

CREATURE CHRONICLES

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE VIRGINIA BEACH SPCA

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Message from the CEO

When the Waters Rise, We Must Rise Higher

My job is both incredibly heartwarming and incredibly heartbreaking.

On a very personal level, I believe my heart has grown bigger with the adoptions of my cat, Tubby, and my puppy, Sueshi, from the VBSPCA.

Sueshi joined our family five months ago. Given that one of the perks of my job is that I get to bring her to work with me, we are rarely separated. We love each other, a lot!

My heart was broken by the recent discovery that she has a rare and serious congenital birth defect. Both of her kidneys are severely abnormal. A Google search will tell you that most animals with this condition do not live beyond one year of age.

Those of us who work in shelters often adopt the animals who are the sickest and least likely to be adopted. We will adopt the "tripods," the seniors, the heartworm positive, the emotionally scarred, and the behaviorally challenged.

The staff members of the VBSPCA regularly, routinely and *literally* take their "work" home with them. In addition to adopting special needs animals, our employees provide foster care in their homes until animals are old enough or healthy enough to be adopted. For staff, this can mean waking up every three hours during the night to feed unweaned foster kittens, then coming to work the next day to take care of more animals.

Shelter professionals' compassion and desire to help all animals can take a toll. Witnessing atrocities and caring for animals that are sick, abused and neglected on a daily basis can lead to "compassion fatigue." A recent study revealed that animal welfare workers, along with firefighters and police officers, have the highest rate of occupational suicide among American workers.

What is truly heartbreaking to me is when compassion fatigue, an occupational hazard of the caregiving work we choose to do, is compounded by hurtful accusations

from other passionate, well-intentioned animal welfare advocates.

Let me tell you a story to illustrate this point.

The VBSPCA's Director of Shelter Operations, Jenny Teed, has lived in Hampton Roads for several years, but she still calls Baton Rouge "home." When animal shelters in her hometown were impacted by the recent flooding, she was eager to answer the call to help. For several days, Jenny and other animal welfare professionals from Virginia worked day and night to help our Louisiana colleagues.

Removing dead bodies from shelter cages was one of the most tragic tasks Jenny faced. These animals had drowned while desperately trying to escape their cages as the flood waters rose in one shelter. Luckily, most shelters anticipated the disaster, accepted offers of assistance prior to the flood, and did not leave animals to perish.

Another task was to help make room in multiple Louisiana shelters for pets who were displaced by the floods. In order to do this, some homeless animals who were already in those shelters prior to the floods were brought to Virginia for adoption.

At the Virginia Beach SPCA, we took 16 dogs from Louisiana. All of those dogs were adopted immediately. In addition, the outpouring of people who came to our shelter to adopt Louisiana dogs led to many "Virginia" animals



being adopted. We had one of the most successful adoption weeks of the year.

Imagine our dismay when we saw vitriolic social media postings stating that the animals from Louisiana had only been brought back to Virginia to be "killed" by "kill shelters." Or that even if these Louisiana dogs were adopted, other dogs already in Virginia shelters would be "killed" as a result. Or that we had taken pets from Louisiana who would never be reunited with their families. Hello, these dogs were not strays as a result of the flooding...they were in shelters *prior* to the threat of disaster!

Imagine Jenny sobbing...suffering from the emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion of compassion fatigue...while simultaneously having to defend her actions and the actions of the VBSPCA in the face of these attacks.

Oh yes, I forgot to mention...Jenny's family members in Baton Rouge lost nearly everything they own in the flood.

I can't tell you how incredibly touching it was to me that other animal welfare professionals and advocates in our region spearheaded a fundraising campaign to help Jenny's family. Many of them knew Jenny was trying to help others when her own family needed help.

Like I said, my job is both incredibly heartwarming and incredibly heartbreaking. There is so much good and so much bad in this Louisiana story. And I could tell you many other similar stories of the good, bad and ugly of animal welfare.

Before I entered the field of animal welfare, I worked in child welfare. I sometimes had to testify in court to have children removed from their homes, or to permanently terminate parents' rights to their children.

Despite that experience, I never received a death threat until I started working at the VBSPCA. I know I am not alone. Other shelter directors in our region have also received death threats. As top leaders of our organizations, we shoulder these threats and do what we can to protect ourselves and our employees. Some of us take down our Facebook pages to prevent hackers from accessing our personal information, consult attorneys regarding protective orders, or take other legal action when appropriate.

