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County of Santa Clara Animal Care & Control Places 100% of Healthy Dogs and Cats in 2011

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIF.— In 2011, the County of Santa Clara's Animal Care & Control Division placed 100% of the healthy animals entering its shelter in San Martin. The overall adoption and reclaim rate for 2011 was 80%, a remarkable accomplishment considering that the national average is just 50%. The shelter, which takes in about 3,000 animals per year, is an "open-door shelter," meaning that it accepts all stray animals from its jurisdiction, the unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County. Located in a rural area, the shelter also faces special challenges like large numbers of feral cats on farm properties and abandoned horses.

"The Animal Care and Control staff does an excellent job," said Supervisor Mike Wasserman, Chair of the Board of Supervisors' Housing Land Use Environment and Transportation Committee. "I am pleased that they are working with community partners to ensure that every adoptable animal is placed in a loving home."

The Division credits its success to several life-saving programs begun in the last few years. One such program is the WeCARE Coalition, a partnership of six shelters in Santa Clara County working together with the common goals of increasing pet adoptions and reclaims and decreasing euthanasia. In December of 2011, the coalition held a joint adoption event called "Home for the Holidays" with a goal of placing 1,000 animals county-wide by New Year's Eve. That goal was not only met but exceeded, with 1,128 animals being placed overall, 171 of whom came from the shelter in San Martin.

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"An 80% live release rate shows a level of progress that very few municipal agencies have achieved--the people of Santa Clara County should be proud of this accomplishment," said Rich Avanzino, President of Maddie's Fund, The Pet Rescue Foundation. "Maddie's Fund salutes our animal welfare neighbors who have worked collaboratively to achieve this benchmark of lifesaving success."

Another life-saving program is the Barn Cat Spay/Neuter Outreach. Every spring and summer, feral and stray pet cats reproduce, filling shelters to capacity with hundreds of kittens. In 2011, shelter staff and volunteers reached out to the community to help them solve this perpetual problem. With the help of residents -- often rural property owners -- all cats in each area are trapped and evaluated. Healthy feral cats are spayed or neutered and returned to the property, while friendly cats and kittens are put up for adoption. Thanks to this program, the shelter saw a 15% reduction in cat intake and an amazing 65% reduction in cat euthanasia.

The County of Santa Clara Animal Shelter is located at 12370 Murphy Ave. in San Martin near US Highway 101 at San Martin Avenue. The shelter is open seven days a week: Mon-Fri, 12-6 and Sat-Sun 12-5, closed on major holidays.

To learn more about the shelter, view adoptable pets, or make a donation, please visit our web site at www.sccountypets.org or call (408) 686-3900.

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