

The Ask Report



The Ask Foundation

April 2011
Volume 1, Issue 1

On the Origins of ASK

This revolutionary social media age has heightened our awareness of the enormity of the animal welfare challenges which we face in our country and beyond our borders. The surge in human pet owner populations has and will require magnified efforts in reducing pet overpopulation and decreasing pet homelessness and abuse.

With this new clarity about the situation, the trend of the future will be collaboration between government run shelters and non profits. Considering the wide scope of the challenges it's apparent that no one entity can be successful in this endeavor without the assistance of the other. We see this happening in San Bernardino with the formation of HEAL which assists in providing for the pets of the SB city shelter. And, we see it in Riverside with our own ASK Foundation which assists the Western Riverside County Shelter in providing for the shelter

pets through fund raisers and community outreach programs.

ASK was formed in 2009 with the sole intention of providing much needed supplies and volunteer relief to the shelter which relies primarily on the county budget. In times such as these when city and counties are eliminating programs to make up for lost tax revenues non profits such as ASK are truly a saving grace.

Ask was organized by a small group of conscientious and concerned Southern California residents. Thomas Miller, Wally Baker, former Riverside council woman Laura Densmore and Dr. Marshall Scott were instrumental in getting ASK on its feet and spear heading fund raising efforts which provided much needed financial assistance and volunteer support for the shelter. We commend them for their commitment and vision.

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Our Board of Directors

Our board is comprised of old and new members, all with distinctly different professional and animal welfare backgrounds. This makes for a well rounded group and a rich environment for informed discussions on how to best serve the Western Riverside County Shelter. Several on the board are entrepreneurs who bring an understanding of the mutual benefit of collaboration between business and non profits. And one third of our board has had experience

working in the public sector in public safety, education and animal welfare. The diversity of age and experience within our board is where our strength lies.

- President: Wally Baker
- Secretary: Barbara Davis
- Treasurer: Tom Miller
- Director : Carolyn Badger
- Director: Diane Falconer
- Director: Marti Michaels
- Director: Robbie Maxwell
- Director: Dr. Scott



Our Board
Pictured Left to Right
Barbara, Tom, Robbie, Diane, Wally, Marti, Carolyn
Front Row: Apollo

RECENT EVENTS

Spay & Neuter Program

Pictured:
Union Bank Branch Managers
Lydia Mendoza (Riverside) and
Vicki Gomez (Glen Avon)
standing with two Spay and
Neuter Voucher Recipients
and their pets Dozier and
Princess



This winter our foundation received a generous donation of \$5000 dollars from Union Bank. Two thousand has been designated toward fulfilling specific needs of the shelter animals and three thousand was used March 11th to provide free spay and neuter surgeries for 33 pets of low income residents of Riverside County. Each pet of voucher recipients received a free vaccination and microchip with their surgery. Operations were performed at the Western Riverside County Shelter clinic. This was a significant help to many when you

consider the average cost for private practice vet spay or neuter surgeries can range between \$200 and \$400.

Pets of low income families typically have the highest risk of being turned in for a myriad of reasons. If they are altered this risk decreases and conversely increases their chances of adoption should they ever be relinquished. We are deeply grateful to Union Bank for recognizing the needs of many of our pet owners and for choosing to designate part of their community service funds toward helping the Western Riverside County

Shelter. Their contribution has helped several well intentioned low income pet owners provide for their pets and has made a significant dent in the pet over population crisis which we face in the Inland Empire. It affirms our belief that the local Riverside business community cares about people and their animals. We look forward to making more miracles happen with continued collaborative efforts between local businesses and ASK. Together we can help pet owners and save lives!

How these operations helped

“We look forward to making more miracles happen with continued collaborative efforts between businesses and ASK.”

