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Animal Tales

Spring/Summer 2021

Covey's Corner

Researcher Dr. Ignacio Martinez-Moyano defines collaboration as “the process of two or more people, entities or organizations working together to complete a task or achieve a goal.”

In this issue of *Animal Tales*, you'll read about some of the many ways Washington County Animal Services and the Bonnie L. Hays Animal Shelter work collaboratively with rescue groups, police and fire agencies, community members and each other. This collaboration allows us to accomplish successful animal rescues, help pets along the road to recovery from illness and injury, and achieve some of the very best return-to-owner (RTO) rates in the country. (See page 8 for more on our RTO rates.)

I sometimes think back to when I first made the decision to pursue a career in animal welfare. I was in my early 20s and had a strong interest in learning all I could about the field. Because I lived in a small remote island town in Alaska, I traveled to Anchorage and then Seattle to visit and learn from larger animal service agencies. Even back then, I was impressed and grateful for the time and interest the staff at

these agencies took in making sure I had the support and information necessary to be successful in my work with animals. In my early years, I called my animal welfare colleagues often to ask questions or brainstorm solutions for shared challenges. I'm grateful to have found that same spirit of collaboration here in Washington County and in the greater Portland metropolitan area.

Collaboration is the key to our success and includes partnerships with other animal rescue entities, working relationships with local veterinary practices, involvement and leadership in regional animal disaster response and training, and, of course, you – the Washington County community.

I'm confident you'll enjoy reading this issue of *Animal Tales* and invite you to pay special attention to the article about our upcoming Animal Services Academy, an innovative way we're collaborating to bring important information to the community!

Warm regards,

Randy Covey

Helping Hobbs Hobble No More

Hobbs relaxing in a foster home thanks to one of our rescue partners, Indigo Rescue.



With the help of one of our rescue partners we were able to get Hobbs, a young 5-month-old German Shepherd with orthopedic concerns, the help he needed. Hobbs came into our shelter as a stray in late 2020. Right away, our shelter technicians and Animal Services officers noticed he looked uncomfortable by the way he was standing. Our medical team provided diagnostics, including radiographs and bloodwork, to make sure Hobbs didn't have any broken bones or underlying metabolic diseases.

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Like Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter on Facebook or follow @BonnieLHays on Twitter to stay up-to-date on happy reunions, events, pet news and more.

Helping Hobbs

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They also started him on a specialized feeding plan to rule out nutritional deficiencies and help him gain more weight.

During his stay at the Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter, our staff kept Hobbs comfortable by providing him lots of extra-padded bedding, monitoring him, and giving him some yummy treats throughout the day in addition to his special feeding plan. Hobbs improved a lot during his stay with us, which he displayed by showing more enthusiasm for walking and playing. Hobbs was a very happy puppy that couldn't get enough attention and love from the staff at our shelter!

We work with some amazing rescues in our area that place animals in foster care with community volunteers. When Hobbs' stray holding period was over and it was his time to go to a rescue, Indigo Rescue – one of our many partners – stepped up to continue his recovery. By going to Indigo Rescue, Hobbs has been able to receive additional medical diagnostics and treatment, and can recover in a calm home environment where his changing medical needs can be met. Once Hobbs' medical needs are cleared for him to be adopted, the rescue will find a loving forever home for him. We are thankful not only for our rescue partners, but also the community members who support both the Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter and the rescues we work with.

Sirius Made it Home for the Holidays

When Sirius arrived at our shelter in December 2020, we had no idea that he'd disappeared from his North Portland home over three months earlier. The big friendly dog was in good condition and was clearly well cared for. Our shelter technicians scanned Sirius for a microchip upon arrival at the shelter. They were happy not only to find out he had a microchip, but also that the contact information affiliated with it had been recently updated!

As it turns out, Sirius's family had updated his microchip information immediately after he went missing from their home back in early September, when their gate had blown open during the windstorms and accompanying wildfires in the region. The family looked for Sirius, filed a lost dog report in Multnomah County where they live, and posted all over the internet and in their neighborhood in search of their family member. The family did not expect to be making the drive to Hillsboro to pick up their dog who'd gone missing in Portland. The owner shared with us that Sirius had been with her through a lot of stressful situations since his adoption four years earlier, including being a huge source of support for her when she got married and during her pregnancy and the birth of her daughter. This reunion warmed our hearts! If you find a stray pet, please notify your local animal shelter immediately and file a found report. You could be the key to helping an animal get back home to their family quickly!



