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For Immediate Release:

Animal Foster Parents Donate \$2 Million to Humane Society Silicon Valley

Gift from longtime volunteers Shannon Wass and Dan Kelmenson will help HSSV expand foster care and other critical programs

[Milpitas, CA, Aug. 1, 2022] As longtime friends of Humane Society Silicon Valley (HSSV), Shannon Wass and Dan Kelmenson have opened their home to more than 130 foster animals. Now they are expanding their commitment by making a transformative \$2 million gift to support HSSV and its lifesaving mission. These funds will allow HSSV to sustain and grow its foster program, which plays a critical role in all of HSSV's work to help pets and their people.

With this gift, Shannon and Dan are honoring all of the foster cats and dogs they have loved and celebrating the families who have adopted these animals into loving homes. They also hope that more people in our community might be inspired to foster animals in the future. According to Shannon, the motivation behind this transformative gift to HSSV is simple: "The more fosters we take in, the more lives we can save."

In honor of Shannon and Dan's generous gift – a combination five-year pledge and legacy commitment – HSSV will name its foster program the Shannon Wass and Dan Kelmenson Foster Care Program. Each year, HSSV's foster program finds temporary homes for nearly 3,000 animals that need time and care before they are ready for adoption. These foster animals include pregnant cats and dogs, orphans too young to be adopted, and animals with special needs who might be recovering from illness or injury or stress from the shelter environment.

At any given time, as many as 200 foster families across Silicon Valley are hosting animals and extending HSSV's capacity to save far more animals than can be cared for in a single building. With Shannon and Dan's support, HSSV's fostering community will continue to grow.

As another way to bring more foster parents into the HSSV family, Shannon hopes to extend the program by translating educational materials into multiple languages and recruiting multilingual foster mentors. She is also excited about providing specialized training for fosters, such as fear-free handling for energetic large dogs and in-home protocols to treat ringworm — a critical need each year during the spring/summer "kitten season".

Shannon adopted a cat from HSSV in 2007, began volunteering a few years later, and since then has become a dedicated supporter, kitten nursery volunteer, foster parent, foster mentor, and HSSV board member. With their latest gift, Shannon and Dan are grateful that they can share the rewards of successful careers — Shannon in residential real estate, and Dan as a software developer who played key roles at Paypal, Facebook, and other companies.

“We want HSSV to continue to have a national profile — as a model shelter, with its exceptional veterinary department, and through a strong and growing foster program,” Shannon says. “But our real dream goes beyond that. Our hope is that shelters all over the world will be able to emulate HSSV’s game-changing programs like Regional Rescue and foster mentorship.”

The couple’s gift is part of \$16 million in recent donations to HSSV’s current campaign “Making and Keeping Families Whole”, including a \$10 million multi-year investment from Michelle Oates Detkin and Peter Detkin to expand access to veterinary care for families impacted by economic challenges, a \$3 million legacy gift to HSSV to establish the Cecilia Claudio Spay and Neuter Programs to help reduce animal homelessness, and a \$1 million planned gift to HSSV by Conni Ahart and Clint Severson that will help support several areas of HSSV’s work.

Over the next three years, HSSV’s goal is to raise \$60 million through this campaign to launch new programs and support existing work. These investments are focused on HSSV’s strategic initiatives: saving lives, keeping families together, and changing the game for pets and their people by increasing the funds, resources, and talent available to the sheltering community.

About Humane Society Silicon Valley

Humane Society Silicon Valley (HSSV) is an independent, privately funded, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving people and pets for over 90 years. In 2017, HSSV became the first organization ever to earn model shelter status according to the guidelines set forth by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians. As an independent non-profit organization, HSSV does not receive funding from Humane Society of the United States, ASPCA or state and federal government entities. HSSV offers quality adoptions, affordable spaying/neutering, vaccinations, microchipping services, pet care services and education programs to enhance the human-animal bond. Established in 1929, HSSV has adopted more than 500,000 animals into permanent, loving homes. Animal welfare is their top priority and their mission is to save and enhance lives. For more information, visit HSSV.org.

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Online press kits: HumaneSocietySiliconValley.OnlinePressKit247.com

Public sites: HSSV.org

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