I usually try to stay out of the infighting among

animal walfare arganizations and



animal welfare organizations and advocates because I believe it hurts all of us and our cause. I firmly believe we all want what is best for animals, we just sometimes disagree about what is best. At the VBSPCA, we try to collaborate whenever possible and focus on the positive, such as the outpouring of support for Jenny's family led by other shelters and advocates in our region.

But it crosses the line for me when I see dedicated animal welfare professionals like Jenny suffering because some some other animal advocates are spreading inflammatory and often untrue rhetoric.

Imagine what it feels like when someone says you work in a "kill shelter." This term is absurd, made even more so when applied to the VBSPCA because we consistently achieve exceptionally high adoption rates.

We need to draw the line when passion and words like "kill" are turning to poison and endangering the lives of animal welfare professionals. The discourse is not only engendering death threats but also compounding compassion fatigue.

In our Humane Education programs, we try to teach children about the importance of increasing compassion and decreasing cruelty towards one another and all living things. In fact, increasing compassion and decreasing cruelty are at the heart of the mission of the VBSPCA.

This is a lesson many adults, even some who are ardent animal welfare advocates, need to revisit.



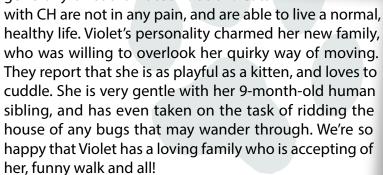
Dia DuVernet President & CEO

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A Purrfect Match

Violet's family initially came to the VBSPCA in search of a dog, but decided that a cat with a docile personality would be a better fit for them. They were introduced to Violet (previously known as Salty), a cute, friendly 3-year-old cat. Violet has Cerebellar-Hypoplasia, a disorder found in dogs and cats which causes jerky movements, tremors, and generally uncoordinated motion. Cats







Tim's Training Tips

- Catch your dog getting it right. The average owner only pays attention to their dog when he or she is doing something wrong. Think about it: your dog has been lying around the house quietly all morning and then barks. You tell your dog to "hush" and that is the first interaction you've had with him or her all morning. You are rewarding your dog for barking by giving him or her attention. Instead, reward your dog as he or she is quiet and calm throughout the day.
- Set your dog up for success. Unless your dog has had extensive training, beginning their training at the local park on a Saturday, or at a pet store, is cause for information overload on your dog's end. Remember that your dog smells every dog, every person, and every animal in the area. Begin your training in a room with no distractions. I like to train dogs in a restroom for my first few sessions. That way I can shut the door and keep the other pets and little people from interrupting. Once I've had success in the restroom, then I move to the living room. Once my dog does well in the living room, I may turn the TV on, have another human in the room, or bring in another animal. From there I'll work in the backyard, on the front porch, in the front yard, and so on. If you move to a new area and your dog isn't listening go back a step or two.

Tim Molina is the Lead Trainer and Manager of Happy Paws Humane Pet Training. Happy Paws is the preferred option for people who want their pets to be happy, well-behaved members of their families. Happy Paws, a program of the Virginia Beach SPCA, has a "humane seal of approval" and is endorsed by the Chesapeake **Humane Society and Norfolk SPCA.**

To learn more, visit HappyPawsTraining.org or call (757) 963-8661



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A Happy Tail

Yo-Yo, an American Bulldog mix, had a rough start in life. Before coming to the VBSPCA, he lived his entire life outside, chained up with no shelter. He didn't even know how to play with toys, and was heartworm positive. It was clear to us that Yo-Yo needed a special family, one who would make sure that his sad beginning would not define the rest of his life. He found his perfect family, and we couldn't be happier. We recently received a touching letter from Yo-Yo's new mom, which we've shared below.

We adopted our first dog, Buddy, from the VBSPCA almost a year ago in the beginning of September 2015. It was our first experience with the VBSPCA and it was great—all the staff and volunteers were friendly and more than helpful. The facility was astonishingly clean and well cared for along with the animals. But what really struck me was the level of compassion that could be felt as soon as we walked in the door. I had looked at dogs online so I had an idea of which ones I wanted to take a closer look at when I got to the VBSPCA, but I LOVE dogs so when I got there I couldn't help myself and I talked at length to the staff about almost every dog. Each staff member that I talked to spoke about the dogs in a manner that immediately made clear that these dogs are loved and cared for greatly while they wait for their forever homes. The conversations weren't just simply stated facts like age, breed, male/female; rather the staff knew each dog's quirks, personality, and favorite toys and treats.