Sirius reunited with his family after three months apart!

Cookies for Caregivers

In January, one of our own longtime volunteers dropped by the shelter with a special surprise. As a volunteer for Cookies for Caregivers, Sheri delivered cookies for our staff who serve as essential workers!

Cookies for Caregivers was started by two dads in a competition for who made the best cookie during the pandemic. It has evolved into a Facebook group where people volunteer to make and deliver treats to frontline workers!

We are grateful for our caring community, including our volunteers who recognize the work our staff continue to do to support the people and pets of Washington County during the pandemic.



Volunteer Sheri delivers joy in the form of cookies to staff members Jenna Draggoo and Stacy Smejkal on a cold January day!

The Pandemic Pet Boom and Finding Veterinary Care

One positive thing that has come out of the COVID-19 pandemic is how many people have welcomed a new pet into their home over the past year and a half. Many shelters anticipated drastic spikes in the number of animals coming into their facilities due to financial hardship or other issues, but that's not what happened at all!

Many animal shelters across the country experienced the lowest number of animals they'd ever housed within their walls — numbers never thought possible. Some shelters even experienced empty facilities for the first time since their buildings had been constructed.

Where did all those animals go? At the beginning of the pandemic, many shelters shifted gears from housing animals onsite to placing them into adoptive homes or into foster programs. Community members found themselves with more time to devote to a pet while working from home and canceling travel or other plans, and many found themselves longing for the companionship of a pet during a time when our social interactions were scarce.

But what happens when thousands of people get pets while veterinary clinics are required to uphold stricter protocols for the safety of their staff and clients? If you are a pet parent, you know it became much harder for your pet to get a veterinary appointment for routine or even urgent care.

Private practice veterinarians are experiencing an overwhelming demand for their services. Whether it's puppies and kittens that need to stay on track with their vaccination boosters, older pets with chronic conditions that require maintenance medications and diagnostics, or emergency situations where a same day appointment is needed, veterinarians and their support staff are juggling tight schedules these days.

What does this mean for you and your new "pandemic pet" or your old faithful friend? Take time now, before you have an emergency with your pet, to establish a professional relationship with a veterinarian you know and trust. Keep an eye on upcoming veterinary services you know your pet will need and schedule routine appointments in advance. Some clinics are scheduling two to four weeks out. If you are thinking about getting a new pet, contact veterinarians around your area to see if they are taking new clients, or what the wait time would be before they could see your pet.

Enjoy your new family member, plan ahead the best you can, and please be patient with the veterinarians and their staff who are working hard to care for the animals in the community!

Collaborating with the Community – Animal Services Officers are Here to Help!

In any given week, Animal Services Officers (ASOs) might find themselves educating a pet owner about dog licensing, transporting an injured animal to one of our veterinary partners, or collaborating with law enforcement and other agencies on an animal neglect or abuse case. When our officers go out into the field, they never know what their day will bring.

Our staff is proud to provide animal-specific expertise when called upon for police assists, emergency services, and when our community members are in need of resources.

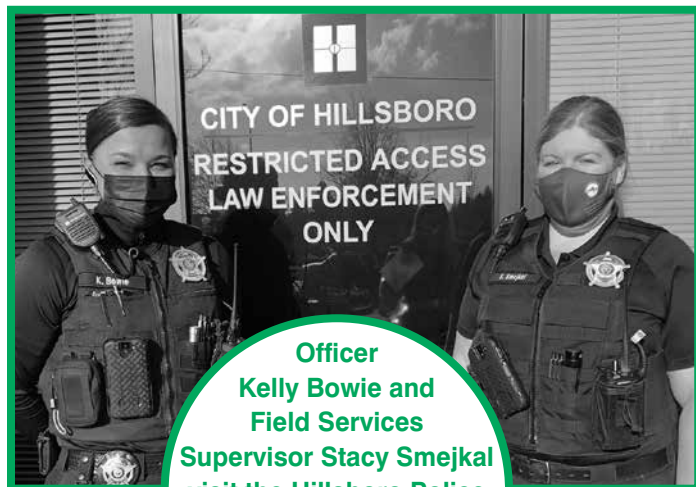
Read on for three stories about our Animal Services Officers in the field. We hope that when you see our ASOs out and about, you'll see them as a community resource that extends far beyond our animal shelter.

