



FALL 2021

SHELTER TAILS



Kiko
Adopted April 2021

Kiko's Road Home

Kid's & Pets: Making a Lasting Connection

Helping Pets and Families Stay Together

From the CEO: One Thing's For Sure

Dear Friends,

In times of uncertainty, pets are a constant. Throughout the last year and more, we as a community have been in a continual state of transition. We took school and events online, we worked from home, we wore masks... and then, we wore them again. We awoke to face each day, not knowing what new challenges would be waiting around the corner.

But one thing was certain: The dog needed to go for a walk. The cat needed to be fed and brushed. The adorable, silly, slobbery, and endlessly charming furry friends in our lives brought smiles to our faces when almost nothing else could. In these little ways, our pets have been our anchors.

At Woods Humane Society, it was no different. Through the ups and downs of the last fiscal year, homeless animals needed us to keep calm and carry on and, thanks to your unwavering support, we did.

From July 2020 through June 2021, we placed 2,352 dogs and cats in loving homes. We were pleased to see the average length of stay in our shelters decrease from more than 22 days for adult cats down to 10.5 days, and from nearly 15 days for dogs down to 12.8. With the help of our adoption support and community programs, the number of returns of adopted pets also went down by 23%.

In spite of new protocols and limited staffing, our clinics increased the number of spay and neuter surgeries performed by 335—from 5,560 to 5,895—including altering 1,344 unowned community cats through the Project MEOW fund. These were in addition to 230 other life-changing surgeries that gave suffering animals in our community a second chance at a happy life.

And, yes, every single day, we walked and played with the dogs in our care—more than 740 total. Our foster volunteers lovingly bottle fed 440 of the tiniest kittens, every few hours around the clock, so that they could grow strong enough to come to the shelter and find a home. More than 1,600 cats in all chased wand toys and curled up in the warm, soft beds we made for them.

So, although the world has not quite returned to “normal,” with your support, our dedication to the helpless dogs and cats in our community has remained steadfast. We, and the thousands of homeless animals that enter our doors each year, thank you for the generosity and compassion that have made all of this possible. One thing's for sure: We couldn't do it without you.

Sincerely,



Neil Trent
Woods Humane Society CEO



Neil and Rosie



YOU VOTED US “**BEST NON-PROFIT IN 2021**” AND WE COULDN'T BE MORE GRATEFUL!



Anaya in Oz

Anaya had escaped a nightmare. Found with a chain and padlock hanging around her neck, she was severely underweight and had recently had puppies. Luckily for this sweet, gentle soul, her life was about to change. She was transferred to Woods, where Woods Volunteer & Event Coordinator Catherine Armstrong swiftly adopted her. Over the next five years, along with toys, beach days and treats galore, Anaya got the chance to learn that people could be kind. She has become a beloved family member, an honorary Woods staff member, and a certified Canine Good Citizen. She even helps other shelter dogs gain confidence and assists Woods trainers in obedience classes.

Anaya showed just how far she has come in our recent Oz-themed There's No Place Like SLOme event in June, where she played the leading role of "Toto." This was our first-ever virtual gala, and it was a journey for all of us. Like Dorothy, we were grateful to meet so many friends that helped us to make it happen. More than 150 people registered and we raised nearly \$70,000 in one unforgettable evening somewhere over the Zoom-bow, proving that there really is no place like our SLO County pet-loving community!

With that said, we are looking forward to returning to the real world next year for our annual Tails Gala, on June 4, 2022, at Oyster Ridge at Ancient Peaks Winery. We hope to see you there!



Kiko's Road Home

Kiko, a young, gorgeous lynx-point Siamese cat, was surrendered to SLO County Animal Services earlier this year after being hit by a car and sustaining a complicated pelvic fracture. Homeless and in need of a surgery that was sure to come with a large price tag, his chances of adoption were slim, and his fate was uncertain.

Luckily for him, he caught the eye of Woods Humane Society Intake Supervisor Dani McKinsey Portman. “Right when he saw me, he was all over the cage bars,” Dani recalls. She looked into his case and found that Kiko would likely need a femoral head ostectomy (FHO). Seeing how sweet and loving Kiko was in spite of his pain, Dani knew she had to help him.

Once he was transferred to Woods, our medical team’s examination confirmed that Kiko’s injury had not healed properly. He displayed a significant lameness that would continue to impact his mobility. They scheduled him for the operation that would correct the fractures, easing the road to health and vitality.

Soon after his surgery, Kiko’s story made the local news and an outpouring of love came his way, including an adoption application from a local adopter. Samantha says she had been waiting to find another male Siamese cat to join the one her family had adopted from us. “At the opportunity to meet Kiko,” she recalls. “We were immediately in love. He was so affectionate and goofy, and I could tell a lot about him.”

In July, 5 months after Kiko was surrendered with a broken pelvis, his new family sent us an update. “It’s like he’s always lived here,” she says. “He and our other cat, Mookie, snuggle and play nonstop. Once Kiko recovered from his surgery, the kitten in him came out and he’s still so affectionate, very curious, and oh-so playful.”

