

SACRAMENTO SPCA

# Heartline

SACRAMENTO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS | [WWW.SSPCA.ORG](http://WWW.SSPCA.ORG) | WINTER 2015



## INSIDE

Celebrating Senior Dogs

17 Cats and Counting

Tippy's Tale

Gifts That Keep Giving

# Save the date and be COOL!

Doggy Dash 2016 is moving to April to beat the HEAT.

So mark your calendar, leash up your pup and join us at William Land Park on April 9 for the SPCA Doggy Dash and Bark at the Park Festival.

Registration opening soon! For more information, call (916) 504-2802 or email [events@sspca.org](mailto:events@sspca.org).







Melinda Wong visited the Sacramento SPCA in December 2012 and fell in love with a tiny purring ball of orange stripes. "Nemo is one of the most affectionate cats I know, and an expert cuddler. He loves getting belly rubs, stealing socks, hugging shoes, and playing fetch. In other words, he thinks he's a dog."

**THE SACRAMENTO SPCA** fosters a loving and compassionate community for animals and people by providing assistance, creating lifelong relationships and saving lives.

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Lesley Kirrene  
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**Design**

Marianne Skoczek  
*Animal Related Communications*

**Cover Photo**

Bill Santos/Santos Photography  
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**MEET OUR STAFF ...**

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Rick Johnson | (916) 504-2806  
**Chief Financial Officer**  
Michael Oei | (916) 504-2801  
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**Volunteer Program Manager**  
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**Humane Education Manager**  
Dee Dee Drake | (916) 504-2849  
**Chief of Shelter Medicine**  
Laurie Siperstein-Cook, DVM  
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**Chief of Surgery**  
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Michael West | (916) 442-8118  
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**ON THE COVER ...**

**THE BEST IS YET TO BE** | Eleven-and-a-half-year-old Sulu flashes his best happy face. This gentleman is one of a growing number of senior animals adopted from the Sacramento SPCA and going on to live long, happy lives with their new families. At the SPCA, we know the power of seniors! *See story on page 3.*

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ROGER ELEAKIS

## DIRECTIONS

### The Golden Years

#### "SHE LOOKED AT ME."

These four simple words began a decade-long, loving relationship with our golden retriever, Sydney. She was politely prancing alongside a SPCA volunteer as I walked to my car one fall afternoon in 2006. I looked into her warm brown eyes and that was all it took. I emailed my wife with the news that there was another female in my life.

At the time, we had one dog, Oliver, an older and somewhat grumpy soul. We were pretty convinced we would always be a one-dog family, as Oliver was not one to put out the welcome mat for other canines.

However, we decided it was worth a try. For several months, our home was a gated community. Every doorway had a baby gate while the dogs became familiar with each other at a safe distance. We walked miles around the neighborhood with both dogs, hoping to solidify our family pack. Gradually, the dogs became accustomed to each other and life was good.

It quickly became apparent to us that Sydney had an uncanny knack for knowing Oliver's mood. Sometimes she would eagerly entice him to play with her favorite toy, while other times she would give him a wide berth, glancing nervously in his direction. I found this intriguing.

Over the years, Sydney has been a wonderful companion. She loves everyone, never complains, and greets me every morning and night with an enormous amount of smiling enthusiasm. **A typical golden, Sydney has never met a tennis ball she doesn't like, although she does show a preference for the squeaky versions.**

Now ten years old, our brisk walks have become slow strolls. Sydney displays selective hearing when she is so inclined (although she can always hear the opening of the treat jar!). Life seems to be about the smells—she can stand in one spot motionless for what seems like hours, her nose investigating the who/what/when message that is hidden from view.

These days, Sydney shares her bed with a feisty three-year-old terrier named Jackson. They are great buddies, romping around the house entertaining us with their canine antics. When the time came to add another dog to our family, we let Sydney help pick the new arrival. She did a great job winning over Oliver's approval, and she did not disappoint us with her selection of Jackson.

All our dogs have been shelter dogs. I truly believe they come equipped with loving spirits and a great enthusiasm for all life has to offer. Their needs are few compared to complicated humans, but their devotion and love are boundless. Who could ask for more?

**Rick Johnson**

Chief Executive Officer





Nine-year-old Bahati (meaning Blessing) had been at our shelter for more than three months. He recently went home with Roy and his daughter Nancy—and his beautiful portrait by Nathan, an SPCA employee!

