



The Poop Scoop

Tails and Tidbits for Team Sammie, Volunteers, and the Animal Lovers of Nevada County and Beyond . . .

Volume XII, Issue 1

Summer 2021

SAMMIE'S FRIENDS CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF RESCUING ANIMALS ON MARCH 23, 2021,

culminating in saving 30,000 lives. Sometimes it seems just yesterday when this adventure started and sometimes it seems like I can't even remember that far back. Sammie's Friends has TRANSFORMED the way unwanted, neglected and disadvantaged animals in our community get treated. I (Cheryl) went to the Nevada County Animal Shelter on March 23, 2001 to walk the dogs once a week. That one event set in motion all that has become known as Sammie's Friends.

The inspiration for all of this was Cheryl and Curt's Shar-pei, Sammie. Sammie came to live with Cheryl as a 7 week old puppy. Sammie was one of a kind and taught Cheryl and Curt all that a dog could be. His dog trainer said "I have trained about 7,000 dogs and I have never met one as interesting as Sammie." We haven't met one as interesting as Sammie either.



From that one event of entering the shelter and learning that 68% of the animals were being euthanized and no animal was being vaccinated, spayed/neutered, or receiving medical attention, it was obvious something needed to be done. But what? So overwhelming! The shelter staff said "Cheryl, this is the way it has always been, there is nothing that can be done." Hmm! I started a volunteer program and quickly we had over a 100 volunteers and shortly thereafter more animals were getting adopted and the euthanasia rate went down. Next Curt, my partner, got involved. He did the paper work to make us a 501(c)(3) non-profit and we began to raise funds so that animals could receive veterinary care rather than being euthanized. The euthanasia rate declined some more. Kathleen O'Sullivan, who later founded Pound Puppy Rescue, began getting shelter animals spayed/neutered.

We expanded our program so that we could reduce the number of animals coming to the shelter. We began to help sick/injured animals in the community so they could get well rather than being euthanized. We expanded our spay/neuter efforts. We delivered dog/cat food to North San Juan and Washington.

We were all volunteers and had no authority to make any policy decisions that would change the lives of the animals. This shelter became "NO KILL" based on practice, not policy. This was based on one simple idea - WE WILL GET THEM OUT OF THE SHELTER QUICKER THAN THEY COME IN AND THERE WILL BE NO NEED TO EUTHANIZE ANYONE. Wherever there is a

need we will find a way to "dam up the hole". By 2006 using this philosophy we reduced the euthanasia rate to 2% from 68%, proving things do not have to be this way.

Our second principle was "WHETHER YOU THINK YOU CAN OR YOU THINK YOU CAN'T, YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT." I knew that for every animal we only needed to find one person on this earth to adopt that animal. The earth's population is 7.8 billion, the U.S. has 331 million, California has 39.37 million and Nevada County has 100,249. How did we find those people? We made posters, developed relationships with many rescues, shelters and individuals. We sent animals on airplanes to other states, Curt drove dogs to new homes in Canada. One dog went to Mexico.

I would take my SUV to Vacaville every Wednesday morning filled with animals and meet Bay Area people. We worked with a woman in the state of Washington and a rescue in Texas and of course everything in between. We met people at the shelter at all hours of the day and night to adopt the animals. We screened carefully and worked very hard to get the animals into

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Sammies' Friends Accomplishments:

Reduced euthanasia rate from 68% to less than 1%

Each year we spay/neuter approximately 1,000 community animals and 1,000 shelter animals

More than 30,000 animals saved since 2001.

Visit us at www.SammiesFriends.org

Edie Heymann – Kitten Crusader

11 years ago, Edie Heymann entered Sammie's Friends looking for her cat who had gone missing. Although she was unable to locate her cat, she made a blessing out of a tragedy. During her visit she inquired about volunteering, and so began her extensive journey with Sammie's Friends. She began as a cat foster (but does so much more than that now).

