

# CREATING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES

By Carole Hyde

Daisy the dog, abandoned in a local shelter at two years of age, was scrawny, unhealthy, and terrified at the time of her adoption but eventually blossomed into a trusting and happy dog. Daisy provided many years of grateful devotion to her human companion. When Daisy reached the end of her life, her owner presented a generous memorial gift to the Palo Alto Humane Society (PAHS). With this gift, PAHS created the *Daisy Fund*, which provides assistance for animals whose owners cannot afford their pets' urgent veterinary care. In this way, sick or injured animals will not have to be surrendered to animal shelters or euthanized for lack of means. Assistance with managing crisis veterinary costs is one of the unique ways in which Palo Alto Humane Society helps people and animals in the communities of the mid-Peninsula.

Humane societies and SPCAs are associated with the sheltering of animals who are homeless, cast off, and sometimes traumatized by abuse. This vitally important role provides these animals a haven, sometimes for just a short while, but an opportunity nevertheless to have shelter and humane treatment, and a chance at finding a permanent home.



Photo by Cassie Boris

The PET Help program: a dog owner helped with crisis veterinary care.

There are also humane societies who contribute to the wellbeing of animals in non-traditional yet equally crucial ways. Palo Alto Humane Society is one of these organizations. It provides for the care and safety of companion animals before sheltering is required and is often the first-line of care for animals in distress. Financial support for veterinary and spay-neuter services, community education, and advocacy are offered by the Palo Alto Humane Society in a diversity of programs. Through PAHS' *emergency veterinary program*, lives are saved when sick or injured pets do not have to be surrendered to a shelter due to lack of funds for veterinary care. The *spay-neuter program* assures that kittens, bunnies, and puppies are not born in excess of the homes available to care for them. Through advocacy for good public policy and legislation, PAHS provides a strong statewide voice for animals. PAHS' extensive education program helps communities understand the unique responsibility needed for the wellbeing of their animal friends.

Education is a crucial path to creating a more compassionate society, and PAHS dedicates itself to teaching children from an early age about their responsibilities to animals and the living world.

PAHS' acclaimed humane education K-5 teaching program and Telly Award-winning children's film *It's a Dog's Day* help teachers fulfill their California state mandate to teach about kindness to animals. PAHS' imaginative bilingual curriculum



Photo by Jill Thompson

PAHS' Kiddies 2 Kitties animal shelter reading program.

will reach thousands of children in California schools through lessons aligned with science, language arts, and social science. PAHS' community outreach includes *Kiddies 2 Kitties*, *Adoptables Art*, and *Critter Club*.

PAHS has also successfully spearheaded Assembly Concurrent Resolution 144. With Assembly Member Kevin Mullin (San Mateo) as its sponsor, ACR 144 highlights the California Code of Education and its requirement for character development in children through the teaching of humane education.

This year PAHS celebrates nearly 110 years of dedicated work throughout the mid-Peninsula. Founded in 1908 with the help of luminaries such as Mrs. Jane Stanford and the first president of Stanford University, David Starr Jordan, PAHS created the shelter for Palo Alto and surrounding communities. Turning over the shelter management to the City of Palo Alto in 1970, PAHS has since continued its mission to improve the wellbeing of animals through advocacy, intervention, and education.

At PAHS we aim to achieve a loving home for every companion animal, such as the one Daisy found, and a caring world for all beings. Please join us in our ongoing campaign, *Creating Compassionate Communities*. If you would like to aid in ensuring wide distribution of the PAHS Humane Education Program in schools or donate funds for our many animal welfare programs, please contact us to see how you can help. [www.paloaltohumane.org](http://www.paloaltohumane.org).

Carole Hyde is Executive Director of Palo Alto Humane Society, a nonprofit 501(c)3 serving the communities of the mid-Peninsula since 1908. ■



PAHS Critter Club at Beechwood School.