

The PAWSitive

* A publication of Riverside County Animal Services * DECEMBER 2020 *

Other Stories

Page 2 — *A HOLIDAY MESSAGE FROM ANIMAL SERVICES DIRECTOR*

JULIE BANK: Thank you to all those helping to save animals.

Page 3 — *The ASK FOUNDATION KEEPS ASSISTING ANIMAL SERVICES:*

A \$10,000 grant is the most recent donation.

Page 5 — *HAPPY NEWS TO WARM YOUR HEARTS DURING THE HOLIDAYS:*

Our Stories of the Year series continues with No. 6, No. 7 and No. 8.

Page 6 — *REMEMBER WHEELIE PUP?*

A dog stuck in a spare wheel made the Top 5 in our Stories of the Year list.

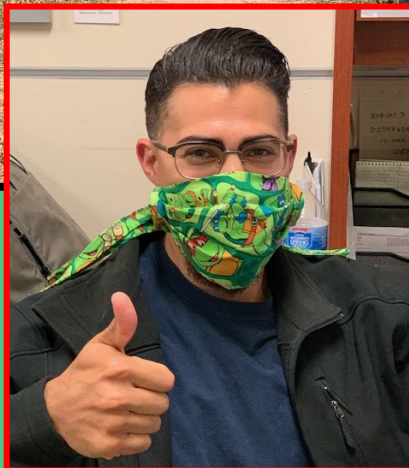
Page 7 — Neglected dogs get a second chance (Story No. 2 in our Top 10); and Buck tops all stories in 2020.

Page 8 — PetSmart continues wonderful partnership with Animal Services.

Page 9 — Please take a peek at our Holiday Fundraising Guide.

*** COVER STORY ***

Our Holiday Tradition: Stories-of-the-Year List



King Solomon and his family, above, made the cut for our 2020 Stories-of-the-Year list. And we all kept a positive spirit this year, as Senior Animal Care Technician Daylin Valencia showcased, left, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Please go to Page 4 to review all of our top stories this year.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

We are in the holiday spirit at Riverside County Animal Services despite a global pandemic. This past year has had its ups and downs, but as homeless and abandoned animals continue to come into our shelters our commitment to their welfare and spirit continues to prevail.

During the past year we have quickly created new opportunities and programs to support the human-animal bond and increase the successful placement of the animals in our care. Our Healthy Pet Zone program has supported hundreds of individuals impacted by COVID-19 by providing pet food, wellness and temporary boarding.

Our community and transfer partners have stepped up to open their homes to new four-legged family members and

our volunteers have been amazing by fostering animals and providing them with walks, treats and love. As the adage says, "It takes a village" and I want to personally say thank you to the village that makes our programs successful and help us to save lives every day.

In this newsletter, you will read about some of the stories that touched our hearts in 2020. You will also learn more about our team and some of our amazing donors and supporters throughout the year. You will also hear about ways you can support us during the holidays including giving someone the gift of love by purchasing a gift certificate for an adoption, donating in the name of a loved one, or doing a community donation drive of towels and blankets to keep our pets warm. (Please take a look at the



Director Julie Bank showcases one of her pets, 10-year-old Bobbie, and her holiday outfit — which was removed soon after this photo because, well, Bobbie is not a fan of playing dress-up.

Holiday Fundraising Guide on Page 9.) Every bit goes a long way to make the animals that enter our shelter that much better.

As we end 2020, I want to again say thank you to all who have supported us during the year.

We are hoping that 2021 brings on some much-needed sunshine for us all. Wishing you and your loved ones a very Happy Holiday and New Year.

Warmly,

Julie Bank

ASK Foundation Provides \$10,000 Grant Grant to Help Owners in Need During COVID-19

Animal Services received a grant for \$10,000 from The Animal Solutions Konnection (ASK) Foundation that will be used to help pet owners during the pandemic.

The grant will assist pet owners with needs that will help keep the pets with their owners. Some of those needs include spay/neuter surgeries, vaccinations and microchips. Riverside County Animal

Services will provide those services for free, thanks to the ASK grant.

