

The Milpitas Post

LSI employees go to the dogs ... and cats

By Shannon Barry

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Approximately 5,000 LSI Corp. employees worldwide stepped out of their offices on June 3 to offer a helping hand within the different communities in which they live and work for the company's second annual Volunteer Day.

"Volunteer Day, when we created it, we thought it would be nice to make it a worldwide event," said Jack Molets, philanthropy coordinator for Milpitas-based LSI. "LSI is out there, really participating in the communities we care about as individuals as well as our company."



In Milpitas and the greater Bay Area, 200 employees had a choice to spend the day at 23 different sites, including Loaves & Fishes, Career Closet, Resource Area for Teaching, and the Humane Society Silicon Valley's Animal Community Center.

Sixteen volunteers were divvied into groups at HSSV in order to help with daily chores like cleaning up the pet store,

folding laundry and setting up animal play equipment.

Milpitas employee Cathy Jakubiec is an animal lover who felt it was important for LSI to reach out to HSSV, so she suggested the idea for Volunteer Day.

"This is my thing, my cause," she said. "It's about education and awareness."

Jakubiec owns three rescue dogs that have either come from or ended up at HSSV within their lives.

"What LSI is doing really embodies the community center," said Elena Battles, chief operating officer for HSSV. The timing of the volunteerism at the center was crucial, she said, considering they relocated from Santa Clara to Milpitas just

last month. Their new facility should be able to accommodate approximately 10,000 adoptions a year, three times more than the former location, because it is larger and offers different services, including a dog park, day care, boarding and a pet store.

"Having all these services has changed the model of what a shelter is," said Jennifer Chen, major gifts officer for HSSV.

At their former location, Battles explained, the environment wasn't as welcoming so people would only come to the facility if they were interested in adopting, but would rarely return.

"When they visit now, people have tears in their eyes," she said. They watch cats that are up for adoption bask in the sunlight on window perches and dogs go for daily walks with volunteers outdoors in the park.

"This is the kind of place people want to come to time and time again," Battles said.

Helena Farnham, LSI online marketing program manager, is a Santa Clara resident who agrees that the new facility is much more welcoming. "The big difference is seeing how it is now versus the old facility in Santa Clara," she emphasized.

Farnham was in charge of coordinating Volunteer Day for LSI's Milpitas office but enthusiastically decided to act as site leader for HSSV the day of the event.

"I love animals," she said, speaking passionately about her 3-year-old Jack Russell terrier and 4-year-old cat.

"I can't imagine my life without them," she said.

For Jamie Muller, helping at HSSV allowed her to reflect on her past and remember pets she had while living in Oneonto, N.Y. until she moved to Santa Clara two years ago.

"My family raised Irish setters. We once had a litter of 18 and found homes for all of them," she recalled.

Because she moved from a remote rural area to one that is much more urban, Muller said she may use the Humane Society as an outlet to continue her passion with animals and become a regular volunteer.

It is this philanthropic spirit, Molets said, that is what national Volunteer Day is all about.

"It reminds people that volunteering throughout the year is a good thing," he said. "If you live in a community and you look around, you usually notice that there are things that need to be done. The other side of that coin is you realize you have skills that you can offer. You can add to that. Where those two things come together is helping to build a stronger community."