



WINE COUNTRY ANIMAL LOVERS NEWSLETTER



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SAVE THEM ALL

In animal rescue, your outlook on the world has a significant impact on how you view the animals we help. Are these the most unfortunate puppies or might they be the luckiest puppies?

The mom of the puppies in this photo is a companion to a homeless man in Lake County and he and his dog both sleep under the stars, keeping one another company. When she became pregnant and gave birth, he did his best to help her raise her pups and keep them all fed and healthy. At a certain point, though, he began to struggle to provide for so many hungry mouths and that's when he reached out to help from the Clearlake Animal Shelter. They gave him a bag of dog food and said that if he came back with the puppies, they'd be happy to help. The next day, three tiny puppies were delivered safely to the animal shelter where they were bathed and received their first medical treatment.

Thanks to our close partnership with the shelter staff, Wine Country Animal Lovers received a message for rescue help, and we were able to quickly line up a WCAL foster home and accept little Bert, Vera and Margie into our program for safe keeping. Young baby puppies are at very high risk for parvo in all public areas and moving them out of that environment right away is incredibly important.

Once the pups were safe, we coordinated with the animal shelter to reach out to the owner of their mom and offer to pay for her to be spayed, because we try our best not to leave anyone behind. It is our way of thanking him for all he did for them, of helping their mother to

have an easier, healthier life and an important step towards reducing the overwhelming pet overpopulation in our area. Our team had the privilege of cuddling, feeding, training and cleaning up after three bundles of joy who could easily have been given away in front of the grocery store or who might have succumbed to parvo if left to grow up in a homeless encampment without access to life saving vaccines. Luckily, none of these horror stories came to be and each of these puppies has found a devoted forever family of their own.

The happily ever after stories that we help create for hundreds of dogs and cats are enough to turn anyone into an optimist.



A SENSE OF PURPOSE

Each dog or cat that WCAL rescues from a shelter or from the streets and offers for adoption is hand raised by a caring foster family. By opening our homes to these amazing animals, we get to know their quirks, preferences and personalities to help us make the very best matches when they meet their forever families. At its core, WCAL is a collection of foster homes working together to save homeless animals. The need in our area is so great that we have chosen to focus our efforts on helping those dogs and cats closest to home. Our growing team of fosters and supportive donors are some of the most caring animal lovers that I have ever met. All of this is what makes our rescue group so special.

The year 2020 has been unpredictable, record setting and full of extremes. As news of the pandemic spread and animal shelters closed their doors to the public, the pressure on animal rescuers increased, and we prepared for the worst. Thankfully, we have not seen the record levels of homeless pets that were predicted and our team has been able to help local families through COVID-19 in creative ways - sponsoring the cost to board a St. Helena cat while her human recovered in the hospital, offering increased charity medical assistance for families facing emergency veterinary costs and teaming up with the local Boys & Girls Clubs to provide a weekly pet food delivery for over 400 local families during for the first months of shelter in place. Keeping pets with the families that love them is always our goal.

When our community was threatened by wildfires and forced to evacuate, we saw the

benefit of years of preparations. People are planning ahead and including their pets in disaster planning more than ever. Community members are signing up to train with Napa & Sonoma Community Animal Response Teams (CART) which act as our emergency response teams, to ensure that no animal is left behind. This resilience, cooperation, and kindness makes me proud to live in Wine Country.

As our community rebounds and looks forward to 2021, WCAL is fielding the highest volume of adoption applications that we have ever seen, because more families are looking to adopt a pet than ever before! Even with the increased demand

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for adoptable pets, our priority remains doing our best for each and every animal in our program. The veterinary care that WCAL provides far exceeds California's minimum

requirements for spay/neuter and basic vaccinations. Our team serves an extraordinary number of special needs pets, administers lifesaving veterinary care and also addresses their behavioral needs with progressive, animal-friendly training. Your generous support makes it possible for us to provide the highest level of care for each pet adopted from Wine Country Animal Lovers. Our Board of Directors is committed to doing our best for the animals of Napa, Sonoma and Lake counties, and your support means the world to us.

Alissa McNair
WCAL Board President





FOSTERING DURING FIRE SEASON

THE ADVENTURE OF HISSY & TOPSHELF

By Jennifer Johnson, WCAL Board Member

Hissy & TopShelf are kittens that came to my home as fosters. Along with WCAL, we decided that a future as barn cats with daily access to food, water and shelter from the elements was the best route for these guys given their age and lack of socialization. Since we lived on a rural property with plenty of rodents, we decided they were already home! With spay and neuter appointments backed up due to the pandemic, they lived in our spare room for a few weeks waiting for their turn.

During that time, the LNU Lightning Complex fires hit and with it, our first evacuation of the summer. Hissy and TopShelf evacuated with us, along with our other friendly foster kitten, three resident cats and new puppy (the Southbridge Hotel in St. Helena was very accommodating). Once we returned home, WCAL had the boys altered and Hissy and TopShelf started their new lives acclimating to the great outdoors.