After about an hour, we submitted an application on Buddy, a heartworm positive Setter mix, and I left the VBSPCA with watery eyes (happy watery eyes). We brought Buddy home the next day and got him through his heartworm treatment over the next few months. In early December 2015, I had finally convinced my fiancé Nick that we needed another dog, a playmate for Buddy. Once again, I had done my research online so I had a couple of dogs in mind prior to arriving at the VBSPCA. But the dogs I had pre-selected were not as other-dog-friendly as I had hoped so I strolled the kennels, stopping to look at and read about every dog. When I reached Yo-Yo's

kennel, his story gave me watery eyes...again. He was so happy and excited in his kennel and promptly started licking and pawing the gate as if he was trying to let us know that he is a loving, friendly guy. Nick and I met with him outside for about 15 minutes and I fell in love.

The next day we brought Buddy to the VBSPCA for a dog-to-dog introduction. It went great watching Buddy and Yo-Yo play brought the staff to tears. Nick and I were sold so we filled out the paperwork, bought an Easy Walk Harness, and were on our way home.

Yo-Yo fit right in to our family as if he had been with us for years—playing with his brother Buddy like they were old friends, and laying on the couch as close as possible to us. Over the next few months, we got Yo-Yo through his heartworm treatment and fell even more in love with our two VBSPCA alumni.

We have had Buddy for 9 months and Yo-Yo for 6 months and we could not imagine life without them. Both have graduated from a beginner's obedience course and Buddy has started on intermediate. (Yo-Yo will be starting in a couple months) Yo-Yo has learned to sit, lie down, shake, stay, and come. Buddy and Yo-Yo have 4 dog cousins that they love to hang out with. Yo-Yo loves his cousin Hannibal (an 8-year-old Boxer) the most. We frequently take the dogs on weekend adventures to Mount Trashmore, the beach, state parks, and hiking in the west side of the state and they love every minute of it. Yo-Yo now happily jumps in the car!

Even though Yo-Yo came from such a sad, rough background he has become the most loving, loyal, and goofy dog. He loves to eat, go on walks and runs, play Frisbee and cuddle. I wanted to update you on how well Yo-Yo is doing but I also wanted to thank the VBSPCA with all my heart for giving us two wonderful dogs that we love so much. Thank you for putting your faith in Yo-Yo so that, despite his awful start in life, he could become a loving family member. Although he was extremely mistreated for the first two years of his life, Yo-Yo is well loved (and spoiled!) now and he has the VBSPCA to thank for giving him his second chance at life.

Without the dedicated, compassionate, and hardworking animal advocates at the VBSPCA, Yo-Yo would have just been another sad story of a forgotten, mistreated dog. I cannot say enough about the VBSPCA and its wonderful staff and volunteers who work so hard to find animals from all different backgrounds their forever homes. Even though Yo-Yo was at the VBSPCA for 4 long months, no one gave up on him. He found his forever home and we found another member of our family. Thank you for taking a chance on him and all the other animals that need somebody on their side.



Celebrating 50 Years of Compassion

We're a Shelter and More...



We're a Community of Compassion.

We first met **Amy Stout** like we meet any new volunteer. She attended a Volunteer Orientation back in February 2013 because she loved critters and wanted to give her time to a worthy cause. After volunteering in several areas of the shelter, she settled into fostering and is now one of our go-to volunteers when kittens or puppies need a loving, temporary home. Amy is truly a member of the VBSPCA family, and the VBSPCA is a large part of her family! Her husband and children volunteer their time, and her youngest daughter is a regular face at our Critter Camps and one-day workshops. When asked what fostering means to her, Amy said, "Fostering is a big part of my family's life. We truly enjoy watching our kittens and puppies grow.

It's an incredibly fulfilling experience that has taught my children how to be more compassionate and responsible." Kittens and puppies come to us in the most vulnerable stage of their lives, and many would not survive in a shelter environment. Having the opportunity to be nurtured in a home, rather than a busy shelter, means that these delicate babies will grow into wonderful, healthy pets. Our foster volunteers are truly lifesavers.

Rebecca Meredith is a valuable member of our volunteer team. You may know that the VBSPCA offers a Court-Ordered Community Service Program for community members who are required to complete service hours in response to a minor offense, or who wish to serve volunteer hours prior to going to a court hearing. Rebecca handles the logistics for this program, including providing orientations, scheduling community service shifts, and record-keeping. Rebecca's organizational skills, attention to detail, and friendly attitude ensure that this program runs like a well-oiled machine. When asked what the VBSPCA means to her, Rebecca said "I am just so proud that I can be a part of the amazing things happening at the VBSPCA. If you are looking to have a significant positive impact on the community, make a donation or volunteer. Miracles happen here every day." If you would like more information about our Court-Ordered Community Service Program, you may



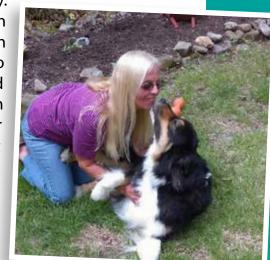
contact Rebecca at communityservice@vbspca.com or 427-0070 x102.