After a couple of months of doing that, a litter of five kittens came in that needed to be bottle fed. Edie rose to the occasion, although she had never done such a thing before. She ended up taking them home to foster and she hasn't stopped since. Edie explained, "Once you start feeding those little guys and their ears start twitching . . . they smile. It's just a really good feeling that you're giving them a second chance at life." Edie quickly became the foster volunteer that could be entrusted to take home the sickest of kittens. She's a retired emergency nurse, so she has lots of experience with tube feeding and is capable of handling various difficult medical needs that arise for these kittens. She provides endless amounts of care for kittens who might not otherwise survive.

In total, Edie has fostered over 457 cats and kittens during her 11 years at Sammie's Friends, and she has adopted three cats herself. She says that she chooses to do this difficult job because there's so much reward to witnessing the kittens become healthy, grow up and go off and find their own homes. It makes her feel better to know that she's made a difference in a kitten's life. Sammie's Friends cannot thank Edie enough for all of her arduous and compassionate work that she provides for the animals.



Emily Collins – Making a Difference

Emily Collins has been a volunteer at Sammie's Friends for three years. She began as a volunteer dog walker and has quickly proven herself to be a valuable member of the team. She is a vet tech at Mother Lode Veterinary Hospital, so not only does she spend her working hours taking care of animals, but she chooses to spend her free time with all of the dogs here at the shelter who don't yet have their own family to care for them.

Her greatest contribution to Sammie's Friends has been her willingness to take home dogs to foster. She's provided a loving home for dogs like Bonita, who came in so sickly and had never been inside a house before, as well as many puppies in need of socialization. But with Emily's love and attention, and the support of her two dogs who help socialize these shelter dogs, a tremendous difference is made in their overall demeanor. In addition to fostering dogs, Emily continues to walk dogs at the shelter, she trains new volunteers to do the same, and every Saturday she clips all dog's nails who may need it.



So why does Emily choose to spend her free time around dogs when that is already her working life? She says, "It's different here because these dogs don't have people, and I like to be that kind of support for them . . . it's almost more fulfilling when you can help these guys compared to the vet because they need the love." Sammie's Friends wants to thank Emily for all of her generous work and effort that she provides for the dogs!

SAMMIE'S FRIENDS' DOGS ARE HAPPY NOW!

Incredible Pets partnered with Nulo Pet Food to provide \$30,000 worth of food for Sammie's Friends shelter animals. What an incredible gift. That amount of food will feed our dogs for a year. Incredible Pets is the # 1 seller of Nulo, a very high quality dog food.

When Nulo had an excess amount of food as a result of the pandemic, they asked Incredible Pets to select an organization to give it to. Lucky us! Incredible Pets has been so supportive to Sammie's Friends for a very long time.



This is one more example of the wonderful community support that Sammie's Friends receives. Thank you Incredible Pets and Nulo.

THE KITTIES ARE HAPPY TOO!

Briar Patch recently delivered 40 cases (960 cans) of high quality Wellness wet food for our kitties.

Yum! Yum! We have some happy purrers at the Kitty Kove. Sammie's Friends is the May CAUSE recipient of the *Round Up At The Register* program. In addition, Briar Patch wanted to help in any way they could.

Learning that every spring Sammie's Friends receives 300 to 400 kittens, along with many adult cats, they felt we could use some help. Briar Patch is dedicated to supporting the community and has helped Sammie's Friends for a long time. Sammie's Friends is so grateful for the help of the Briar Patch and the many who shop their. Briar Patch supports the efforts of many worthy non-profits. We are grateful such a positive organization resides in our community. Thank you Briar Patch!



Volunteer Amy and Holiday Market help special needs kitties

Amy Woodbury has been a holistic nutritionist for 10 years and recently, through Penn Foster University, became an animal holistic nutritionist as well. She started volunteering at Sammie's Friends Kitty Kove, after losing her special kitty Betty. She wanted to work with our kitties to honor Betty.

When Ruth, the Kitty Kove Manager, learned of Amy's talent, they decided to try to help some of our special needs kitties through nutrition. The first kitty was Amelia, who had cancer. Amy has been cooking healing homemade food for several cats at the shelter and looks forward to helping more. In addition we are hoping to utilize her knowledge with Sammie's Friends dogs.