Marooned Max

Earlier this year, we were called to assist the Washington County Sheriff's Office with a dog in distress that appeared to be stranded on a little patch of grass in a marshy area. Two of our officers responded and met a deputy at the scene but were unable to reach the dog safely or convince the dog to swim toward them.

Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue was called in to assist due to the depth of the muddy water. While they were in the process of calling for a water rescue team with the appropriate gear, the deputy waded out into the water and found his way to little Max. He carried him to the safety of an awaiting ASO's arms, who was then able to take him back to their truck for a safe ride to the shelter for warmth and quality care!

Max, an 18-year-old senior dog with a sense of adventure, was reunited with his family at the Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter that very same day!



Officer Kelly Bowie and Field Services Supervisor Stacy Smejkal visit the Hillsboro Police Department to collaborate with their code enforcement team.

Keeping People and Pets Together

When we received a call from a community member who had been attacked by her own cat, our ASOs approached the situation with professionalism and kindness. The woman explained that the cat had belonged to her mother who'd recently died. She'd taken the cat in and wanted to care for it, but she didn't have much experience with felines. She was obviously upset at the idea of surrendering the cat but didn't know what choices she had.

Our officers noticed that the cat was not walking normally and asked the woman about the cat's medical history and veterinary care. Our ASOs carefully put the cat into a carrier so the owner could safely take her to a veterinarian for further evaluation. Ultimately, it was determined that the cat had a medical condition that was likely the cause of some discomfort and possibly the attack.

Our ASOs are trained to notice unusual animal behavior and when we respond to a call, our goal is to find solutions, rather than separate people from their pets.

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Special Exception Squirrel

A Tualatin resident was more than a little concerned when he looked in his wood stove and saw something looking back at him. He called us worried that a rabbit had gotten into the space and couldn't get out.

When two of our ASOs arrived at the home, they discovered that the "visitor" was actually a large squirrel. Our ASOs explained that while they are usually only able to assist with domestic animals, they would try their best to help in this situation. The officers were successful in carefully catching the squirrel in a net and releasing it outside where it took off up a tree.

We were pleased to receive an email shortly after the call stating, "I want to say how much I appreciated these officers taking care of this. In the future I know to call a commercial critter getter for something like this. They were nice guys who really helped me out because I was more than a bit freaked out by this experience. I can't thank them enough." Although working with squirrels is not a service we are able to offer, we do have wildlife resources listed on our website and are glad our ASOs could help in this case!

Quiet on the Set! Sharing Our Message on the Small Screen

Animal Services Manager Randy Covey watches PSA footage on set.



Officer Les Ico filming his scene as a dog guardian who realizes his furry family member is missing.



Officer Kelly Bowie poses for a scene with our canine star, Lucy.

If you're reading *Animal Tales*, you are likely already familiar with our work at Washington County Animal Services. However, we know that some people in our community might not know much about us or how or why to license their dog, and we want to reach them.

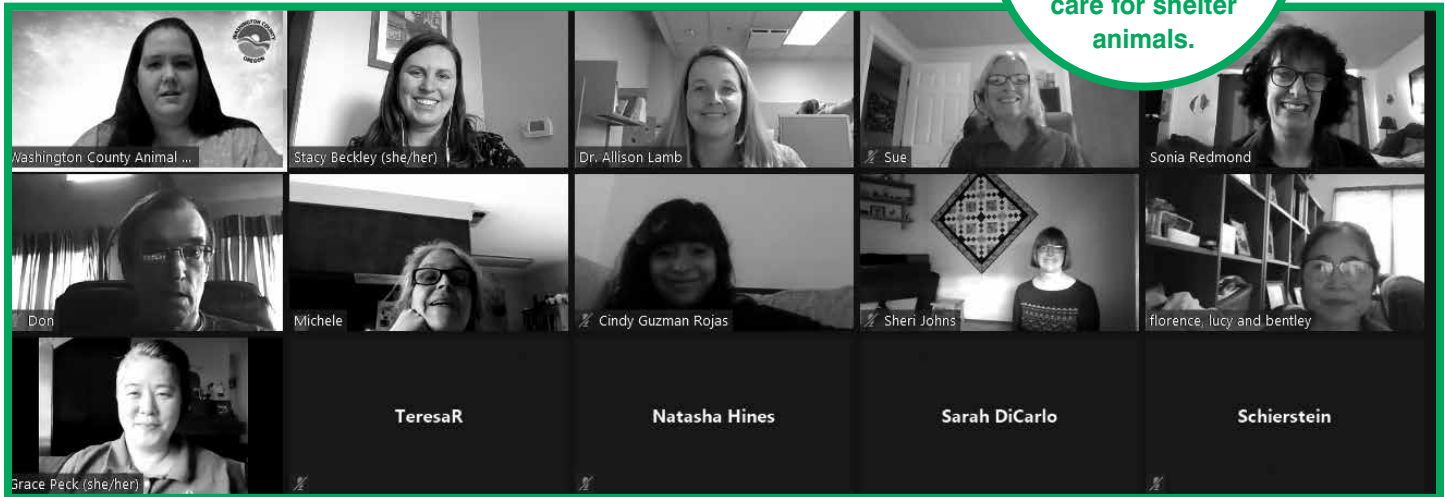
This spring we filmed a new public service announcement to encourage Washington County residents to license their dogs. The PSA was inspired by near daily happy reunions between lost pets and their families that take place at the Bonnie Hays Animal Shelter and in the field. Licensing your dog helps us get them back home if they are ever lost, shows others that your pet is vaccinated against rabies, and the license fees help fund services for animals in our county!

