



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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PRESS RELEASE

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SCCAS DIRECTOR SOBEL TO DEPART COUNTY SERVICE

Melanie Sobel, who has led the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter (SCCAS) for close to 12 years while improving facilities and implementing a broad range of equitable programs to improve animal and human welfare, is departing County service.

Sobel's last day will be Friday, July 1. She has accepted a position as director of the Denver Animal Shelter.

During her tenure, Sobel reshaped SCCAS into one of the most respected animal welfare agencies in California. The many initiatives Sobel and staff implemented over the years include the free and low-cost spay/neuter program, PLANNED PetHood, low-cost rabies and other vaccinations, low-cost microchip programs to reunite lost pets with their families, online dog licenses, and many more. She also organized emergency sheltering operations for local animals and pets, including during the CZU Fire.

Sobel also created a unique and recognizable brand for SCCAS, and led or helped in the creation of numerous animal-focused special events, including Meow Luau, "Catio" Tours, St. Pittie's Day, Halloween Hoedown, the annual Parks & Rex event and more.

Under Sobel's tenure, SCCAS increased the level of community giving to support SCCAS' proactive, progressive programs and services, and established the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter Foundation. SCCAS also operates the largest volunteer operation in Santa Cruz County, including a program for youth volunteers.

Sobel also initiated an expansion of the Animal Services Santa Cruz building, as well as the establishment of the upscale secondhand Benefit Shop on 17th Avenue, which helps subsidize the SCCAS' mission. SCCAS' community outreach efforts are unparalleled, including partnering with local social service agencies to provide free veterinary exams and wellness clinics to the most vulnerable animals in the community.. She is also known through media outreach efforts, including weekly "Pet of the Week" segments on local radio station KPIG and appearances in local publications.

The County will conduct a national search for Sobel's replacement.