Interested in joining our Community of Compassion? Visit vbspca.com/get-involved to learn the many ways that YOU can make a difference for homeless animals in Virginia Beach!

CREATURE CHRONICLES • Summer 2016

In May the VBSPCA Community lost a beloved volunteer. Candy Jordan was a familiar face in our shelter and could be found in our kennel almost every weekend. She was incredibly hardworking, a dog lover through and through, and a great friend. She was

a kind, sensitive and loving soul whose presence is missed dearly. Candy didn't let anything, even a cancer diagnosis, interfere with her dedication to her VBSPCA family. When she lost her battle with cancer, we were heartbroken. The VBSPCA family said goodbye to Candy in a touching service in our memorial garden. We laughed and cried together as we exchanged stories of the many ways in which Candy touched our lives. Candy, just like so many of our volunteers, made a difference in the lives of countless animals. Just as the lives of our furry friends are changed thanks to the members of our community, our organization too is molded and shaped by this community.



Round of A-Paws

We're so grateful for everyone who donated supplies for the 27 baby bunnies in our care this summer. Thanks to your support, the bunnies have plenty of food, toys, and all of the necessities they'll need while living in their foster homes.

Three cheers for Pleasure House Brewing for hosting raffles that benefited the VBSPCA to the tune of over \$1,000!

We love Mix it Up, whose owners hosted a party in honor of their rescue dog Mixey's adoptiversary. A portion of proceeds were donated to the VBSPCA, and all of their customers learned about the importance of adopting shelter dogs. We'd call a that win-win!

We're so grateful for J&A Racing for naming the VBSPCA as their charity of choice for their last Summer Series 5K run!

A. Dodson's named the VBSPCA their round-up charity of the month in July, raising over \$2,000 for the critters in our care! We're so grateful!

Huge thanks to London Bridge Garden Center for donating mulch for the flower beds at our main shelter.

Thanks to the Master Gardeners who work hard to ensure that our wetlands are always beautiful.

This summer, an anonymous donor and a volunteer have donated countless hours and materials to whip our landscaping into shape! While these amazing folks wish to keep their names under wraps, we want them to know that we think they're amazing!

We're wild about Girl Scout Troop 176! They donated supplies for our wildlife program, including bat houses, for their Silver Award Project!

We were really in a pickle when our Neuter Scooter got stuck in the mud. Sandbridge Towing donated their services to help us get back on the road!

Two paws up for Smith & Keene! They donated and installed 2 digital thermostats and 2 NASA quality "air scrubbers." The air scrubbers help to eliminate the spread of airborne illness, which is very important in a shelter environment.

Add Taylor Locksmith to our list of heroes! They donated locks for our clinic pharmacy cabinet and came to unlock a door for us in an emergency!

We love Yoga Revolutionaries! This summer they donated a portion of proceeds from every transaction on their website!





On June 16th, major donors from the past 50 years came together to celebrate our golden anniversary. They enjoyed delicious food graciously donated by 80/20 Burger Bar, Urban Cupcakes, The Landing, Nawab Indian Cuisine, Croc's 19th Street Bistro, Chesapeake Bay Catering, and Princess Anne Country Club. Sandra Baylor provided beautiful floral arrangements that really made our shelter shine! Guests toured our shelter and clinic, stopping to visit with adoptable animals, chat with staff members about our many programs, and peruse our wall of memories.

Another event on June 18th, a block-party-style birthday party, drew large crowds of smiling faces. Many media outlets, including The Hampton Roads Show, Jen Lewis at WAVY 10, WTKR, and Stephanie Taylor at Eagle 97.3, helped to promote the party in the days leading up to the event. Bounce Hoppers donated a bounce house, which was a huge hit with our pint-sized visitors. Guests were treated to a canine play area hosted by our Happy Paws Pet Trainers, face painting, a petting "zoo" and games. Get Stuffed and Kona Ice arrived just in time for lunch, and Eagle 97.3 provided us with great music all day long. The icing on the cake? Thirty eight animals found their forever homes that day! A huge "thank you" goes out to the volunteers who helped make the party a success! The wonderful photos of our birthday party were provided by Natasha Valentine.