Thanks to Officer Kelly Bowie, Officer Les Ico, and Lucy the dog along with her guardian Nina Rogers, for their participation in this project!

If you haven't seen this commercial pop up on your television, you can hop over to our Facebook page or the Washington County YouTube page to check it out.

Introducing a New Volunteer Ambassador Program and the Animal Services Academy!

Volunteers participate via Zoom in a Volunteer Ambassador training focused on veterinary care for shelter animals.



Our volunteer program has weathered many changes this past year. COVID-19 safety protocols, aging facility limitations, and changes in the types and numbers of animals coming through the shelter have brought new challenges. Policy changes made necessary by those and other factors have resulted in fewer opportunities for volunteer dog walkers and cat socializers. Additionally, we have found there is an increased need for local outreach to promote ourselves as a community resource. We want residents to know we are here to help the people and pets of Washington County!

This past year we invited current volunteers to participate in a pilot program called the Volunteer Ambassador Program. Twice a month for six months we hosted virtual sessions during which our expert staff shared the inside details of our policies and programs. Topics included the importance of licensing your dog, code enforcement, investigating animal abuse and neglect, veterinary care, pet lost and found services, and daily animal care routines within the animal shelter. Volunteers and staff learned a lot from each other!

Our goal was to help volunteers become equipped to answer animal welfare questions within their own communities which may include family, friends and neighbors, both in person and on social media sites like Nextdoor. Questions they have already encountered include, “What should I do if I find a stray dog?” and “My neighbor’s dog is barking too much, what can we do?” When Washington County is able to have events again, our Volunteer Ambassadors will share information about us at community events.

Here is what two volunteers who participated in the pilot program had to say about it:

“I really enjoyed attending these very informative training sessions. They have helped me understand and appreciate what Animal Services does, and why, for the animals in our community.” — Sue

“I’ve always known this but as a longtime volunteer I can easily say to folks: The staff are extremely dedicated to the care and well-being of the animals. They do their best to provide excellent customer service and experience regardless of how difficult the situations may be.” — Florence

Based on the success of the Volunteer Ambassador pilot program, we will be launching the Animal Services Academy this fall! This free virtual program will be offered twice a year to anyone age 16 or older in Washington County.

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The Animal Services Academy will be presented in 10 weekly virtual sessions on Saturdays from 10 a.m. – noon.

Fall 2021 Schedule:

General overview

September 18

The importance of licensing your dog

September 25

A guide to lost and found pets

October 2

Field services: Investigating abuse,
neglect & code enforcement

October 9

The animal intake process:
What happens to the animals at the shelter?

October 16

Veterinary medicine within animal shelters

October 23

Animal enrichment

October 30

Community resources

November 6

Disaster preparedness:

Are your pets ready?

November 13

Careers in animal welfare

November 20

After completing the 10-week program, participants will have the opportunity to apply to become an official Volunteer Ambassador! Even if you choose not to become a Volunteer Ambassador the knowledge you will gain at the Animal Services Academy will benefit you, our community, and the animals we share our lives with.

Keep an eye out for more information on our website. We look forward to you joining us for this opportunity to learn more about our services and to connect with your community!

Get Inspired by a Catio Tour

Cat + patio = catio! Catos are outdoor enclosures that allow indoor cats to safely enjoy some fresh air. We love catios at Washington County Animal Services because they keep cats safe from dangers like disease, cat fights, cars, predators and pesticides. They also keep birds and other wildlife, some of which may be endangered or threatened species, safe from kitties who may be avid hunters.