She says Kiko has been a source of joy for her two young children, as well. “He lets my toddler carry him around and our older girl loves comfort snuggling with him. Also, she has a sense of pride that he stays with her. He’s brought so much love and silliness to our home.”

It’s safe to say that Kiko is “Out of the Woods” and in his true forever home. Thanks to generous donations, Woods is able to provide care for so many animals like Kiko. These dogs and cats go on to become beloved members of local families, providing the comfort and companionship that has become even more cherished in years like this one.

Kids & Pets: Making a Lasting Connection

“When the pandemic first hit, I had no idea what would become of our education programs,” recalls Woods Humane Educator Jamie Relth, whose normal workday entails teaching local children about empathy and animal care in classrooms across the county. With the help of technology, though, she found a way to reach 3,321 students over the last school year.

She was also surprised to see that the young people most passionate about pets didn’t let stay-at-home orders stop them from helping animals. Whether they found a new best friend through adoption, took virtual classes or camps with us, or conducted community service projects from home, many local animal-loving youth found comfort, companionship and connection by turning to Woods. “It was really inspiring to see their enthusiasm—even if from afar.”

These are just a handful of the outstanding young people who touched the hearts of homeless dogs and cats—and us humans, too—in recent months.



Six-year-old Virginia is holding a picture of the pet she adopted from Woods. Lillie, a senior cat who was behind when he was adopted, is now Lillie’s parents’ sweet kitty Rex send love to all the sweet pets waiting for their forever homes.



Two young sisters are helping Woods Humane Society by making colorful hand-knitted items for the animals. Their mom says they’ll be getting their own pets soon.

hit by a car and suffering a
option were jeopardized

he, he started rubbing up
(FHO) to repair his hip.

emonstrated lingering
use his pain, and set him on

tion from his soon-to-be
the year before. "I jumped
all the staff really liked him."

re," Samantha says. "He
is a lovely little maniac:

girl [3, pictured] finds such
family. We feel so lucky!"

provide shelter and medical
fort and companionship



“He lets my
toddler carry
him around
and our older
girl finds
such comfort
snuggling
with him.”

tual Critter Camper Lillie sent us this
pet portrait she painted of Crystal, a
came to Woods after being left
er original owners moved away.
said, "Lillie and our foster/adoptive
lots of love to Crystal and the other
ing to be adopted!"



Fourth-grade student Gracie has become one of
our youngest sustaining donors over the last year.
She makes and sells organic dog treats to raise
money and twice has come in with a hefty envelope
of her proceeds for Woods animals. "Thank you for
letting me donate," she wrote in a letter to us. "I
wanted to let you know I love to donate to you guys."

ers, Chloe and Zoe, chose to meet
community service requirements by
. After more than 30 hours of work,
off an impressive heap of brightly-
nade toys and snuffle mats for the
to enjoy. "We love making them,"
of the family projects. "I expect
g more over the next few years!"



Holliday visited us after holding a lemonade stand
in Pismo to raise money for Woods. She proudly
brought in \$345 in a Ziplock baggie a couple of
months ago, announcing, "I love animals!! I have a
dog named Lola!" When Woods education team
coincidentally showed up at her day camp the
following week, she was proud to stand out as an
example of compassion for her peers.

out of the woods



"Cookie Dough is adjusting very well and loving her new home. She has been loving sleeping and purring at the foot of our bed and waking us up in the morning for lots more snuggles. She is very affectionate and does not seem to mind our 18-month-old at all. The first night she spent here, right before bed, she went right up to him and flopped onto his lap. We helped him to pet her gently and she just laid there as happy as can be and all went very well between the two. Cookie Dough is loved and being treasured here."



"We love Nala! She was very shy for the first few days, especially around my husband. Two weeks in, she is confident and comfy in her new home. She loves soccer balls and belly rubs, does great in the car and on walks, and doesn't wake us up too early most days. Training is going well so far, thanks to online Woods University. Thanks for your support and for all you do!"



"Stache has been renamed Oliver by my 6-year-old granddaughter, 'because he is black like an olive.' Oliver is the friendliest cat I have ever known. He follows me from room to room, begs for pets, plays vigorously with toys and cat wands, and I have started training him with a vest and leash, which he tolerates well. We have been on two short strolls. I am so glad I got this friendly fellow. As a senior on limited income, I am devoting my latest stimulus check to buying Oliver stuff, like a real cat tower instead of the cardboard boxes."



"Lady is such a sweet, smart, and snuggly dog. She is unbelievably tolerant of our three-year-old antagonizing her all day long, loves other dogs, and just wants to be with us and snuggle. She's a big snuggle bug and we love her."



"It is a sight to behold to watch Tommy display his silly love to the kids. He was immediately accepted into the kids' hearts with the first lick. My little girl and him have developed the closest bond of the family; they're inseparable. He also has become the office mascot, parading himself around to announce his arrival and giving everyone preemptive pig snorts. We appreciate the time and love you gave Tommy. It was an easy transition."