# GROW OLD WITH ME

...by Dee Dee Drake  
Humane Education Manager

It's a warm Saturday morning at the Sacramento SPCA, and a small crowd of people has formed in front of Gracie's Adoption Center. They mill around on the memorial brick walkway, adoption applications in hand. An irresistibly adorable litter of Labrador mix

puppies will be available once the shelter opens, and strangers smile at one another and discuss which of the five pups they most hope to bring home today. One woman has printed photos from the SPCA's website, and debates with her husband whether a male or female would suit them best.

The front doors are unlocked promptly at 11 a.m., and the crowd makes a beeline directly for the puppy room. Adoptions Supervisor Ashley Elamrani watches them pass by. "Everybody loves the puppies,"

*Continued on next page* ►►

"Grow old with me. The best is yet to be."—ROBERT BROWNING | 3

After the loss of her beloved St. Bernard mix, Bruno, in January, Elizabeth Delgado sought to adopt a senior dog. "I definitely wanted an older dog. The seniors still have so much more to give. These years are when they need you most, and I don't think they ask for too much: someplace cool in the summer, a warm place in winter, and a comfortable bed.



BILL SANTOS

she says. "I mean, I get that. Puppies are cute. But I wish more people would take a look at the adult and senior dogs. They have so much to offer. Getting them placed is easier than it used to be, though."

SPCA Chief Executive Officer Rick Johnson agrees. "Years ago the likelihood of senior dogs being able to find a new home was slim," he says. "Now they're more likely to find a home sooner rather than later." The shelter's adoptable pets, including seniors, are featured weekly on numerous "Pet of the Week" segments on local news channels, as well as various online news and magazine sites. The SPCA's popular Facebook page often spotlights senior animals as well. "We have numerous resources

that we didn't have in years past," says Johnson. "It's nice to see how many people have come to realize that taking an older dog into their home can be a terrific addition."

One of those "senior dog converts" is Sacramento resident Elizabeth Delgado, a state worker who does portrait and event photography on the side. After the loss of her beloved St. Bernard mix, Bruno, in January, Delgado specifically sought to adopt a senior dog. "I definitely wanted an older dog," she says. "Some people surrender them to the shelter when their health and everything starts to fail, and I thought, 'I can deal with that.' The seniors still have so much more to give. These years are when they need you most, and I don't think they ask for too much:

someplace cool in the summer, a warm place in winter, and a comfortable bed. Of course, there might be medical issues, but that just comes with it."

The SPCA's Chief of Shelter Medicine, Dr. Laurie Siperstein-Cook, cautions that medical expenses are part and parcel of having a senior animal, but notes that youngsters can incur large bills as well. "Puppies and young dogs get into absolutely everything, which can be expensive. Plus, any dog you get will hopefully be a senior someday," she says. "So you will encounter the costs with any pet, whether it's now or eight or 10 years from now."

Siperstein-Cook says that good communication is key to effectively managing a senior animal's health



care. “It’s important to have a careful dialogue with your vet about what you are able to do, and what your family really needs,” she says. “People aren’t always good advocates for their own pets, and some vets don’t offer options. The lengths you are willing to go to need to be discussed in detail with your vet and you can decide together on the best course of action. You can make choices that don’t necessarily include doing every possible medical procedure, while still offering good quality care to a senior pet.”

Delgado’s quest to adopt a senior began and ended online. “I saw Sulu on his foster mom’s Facebook page. She had written, ‘He can’t see, can’t hear, has a heart murmur, and his teeth are pretty messed up.’ I posted back, ‘Hands off, ladies, he’s all mine!’” Delgado laughs. The SPCA provided a thorough dental procedure prior to Sulu’s adoption. **“I can’t believe how inexpensive it was to adopt this dog who’d had his teeth cleaned, was neutered, had had his behavior evaluated, and was just**

**ready to go,”** says Delgado. “I totally lucked out.”

Sulu, a dapper, cream-colored Pekingese mix, settled into Delgado’s home immediately. “You’d never know that he was eleven and a half,” she says. “He has an almost puppy energy sometimes. He lives for his daily walks, and he’s just excited to be alive. He’s very independent and doesn’t need to be coddled, carried or pampered. Don’t get me wrong—he enjoys it, but he doesn’t demand it the way a younger dog probably would.” Sulu came to Delgado housetrained and familiar with house rules. “When I’m on the computer, he knows his spot is right by my foot, and he just lies down there,” says Delgado. “You can’t teach a puppy that!”