Shelter staff will assist those pet owners expressing a need for assistance.

The nonprofit ASK Foundation started its mission in 2009 to work as a close partner with Riverside

County Animal Services on various projects, events and

outreaches.

The ASK Foundation actively coordinates spay and neuter outreach events, assists Animal Services by supporting the volunteer program and education events for children, such as Critter Kiddz Camp. ASK also actively works with local fire stations to provide oxygen masks especially designed for pets of different head sizes.

“ASK is dedicated to helping pets of Riverside County and if we can help those pets return home, this gives us all great satisfaction,” ASK Foundation President Carolyn Badger said.



Former ASK Foundation board member Diane Falconer enjoyed working with the shelter staffers at Critter Kiddz Camp, an ASK-sponsored outreach for children interested in animals. Visit ASK at: <http://theaskfoundation.org/>



COVER STORY

Buck Homecoming Tops Stories of Year

We helped a cat on a freeway ramp in Riverside. We cared for 31 neglected dogs from a house fire in Junupa Valley. We rescued a raccoon from razor wire — say that three times fast.

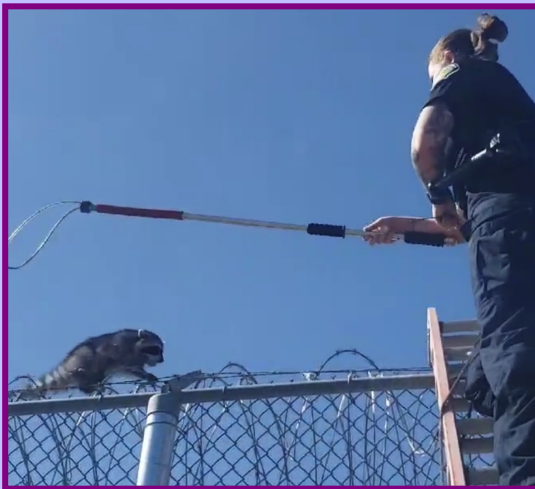
And we enjoyed reuniting a wayward sheep named King Solomon with his loving family in Riverside. These were some of the enjoyable moments during a year that we will all want to forget soon enough.

Yes, the pandemic played a role in our operations. But we remained steadfast to our mission of working together to improve Riverside County for people and their animals.

And, so, what topped our favorite stories of 2020? Animal Services' employees voted for Buck, a cute cattle dog that went missing during the frantic moments of the Apple Fire near Banning in early August. We'll get to Buck in just a minute. First, we'll start with No. 10 on our list, and move our way up. We hope you enjoy this annual tradition of ours. It certainly makes us proud to serve the public and, just as importantly, save animals from cruel or neglected situations. So, here we go:

No. 10 — Raccoon Razor Wire Rescue: Officers Kellsey Hoesman and Carra Mathewson teamed up in Banning at the Larry D. Smith Correctional Facility to save a raccoon that was stuck inside some razor wire. It took a few tries, but it was a success. Watch the video here: <https://tinyurl.com/yaebafig>

No. 9 — Charlotte the Piggy Goes Weeeeeee all the Way Home: Indio Police officers responded to an odd call in mid-November when they received a call about a wayward pot-bellied pig. They nicknamed the pig "Camitas" and contacted Riverside County Animal Services. The pig was transported to the Coachella Valley Animal Campus in Thousand Palms where it was soon reunited with her owner. Her true name is Charlotte, by the way.



TOP: Buck, a Queensland heeler, relaxes with his house mate after reuniting with his owner. Buck bolted during the Apple Fire near Banning and ended up in the San Jacinto Valley Animal Campus. Officers John Stephens and Lesley Huennekens drove Buck back home. BOTTOM: Charlotte, a stray pot-bellied pig that was discovered by Indio Police officers in mid-November, reunites with her owner, Marisa Bravo.