Michael, Amy, Doug

Recently Amy reached out to Holiday Market in Penn Valley to see if they would donate extra meat to the shelter for Amy to prepare for the cats. They have been generously donating. What a great help to Sammie's Friends!

Because of Amy and Holiday Market our special needs kitties are doing well. Thank you Amy! Thank you Holiday Market!

Something New is Always Happening at Sammie's Nifty Thrift Store

On March 1, 2013 Sammie's Friends opened Sammie's Nifty Thrift Store under the leadership of Joanne Castles, volunteer extraordinaire. The purpose of the Thrift Store was to benefit the animals that we care for at the animal shelter, which we have operated under contract to Nevada County since July 2010. The thrift store has now been in operation for 8 years and things continue to grow.

As you might guess the shelter does not receive the pampered pooches and kitties of the world, they are home being pampered. Each year we receive approximately 1800 animals, and Sammie's Friends contributes \$230,000 toward their veterinary care (about \$130 per animal).

Our thrift store is always on the move, trying to provide the best quality and variety of merchandise while providing great customer service. This all benefits the animals. In November 2019 Sammie's Nifty Thrift moved to a bigger building to make room for our ever expanding business.

Our current expansion and brain child is welcoming Nick and Rebecca into the Sammie's Friends family. Nick and Rebecca are the owners of Mattress By Appointment/Auburn. They now have a branch in Grass Valley as an adjunct to Sammie's Nifty Thrift. As a thrift store we receive many lovely donated bed frames and now people can purchase a brand new mattress to go with it right here at Sammie's Nifty Thrift. "Getting a new bed is one of the greatest gifts a person can give themselves," says Rebecca. Nick does hours of research, even visiting manufacturing warehouses, to bring the customer the highest quality affordably priced mattresses that will enhance your sleep quality. When you sleep well you have better waking hours as well.

We think that expanding Sammie's Nifty Thrift to include new beds is a win for our people and our furry friends! Who doesn't love cuddling up in a cozy bed with their furbabies? Come on in and say "hi" to Nick or Rebecca. They will be happy to meet you and help you find the perfect bed at a fraction of what it might cost elsewhere. And when you buy a bed from them, you are helping Sammie's Friends. Both Nick and Rebecca are animal lovers and spend personal time at the Sammie's Friends store. If you purchase a bed through the "Benefit" app, a percentage of the sale goes directly to Sammie's Friends! We think that's a win and a wag for everyone!



Remember to use your eScrip when shopping at SPD

Please remember to have your Community Card scanned or ask the cashier to enter your telephone number when shopping at SPD.

1,294 people have signed up with eScrip to support Sammie's Friends when shopping at SPD (unfortunately less than 15% of these people remember to use it). This is a program where SPD makes contributions (in your name) in the amount of 3% of your purchases when shopping there. This is SPD's way of supporting our non-profit community and costs you nothing to participate!

Once you are signed up ask the cashier to either 1) scan the Community Card that was given you, or 2) ask the cashier to enter your telephone number. SPD then makes a 3% contribution in YOUR NAME to Sammie's Friends and it costs you NOTHING!

SPD contributed \$5,124.89 for the first three months of this year. This is an average of \$1,700 per month which is awesome!!! If you aren't sure whether or not you've signed up in the past, ask the cashier the next time you do your shopping to enter your telephone number. If an account comes up, you're all set. If no account comes up, email me (joannecastles@gmail.com) and I'll sign you up!

Beverley Mercier-Ward ~ Dog Socializer and Behaviorist

Beverley is Sammie's Friends' wonderful Dog Socializer and Behaviorist. What she does for Sammie's Friends is so important to help dogs that come to the shelter become more easy to adopt. She and her team of Shelter Staff and Volunteers work daily to bring dogs with behavior issues into a condition where they can co-exist with other dogs and humans. This is what makes them more easily adopted. Her success rate is amazing.

Beverly came to us from a long and winding path. She was born in Uganda, went to school in Uganda, Kenya, and South Africa before coming to the United States in 1974. When she got here, she worked at several occupations both here and in Belize including tending bar, managing a hotel, operating a dive shop, working in bio-tech, and as a professional recruiter. Wow, so many talents.