BRIDGING THE GAP

helping pets stay with their people

Adopting a pet is just the beginning of a journey that can be filled with thrilling adventures, surprising obstacles and daunting challenges for pet owners. Whether with a free bag of dog food or free training assistance, Woods offers a number of programs to help pet owners bridge the gaps along the way so that their pets stay out of the shelter and with the family they love.

BASHER'S BOOST Basher didn't need a new owner; he just needed food. This little dog stood by his mom's side through an illness that kept her from working and that caused her to become homeless. For a time, they even lived together in her car. They now have housing, but with only a limited disability income, his owner has been a grateful participant in our Community Pet Pantry program that helps her provide healthy food for her best friend. During a challenging and unpredictable year, Woods Community Engagement Manager Robin Coleman made it a priority to ensure that pets like Basher had access to essentials. With the help of donations from the community and supporters like Lemos, the Community Pet Pantry now helps numerous partners such as Pets of the Homeless, Feline Network, Meade Canine Rescue, and more to provide more than 1,000 pounds of donated food and supplies per month to families in need.

TIA'S TRAINING TIPS Cathy was thrilled with her recent adoption of Tia, but needed assistance with a few unforeseen behavioral and medical issues. She was glad to learn that Woods includes 30 days of Met Life pet health insurance with all adoptions to help in the case of unexpected veterinary expenses, and Woods University Behavior and Training team offers free training support for new adopters. "One of your staff members was kind enough to meet with me to offer me some advice and training, for which I am grateful," Cathy says. She added that she'd also made use of the pet insurance. "I have taken Tia to my vet several times already, to get some lab work done and several vaccinations. So far, everything has checked out and she is a healthy, two-year-old girl."

HODOR'S HOME When Good Samaritans found Hodor, they assumed he was a homeless cat. Luckily, they decided to help him by bringing him to our clinic for a low-cost neuter and Rabies vaccination. Once he arrived, we discovered that not only was he already neutered, but he also already had a home. The microchip he received when he was adopted from us in 2019 enabled us to reunite this cat with his family, who lived three miles from where he was found and clear on the other side of Highway 101. The American Humane Association estimates that more than 10 million dogs and cats like Hodor become lost in the U.S. every year, but as Woods Veterinary Services Manager Alessandra Belloumini says, "Microchips are MAGIC!" Woods implants them in all of its animals and offers them at low cost to the public. In the last fiscal year, we chipped more than 1,200 animals.

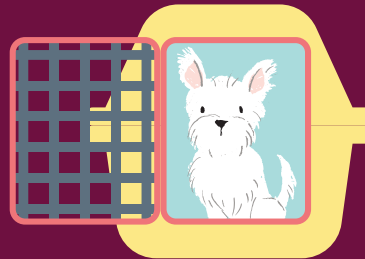
5 Tips to Help Dogs During COVID Transitions

Over the past year, COVID restrictions have kept many families home with their pets, and dogs have become accustomed to that. As in-person work and school schedules resume, these five tips can help pets (and their humans) make a smooth transition.



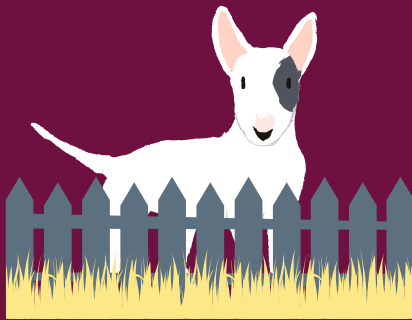
Keep a Routine

Create a consistent daily schedule for meals, walks and play time. Stick to your schedule whether working remotely or heading in to the office.



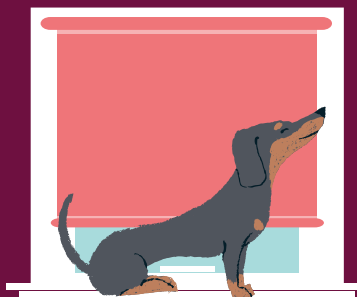
Incorporate the Crate

Give meals and bones exclusively in the crate, leaving the door open for your dog to go in and out. Eventually, it will become their favorite place to go.



Increase Independence

Build up your dog's tolerance for being alone by putting them in their crate, the backyard, or another room while you shower or eat lunch.



Curb Their Enthusiasm

If your dog tends to bark at passersby, reduce their access by blocking window views with clinging privacy film, screens or shades.



Find Ease with Brain Teasers

Utilize puzzle feeders and Kongs, and add challenges to the morning walk, to help tire out your dog's mind so they feel ready to nap while you're away.

For more tips, follow @WoodsHumaneSociety on Instagram or Facebook, watch Woods Training Tips videos on YouTube, or contact the Woods Humane Society Training Department at 805.543.9316 ext. 24 or at trainer@woodshumanesociety.org.

SAVE THE DATE FOR TAILS 2022

We hope that you will dress in your dapper best and join us on June 4, 2022 for Roaring '20s – A Tails Gala and an unforgettable evening under the stars.



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Humane
Society**

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Our Mission

To serve, protect and shelter homeless companion animals; To place animals in humane environments; To promote responsible pet ownership, provide humane education and reduce pet overpopulation; To celebrate the human-animal bond.

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