Maturity and manners are among the chief benefits of adopting a senior dog, according to Val Masters, SPCA Director of Community Services (which includes the Behavior and Training Department). “There’s certainly an advantage to not having to deal with any of the puppy stuff,” Masters says. “You

have a dog that’s past the chewing stage, is usually housetrained, and tends to require less exercise than a younger dog. Seniors are calmer, and they often come to you with some training already in place. They can be a terrific pet from the moment you bring them home.”

There seems to be only one real drawback to taking in a senior animal. “Your time together is going to be shorter, it’s true,” says Johnson. “But you will receive so much from that relationship that it becomes a very compelling reason to adopt an older dog.”

Just ask Elizabeth Delgado. “Sulu is the perfect ambassador for shelter dogs everywhere,” she says. “When we go on walks here in Curtis Park, people stop us and want to pet him, and he’s just a gentleman. I wanted a dog that would make me laugh and smile every day, and I definitely got that. When I tell people how old Sulu is, they’re shocked. Together we’re showing people that there’s a lot of life left in these senior dogs.” 🐾

**Senior dogs are past the chewing stage, usually housetrained, and tend to be calmer and need less exercise than a younger dog. They often have some training and can be a terrific pet from day one.**

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## HAVE YOU LOST A FRIEND?

Saying goodbye to a loved one is hard. Finding a permanent resting place is easy.

Sacramento SPCA's pet columbarium provides interment options for pets weighing up to 150 lbs.

Call (916) 504-2805 or visit [sspc.org/petcolumbarium](http://sspc.org/petcolumbarium) for pricing and information.



**DONATE** your used car, truck, boat or RV to the Sacramento SPCA. You'll get a nice tax write-off **AND** you'll feel great knowing that your donation is helping animals in need.

For more information, call (877) 707.7722.

Our local partners at America's Car Donation Center will make the process quick and simple...And the animals will benefit from your generous donation.

## GIVE THE GIFT THAT GETS EVERYONE GOING!





# 17 KITTENS



## AND COUNTING

...by Dee Dee Drake  
Humane Education Manager

RECEIVING MORE THAN a dozen kittens over the course of a single day isn't unusual at the Sacramento SPCA. Receiving more than a dozen at once, however, is another thing entirely, but that's exactly what happened one day in late August.

"A man who runs a strip mall said that kittens get dumped there pretty regularly," says SPCA Foster Care Coordinator and Social Media Assistant Sarah Varanini. "There were two boxes left outside one of the stores with 17 kittens inside, so he brought them to us."

The kittens, all about a month old, weighed less than a pound each. "It was impossible to tell if they all came from the same litter or were just born around the same time," says Varanini. "There were eight orange ones that looked alike, and nine brown tabbies that looked similar. We separated them by sex, and it happened that all the boys were orange and all the girls were the brown tigers."

Because the kittens were underage, they required immediate foster care. (By law, kittens must be eight weeks old and weigh at least two pounds to be adopted.) The youngsters first received vaccinations, leukemia testing, deworming and flea treatment, and then "it took five foster homes to absorb them," Varanini recalls. "As always, our volunteers answered the call."

Summer is the shelter's busiest foster season, and

because the season was near its end, supplies were depleted. "We posted photos of the kitties on our Facebook page, along with a request for donated food and supplies," says Varanini. "The response was overwhelming."

Within a half hour, "people were stopping in with cases of food," she says. "People who live out of state or out of town bought from our Amazon wish list, and crates of food and supplies began arriving within a couple days. Two weeks later, we were still getting deliveries of Friskies and Fancy Feast. We got additional items, like formula, litterboxes and toys, which will all be put to good use. In fact, we have enough now to help us start next year's kitten season as well."

The kittens, most of whom were available for adoption by late September, are growing fat and happy thanks to the compassion and generosity of our online community. "It's wonderful that people across the country care about 17 tiny kittens dropped off here in a cardboard box," says Varanini.

**The Sacramento SPCA needs foster homes for all types of animals. Learn more at [sspca.org/foster](http://sspca.org/foster).**



"A meow massages the heart."—STUART McMILLAN | 7

# THAT KEEP ON GIVING

...by Lesley Kirrene  
Communications Director

Tired of giving tacky ties and other token gifts? Are you looking for unique holiday gift ideas that give back? Well, look no further. The Sacramento SPCA has a gaggle of great gift ideas that are sure to please friends and family...and the animals win too!