A catio provides a happy middle ground for cats that might enjoy being outside and their owners who want to keep them safe.

There are a wide variety of options when it comes to catios. Looking for inspiration for your own home or just curious about this growing trend? Check out the 9th Annual Cats Safe at Home Catio Tour scheduled for Saturday, September 11, 2021. After hosting a strictly virtual tour last year, the organizers are hoping to make the 2021 event a hybrid one, featuring both in-person and virtual options. Learn more at catssafeathome.org/catio-tour-info.



Angel, José
and Grace relax
in style while taking
in the world from
their catio on
Bull Mountain.

Whose Cat is it Anyway?

There are many risks that come with allowing your cat to roam freely around your neighborhood. Not only is your kitty in danger of being hit by a car or injured in a fight with another animal, but they also may harm birds and other wildlife while out and about. Being outside also increases the chances they will be mistaken for a stray, even though they have a family back home! This makes it even more important that cats have both a microchip and an ID tag that neighbors can peek at if they are unsure if the cat is a stray.

If you have a cat, we urge you to keep them inside if possible. Whether they are indoors or out, double check that the contact information associated with their microchip is current and that their tag is accurate and easy to read. This helps your cat get home if it finds its way to our shelter or into the arms of a Good Samaritan!

If you see a cat in your yard or neighborhood, assume your furry visitor has an owner. Please don't keep or give away a cat you find. Pets are family, but animals are considered property under the law, which means certain steps must be taken if you find one and hope to add them to your family:

- File a "found report" with us.
- Take the kitty to be scanned for a microchip. Vets will do this for free (as will we).
- Ask neighbors if they recognize the kitty.
- Contact Animal Services to ensure you are following all necessary steps to reunite the cat with its family.

More information about what to do if you lose or find a pet is available at www.washingtoncountypets.com



Ernie had been missing for almost four months when we called to tell his family that a Good Samaritan had brought him to the shelter. What a reunion!

What is RTO?

Return-to-owner efforts, also known as "RTO," remain a central part of our work at Washington County Animal Services. When a stray animal enters our shelter, our goal is to reunite that pet with their family as fast as possible! RTO reinforces the idea that most stray animals in our community are not abandoned but instead have families who care about them and want them back.

Every dog and cat who arrives at our shelter is checked immediately for identification, scanned for a microchip, and photographed for our website. During the legally required stray hold period for an animal, our team continues to work to find the owner and get the lost pet back home. Staff spend time reviewing lost and found reports, searching social media groups for lost animal posts matching shelter animals, and responding to calls and emails regarding lost and found animals. Our administrative staff contribute to the effort by attempting to reach owners of licensed dogs through mail, phone or email.

We are proud of each reunion that takes place because of our team's efforts! You can help your pet get back home if it is ever lost by placing a collar with ID on them, microchipping cats and dogs, licensing your dog, and checking regularly to make sure your contact information is up to date on all of your pet's identification. We also recommend routinely inspecting your fence to make sure your dog does not go on any adventures without you. Whenever pets are found wandering alone, we know RTO is the way to go!

Donations: Friends of the Animals

October 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021

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\$10,000+

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Animal Friend

\$500-\$9,999

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Animal Advocate

\$50-\$499

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Dog Licensing Gets Butters Back Home

Butters had been missing from his home for about two weeks when Jenny Kanakis and her boyfriend stumbled across him darting in and out of traffic on their way to take their own dog to a veterinary appointment in Hillsboro.

After helping Butters get safely out of the road and on a leash, Jenny noticed the Washington County dog license tag on his collar. Although Butters did not have a separate tag with a phone number or address on it, the dog license provided information to help get him home. Jenny used the dog license lookup tool on our website to find the name and phone number of Butters' guardian, who was thrilled to be reunited with her dog. This tool is located on the front page of our website at www.washingtoncountypets.com. Community members can use it to help a licensed lost dog make it back home without the expense, delay and stress of going to the animal shelter.

We are grateful for Jenny and other caring community members like her who help lost animals make it back home. Remember, if you have a canine companion, please make sure they wear their dog license to show they have a family who cares about them. Our shelter technicians and Animal Services officers aren't the only ones who can make a reunion happen – you can, too!



Butters, safe
and happy to be
back with his
family.

Animal Tales is a publication of Washington County Animal Services & the Bonnie L. Hays Small Animal Shelter

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