2020 Stories of the Year (Cont'd)



No. 8 — King Solomon the Wayward Sheep: In early July officers responded to a call about a wayward sheep in the city of Riverside. We truly loved meeting the very vocal sheep and, eventually, reuniting “King Solomon” with his gracious family. We also enjoyed learning that King Solomon has tagged a long on dozens of the family trips to national parks — 22 in all! Watch the happy reunion here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9h4oxnb>

No. 7 —Pandemic Puppies! Adopters Flooded Shelters for Pets: The pandemic has been rough on so many of us. School children turned on their home computers for virtual learning. Business owners were forced to close. Restaurants shut down. And the toll on our health-care workers has been major. It’s been a long, long road for all of us as we maneuver through this deadly virus. If COVID-19 brought any glimmer of light, we would submit that the wave of adopters that came to our shelters provided much needed joy. It made total sense, didn’t it? People were in lockdown mode, sitting at home, wondering aloud, “why don’t we have a pet?” So many people tumbled out in waves for their “pandemic pup.” During the early months of the pandemic, hundreds of pets headed home to be with their adoptive families.



No. 6 — Feline Rescued from Freeway Ramp: Officer Michael Cox responded to a call on Nov. 12 about a cat on the freeway. The black kitten was resting on a wall of a connector ramp in downtown Riverside. Who knows how that cat got to such a precarious spot without getting squashed. The ramp, taking motorists from Interstate 215 to Highway 91 has a significant drop in some sections. Thanks to a California Highway Patrol officer who provided a traffic break, officer Cox was able to safely remove the feline. The cat was super calm, despite its predicament. The good news is that our friends at ARE Rescue agreed to transfer the cat to its home base in Hemet. As an aside, officer Cox had an unusual final two months of the year. He rescued a dog trapped under a home and saved a kitty from a storm drain.



TOP: King Solomon’s owners (from left to right), Haider Al Khazraji, Hunter Jones and Dawn Jones, reunite with their wayward pet.

MIDDLE: Ella, a gorgeous, almost-2-year-old Doberman, shows off her happy face. Rachel, middle right, adopted the pooch during our busy “pandemic pup” frenzy in the spring days of lockdown. She sent this photo to us. It’s from the day Ella — short for Cinderella (her daughter picked the dog’s name) was adopted.

FAR RIGHT: It’s not the best photo in the world, but if you look closely you’ll see the freeway feline.



You can help, too! Please consider making a donation to Riverside County Animal Services; here’s a direct link:

<https://www.rcdas.org/index.php/donate>

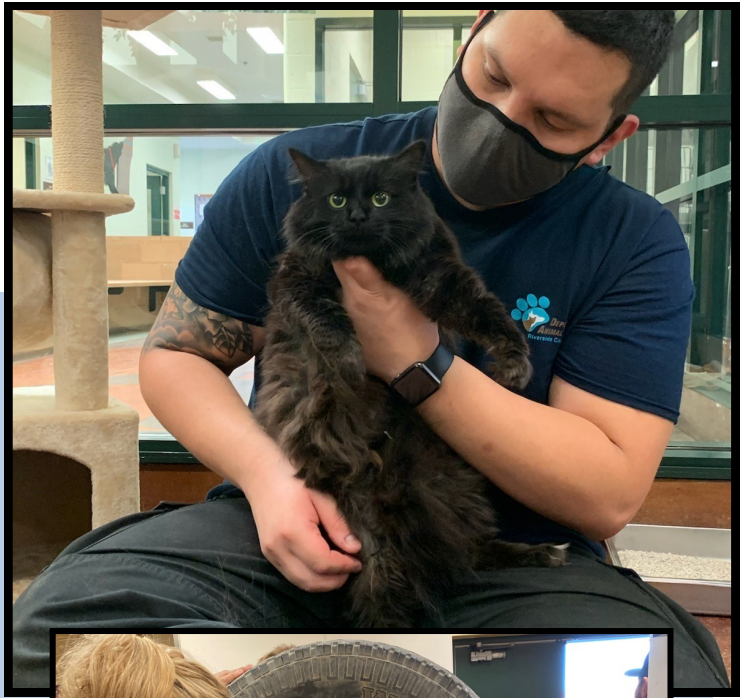
STORIES OF THE YEAR (CONT'D)

