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## Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA is turning 75 this year

By Annie Tsai

May 13, 2025



Annie Tsai



I worked at the Peninsula Humane Society's shop for two years while in high school, back when the adoption center was still on the outskirts of Coyote Point.

I had always been an animal person, but this place was next level. Everyone was so knowledgeable, and here was where I learned the difference between dozens of dog and cat breeds and how to care for young kittens. To this day, dog breed knowledge is a quirky fun fact that surprisingly comes in handy regularly.

This year, PHS/SPCA celebrates 75 years of important work. Since 1950, it has served as a safety net for the most vulnerable animals in our communities, whether that's a bearded dragon in need of a home, a

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Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA opens Wildlife Care Center in Saratoga

motherless kitten needing bottle-feeding, or a golden retriever rescued from neglect.

In 2024 alone, the organization rescued 4,093 animals. Last week, 40 animals found new homes. That includes cats, dogs, rabbits, guinea pigs, pigeons, snakes, turtles and, yes — even goldfish. Over 2,500 of those animals were part of the Hope Program, a 100% donor-funded initiative that provides extra behavioral and medical care so animals with special needs still get a chance at love. That kind of care doesn't happen without people. This past year, volunteers donated 142,680 hours of their time, or the equivalent of 69 full-time employees. Dogs were walked almost 17,000 times. Baby animals were bottle-fed and they cleaned wildlife enclosures, folded towels, ran youth programs and supported the adoption center, where staff are trained to be matchmakers for pets and people.

One of my favorite things about PHS/SPCA is that this is one of the few animal welfare organizations where teens and their parents can actively volunteer together. Under supervision and with support from their parents, minors as young as 13 can walk dogs, clean wildlife habitats, support feeding and play in the kitten nursery, give cats or dogs some TLC, or help out with laundry. There is a lot of laundry — every animal gets a clean towel or blanket every day and this time of year, there are around 600 animals being cared for. During peak season in July and August, that number is over 1,000.

But PHS/SPCA's work isn't limited to pets. A new Wildlife Care Center in Saratoga opened this past March through funding from the Larry Ellison Foundation, and is operated by PHS/SPCA. This state-of-the-art facility

takes in injured, orphaned or sick native wildlife from San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties and provides full rehabilitative care until the animals are ready to return to the wild.

Already this year, more than 4,300 wild animals have been rescued and rehabilitated. That number is expected to climb to 10,000 annually. Patients include hawks, ducks, seabirds, songbirds and mammals. They even run a captive breeding program for two threatened native species: the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander and the giant garter snake.

And while some of their work is tender and slow, other parts are immediate and urgent. PHS/SPCA is San Mateo County's designated responder for animal cruelty and neglect, investigating every report. PHS/SPCA is also part of the county's emergency response network. After the 2010 San Bruno gas explosion and during the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire, it was there rescuing left-behind animals, setting traps for scared pets and handing out kennels, food and blankets to evacuated families with animals.

Of course, all this takes community support. And sometimes, that support comes in the form of sand dollars. One child painted and sold them, raising \$570. Another held a brownie bake sale and donated \$1,100 to the Pet Food Bank, which provided 365,000 pet meals to low-income families in San Mateo County last year.

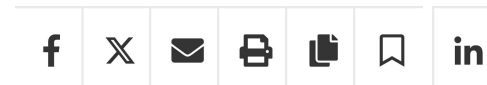
PHS/SPCA is planning to celebrate its 75th anniversary later this year, so keep an eye out for announcements. But if you want to help now, drop by the 2025 Kitten Nursery Shower on May 17 from noon to 3 p.m. to watch

volunteers syringe feed tiny kittens, make crafts and interact with the older kittens (and bring a small stuffed animal or clean towel as a shower gift!). Then, mark your calendar for the Bark n' Brew Fest June 28. It's a dog-friendly craft beer festival where 100% of the proceeds go to the Hope Program. Bring your pup, grab a tasting glass and enjoy the afternoon.

Or just go visit the adoption center in Burlingame. Right now, adoption fees are being waived for puppies — might it be time to grow your family by one? Visit [phs-sPCA.org](https://phs-sPCA.org) for more info.

Through the summer, I'll be highlighting some of the incredible nonprofits that are the heart of San Mateo County. If you'd like your nonprofit to be considered, please reach out.

*Annie Tsai is chief operating officer at Interact ([tryinteract.com](https://tryinteract.com)), early stage investor and advisor with The House Fund ([thehouse.fund](https://thehouse.fund)), and a member of the San Mateo County Housing and Community Development Committee. Find Annie on Twitter [@meannie](https://twitter.com/meannie).*



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