The stories each voucher recipient had to tell about their pets and how this voucher award was helpful to them is certainly newsworthy. I was most impressed by the number of pet owners who had rescued these animals from tragic fates of abandonment and abuse. All of the recipients qualified as low income earners. Some were elderly on a fixed income; others had fallen on hard times due to disabilities or the weakened economy. Yet they selflessly adopted these

animals which undoubtedly meant another mouth to feed and more responsibility. However all agreed the love they received in return was worth it and each owner was equally devoted to their pet. One story which represents the benevolence of some of the recipients was that of Margaret who after a year of witnessing the neglect of her neighbor’s poodle got up the nerve to ask if she might adopt him. Margaret lives in low income housing and has a family to look after. She

could not bare to see the poor poodle which had hair growing over his eyes left alone in the cold. The other story is of Bob, a metal smith worker. Along the chain link fence of his work place homeless dogs often gather. Bob, on a limited income as a result of a disability developed a relationship with one of the dogs and has since rehabilitated her and given her a safe home. There is a saying that “kindness begets kindness”. This is proof.

Robbie Maxwell

Upcoming Events: Park and Bark & ART for the Animals

This year we are combining our two biggest fund raisers and adoption events. Our annual **Park and Bark** and **Art for the Animals** will take place on the same day Saturday **May 14th**.

Our **Park and Bark** event will feature vintage automobiles and several raffle opportunities. The *Inland Empire Classic Mustang* club has generously offered to organize the car show event for us. They are still accepting vintage car entrants. For an application you can go to our website at theaskfoundation.org. All entrants will have an opportunity to nominate other entrants for special trophy awards. We are bringing in



the 60's band *Back Pages* this year to play for the crowds and food will be on hand to purchase. There will also be several auto vendors. This fun event will run from 11-2 pm.

Right next to the auto show running from 11-5pm will be our annual **Art for the Animals** event. Art for the Animals is an art fair where professional and hobby artists can sell and display their art and donate one piece to be auctioned. It is also a great way to include children of all ages who will be able to submit their artwork to be judged and auctioned. The theme this year for Children's art is "**Peace Love and Pets**". Children may express their ideas in art, video, stories and poetry. To obtain an entry form and for more information please visit www.rcdas.org and click on events. You may also submit questions to Candace McGrew at cmcgrew@rivcocha.org. This is a lively and colorful event which the Riverside community looks forward to each year. Please help us spread the word for in addition to being a fundraising event it is a great way to introduce the public to the shelter and increase adoptions.



Critter Kiddz Summer Camp: Come Explore With Us!

Ask in conjunction with the Department of Animal Services is hosting it's first ever Summer Kid's Camp. This is a wonderful opportunity for kids of all age groups to explore their natural environment, learn about the insect and animal kingdom and pick up valuable pet care taking skills which will enable them to be capable and responsible pet owners.

Introducing **Critter Kiddz Camp!** Come and bring your kids down to the Western Riverside Animal

Shelter this summer for Critter Kiddz Camp! During each week long camp session, children will have exciting opportunities to participate in animal related activities. Each week is themed. Week one will explore the amazing animal world with "The Animals Around Us". Kids will be able to interact with a variety of interesting critters from dogs, cats, rabbits, reptiles and more. Week two is 'Animal Detectives'. Children will uncover the

mysteries of the animal world, investigate careers with animals and discover how working animals help us every day. Special guest speakers, activities, crafts and animal interaction will engage youth in how to be safe around animals, proper pet care, wildlife, conservation and more in a fun learning environment. Come join the fun! To register online go to our website after May 18th www.theaskfoundation.org For other inquiries contact Kim Mcwhorter at kmcwhort@ricochoa.org or call (951) 358-7042.

Interview with Peter Marsh -Attorney and Advocate for Subsidized Low Cost Spay and Neuter or Low Income Earners

1.) Peter you were instrumental in leading the path toward government subsidized spay and neuter for low income individuals of your state of New Hampshire. Please explain how you and others determined that this was one of the most effective ways to reduce pet overpopulation.

It began when several of us went to a conference in Washington, D.C. about pet overpopulation in 1991. One of the speakers, Dr. Arthur Baeder, told about a publicly-funded low-income spay/neuter program in New Jersey that seemed promising. After we returned to New Hampshire, another member of Solutions to Overpopulation of Pets (STOP), Barbara Carr, began asking people who brought litters of kittens to her shelter a few questions, including their household income. She found that more than half of the kittens turned in to the shelter came from poverty-stricken households even though only 12% of the families in the county had poverty-level incomes. All of this convinced us that we could greatly reduce shelter intake rates if we could find a way to make pet sterilization as affordable and accessible for indigent caretakers as it was for everyone else.

