

# Press Release



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## **Humane Society Silicon Valley Breaks Ground On Innovative Animal Community Center to Serve Bay Area**



SANTA CLARA, Calif., Oct. 6, 2007 – The dogs had permission to dig holes at Humane Society Silicon Valley’s (HSSV) groundbreaking ceremony for its new innovative Animal Community Center. Hundreds of animal lovers and their canine companions attended the tail wagging ceremony today at 901 Ames Avenue in Milpitas, the future home of HSSV’s new center. Jose “Joe” Esteves, the honorable mayor of Milpitas, was on hand to welcome HSSV officials to Milpitas. Nationally known

artist Ron Burns presented HSSV with a painting of a former shelter dog guest to hang in the new center.

“Addressing pet overpopulation and euthanasia in Silicon Valley calls for a revolutionary approach to the way animal facilities interface with people in our community,” said Christine Benninger, HSSV president. “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 HSSV’s innovative Animal Community 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 HSSV board of directors.

### **The Need for an Innovative Approach**

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 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,” Benninger stressed.

To stem pet euthanasia in Silicon Valley, Benninger said HSSV 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 explained. “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.”

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### **An Inspiring Model for Shelters Nationwide**

HSSV's 48,000 square foot Animal Community Center will feature an adoption gallery 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 medical center, and a veterinary hospital with a public viewing room.

HSSV 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 HSSV's capital campaign committee.

The Animal Community Center will be able to accommodate up to 10,000 animals 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. These new habitats will reduce stress for animals and make HSSV a more people-friendly environment, facilitating more human-animal matches.

The Animal Community Center will be built on 4.8 acres of land near Milpitas Boulevard and Montague Expressway and is accessible to Highway 101 and Interstates 680 and 880. HSSV 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. The center is expected to be completed by the second half of 2009.

### **Environmentally Friendly, LEED Certified Building**

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 (LEED) 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 HSSV's new site will be recycled and used to construct the new building. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

"We want to build a sustainable, environmentally friendly center that will not only promote animals but promote water savings and energy efficiency," said Christine Benninger, HSSV president. "We believe this will be an inspiring model of humane care and community involvement for shelters nationwide."

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

### **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 more than 78 years and found homes for more than 500,000 animals. 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 [www.hssv.org](http://www.hssv.org).