**Greetings!** Purchase a package of greeting cards (blank inside) featuring whimsical original artwork by local artist, Kat Moon. All animals depicted were adopted from the

Sacramento SPCA, and proceeds from the sale of the cards benefit the SPCA. Get a package of five, limited-edition cards and envelopes for just \$8 at the SPCA adoption center.

**Deck 'em out in SPCA logo-wear** and help those you love make a fashion statement! Choose from a variety of unique SPCA shirts, sweatshirts and more. Shop online at [sspc.org](http://sspc.org) or shop in person at the SPCA adoption center during regular shelter hours.

**Honor a loved one** with a custom tile, brick, personalized card or e-card. Design (or let friends and family design) a tile to be displayed at the SPCA adoption center. Honor or memorialize a beloved pet. Use your creativity to tell a friend how much you care. Or send your holiday message in a card or e-card, featuring one of our many custom designs. For information, visit [sspc.org/give/honor-and-memorial-gifts](http://sspc.org/give/honor-and-memorial-gifts) or call (916) 504-2843.



**Shop our boutique thrift store** for gently used bargains and a variety of holiday décor! Visit the Sacramento SPCA Thrift Store at 1517 E Street in Midtown Sacramento and you'll find holiday decorations, clothing, and plenty of great gifts for everyone on your list. Call (916) 442-8118 or [sspca.org/give/thrift-store](https://www.sspca.org/give/thrift-store) for hours and information.

**Become a Constant Companion.** For as little as \$5 per month, you (or a family member or a friend) can become a Constant Companion to the animals at the Sacramento SPCA. Monthly donations help to make our work possible. In 2015, the SPCA will find homes for thousands of animals. We will spay/neuter more than 18,000 animals in our clinic. We will provide assistance to senior citizens and their pets, and we will educate children—the next generation of humane leaders and pet caregivers. Constant Companions help us to help those most in need. To make a monthly donation, visit [sspc.org](http://sspc.org) under the Give tab. Click on Become a Member and opt to simply repeat your gift. For more information, call (916) 504-2803.

**Give the gift of membership!** For a minimum donation of \$20, you can give someone a Sacramento SPCA membership. Members receive a Sacramento SPCA decal, a one-year subscription to our *Heartline* newsletter, enrollment in our online community, and the satisfaction of knowing that they are helping to change lives for the better. For membership information, visit [sspc.org](http://sspc.org) under the Give tab and click Become a Member, or call (916) 504-2803.

For learn more about these and other gift ideas that help the animals, visit [sspca.org](http://sspca.org) or call (916) 504-2803. Happy holidays to you, your family and friends!



## ONE-OF-A-KIND GIFTS FOR ONE-OF-A-KIND FRIENDS

**B**ruce is a busy guy. After being adopted from the Sacramento SPCA two years ago, the gregarious tabby went right to work as Chief Moral Officer for Graphics and More and Made on Terra. Both brands are part of a growing e-commerce company located in the Sacramento area. Graphics and More and Made on Terra customize just about anything, and donate a portion of the proceeds to the Sacramento SPCA. Unique, affordable gift items include customized key chains, stickers, cell phone and tablet cases, automotive accessories, jewelry, badge holders and so much more!

### And Bruce is in charge of it all.

Self-assured, unflappable and downright cool, Bruce keeps a close eye on the daily operations and makes sure that staff members stay relaxed, despite the business's busy pace.

When asked about Bruce's role with the company, Graphics and More co-founder David Nielsen says, "Well, nobody else is probably aware of it, but aside from being our Chief Moral Officer and official greeter, Bruce is our very own employee Excalibur test. I've always watched the way potential new hires respond to him, and especially how he responds to them. If you don't pass the Bruce test, you don't work for us. He's the true power behind the throne...and he knows it."

### The gift that gives again

Years ago when Graphics and More co-founders Dave Nielsen and Heather Dykes were just getting the business started, they dreamed of how they would run the company once they had "made it." They knew that they wanted to give back to their community in some way. Thanks to Bruce and his purrsuasive purrsonality, Nielsen and Dykes decided to help homeless animals by donating a portion of the company's proceeds to Bruce's alma mater, the Sacramento SPCA.