2.) Can you tell us how long it took before your state noticed a dramatic decrease in the number of shelter intakes after this legislation was passed?

After the program started in 1994, shelter intakes throughout the state began a steep drop. In 1995 alone, statewide shelter intakes dropped by 30%. That year, every one of the eight open admission shelters in the state saw a drop in euthanasias of between 15% and 58% compared to the year before. By 2000, the statewide shelter euthanasia rate had dropped by more than 75%.

3.)What is it about low income earners which make them a high risk group for

contributing to the pet overpopulation challenge?

Intact pets are much more likely to end up in shelters than those that have been sterilized and low-income caretakers usually have a much harder time getting their pets sterilized. This is true not only in New Hampshire--as Barbara Carr discovered--but throughout the country. For instance, a 2007 national survey found that only about half (50.4%) of all the cats living in households with annual incomes of less than \$35,000 were sterilized compared to more than 90% of the cats living in households with higher incomes.

4.) Where does the money come from to pay for the subsidized surgeries?

Funding for New Hampshire's publicly-funded spay/neuter program comes from a \$2 companion animal population control fee collected with dog license fees.

5.) Now you are well familiar with the demographics of California as a result of your years of research on pet overpopulation. Comparing New Hampshire to California is like comparing apples to oranges. What potential road blocks might we face if we were to try to institute a similar program? And how might we overcome them?

California legislators have established some of the most progressive shelter overpopulation laws in the country, like the Vincent Law which requires public and private shelters in most counties to make sure that cats and dogs have been sterilized before their placement in a new home. That law made a huge difference. For instance, in the first five years after it was passed, intakes at shelters in Riverside County that provided animal control services dropped by 23.5%.

Perhaps the best way to approach such an ambitious project would be to secure funding for a pilot program in a single county and use the success there as a springboard for a statewide legislative initiative.

6.) What are your plans for the future?

It's only a matter of time before the killing of healthy shelter cats and dogs will be a thing of the past everywhere in the country. It's inevitable. After all, we've reduced the shelter euthanasia rate by more than 75% over the past 30 years with poorly-funded, trial-and-error programs.

We can speed up the eradication of shelter overpopulation by spending more of our money on programs that are better-informed. I hope to help with this through writing projects like a manual that was published last year titled: *Replacing Myth With Math: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Eradicate Shelter Overpopulation in the United States* (available online at no cost at <http://shelteroverpopulation.org>) and another writing project now in the process of being published.

For more information on New Hampshire's subsidized Spay and Neuter Program go to <http://www.aspcapro.org/stop.php>

"California legislators have established some of the most progressive shelter overpopulation laws in the country.."

Three things every dog needs to Know

Most folks are surprised to learn that more than half the dogs surrendered to shelters wind up there for behavior problems that could be easily corrected with just a little training! This sad state of affairs could be turned around if every dog's owner took a little time to teach their dog just 3 simple things:

1. Where to go to the bathroom

Most dogs are pretty fastidious and can learn house manners quickly, if the human has a good plan and communicates clearly where the proper toileting area is. During the training period, untrained dogs should be confined to a small space or leashed to a responsible human when inside, so that accidents can't happen. Periodically bring the dog to the correct toileting place and plan to wait at least 5 minutes for the dog to figure out why you're there. If the dog pees or poops in the correct place, reward with a tasty treat immediately. For more complete information, don't forget to stop by the shelter for a helpful handout on house training!

2. Coming when called ("Recall")

Many dogs are impounded when they are picked up in the field as "strays", after having gotten loose and running off. Some dogs automatically return when you call them, but no dog is born knowing what "come!" means. When training "come", make sure to reward a speedy return with a tasty treat, and never, ever punish the dog or do something unpleasant (like a bath or a toenail trim!) when you call the dog to come to you

3. How to walk politely on leash

Most people adopt dogs so they can do things with them, and one of the most popular activities people choose to do with their dogs is go for a walk. But if the dog is unruly or pulls on leash, the walks are not pleasant and probably will stop before long. . Teaching your dog to walk on leash is a lot easier than most people think. Most folks try to wrestle with the dog or yank on the leash to get things under control, but that typically doesn't work very well, and can make things worse.

