



# Help, They Brought a Dog!

How San Diego Service Providers Keep Pets and People Together





# Lauren Rogers

## Community Initiatives Manager

California native

Began career in animal welfare in 2012

Currently manage intake diversion programs and  
partnerships with human service organizations



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# San Diego Humane Society

Founded in 1880

Private shelter with animal services contracts for 13 cities in the county

5 campuses

Care for 40,000+ animals annually (domestic and wildlife)

Robust community programming



## Staying at Zero

SDHS has maintained zero euthanasia of healthy and treatable animals since 2002





# San Diego County

4,500 square miles, 3.3 million population

High cost of living

10,264 people experiencing homelessness according to  
2023 PIT Count

City of San Diego contracted homeless shelters are pet  
friendly



## Sunshine Tax

U.S. News and World Report ranked San  
Diego the most expensive city to live in



# Partnerships 101

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**Recognizing that we are serving the same population and that we can accomplish a lot more together vs. working in silos.**

01

## **Establish a relationship**

Network to find a contact, attend meetings or events with other service providers

02

## **Define objectives**

What are we each hoping to get out of this and how can we help each other get there? Consider an MOU.

03

## **Continuous evaluation**

Ongoing communication about how things are going and any new needs.





# Partnership Ideas

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01

## **Best Practices**

Share best practices for working with each agency's population.

02

## **Programs and Services**

What is the agency not currently able to provide that would be helpful?

03

## **Funding Opportunities**

Identify potential funders for independent or collaborative programming.

04

## **Spread the Word!**

Sharing your partnership success may lead to new funding sources, partnerships, volunteers, etc.







# Programs and Services

Pet food and supplies

Microchipping and ID tags

Veterinary care clinic

Grooming

Behavior and training support

Pet boarding or foster care options

Youth programs

Speaking opportunities

Landlord engagement strategies

Flyers or other educational materials







TOGETHER WE CAN CREATE A  
MORE HUMANE SAN DIEGO







Weekly Community Conversations

**Help, They Brought a Dog!**

**How San Diego Service  
Providers Keep Pets and  
People Together**



Father  
Joe's  
Villages

**MARCH**  
**2024**



# ■ Jesse Casement, Division Director of Client Services

- Started with Father Joe's Villages in 2010
- Nearly 20 years of experience in Human Services
- Education in Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation
- History of working in Humane Society and Veterinary Office settings
- Passionate about keeping pets with their people





# ■ Our Mission

## Mission

Prevent and end homelessness,  
one life at a time.

## CREED

### COMPASSION

Concern for others and a desire to assist.

### RESPECT

An act of giving particular attention or special regard.

### EMPATHY

Understanding, an awareness of and sensitivity to the  
feelings of others.

### EMPOWERMENT

Helping others to help themselves.

### DIGNITY

Counting all people worthy of our esteem.



”  
*“These are neighbors not strangers. They are somebody’s son,  
daughter. They’re just in trouble but there’s a way to help.”*

**Father Joe Carroll**  
President Emeritus (1941 - 2021)





# ■ Pillars of Care



## Meeting Basic Needs

Housing  
Meals  
Day Center



## Investing in Children

Therapeutic Childcare  
Services for Families



## Making Health a Priority

Medical Care  
Dental Care  
Behavioral Health Care



## Strengthening Self-Sufficiency

Employment  
Education  
Vocational Training  
Chaplaincy





# ■ Meeting Basic Needs

## THE STREETS ARE NOT A HOME

At least 7,600 people are experiencing homelessness every night in San Diego. Of those, nearly 4,000 men, women and children lie down to sleep each night on sidewalks, in doorways, canyons and alleys. They live without regular access to food or water, and no place to use the bathroom, wash their hands, bathe or do laundry.

People who are homeless are at greater risk of serious illness, mental health issues, substance abuse and violence.

**3-4x**

more likely to  
die prematurely  
than those who  
are housed.

**3-6x**

higher rate  
of illness than  
their housed  
peers.

**10x**

more likely to  
be the victim  
of a violent  
crime.

