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**Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA spearheads pilot program
to help save local Burrowing Owls**

Burlingame, CA—The Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA (PHS/SPCA) has joined the effort to help save the diminishing numbers of local Burrowing Owls through their brand new Burrowing Owl Nursery. This pilot program is in partnership with the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency.

“Burrowing Owl populations have been in decline for years, and while the birds are not formally considered endangered, they are considered ‘a species of special concern’ in California,” said PHS/SPCA Communications Manager Buffy Martin Tarbox. “Burrowing Owl mothers often hatch more babies than they can feed and raise to survival. This program will remove a few of the owlets from different nests to allow the parents to concentrate their efforts on a smaller family. We will then care for and raise the removed owlets in our nursery until they are adults and return them to the wild as strong and healthy owls ready to reproduce.”

A majority of Burrowing Owl babies don’t even survive their first year. Since these birds burrow in the ground, they are easy prey for a variety of predators. The Burrowing Owl populations have crashed due to rampant development, encroachment on their native habitats and high levels of predation.

“The owlets that are in our nursery have been carefully selected. They are the smaller ones from various nests, and without human intervention, would more than likely not survive,” according to Tarbox. “By head-starting these babies, we can provide them the food and care they were not receiving from their parents and raise them to be strong and healthy adults.”

The Burrowing Owl Nursery is located in an outdoor aviary at PHS/SPCA Wildlife Care Center in Burlingame, California and will not be open to the public. It is constructed with special burrows for the owls and is protected from the elements and predators. The owlets will remain in the nursery for the next ten months and then will be returned to the wild.

The new Burrowing Owl nursery is funded entirely by donations. PHS/SPCA’s Wildlife Care Center successfully rehabilitates 1,200 to 1,400 animals each year.



Photos are courtesy of PHS/SPCA.

About the Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA

The Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA (PHS/SPCA) is a local, private, non-profit charitable organization dedicated to animal welfare. Among our major programs, PHS/SPCA adopts fully 100% of the healthy dogs and cats in our care and also, through our charitably funded Hope Program, makes well and finds homes for thousands of animals who come to us sick, injured, or too young to survive without supportive care. PHS/SPCA is truly an open admission shelter, not only accepting many pet animals who might be refused at other shelters, but also taking care of injured and orphaned native wildlife from San Francisco through San Mateo and the northern half of Santa Clara County. Our work means 6,300 lives saved each year. Please visit www.phs-sPCA.org to learn about all our programs and services, ways to help our animals and special events.