For most dogs, you can learn all you need to know to help your dog be a successful family member in one short 5-week class. Did you know that every dog who's adopted from the Riverside shelter gets a scholarship to a complete dog-training program? These classes are provided free-of-charge through DePaw University. Adopt your new best friend from our shelter and we'll help you both get the best possible start!

Barbara Davis, CPDT-KA, CDBC
BADDogsInc LLC
Corona, CA
IAABC #134, APDT #65050
www.baddogsinc.com

Have a question to ask Barbara?
Please submit to newsletter editor
Robbie Maxwell at
animalangels07@hotmail.com

Regular help is also available every Thursday at the Western Riverside County Shelter from 4-6PM in Training Center A. Dog trainers from DePaw University are available to answer your questions and give you the help you need to get things back on track. Best of all, this help is available free! No appointment is necessary, so just come on down; dogs are welcome to come too, as long as they don't behave aggressively.



On Going Projects

The Ask Website: www.theaskfoundation.org

The Ask Foundation has a website which we encourage members and non members to visit regularly in order to find out about up coming and on going events for ASK and the shelter. We also have a donation page where one can make donations to the foundation online. The website address is www.theaskfoundation.org We hope to grow our website in the future to include links which are helpful to pet owners and the animal welfare community. We are open to suggestions about content on our site or tips on how we might improve the site. Please e-mail your comments to TomMiller@theaskfoundation.org ASK phone 951-777-5341

Cell Phone Drive

We have an ongoing cell phone drive where patrons of the shelter can drop their old or broken cell phones off at our drop Box in the main lobby of the Western Riverside County Animal Shelter. We recycle these phones with an organization and receive money in return for our foundation. It's a win win for the environment and the animals.

The ASK Foundation Newsletter

We are excited to bring you this first issue of our newsletter. It is a perk of a membership with our foundation. It will not be just any ordinary newsletter but we hope to deliver an informative newsletter that gives you a window into the events at the shelter. For each of our letters we will offer helpful tips for pet owners and a feature article where we interview an animal welfare celebrity from anywhere in the United States. We are open to feedback and suggestions for stories. Please e-mail your comments to our newsletter editor Robbie Maxwell at animalangels07@hotmail.com

Heroic Stories

At the Shelter

The following stories are examples of the heroism of the Western Riverside County shelter which inspire our enthusiasm to support their efforts to save animals. Being that they are a county shelter they do not discriminate among the types of animals they will accept. They often take in injured and sick animals and they come to the aid of animals in desperate need of medical attention or officer protection.

Our hearts go out to the shelter staff and animal control officers who often come across some fairly "hairy" scenes where animals are on the verge of death. This month of April happens to be Shelter Staff Appreciation Month and so we dedicate this first newsletter to the shelter employees who every day must keep a stiff upper lip as they

manage the often chaotic animal control challenges we face in our county. The following are just two of hundreds of incidences where the Department of Animal Services has been instrumental in saving lives

" When officer Gary Pahls pulled up to the cat's location he immediately knew that a rescue attempt would require CHP' s assistance"

In late January Riverside animal control officers made a heart breaking discovery when they arrived on the scene at a washer dryer facility where a pregnant cat had been wrapped in duct and left in a clothes dryer to die. Amazingly she was found just in time and survived the ordeal and was able to give birth in a safe foster home of a former animal control officer. Two and a half weeks later the prayers of the entire shelter staff was answered when on Valentines day February 14th a boy and his father instantly fell in love with Snuggles and determined that that they would

open their heart and doors to her. James Farnsworth and his nine year old son Christopher officially rescued Snuggles on February 14th and gave all of us a very special Valentine's Day treat.

Now here is a story that will take your breath away. On March 23rd somehow a one year old black cat ended up on a tall freeway ramp over hwy 60 in the Mira Loma area. She sought out a safe place upon a concrete barrier over looking Hwy 60 more than 200 feet below.