**2023 (JAN-DEC) TOTAL UNDUPLICATED SERVED: 12,952**





# Shelter

- Shelter operated in 4 separate buildings
  - Each shelter design is slightly different
  - Mix of single rooms, shared rooms, and congregate
- 1,048 total shelter beds
  - 246 beds dedicated to families with children
  - Inclement Weather Shelter is in addition to the 1,048 beds
- Various program models
  - Emergency shelter, transitional housing, recuperative care, Inclement Weather
  - 100% are pet-friendly

**2023 (JAN-DEC)**

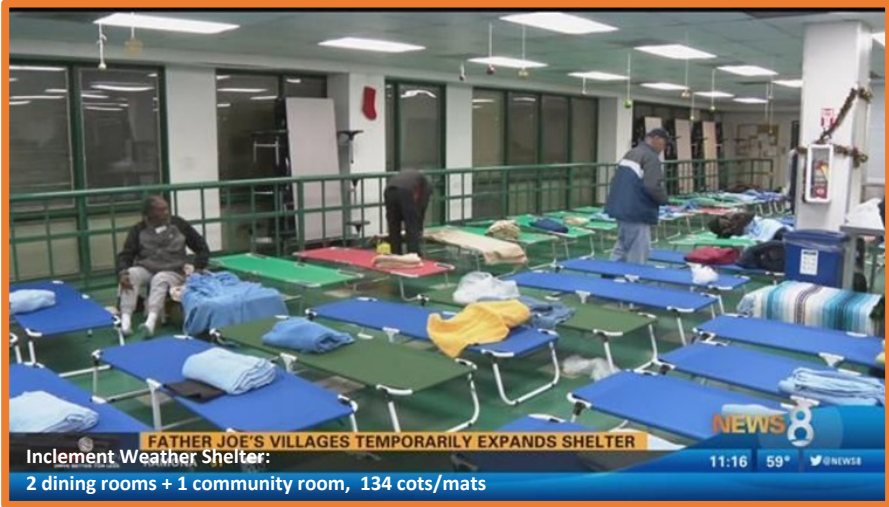
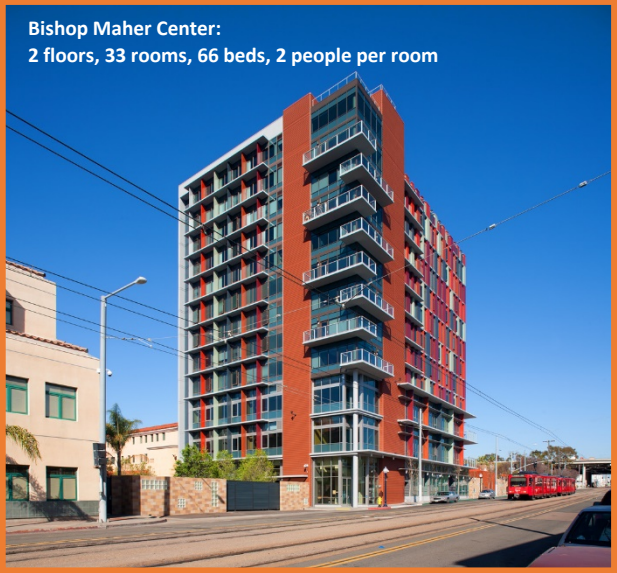
**366,805**

SHELTER BED NIGHTS  
(INCLUDING INCLEMENT  
WEATHER SHELTER)





# Shelter





# ■ Co-Sheltering

- Co-Sheltering is the practice of providing shelter to people with their pet(s).
- Co-Sheltering can look different depending on the design of the facility.
- FJV started Co-Sheltering in 2020 in our existing shelter facilities.
- Every FJV shelter bed is pet-friendly.
- Pets may have hair, fur, feathers, fins, shells, scales, etc. We welcome them all.



# ■ Why We Co-Shelter

- Removes a barrier to entry into shelter.
  - The three Ps ...people, property, and pets!
- Pets are family.
- Pets save lives.





# ■ Pets vs. Assistance Animals

1. At FJV, pets are limited to cats, dogs and other domestic companion animals that may be kept legally as pets in San Diego.
2. Wild animals, farm animals, and venomous animals are not allowed as pets.
3. **Pets must be in possession of the client at program intake.** New pets or pets joining the household after intake to the residential program are not allowed without prior approval from the Director of Residential Services.
4. Due to space restrictions, pets are currently limited to 10% of households in each program so that room is left for assistive animals.
5. **Pets are restricted to pathways of travel (e.g. Courtyards, hallways, lobbies, etc.), outdoor areas, and the client's room/bed area.**