In 2007, after the work environment soured, she decided to look into community volunteerism, first at Hospice and then at the Animal Shelter where she was inspired by Cheryl Wicks, Mark Lenci, and Sammie's Friends to work with difficult dogs. She became impassioned with this activity and was certified as a Dog Behaviorist in 2010 and became our socializer and behaviorist. She also runs her successful "Canine Academy" where she consults with members of the community about their dog behavior issues. For her, "no day is a work day, its all uplifting".

She is married to Mitch Ward who works with Sammie's Friends as our Safety Officer. We'll save his story for another issue of The Poop Scoop. We are so glad that she is working with us – she makes a big difference. Pictured here is Beverly and two of her Pack Members, George (the mastiff mix) and Goose (black lab mix).



Another interesting day at Sammie's Friends

Just when we think we have seen it all, a new drama unfolds. We received the fateful call from a passerby. A sad sight indeed. At the top of our driveway, we are told, an animal is injured and laying on its side. A message goes out fast amongst the staff. Phil yells to Mark and they both start heading up the hill to see what they can do to help this poor animal. Mark not sure what he will find, looks up the driveway. Sure enough, there was a large bulk of golden fur not moving.



Thoughts race through his mind. He grabbed the wheelbarrow, assessing the size of the animal and how to transport it.

Upon approach the story changes swiftly, this is no ordinary dog, this is a very convincing **STUFFED** Animal! An instant sigh of relief came over Mark. He picked the stuffed toy up by the tail and carried it down to share with the worried staff. Mind you, there were staff and dog walkers watching from afar aghast at what Mark was caring with a smile on his face. All was well and a good laugh was had by all.

The mystery remains, was this a silly joke played out on our staff, or a weird coincidence? We may will never know!

Meet Fat Al!



There are so many ways to help the animals at Sammie's Friends: sometimes it is providing a home for a 300lb snorting friend. Fat Al was found roaming around on his own with no owner in sight. He was brought into the shelter and instantly became a staff favorite.

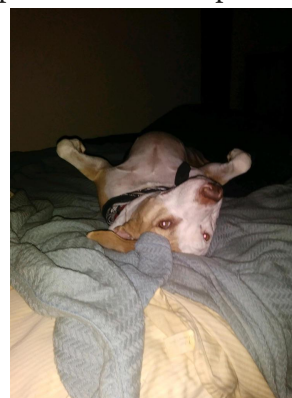
This charming Tamworth befriends all who come to say hello. He loves receiving his treats with a little scratching behind his furry ears. He has spent a year farming the soil in our garden and is ready to move to his forever home. Providing a home for a rescued pig is a wonderful and rewarding experience. If you have space and would enjoy the friendship of an ever thankful pig, please contact us. Fat Al is waiting for you!

THE AMAZING JACKIE

I am writing about Jack because I think most people will remember his story and because what started out as an absolutely hideous life for Jack ended up being a storybook life for him. Three years ago an "out of county" person saw someone severely beating a dog. The person had the wherewithal to pull out his cell phone and videotape it. Animal Control came and picked up Jack and took him for a veterinary check.

On the way to the vet, he washed and kissed the AC Officer, and the vet said he was a very good boy. Most of us would not be so resilient and loving after a beating. Jack went into the "witness protection program" at the animal shelter. At the shelter he was given lots of TLC and had the opportunity to meet many other dogs and people. He began to relax and enjoy himself.

Eventually a nice person came to the shelter looking for a dog; seriously wanting to help a dog in need of a home. After spending a lot of time with Jackie on shelter visits, taking him on outings and overnights, ultimately Jackie was adopted and went home to live with his "nice person" for the rest of his life. Jackie and his adopter are the tightest of buddies. They go to the river and swim and Jackie gets to play with the dogs of his person's family and friends. Jackie sleeps in bed with his person and when he's cold he crawls all the way under the covers to get nice and toasty. Sometimes when his person first wakes up in the morning Jackie will be laying flat on his back with all four legs in the air. They go to the meat shop to get knuckle bones. He lays in front of the fan and loves the wind blowing on him.



