



Digging it

Photo by Robinett Photography

Milpitas Mayor Jose Esteves (far right) helps Humane Society Silicon Valley board members and President Christine Benninger (far left) shovel dirt at Saturday's Animal Care Center ground-breaking ceremony. All donned animal ears instead of the traditional hardhats. Dogs also assisted in turning the first soil.

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POST

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Humane Society raises \$90,000 through walkathon Saturday

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of space is not the primary reason,” Benninger explained. “The majority of these pets simply cannot be adopted. Because people failed to provide them the early social experiences that shape temperament and build confidence, these animals are fearful, excessively shy, or aggressive. We cannot save these animals with more space or even more adoptive homes.”

To stem pet euthanasia in Silicon Valley, Benninger said the humane society has embarked on a mission to strengthen the very foundation of human-animal relationships by teaching people about animals, their needs, and the important contributions they make to society.

“We must shift the humane society’s emphasis from sheltering homeless pets to cultivating a community in which humans

truly understand their four-legged companions — and in which animals are respected and valued for their unique gifts,” Benninger said. “We felt this ambitious goal could not be attained at our current facility, which is more than 50 years old. Although the staff and volunteers do a wonderful job, the facility was not built to accommodate the needs of our animals for more than a few weeks at a time and does not have any space for ongoing educational programs.”

Humane Society Silicon Valley’s 48,000-square-foot Animal Community Center will feature an adoption galleria with home-like habitats for dogs, cats and rabbits, a boarding facility, doggie daycare, grooming center, dog park and training center, pet store, pet-friendly café, education center, indoor presentation area, affordable spay/neuter med-

ical center, and a veterinary hospital with a public viewing room.

Shelter officials are hoping the innovative center will be an inspiring model of humane care and community involvement for shelters nationwide.

“This is the first Animal Community Center to take a holistic approach to supporting people with a full spectrum of services to address their pet’s emotional, medical, training and nutritional needs,” said Sue Levy, chair of Humane Society Silicon Valley’s capital campaign committee.

The Animal Community Center will be able to accommodate up to 10,000 animal adoptions a year. With its enlightened architecture and design, the center will replace traditional chain-link cages with healthier, friendlier habitats — comfortable, homelike enclosures for dogs;

condos and colonies, complete with climbing trees, for cats; and a “rabbitat” designed to reflect the warrens rabbits naturally inhabit. Animals will also have the opportunity to socialize and learn from each other, making them more adoptable.

The Animal Community Center will be built on 4.8 acres of land near South Milpitas Boulevard and Montague Expressway. The humane society has raised \$17.1 million toward the \$25 million center during the private phase of the campaign and will now appeal to the broader community to raise the final dollars to complete the building and endowment fund. Saturday’s Walk ‘n Wag raised \$90,000 toward that goal.

The center is expected to be completed by the second half of 2009.

The Animal Community

Center will be a “green” building that meets criteria for LEED Certification established by the U.S. Green Building Council. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. More than 90 percent of the old structure on the humane society’s new site will be recycled and used to construct the new building

The contractor for the Animal Community Center is Robert L. Brown Construction and the architect is George Miers & Associates.

Humane Society Silicon Valley has served Silicon Valley for more than 78 years and found homes for more than 500,000 animals.



Hundreds of pets and their owners start the Walk 'n Wag fundraiser portion of Saturday's Animal Care Center groundbreaking ceremony for Humane Society Silicon Valley.

Photo by Robinett Photography

HUMANE SOCIETY BREAKS GROUND ON ANIMAL CENTER

Dogs had permission to dig holes at Humane Society Silicon Valley's groundbreaking ceremony for its new innovative Animal Community Center. Hundreds of animal lovers and their canine companions attended the tail-wagging ceremony Saturday at 901 Ames Ave. in Milpitas, the future home of the humane society's new center.

Jose Esteves, mayor of Milpitas, was on hand to welcome Humane Society Silicon Valley officials to Milpitas.

"This will be a famous center. It will be a destination point for people who love animals," Esteves said.

Nationally known artist Ron Burns presented the humane society with a painting of a former shelter dog guest to hang in the new center.

Christine Benninger, Humane Society Silicon Valley president, explained how the Milpitas center will be unique.

"Addressing pet overpopulation and euthanasia in Silicon Valley calls for a revolutionary approach to the way animal facilities interface with people in our community," Benninger said. "With this new Animal Community Center, we will turn the paradigm of an animal shelter on its head."

Strengthening the human-animal bond is the driving force behind the center.

"We want to make Humane Society Silicon Valley not only the best place to adopt a pet, but the best place to learn about, engage with, and celebrate animals," said Kate Mulligan, president of the Board of Directors.

Benninger and Mulligan said while there have been great strides in animal welfare in the past decade, much work remains.

"Each year, some tens of thousands of animals in the Bay Area are euthanized — and lack

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