1. Assistance animals are emotional support animals or service animals.
2. Assistance animals are a reasonable accommodation. Wild and venomous animals are not allowed, but a domestic-bred farm animal may be allowed if the space can reasonably accommodate it.
3. **Assistance animals can join the household at any time.**
4. There is no limit to the number of assistance animals being served in a particular program as long as they can be reasonably accommodated in the space.
5. **Assistance animals are allowed in all common areas (e.g. Dining hall, classrooms, etc.) as an accommodation for persons with a disability.**



# ■ Animals Served

- To-Date (10/2010-03/2024):
  - At least 694 animals (\*)
  - At least 527 households (\*)
- Current:
  - 30 animals
  - 30 households



\* It took some time to develop consistent data entry on animal enrollment





# ■ Sheltering Animals



374 of our beds are in a setting like this...in a room with a door and, up to a couple of roommates.



# ■ Sheltering Animals

674 of our beds are in a setting like this...in an open-air dorm, on bunk beds, with hundreds of roommates.



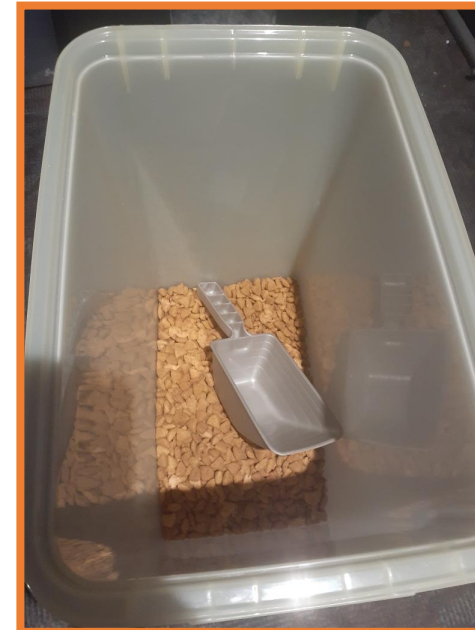


# ■ Sheltering Animals



# ■ Resources for Animals in Shelter

- Food and water
- Bowls, water bottles, and food storage tubs
- Litter boxes, litter, scoops, poop bags, etc.
- Appropriate crates and containment (tanks, cages, etc.)
- Leashes, collars, and harnesses
- When funds allow:
  - Special diet
  - Toys and treats
  - Flea preventative
  - Behavior classes and veterinary care





# ■ Animal-Related Facility Updates



# ■ Animal-Oriented Services and Partnerships

- **We LOVE our Animal Service Partners!**
  - On-site preventative **veterinary care**
  - On-site spay and neuter services
  - Low-cost veterinary services in the community when clients exit shelter
  - **Community pantries**
  - **Training** swaps
  - **Expertise**, creativity, and knowledge of resources when we're in a pinch (emergency boarding, behavior issues, etc.)
- **We try to make having a pet in shelter as normal and easy as possible**
  - Animals share **access to most areas of the campus**
  - **Quick and easy residential intake** process when an animal joins the household
  - Client **advocacy** and landlord education
  - **Preparation** for being a good neighbor in future housing (pet training, reminders of expectations around animal care, creating emergency plans, exit planning, etc.)
- **We have amazing Grants and Development teams that support our programmatic needs by looking for funding for co-sheltering activities and we have a Leadership team that listens and supports innovation.**





# ■ Lessons Learned Along the Way

- We **did not see a drastic increase of animals** served when we opened to pets.
- An **animal care agreement was necessary** to keep expectations clear.
- As we have in place for children in our families programs, we **needed an emergency plan for animals** living on-site. We now collect that information at program intake and it is filed in our database for all staff to access in case of an emergency.
- There are **never enough pet relief areas/materials, plastic tubs for food storage, or crates**. We order in bulk so we don't run out and we allow clients to take them with them so they have the items they need when the exit to their next destination.
- **Small adjustments to space can make a big difference** (dining room, adjustments to bed areas, etc.).
- **Education is key!**
  - Client: budgeting, responsible ownership in current and future housing, potential for impact on housing and employment, etc.
  - Staff: signs and symptoms of disease/abuse, checking personal biases regarding species and breed, working with people and their pets, etc.
  - Community: benefit of housing tenants with pets, positive impact of animals on people – including those experiencing homelessness.
- **Empowered clients will find solutions** regarding their pet's care when they are offsite – let them.
- **Co-sheltering is possible in any physical space - and it's completely worth it.**



**THANK  
YOU!**

HOPE  
LIVES  
HERE



Father  
Joe's  
Villages