Jackie has been with his person for going on a couple of years. His person reports that Jackie gets happier, more relaxed, and sillier all the time. He's good for a lot of good times and good laughs. We couldn't be happier that life has turned out smelling like roses for Jackie. Many thanks to his person for making life so good for this precious dog, who started out with such a sad story.

King of the Coop



would love to find their own home and their own flock to rule.

With the early rise of the sun comes the bellow of a rooster's crow; the quintessential sound that echoes through the country landscape. Since February of this year, it has been no different at Sammie's Friends with the accompaniment of two handsome roosters, Foghorn and Leghorn. These two came to the shelter as strays, having been dumped on someone's property in the freezing snow. The shelter staff quickly determined that the two roosters got along together, so they are able to share the same coop, however they

Roosters make incredible pets and are quite useful in providing protection for your hens as they are always on the lookout for danger. These two roosters in particular are very friendly, they get along with each other, are healthy and are easy keepers. It doesn't take much to keep these two happy, but they sure would love to get out of the shelter! Could you be their forever home?

In memoriam of a very special dog, CHANCE!



Chance, a pitbull mix, was found tied up at the fairgrounds and brought to Sammie's Friends on April 1, 2019 (April Fool's Day). I assure you this boy was no fool. Chance lived and loved at Sammie's Friends Shelter until December 15, 2019 (a very nice early Christmas present.)

Chance was adopted by the Sheriff's Dispatch Center. Working in Dispatch is one of the more stressful jobs a person can have. Every call is drama filled and difficult and requires a calm centered mind. As Dispatch said "Chance filled a hole we didn't know we had". He seemed to intuitively understand when someone needed some love and when to get out of the way.

With incredible sadness for all who knew him Chance passed from terminal cancer, way too early, on April 14, 2021. He brought so much to the Dispatch Team and they brought so much love and care to him. Dispatch says they will get another dog, but there will never be another Chance.

RIP dear boy. Everyone who ever met you fell in love!

A TRIBUTE TO A MIGHTY FINE LADY, CAROL HAMILTON

Carol Hamilton, a woman who dearly loved animals, passed away on April 13, 2021 (May 28, 1933 - April 13-2021). Carol supported all of the animal organizations of Nevada County. As well, Carol supported numerous other non-profits. Sammie's Friends shall always be grateful for the many donations and nice things Carol did to help the animals.

When Sammie's Friends began to operate the Nevada County Animal Shelter we were asked to move a trailer out to the Mc Courtney site as a place to locate the Animal Control Office. Moving a triple wide trailer cost money and Carol made a very nice donation toward that effort. Carol also generously shared her lakeside home(s) in Lake Wildwood for non-profits to have dinners and other types of fundraisers. Sammie's Friends utilized that location for our 5th and 10th anniversaries. It was the most amazing place right on the lake.

Carol was a nurse by profession and used her talents in hospitals, schools, the Air Force, and on a cruise ship. Carol even went to Appalachia to help the children. What an amazing woman! She was honored as the Lake Wildwood Citizen of the year in 2006. She leaves behind her loving and also amazingly generous husband of fifty years, Robert. The animals have indeed lost a good friend. We at Sammie's Friends mourn her passing. RIP dear lady.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

It was a dark and stormy November night when a social media post was forwarded to a Sammie's Friends volunteer; a stray cat was wet and cold, huddled up against a fence attempting to stay out of the heavy rain. Was anyone willing to give this poor kitty a warm home? Oh, and by the way, there are a few more like him. . .

Turns out there were more than just a few.

After assessing the situation, it was determined there were at least 75 cats and kittens living near a home in a local community. The kitties were being fed and had access to water but very few were fixed, leading to numerous litters of kittens over the years. Some were sick with eye and respiratory infections, conditions that many kittens simply couldn't overcome and eventually succumbed to their illness. A few of the furry felines were friendly but the majority were deemed community cats (stray or feral cats that could not be handled) and special precautions would need to be taken for them to receive veterinary care.