Miss Kitty, Wheelie Pup & Max

No. 5 — Miss Kitty Reunited with Owner After Big Rig Wreck: An out-of-state big-rig driver survived a terrible accident on Interstate 10 in late August. The woman's special pet, Miss Kitty, also survived the crash. While Mary Taylor recovered, the fine team at the Coachella Valley Animal Campus cared for her cat. It took her some time to finally get released from the hospital, but the happy reunion happened on Sept. 1. Watch the reunion here: <https://tinyurl.com/yczwzf3m>

No. 4 — Wheelie Pup: We've responded to hundreds of pets-stuck-in-something calls. We once helped a dog stuck inside a discarded smudge pot and a cat wedged in a concrete pipe. Wheelie Pup was a first. Back in late January in Thousand Palms, a small-breed dog stuck his head through a spare tire wheel and, well, he couldn't figure out how to get himself unstuck. He struggled and caused swelling, further complicating the situation. Then our friends at Riverside County Fire Station No. 69 in Rancho Mirage rolled out to assist us with a power saw that provided an escape. Our veterinary services staffers gave the dog a sedative shot to make sure the poor pooch would not wiggle too much as the firefighters worked on their cuts. We are very grateful to work with our public safety partners at Riverside County Fire and the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and many other municipal law enforcement agencies. Watch the rescue efforts here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7nkxosz>

No. 3 — Miniature Horse, Once Neglected, Gets Care and Adopted: We've always had a special place in our hearts for miniature horses. Who doesn't? So, when we received a tip in July that 10-year-old Max was being neglected, we rolled out to the Riverside property and investigated. Max, indeed, showed signs of neglect. Overgrown hooves was one issue. Another issue: the horse appeared to be confined to a cage-like shelter with very little room to move. Ultimately, the owner relinquished Max. We cared for Max and we are very pleased to share that he was adopted soon after he arrived. Photos of Max: <https://tinyurl.com/y7rwhzh2>



A LUCKY KITTY, WHEELIE PUP & MAX THE MINI HORSE — The employees at the Thousand Palms shelter fell for Miss Kitty (top) and were happy when her owner was released from the hospital. Supervising Registered Veterinary Technician Lori Stamp-Brown comforts Wheelie Pup. Bottom: Our friends at Riv Co Fire Station No. 69 helped save the dog. LEFT: Max, once neglected, received care by our team and was later adopted.

The Top Two Stories of 2020

No. 2 — Thirty-One Neglected Dogs Discovered after House Fire:

Animal cruelty cases always trouble us. Even the most seasoned officers and veterinary team members get disgusted by how some owners neglect their pets. When a fire resulted in emergency response in mid-July in Jurupa Valley, firefighters contacted Animal Services to inform us that a property was filled with many dogs. All told, we impounded 31 dogs that definitely had been neglected. They were all examined, treated and provided ongoing care. Eventually they were all adopted or transferred to our adoption partners.



No. 1 — Buck Goes Home:

Remember those summer days when it seemed we were on fire everywhere? There were some tense moments for property owners in the Banning area in August. Resident Greg Skeens had even more reason to be stressed. His beloved cattle dog, Buck, went missing during the Apple Fire incident. The good news is that Buck ended up in our San Jacinto Valley Animal Campus. On a follow-up patrol to see if any residents needed any assistance, Sgt. Lesley Huennekens spoke with Mr. Skeens, who shared his story. She asked him what Buck looked like. He described the Queensland Heeler mix to her. We've got him, she shared with a smile. She and her colleague, Lt. John Stephens, later drove back to the property to hand off Buck to a very-happy Mr. Skeens. There was something about their human-animal bond that was so memorable for our team members. Most of us would be devastated if our pet perished in a wildfire. Fortunately, this was one of those happier endings — the kind we love at Riverside County Animal Services. Thank you reading our annual top stories.



TOP: Two of the 31 neglected dogs from a house fire in Jurupa Valley in July. **MIDDLE and BOTTOM:** Greg Skeens cuddles his dog, Buck, after officers brought him back to his Banning-area property. Buck went missing during the Apple Fire.