Then, the Glass Fire broke out, and again we rushed to evacuate. It was a hurried, frantic morning and we were unable to load them into the car with our other pets.

The following day, we learned that firefighters had been able to save our house, but much of our property was badly burned. I immediately thought of Hissy and TopShelf and felt horrible not knowing if they were safe. I quickly emailed Napa CART,

the group of volunteers who trains to help local animals in times of disaster, and described the situation. Just hours later, I received a call from a volunteer who let me know that a team would be out that way the following morning. They filled dishes with food and water every other day until the evacuation order was lifted, and called me each time they went to give me an update. Although the food was being consumed, no one caught sight of TopShelf and Hissy.



WCAL's team of expert trappers, Helen and Alissa, stepped in to investigate with game cameras. What an exciting moment when they first sent me a visual of both cats! After days of tracking and trapping, Hissy and TopShelf were safely caught and relocated to a WCAL foster home. Their temporary foster spoiled them with canned food and WCAL was

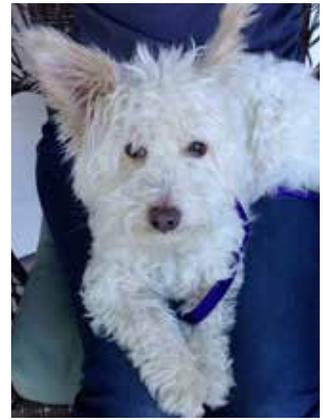
able to find these brothers a less 'crispy' home to move to. The dedication of these organizations and individuals helped ensure Hissy and TopShelf's safety and for that, I am forever grateful!



GIVING BRINGS US JOY

There are many ways to help WCAL help animals, but without the generosity of our donors, the work we do simply wouldn't be possible. As a foster-based, volunteer-run rescue, we depend on your dollars to provide food, bedding and veterinary care to the kittens and puppies who come into our care and to fund the spay/neuter projects that help prevent unwanted animals from coming into the world in the first place. Your contributions also keep loved animals with owners who are suffering from a one-time financial hardship through our charity medical program.

This year, we owe particular thanks to **Sandra Maresca**, who thought to include us in her estate planning. Sandra adopted her little canine companion from WCAL, and they were a wonderful match for one another.



Sandra Maresca and her sweet WCAL pup

Sadly, Sandra passed away in 2019, but her forward thinking resulted in a significant bequest to Wine Country Animals which was funded this past October. To honor Sandee's memory, we will make a careful and deliberate plan for this incredible gift and ensure that it benefits as many animals as possible in the years to come.



DONOR PROFILE:

JANET WICKLUND

MONTHLY GIVING - A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY

Many of you may not realize that we offer the option of monthly giving through our website. This is a simple way to support Wine Country Animal Lovers. You determine the amount, and it is automatically donated to WCAL each month.

We spoke to Janet Wicklund, a newly retired nurse, who has been donating to WCAL every month since December 2016. She had fostered and then adopted Sage, an abused pit bull that WCAL had rescued from Lake County to save her from euthanasia. When Janet saw the work that WCAL was doing with abused dogs, she wanted to lend her support.

According to Janet, "No matter what the amount, you hardly notice it, and, at the end of the year, you feel good when you see how much you have helped."

We thank Janet and the many other monthly donors that help WCAL help animals in need.

To set up a recurring monthly donation, visit us online at www.WineCountryAnimalLovers.org/Donate

WE LOVE SMART MUTTS!

Our puppy adoption fee works a little differently than other rescue groups. Qualified applicants who bring home a young pup pay a \$300 adoption fee that includes spay or neuter, microchip, vaccines, dewormer, flea treatment & heartworm prevention plus a lot of love and care. When the adopter completes a 6-week reward-based training class with their new dog and shares a graduation photo or certificate of completion, WCAL will refund \$150 to the adopter. It's our way of letting our adopters know how important we think it is that all dogs and their humans learn to communicate with one another and get the training tools for a long happy life together. Studies show that a large portion of dogs who are surrendered to animal shelters are unruly one and two-year-old adolescents who didn't receive this early training and have become too much to handle. It is important to us that every puppy we help has the opportunity to learn to be a safe, well behaved member of society so that they never find themselves in this position.

This offer does not expire for WCAL adopters! It is never too late to learn something new and we'd be happy to help you find a force free, science-based training class near you. The average 6-week long class costs about \$120-200. Email us at info@WineCountryAnimalLovers.org if you have questions or need help finding a great trainer.

WCAL does not use or condone aversive training methods for dogs or cats (and you won't ever see our dogs wearing choke, prong or electric shock collars!). Science tells us that dogs learn more effectively when motivated by food and play instead of fear, pain or intimidation. We want to help you develop a healthy, trusting relationship between you and your pets.



Fern, adopted from WCAL in August 2020

HATS OFF TO PAM!