"Bruce approves of our decision," says Nielsen, the cat's primary caregiver. "And our staff really gets behind the concept of helping out locally as well."

So, when you purchase any number of unique—even animal-themed—gift items from Graphics and More and Made on Terra this holiday season, you are helping animals of the SPCA at the same time.

Graphics and More and Made on Terra are offering a special discount code for SPCA supporters and friends. When ordering from either site, just enter the code SSPCA20 and receive a 20 percent discount on your order. Don't worry: A portion of each purchase will still be donated to the Sacramento SPCA. To see what Graphics and More has to offer, visit [graphicsandmore.com](http://graphicsandmore.com), and to order from Made on Terra, visit [madeonterra.com](http://madeonterra.com). 🐾

**Bruce would approve of your shopping decision, and friends and family are sure to love their personalized gifts.**

**THINKING  
OF YOU**

A donation has been made in your name to Sacramento SPCA.



BRUCE, adopted 2013



"The love we give away is the only love we keep."—ELBERT HUBBARD | 9



# TIPPY'S TALE

...by Dee Dee Drake  
Humane Education Manager

**T**HE FIVE-POUND tan dog cuddled in the woman's arms appears no different from a thousand other small dogs at first glance. True, she's certainly friendlier than most, her long straight tail vibrating like a hummingbird whenever she makes eye contact with a stranger. It is only on closer inspection that what sets this little dog apart becomes apparent.

It's probably her missing front legs. But then again, it might be her long pink tongue snaking into that stranger's nostril.

Meet Tippy, a nine-month-old Chihuahua mix who arrived at the Sacramento SPCA early this summer with a big personality

and only two limbs. Part of a litter bred by a local family who then banished her to the backyard to fend for herself with the other dogs, Tippy was surrendered to the shelter by an adult child of the household who didn't agree with this treatment of the special-needs dog.

"Apparently the younger kids in the home weren't so nice to her," says Lydia Caronna-Craig, the SPCA's spay clinic manager and Tippy's foster mom (who is also a veterinary technician). "They thought it was funny to push over the dog that couldn't get back up." Caronna-Craig, who counts a three-legged Staffordshire Terrier



as part of her own animal family, volunteered to take Tippy in until the little dog could be thoroughly evaluated and a treatment plan implemented.

Initially, Tippy could only balance on her hind legs for a short time, and moved around mostly in a crawling position. “She wasn’t able to do a lot of hopping at first,” says Caronna-Craig. “But we started physical therapy right away, trying to make it more like play than anything else. We wanted to help her with her core strength and balancing. We’d help her sit up, with a hand behind her for support, and hold a treat or toy in front of her. She thought it was great fun.”

As Caronna-Craig continued to work with Tippy, the Chihuahua’s strength and endurance increased. “She can get around now like a kangaroo, hopping on two legs,” says Caronna-Craig. “But only for a little while, because that kind of effort tires her out. We always had our eyes on getting her strong enough for a cart.”

SPCA Chief of Shelter Medicine Dr. Laurie Siperstein-Cook has been involved in Tippy’s case from day one. “We’ll never be entirely sure what caused Tippy to not have her front legs,” she says. “We don’t have a complete medical history. Based on our examination, she could have been born this way, but it was more likely the result of a birth trauma or accident. She’s a happy little thing, though—she’s never known any different.”

Siperstein-Cook agreed that a canine wheelchair would be the best option for Tippy to have the mobility and speed of a regular dog. “There are dogs that learn to walk on two legs and do well,” she says, “but it’s always limiting. A wheelchair will allow her to go faster and not risk falling over, and she’ll very possibly have a fuller life.”

Obtaining a wheelchair for Tippy wasn’t simple. Carts, which must be customized to a dog’s exact measurements, are extremely costly—and while the SPCA receives donations specifically for medical cases through our Paws for Health fund, other animals with more emergent needs were prioritized. “Tippy is happy and not in pain, which put her a little lower down on the list,” says Siperstein-Cook.

**Tippy’s tale had been chronicled faithfully on the SPCA’s Facebook page, where it found the attention of precisely the right person: Mick Balaban of Printrbot, a local designer and manufacturer of 3D printers.** (A 3D printer “prints” an object in three dimensions from a digital file, building it layer by layer from plastic, nylon or dozens of other media.)