Every day we are grateful for the people and businesses who have made it possible for us to lead the charge in animal welfare in our community for the past 50 years. Here's to the next 50!



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CREATURE CHRONICLES • Fall 2016

Puttin' for Paws

On August 19, 2016, over 90 golfers hit the links to participate in our 15th Annual Puttin' for Paws Golf Tournament at Red Wing Lake Golf Course. These dedicated supporters didn't even let a rain delay dampen their spirits! A great time was had by all, and this event brought in nearly \$25,000 for the animals! We were thrilled to have former NHL player Curtis "CuJo" Joseph play in our tournament this year. Special thanks to our presenting sponsors, Endurance I.T. Services and The Breeden Company. Lunch was generously provided by Citrus, and The Egg Bistro provided a delicious dinner.



Mark your calendar!

Grab your leash and hit the beach! Join us on Sunday, October 30th at 31st Street Park for our Mutt Masquerade 5K Run and 1 Mile Walk for the Animals! The morning kicks off with our dog-friendly 5K Run and also features our 1-Mile Walk for the Animals. Join us for free activities and games in the park, participate in our costume contest, shop our pet-related vendors, and meet adoptable animals from local shelters!

Have you already registered? Help us go the extra mile for the animals by creating a fundraising page at FirstGiving.com/vbspca/5kwalk.

We can't wait to see you and your costume-clad canines!

Register today at vbspca.com/5K!

Download the "Walk for a Dog" app! Every step you take is turned into donations for your favorite animal welfare organization. Use the app during your daily walks or while you're participating in our 5K!



VIRGINIA BEACH SPCA'S

Tribute Gifts

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William "Bill" Del oatc John Pruitt Mapp, Mapp & Klein Angela Hughes Tanya McComb Cherry Bekaert LLF Robert Barnes Linda Cater Brad Pritchard Eleanor Breckenrida William E. Wall, Jr.

Leigh & Jean Ansell

You can ensure that animals in need will be cared for well into the future by including the Virginia Beach SPCA in your estate plans.

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Learn more at vbspca.com/ friendsforever, or contact Dia DuVernet, President & CEO, at (757) 301-8719, or ceo@vbspca.com.

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Ammon & Lillian Tharp Tasha Frederick lanet Cooke CREATURE CHRONICLES • Fall 2016

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while making a

difference in the lives

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Featured Product



OllyDog makes gear designed from a dog's point of view. Every product, like the OllyBottle, brings better function, fresher style, and more fun for you and your dog.







The Treat Bag Plus is a great way to carry training treats. With a new and improved design, this stylish bag has a magnetic closure for one-handed operation. The secure, zippered pocket is large enough to stash your keys, cash, and ID card. Available in a variety of colors and patterns - grab one for every day of the week!

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Visit our Pet Supplies & Adoption Center at 983 Providence Square Shopping Center in Virginia Beach!
Every dollar you spend helps to provide a second chance for homeless animals in your community.

Take 10% off all OllyDog products when you mention our newsletter!

*Offer valid only at Providence Square location.

DIY Corner

Easy No-Sew Cat Toys

We all know that cats love to play with found items. No q-tip, milk bottle cap, or hair tie is safe in the presence of a cat. Why not make them their very own toy with a few items you already have around the house? It's as easy as 1-2-3, and we think your cats will thank you.



A sock (we used a baby sock) Dried catnip Embroidery thread Feathers (optional)





Steps:

- 1. Cut strips down the leg of the sock.
- 2. Fill the sock with catnip. We placed our catnip in a crumpled up paper ball for a bit of a crinkly effect. You can also add bells!
- 3. If using feathers, insert them deep into the sock so that they don't slip out. Use your thread to tie a tight knot in the sock. You're done!



3040 Holland Road Virginia Beach, VA 23453 phone: (757) 427-0070 fax: (757) 427-5939 www.vbspca.com • info@vbspca.com

OPEN FOR ADOPTION SEVEN DAYS A WEEK!

HOURS OF OPERATION

Shelter Receiving Hours:

Mon-Thurs 12-5pm, Sat & Sun 10am-3pm

Shelter Adoption Hours:

Mon-Thurs 12-6pm, Fri 1-4pm, Sat & Sun 10am-4pm

Pet Supplies & Adoption Center Hours:

Mon-Sat 10-6pm, Sun 12-6pm

Check out www.vbspca.com, where adoptable animals' photos are updated regularly.