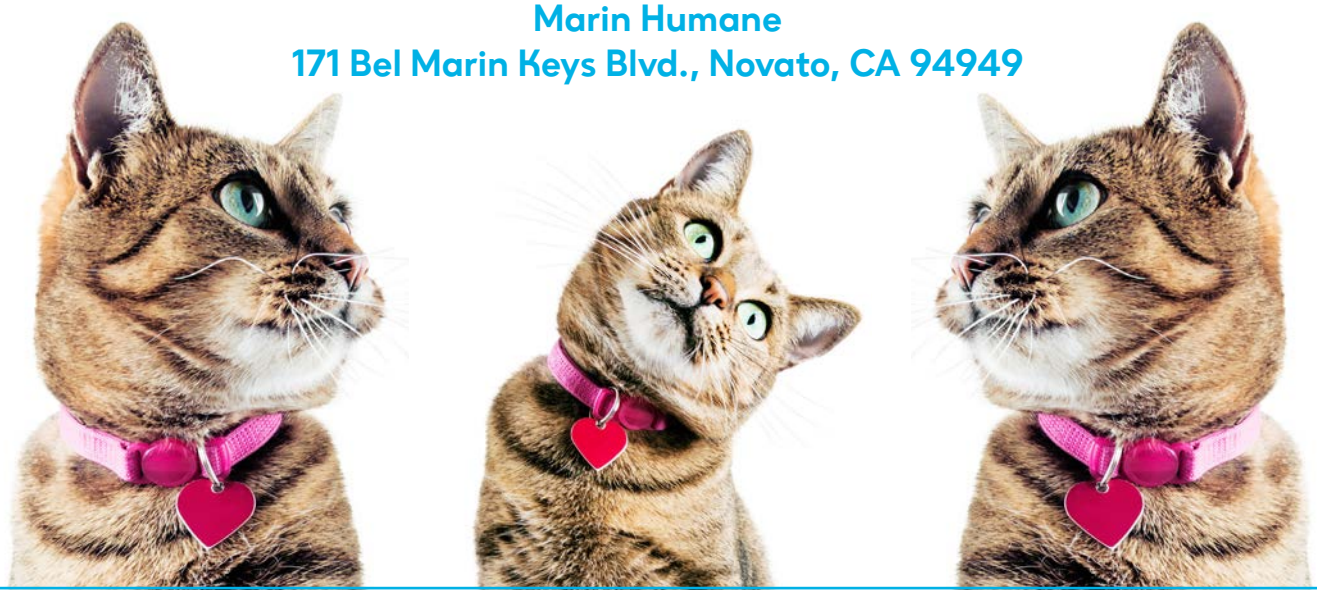

UPCOMING VIRTUAL EVENTS

We're proud to now offer many of our classes and events virtually! Please visit our website for updated listings for:

DOG TRAINING
marinhumane.org/workshops

CAT CLASSES
marinhumane.org/catclasses

HUMANE EDUCATION & MORE
marinhumane.org/events

NEW WHEELS, MORE LIVES MADE HAPPY

Last September, we asked guests at our Gala to reach into their hearts–and their wallets–to help us buy a customized vehicle to save more animals, respond to disasters, help more pet guardians, and better serve our community. We were truly overwhelmed by their generosity during the Fund-a-Need!

Our amazing new vehicle was nearly complete, but with pandemic restrictions at both ends of the delivery (Columbus, Ohio, and Novato), we had to wait just a little longer to take delivery. The good news is that it's now here!

The new vehicle has dedicated space to safely accommodate up to 24 animals and enables us to take Marin Humane on the road! We can provide a much higher level of comfort and safety for the animals, conduct adoptions, and provide a broad range of services for the community.

We look forward to sharing it with the community soon. Thank you GALA 2019 attendees and sponsors!

Meet Herc! Herc is part of Brayton Purcell's extended family. He was rescued in 2017. Herc loves hikes, trips to the beach, and to sit on the couch like a person.

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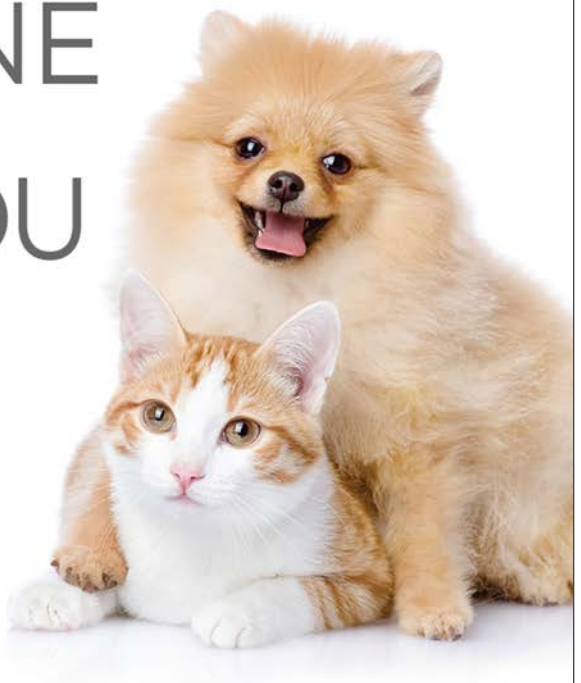

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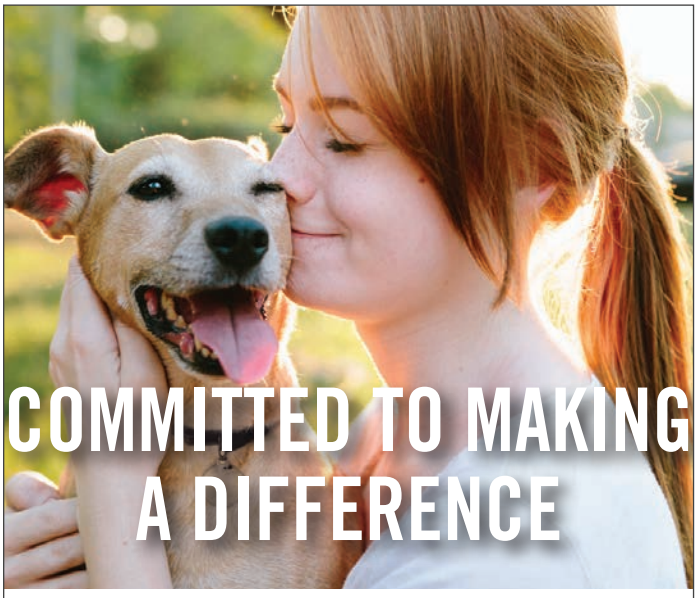

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- Dedicated Community Partnerships
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Please check our website for the most up-to-date hours for all our locations.

We're all in this together!

Your support has truly never been needed more!

Whether you're able to give $50 to keep a cat or dog in their home through our Pet Safety Net program, $100 to support the food and medicine for a shelter animal, or a gift of any size, your support will help us make sure every animal is taken care of through this crisis and beyond.

Make your gift to the animals here: marinhumane.org/COVID