Balaban immediately realized that he could create custom wheels for Tippy at very little cost. “Initially I wanted to help because I love dogs, and this was a dog that came into this world under unfortunate circumstances,” says Balaban. “It also became an opportunity to use a novel technology to improve the quality of life of this adorable puppy.”

Caronna-Craig brought Tippy to Printrbot’s Lincoln headquarters to be measured for her wheelchair. “I was overwhelmed by how



warm and friendly and excited about the project they were,” she says. “Everyone from the back came up front and wanted to see Tippy and pet her and take pictures with her. There were three tech guys on the floor with her playing and making sure that things fit properly. Their ‘Plastic with a Purpose’ slogan fits them perfectly.”

“I’m always amazed at the resources in our community that pull together to make a better life for dogs like Tippy,” says Sacramento SPCA CEO Rick Johnson. “Although I’m not surprised that they wanted to help Tippy. She’s absolutely charming.”

Once Tippy’s new wheels were ready to roll, Caronna-Craig’s physical therapy sessions with Tippy intensified. “First I’d put my hand under her and we’d walk, and she learned to walk with her back feet,” she says. “Then we moved up to using the cart. We’re doing it in short spurts, about 10 minutes at a time a few times a day. A lot of the learning process is getting her comfortable with having the cart put on and taken off.”

Thanks to all of Caronna-Craig’s hard work, Tippy was recently adopted. She is continuing to perfect her wheelchair skills, and is enjoying life with her new “mom” and two Chihuahua “sisters.” There are even plans to take Tippy to senior care centers and hospitals so that she can continue to spread her love and positive energy around.

“Nothing can keep her down,” says Caronna-Craig. “That little dog has so much joy that it just flows out of her. She loves new people, she’s gregarious, she’s outgoing. She never acts fearful, ever. She’s got such a great spirit, she’s full of energy, and she has the longest tongue in the history of Chihuahuas.” 🐾

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**Contribute to the SPCA’s Paws for Health fund and help animals with special medical needs. Please visit [sspca.org](http://sspca.org) or call (916) 504-2803.**

# THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

## Gifts received June–August 2015

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#### "Sky"

Kathleen G. Line

#### Erik Daniels & Sara Shelley

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### IN MEMORY OF

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Kristine Refsell

#### "Shiloh"

Kristine Refsell

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### Steve Woodward

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Memorial and honorarium contributions totaling \$250 or more are listed in *Heartline*. Individual names reflect individual gifts.

DUKE, age 10



## eBAY...HERE WE COME!

The Sacramento SPCA Thrift Store is seeking high-end items such as vintage & antique collectibles, electronics, cameras, toys, clothing, gold and silver that we will not only sell in our second-hand Midtown boutique, but also on eBay where we make the most of your donations!

Donate your gently used items to the SPCA Thrift Store and help us to help animals in need. Volunteers are also needed. **Call or visit us today.**

**1517 E Street  
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(916) 442-8118**







MANNIE, age 7+



BUDDY, age 14



SOL, age 6



ZACKERY, age 13



TOBY, age 9



SHELBY, age 7



COSETTE, age 12



BUBBLES, age 13



TOUPEE, age 6-1/2



NICKY, age 13



CASSIE, age 13



PEDRO (center),  
age 11



FELIX, age 10 & CEILYA, age 9



COZMO, age 15+

**HEARTBEATS** celebrates Sacramento SPCA alumni—this issue, with a focus on seniors. To have your companion considered for a 2016 issue, email a high-resolution, close-up photo of your SPCA alumni to [mktgcomm@sspc.org](mailto:mktgcomm@sspc.org). Please include his/her name, age and adoption date. You can even include a little blurb about how much you love your pet! *We'll feature the top photos based on quality in Heartbeats.*



HOOLIGAN, age 12





SACRAMENTO SOCIETY FOR THE  
PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

6201 Florin Perkins Road  
Sacramento, CA 95828  
(916) 383-PETS | [www.sspca.org](http://www.sspca.org)

**Shelter Hours**

Wed–Sun, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.  
Closed Mon–Tues



**Our 2015 Yappy Hours were a great success.** Thank you to all who attended, hosted and donated. Watch the Sacramento SPCA Facebook page in for announcements of our 2016 Yappy Hour events. You and your pooch won't want to miss out on the fun!

**DOGS + BEER + FRIENDS =  
YAPPY HOUR WITH THE SPCA!**