PetSmart Supports Riverside County Pets



Riverside County Animal Services is very fortunate this year to receive substantial funding from PetSmart Charities to support our adoption programs. At the start of 2020, PetSmart Charities awarded us a grant for \$66,000 to cover the costs of spay/neuter and vaccinations for pets adopted from PetSmart stores. Pandemic-period adoptions continue to be extremely successful with more than 1,135 animals adopted (including those featured here). The department earned an adoption reward bonus of \$25,000 once we completed 1,000 adoptions and will be getting and additional \$10,000 Big Thanks Bonus! Due to the resounding success of this program, PetSmart Charities has granted RCDAS another \$75,000 to continue these efforts in 2021. Thank you, PetSmart Charities!



(One of our former residents.)

Did you know you can renew your dog license online? It's super easy and saves you time. Here's a direct link:
<https://www.rcdas.org/index.php/services/dog-licensing>



*The PAWSITIVE is produced by the Riverside County Department of Animal Services. Stories and photos by Public Information Officer John Welsh, unless indicated. Copy Editors: Laurie Dozier and Stefanie Rubio. GOT A STORY? Please send your stories, pet photos, and other ideas to shelterinfo@rivco.org (we LOVE hearing from our adopters!). Thanks for reading **The PAWSITIVE!***



**DEPARTMENT OF
ANIMAL SERVICES**
County of Riverside, California

Holiday Fundraising Guide

Make a life-saving gift this holiday season!

Your tax deductible donations go a long way toward improving the lives of homeless pets.

Here is how you can help.

MAKE A DONATION DIRECTLY TO THE SHELTER

Donations can be given easily online through our website at www.rcdas.org. Additionally, you can mail your donation to 6851 Van Buren Boulevard, Jurupa Valley, CA 92509.

CONSIDER GIVING A DONATION IN PLACE OF A GIFT

Having trouble thinking of what to give a loved one? Make a meaningful donation instead! We will notify them of the impactful donation you gave on their behalf.

CHECK OUT THE ITEMS ON OUR WISH LISTS

Want to know exactly how your contribution is being used? Purchase an item off of one of our wish lists that will be mailed directly to one of our shelter locations! Please visit our website at www.rcdas.org and click the "Donate" tab to view our Amazon wish lists.

GIVE A SHELTER PET A FOREVER HOME!

Animals in our shelter facilities are ready to make your home their home. Visit our website to view adoptable pets. Our capable staff are ready to help you find the perfect match!

GIFT CERTIFICATES

Not ready to adopt right away, but know you want to? Want to surprise that special someone with the gift of adoption? Purchase a gift certificate to sponsor an adoption! To purchase a gift certificate, please contact us at shelterdonations@rivco.org

EMPLOYEE GIVING

Looking for an opportunity to rally staff or coworkers and give back to your community? Riverside County homeless pets would like to be the recipients of your employee or corporate giving campaigns! Write Riverside County Animal Services into your work giving campaign.

Riverside County Department of Animal Services | 6851 Van Buren Blvd. Jurupa Valley, CA 92509 | www.rcdas.org

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FACEBOOK.**

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COACHELLA VALLEY ANIMAL CAMPUS
RIVERSIDE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES
SAN JACINTO VALLEY ANIMAL CAMPUS**



**PLEASE CONSIDER ADOPTING YOUR NEXT PET AT ONE OF
OUR SHELTER LOCATIONS ***

BLYTHE: 295 S. CARLTON AVE., BLYTHE 92225 (760) 921-7857

**COACHELLA VALLEY ANIMAL CAMPUS: 72-050 PET LAND PLACE,
THOUSAND PALMS 92276 (760) 343-3644**

**WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY /CITY ANIMAL SHELTER: 6851 VAN BUREN BLVD.,
JURUPA VALLEY 92509 (951) 358-7387**

*** DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, ADOPTIONS AND OTHER SERVICES
ARE BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. FULL INFORMATION ON OUR WEB SITE:**

WWW.RCDAS.ORG