Past President of Wine Country Animal Lovers and one of our founding Board Members, Pam Ingalls, has been actively involved with animal rescue for well over a decade. In addition to WCAL, the Sonoma Humane Society, Homeward Bound Golden Retriever Rescue and Bergin University of Canine Studies have all benefitted from her considerable energy and efforts. While working with WCAL, Pam contributed to Napa County's passing a ballot initiative that would significantly reduce the euthanasia of adoptable animals, organized spay/neuter projects designed to reduce the birthrate of unwanted kittens and puppies, and was on the front lines of WCAL's charity medical program which helps families through a one-time emergency veterinary crisis to keep pets with the people who love them most.

Pam retired from the Wine Country Animal Lovers Board of Directors in 2020. As we continue our commitment to the programs Pam was devoted to, we thank her from the bottom of our hearts for her compassion and for hard work on behalf of animals in need.



HAPPILY EVER AFTER TAHOE IN NOVATO

Tahoe was one puppy from a litter of 12 bottle babies that were hand-raised in a loving WCAL foster home. Now, this lucky pup has his own Instagram account [@TahoeInNovato](#).

WCAL adopters Christine and Mario started young Tahoe off on the right foot by taking him to reward-based puppy classes and immediately getting him settled into a routine. The result? A happy dog and a great companion.

“It’s 5 PM and Tahoe has awakened from his afternoon slumber, almost on cue, as if an alarm clock went off in his busy puppy brain. What day is it? It doesn’t matter to Tahoe. Five o’clock means it’s time to go outside, take care of business, and make sure nothing is amiss in the neighborhood. This has been the daily routine since we adopted Tahoe from WCAL in late 2019. We brought home a happy, well-mannered boy—thanks to his wonderful fosters, Wendy and Mark—and we couldn’t be happier to reside in his little world.”

– Christine & Mario



HAPPILY EVER AFTER

FLINT, FLICKER & FLAME

If you follow WCAL on social media, you may remember a tiny trio of two-week-old kittens found in Clearlake in a hollow stump that had been on fire. The kittens were discovered by a firefighter working on a blaze and carried to safety in his helmet! Dubbed the “Fire Kittens,” Flint, Flicker and Flame needed to be bottle fed around the clock in a WCAL foster home until they were old enough to eat canned food. Thanks to our skilled team of life savers, WCAL is able to take in an incredible number of bottle babies each year. Flint, Flicker and Flame have all been neutered and adopted by loving families.

“Percy (formerly ‘Flint’) has brought our family so much joy in just this short time. Our resident feline Merlin enjoys his new role as big brother and has quickly warmed up to him. We are so lucky to have this special little guy in our lives”

- Natalie & Nelson



WCAL FOSTER HERO: LORELEI DUCKWORTH

FOSTER FAMILIES MAKING ANIMAL RESCUE POSSIBLE

Some fosters have a specialty, like bottle feeding kittens or socializing small dogs. Others, like Lorelei Duckworth, recognize that need comes in all shapes and sizes and will answer any call.

Feisty puppies, grouchy cats, tiny kittens, timid dogs . . . Lorelei says, “It feels good to take an animal into your life that needs help and see it bloom in your care. It’s hard to let go, but it’s also amazing how the perfect adopter always comes along and you can say good-bye knowing this lucky creature will have an amazing life. It’s all part of the cycle and makes room for another animal so you can help again.” This willingness to be open to whatever situation presents itself is what makes Lorelei such an asset to the WCAL foster program. It’s also what gives her so much personal satisfaction. “It’s wonderful to be able to help out in a way that changes an animal’s - and their adoptive family’s - life!”





**WINE COUNTRY
ANIMAL LOVERS**

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KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

Sometimes, despite their best intentions, responsible pet owners find themselves with a beloved cat or dog in a life-threatening situation and not enough money to pay for care. It's an anxious and emotional time, but often we can help, whether it be by listening and helping to sift through the options, providing information on available credit options, or assisting with payment through one of our partner veterinary clinics.

In March of this year, we received a call from a worried woman who was looking for help with re-homing her cat. She loved him very much and didn't want to give him up, but he wasn't using the litterbox and she was afraid she was going to be evicted from her apartment due to the smell. We reviewed the most common reasons for this behavior, eliminated each possibility one by one, and then scheduled a WCAL paid vet visit to see if there might be a medical cause. The kitty's urinalysis showed he had minute crystals in his urine (crystalluria), which would make it feel like passing tiny shards of glass when emptying

his bladder. The poor guy had come to see the litter box as a place of pain and was avoiding it in hopes of feeling better. The vet prescribed special food designed to eliminate the crystals, the problem was resolved, and a wonderful cat got to stay with his loving family.

While not as obviously heart-wrenching as the rescue of a litter of tiny kittens, we spend a lot of time on this sort of work because it keeps otherwise healthy animals from facing euthanasia and at home with the people who love them most. It's also a very important way that your donation to WCAL helps save animals!