Spearheaded and funded by Sammie's Friends, a plan was put into place: first; spay or neuter as many of the cats as possible to stop the population growth, and second; find new homes for the kittens and friendly adults.

A number of animal welfare groups and individuals were contacted and agreed to assist with a high volume surgery day. Building space near the property was donated by a local organization to house the kitties before and after surgery. AnimalSave's mobile van provided on-site spay and neuter surgeries, vaccinations and additional veterinary care as needed. FieldHaven Feline Center loaned equipment and arranged for a number of volunteers to assist on surgery day. Grass Valley Animal Control also graciously provided equipment for Sammie's Friends to use during this project.



Many cats were fixed and received veterinary treatment on surgery day, thanks to the collaboration and commitment of all parties mentioned above. It truly takes a village to help the less fortunate animals in our community!

YES, I want to make a difference in the lives of the animals in Nevada County! Sammie's Friends is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization that was created to raise veterinary funds for the animals at the Nevada County Animal Shelter and other disadvantaged animals in our county. Our work is made possible by the generous donations of individuals like you. All donations, big and small, are greatly appreciated. Checks may be submitted to the address below. Please visit our website www.SammiesFriends.org to donate by credit card or text SAMMIE to 41444 for a link to our donation form. Thank you!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, ST, Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Donation Amount: _____

Did You Know...

Lack of funds is not a reason to leave your cat or dog unspayed/ unneutered.

There are two low cost clinics you can use:

Animal Spay and Neuter Clinic:
530-889-8800

AnimalSave:
530-477-1706

For additional financial support you can call:

- For pitbulls, huskys, chihuahuas, and malamutes:

Melise at Pound Puppy Rescue
530-272-1716

- For cats and other breeds of dogs:

pick up a voucher at Sammie's Friends

NC Pets In Need
530-802-3666
will also provide help



**14647 McCourtney Road
Grass Valley, CA. 95949
DOGS: 530-471-5041
CATS: 530-274-1955
EMAIL:
info@sammiesfriends.org
Community programs
530-913-4810**

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loving homes. OUR EFFORTS AND ENERGY KNEW NO LIMITS.

Every veterinarian helped out, many businesses raised money for us and the local media (the Union, KNCO, KVMR) helped so much to get the word out. Even some of the Sacramento TV and radio stations have done stories for us. We wrote grants, made calendars, sold t-shirts and hats and everything we could dream up to raise money to support our efforts. Over time, as people saw our efforts and results, many donors came forward. In 2013 Joanne Castles had the great idea to open SAMMIE'S NIFTY THRIFT STORE to raise money for all Sammie's Friends efforts.

In 2010 Curt and Cheryl finalized a contract with the county to operate the Nevada County Animal Shelter and ensure that every animal got a good home and that the euthanasia stopped completely. In 11 years we have had 3 dogs that we had to euthanize, in spite of our best efforts: they were too dangerous to do anything else with. In 2011 Beverley Ward joined us as our Dog Behaviorist and has turned many a dog around from being not a good dog to being a great dog. We built SAMMIE'S PIT STOP in Penn Valley to facilitate Beverley's effort to help our animals.

You have heard me say many times "IT TAKES A VILLAGE." Indeed it does. We have had help by so many doing so many things. Fran Cole was our first volunteer, who arrived about a month after I did. She walked dogs, cleaned cat cages, walked some more dogs and helped many times with the horsey friends we have acquired and to this day provides excellent legal counsel to Sammie's Friends.

So that's our story and we hope to be around another 20 years and beyond. We know with this fabulous community that is possible.



Cheryl & Curt- The Founders

If you would like us to email you a pdf version of the Poop Scoop in the future, send an email to info@sammiesfriends.org

Sammie's Friends is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit organization founded in 2004 by Cheryl Wicks and Curt Romander to provide veterinary aid to the animals at the Nevada County Animal Shelter. Today, Sammie's Friends provides medical assistance to shelter animals and other disadvantaged animals in the community, and works closely with the Volunteers who help to socialize and find forever homes for the unwanted dogs and cats of Nevada County.

Visit us at www.SammiesFriends.org