



County of Santa Cruz

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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PRESS RELEASE

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The Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter is pleased to accept an award from the Petfinder Foundation and Build a Bear Workshop to help fund the Animal Shelter's youth education programs.

The \$10,663 grant will help educate and inspire the next generation of caregivers and responsible pet owners. It continues the work of the Animal Shelter's existing programs, which include pet-related day camps, after-school programs and in-school presentations aimed at all grade levels.

"We are grateful to the Petfinder Foundation and the Build a Bear Workshop for this grant," said Melanie Sobel, general manager of the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter. "Their generosity will help us further our mission of improving the lives of pets and pet owners."

Through education programs, the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter seeks to establish a humane animal ethic in workplaces, schools, clubs and associations. It has also established a number of youth education programs, including:

- **Critter Camp** - Campers meet guest speakers, get to know many pets, enjoy a shelter tour, and do animal-themed art projects. Through engaging activities, children learn to become responsible stewards while lessons foster understanding, respect, and empathy toward all living beings.
- **Pet Start** - Pet Start serves the youngest students in our community, pre-kindergarten through 2nd Grade. It is an introduction to responsible behavior and



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safety around pets, and has two sessions: Case of Care and Meeting a Dog. The second is co-taught but a registered Therapy Dog canine ambassador.

- **Youth Service Clubs, Animal Advocates** - The Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter provides after-school clubs for two age groups (1st/5th grade, and 6th/12th grade), encouraging and supporting the young animal lovers in our community to learn and grow as compassionate stewards.
- **Kids Speak for Pets** - Kids Speak for Pets teaches basic reporting skills, empathy for others, and the importance of community involvement. Middle School students take part in this program. Participants are introduced to an ambassador animal and learn their story, learn about other shelter pets, then the students write mini-biographies of individual pets for publication to assist in pet adoptions.
- **Safe & Sound** - A single-session workshop derived largely from materials created by the Humane Society of the United States and American Red Cross and aimed at training pet owners in disaster preparedness and basic pet first aid.

There are other stand-alone presentations:

- Preschool/1st grade: **“How people and dogs are the same and different,” “Farm Friends: Cows, horses, pigs and chickens”**
- 2nd grade: **“What pets need.” “How people and dogs feel”**
- 3rd grade: **“Opt to adopt,” “Cat needs”**
- 4th grade: **“Safety tips,” “Wild vs tame”**
- 5th /6th grade: **“Pet overpopulation,” “Careers in Animal Welfare”**