

Press Release



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Humane Society Silicon Valley Documentary on Homeless Cats to Air on KCSM Public TV



HSSV's Mike Foltz examines a Kitten in "Cats Without a Home"

SANTA CLARA, Calif., Dec. 18, 2007 – Humane Society Silicon Valley (HSSV)'s award-winning documentary on homeless cats in Santa Clara County will air on KCSM Public Television this Saturday, Dec. 22 at 6:30 pm.

The 30-minute film titled "Cats Without a Home," powerfully weaves the plight of homeless cats in Santa Clara County by following six individuals who are committed to reducing the unnecessary euthanasia of homeless cats. A trailer of the film can be accessed at: <http://www.catswithoutahome.com>.

"The goal of this documentary is to raise public awareness about homeless cats and inspire people to care," said HSSV President Christine Benninger.

"We shot the film over an eight month period in 2006, and it truly became a labor of love," said Todd Lehr, videographer and editor for Jump Cutters Video. "We wanted to introduce viewers to the secret world of homeless cats and bring to light the painful reality shelter workers and the community endure when a homeless cat not suitable for adoption is euthanized," Lehr explained. "We show the joys, sorrows and reality of this pervasive problem. At the same time, we think people will feel inspired to make a difference."

Humane Society Silicon Valley President Christine Benninger says viewers will be shocked to learn that there are an estimated 125,000 homeless cats roaming our streets. "When we learned that thousands of these cats are euthanized in Bay Area shelters each year, our hearts broke and we knew we had to do something to raise community awareness," Benninger explained.

Benninger says cats comprise roughly two-thirds of the animals brought to shelters and are euthanized at a far greater rate than dogs or rabbits. She says this is because a majority of them are feral (wild) or too young (unweaned) or too sick to be adopted. In Santa Clara County alone, Benninger says approximately 14,000 of these cats were euthanized in 2006 at a cost of \$2.4 million.

"All too often, people feeding the neighborhood stray cat, don't get that cat spayed/neutered and find themselves with a litter of unwanted kittens," Benninger explained. "Our message to these folks is 'be a responsible caregiver and spay/neuter the homeless cat you're feeding.'"

Benninger hopes the film will inspire people to become involved with saving more cats through a non-lethal technique called TNR (trap, neuter and return).

"TNR is the most cost-effective, humane way of addressing the large number of cats dying each year," Benninger said. TNR reduces homeless cat populations by sterilizing cats so they cannot reproduce. TNR, when accompanied by ongoing homeless cat management, is the most effective, humane method of reducing homeless cat populations.

"Rounding up cats and euthanizing them does not solve the problem and in fact creates a void for new cats to fill and continue the breeding cycle," Benninger explained. Furthermore, Benninger says TNR saves money, noting that it costs cities approximately \$250 to pick up, house and euthanize one homeless cat. For the same price, they can spay/neuter five cats.

"I'm often asked, why the public should care about homeless cats," Benninger said. "My answer is simple: Euthanizing unwanted animals is a community problem, not just a shelter problem. It is a reflection of our society and how some of us treat other living things."

Benninger says HSSV's Medical Center offers affordable spaying/neutering services as well as a \$10 spay/neuter clinic for homeless cats.

Additionally, Humane Society Silicon Valley has spearheaded a Homeless Cat Coalition comprised of shelters, animal control facilities and rescue groups to address the homeless cat epidemic. The Coalition's goal is to significantly reduce the unnecessary euthanasia of homeless cats through TNR.

About Humane Society Silicon Valley

Humane Society Silicon Valley (HSSV) is an independent, non-profit agency offering quality adoptions, medical care and education programs to enhance the human-animal bond. Established in 1929, HSSV has served Silicon Valley for 78 years adopted more than 500,000 animals into permanent, loving homes. HSSV is an "open door" shelter and accepts animals 24-hours a day, seven days a week, regardless of any temperament or health related problems. HSSV's medical center offers affordable spaying/neutering, vaccinations and microchips to the public. More information about HSSV can be found at our website at www.hssv.org.

About Jump Cutters Video

Jump Cutters is comprised of two filmmakers, Katherine and Todd Lehr. They have a passion for documentary films that focus on social issues within the community. Their mission is to create socially conscious films that engage audiences to take action. More information about Jump Cutters can be found at www.jumpcutters.com.

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