When Animal Control Officer Gary Pahls pulled up to the cat's location he immediately knew that a rescue attempt would require CHP assistance in order to stop traffic from entering the on ramp. With help from CHP, Pahls was able to coax the cat to come to him. She seemed relieved to receive his assistance and went willingly into his arms.

Membership With The ASK Foundation

As our way of broadening our supporter base and reaching out to the community we are initiating an official membership program. We have several levels of membership and each level comes with perks and benefits to our members. We have memberships for children under the age of 18, adult individuals, and one for seniors on fixed incomes.

Members will receive issues of our quarterly newsletter, monthly

e-mail updates about events and news at the shelter, discounts to our events and discounts to local businesses which sponsor our membership drive.

A thriving involved membership is crucial to our ability to help the animals at the shelter. We hope you will consider becoming a member of our ASK foundation. In doing so you will be able to directly impact the lives of animals in Western Riverside County.

Child (under 18) cost: 15.00

Senior (65 +) cost: 15.00

Adult cost: 25.00

Family cost: 50.00

Life Saver Member cost: 100.00

Business and Individual Sponsorship

The new Western Riverside County Animal Shelter is a striking facility and not what one might expect when one recalls animal shelters of the past. The display rooms which feature the adoptable cats and dogs are excellent advertising venues for local and corporate businesses. With this in consideration, the Ask foundation has set up a program to provide opportunities for businesses to sponsor rooms.

Sponsorships provide mutual benefits to the shelter and businesses. They assist in financially providing care for the

animals up for adoption and they recognize businesses who give with a plaque outside the room and on our sponsorship wall.

Sponsorships are valid for one year and each sponsor gets the opportunity to decorate the room with any particular theme they can dream up because as we know presentation matters and can affect the chances of some animals being adopted. There are other types of rooms such as the grooming room which can also be sponsored. The sponsorship of these rooms would go toward much needed supplies and maintenance.

Another perk to sponsorship are the myriad of ways our foundation will recognize corporations and businesses for their charitable giving at our community events.

We like to show our appreciation for our business and corporate sponsors because they are essential to our ability to increase adoptions and save lives. Working and building relationships with local business is as much a part of our focus as helping the animals at the shelter. The efforts go hand in hand. Below is a list of the different levels of sponsorship. Please visit our website at www.theaskfoundation.org for more information or call 951-777-5341

Help the new Western Riverside County/City Animal Shelter by becoming a sponsor

Display your name and message on a plaque for one year and be listed as a sponsor on the sponsor wall and our website. Sponsorships are available on a first come first served basis

Cats

POD \$20,000
Community Outside \$5,000
Community Outside \$5,000
Kitten Room \$2,500
Cat Cubbies \$250

Dogs

POD \$20,000
Puppy Room \$500
Large Dog Yard \$500
Kennel Outdoor \$350
Kennel Indoor \$250

LifeRooms

Front \$10,000
Mid & Back \$5,000
Criticorner\$5,000
Children'sCenter\$5,000
InterviewRooms\$2,000

BarnArea

Barn\$25,000
OutsideStall\$1,000
Inside Stall \$500

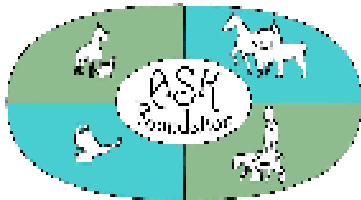
AgilityYards

AgilityArena\$1,000
DemoArena\$1,000
Training \$500
Meet & Greet\$500
Medium size Yard \$500

Other

Grooming Room \$500

THE ASK FOUNDATION
6851 Van Buren Blvd.
Riverside, CA 92509



Animals Solutions Konnection

Making the connections to create sustainable solutions for our animal welfare challenges

www.theaskfoundation.org

“Philanthropy is almost the only virtue which is sufficiently appreciated by mankind.”

Henry David Thoreau

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Otis Spunkmeyer
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Outback Grooming
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Palm Springs Aerial Tramway

Donor Acknowledgements

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K-9 Thrills or Top Gun Performance
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