

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, March 7, 2023 7:29 PM

To: Torres, Michael Angelo (DPH - Contractor) <michaelangelo.torres@sfdph.org>

Subject: Experiences as a Rescue Partner with SFACC

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I was asked to write about my experiences as Director of [REDACTED] Rescue working as a rescue partner San Francisco Animal Care and Control over recent years.

Our organization is a home-based rescue that emphasizes careful screening to ensure well-matched placements. We have specific and stringent requirements for the animals we can accept. I have served in rescue for over 40 years, and have worked with shelters all over California and neighboring states. SFACC is, hands down, the best animal services with which I have had the pleasure of partnering.

Over the past few years, I have been so pleased with our relationship with SFACC that I now pull at least 60% of our dogs from them. Here are just a few reasons:

Communication: Many shelters do not answer email or phone calls at all; we have to arrange for someone to physically go to the shelter (which may be hundreds of miles distant) and attempt to talk to someone to get any information at all. Those shelters or staff that do answer provide very little information.

In contrast, SFACC responds to emails within minutes to hours, with complete, detailed, and critical information. If we are interested in an animal, we receive written records, photographs, videos, and answers to questions. Often, specific testing is done on an animal for us. If we have medical questions, a staff member talks to the onsite vet, or makes a phone call to the SPCA hospital, to get answers. This support allows us to make informed, timely pull decisions, which is critical to our success.

Medical: Many shelters do not have an onsite veterinarian, do not do medical exams, and provide no medical services. Many do not even do intake vaccination and parasite treatment. Many do not treat medical problems, from kennel cough to broken legs. Those that do have a vet often allow only extremely cursory exams and provide basic services only if the rescue pays for them. I have taken in reportedly healthy animals from other shelters that, for example,

- Are completely blind
- Are missing a leg
- Have a neurological condition so severe that they cannot stand
- Are in severe untreatable congestive heart failure
- Have severe pneumonia/lepto/distemper
- Have bullets embedded in fresh wounds
- Have large abscesses
- Have suppurating, malignant mammary lesions
- Are so malnourished that they cannot stand
- Have severe joint problems limiting mobility
- Are females in heat reported to be neutered males
- Are at term pregnancy with 11 puppies and reported to be spayed

In short, we receive animals with unexpected serious and obvious medical challenges that the shelter personnel apparently didn't notice, and that we must then attempt to address.

In contrast, SFACC does thorough intake examinations, vaccinations, and parasite treatment, and also provides needed medical treatments. If they cannot treat the problem, they certainly detail it to interested rescue. If SFACC warrants an animal to appear healthy, that is meaningful. Because we can trust SFACC to be thorough and honest in medical evaluations, we are eager to partner with them.

Furthermore, SFACC provides for rescue animals spay/neuter, vaccination, microchipping, and parasite prophylaxis, all with no charge. These services make an enormous difference to our rescue's ability to help the animals, especially now when veterinary services are scant and have long lead times.

Behavioral: Some shelters do what they consider to be behavioral evaluations, but these often consist of a volunteer walking the animal around the block and then allowing it to meet another. All the rescue is told is that the dog "passed behavioral" or "failed behavioral" -- no details are forthcoming. I have taken in too many animals who "passed" who were literally psychotic and tragically had to be euthanized when no amount of medication or behavior modification could help them.

In contrast, SFACC has staff with well-grounded knowledge of animal behavior. They provide in-depth, skillful, expert assessments, often repeated over time. Most important for us, they write detailed reports of these assessments and provide these to interested rescues. This information is extremely valuable and, again, allows us to bring in animals we otherwise might not be willing to risk.

Transport: Very few shelters provide any transport services. Most require that the rescue have a representative on site at the time the animal comes off hold. Often that rep must drive many hours to reach the shelter, and then is told that the animal just left to another rescue or adopter. It is challenging and expensive to organize transport.

In contrast, whenever possible SFACC will call on a small army of committed volunteers who will provide safe, intelligent, carefully scheduled transport for animals going to rescue. I have met many such volunteers, and all are deeply committed to SFACC, primarily because the rescue branch is so well organized and thoughtful under the expert steering of Kathryn Jones. Ms. Jones is the most dedicated, hardest-working, easiest-to-work-with rescue coordinator I have encountered. Her volunteers are treated with respect and consideration, as are we.

Efficiency: Working with most shelters is a hit-and-miss exercise in frustration, with communication delays and confusion resulting in animals staying at the shelter for days or weeks after a rescue has committed to pulling, and with some animals tragically being euthanized even when a rescue was ready to take them in. Paperwork is sparse or absent or incorrect; attempts to get information are not successful.

In contrast, rescue with SFACC is efficient and swift. We receive notice of an animal in need, we are given information, our questions are answered, the schedule is organized, and the animal is promptly transferred from shelter to our care. Complete paperwork is sent both as a PDF by email and as hard copy with the animal. If we need anything else, we just ask; the response is immediate.

Compassion: Most shelters employ staff who, for whatever reasons, are less than fully committed to ensuring the welfare of the animals in their care.

In contrast, SFACC staff go to great lengths to ensure that the animals are safe, are cared for to the extent possible in a shelter situation, get to rescue or adoptions promptly, and are supported throughout by staff who genuinely care. That caring makes it a pleasure to work with this shelter.

I am greatly impressed by the rescue program at SFACC and am eager to see the excellent staff supported.

I trust that these observations will be helpful to you. If I can provide any further information, I will be happy to do so.

lyn [REDACTED]

From: Caroline [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 7, 2023 9:02 PM
To: Torres, Michael Angelo (DPH - Contractor) <michaelangelo.torres@sfdph.org>
Subject: Working with SFACC

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Hi there. This is Caroline from **Geoda** Rescue. We have been partners with SFACC for the past two years. I wanted to speak to my experience working with them- They are the most amazing shelter we have ever worked with! Animal assessments are 100 spot on, animals are always healthy and vetted. I've dealt mostly with Katy and Emily. If I had to choose one shelter to work with this would be the only one! The Gold Standard! Communication is amazing! Paperwork is always spot on! The evaluations of the animals we have pulled are exactly as presented. Animals are always healthy! My absolute favorite shelter to work with ever! Thank you so much!!!!!!

From: Emily [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 8, 2023 2:17 PM
To: Torres, Michael Angelo (DPH - Contractor) <michaelangelo.torres@sfdph.org>
Subject: SFACC/HSTT Partnership

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Hi Michael,

Over the last couple of years I have worked with SFACC transferring animals from their shelter to ours. I wanted to reach out and provide you with some first hand feedback on my experience with SFACC and their team.

There is a lot that goes into networking and transferring dogs and I am always impressed about how effortless the process is. The amount of information and transparency provided by SFACC and Katy Jones in particular, is unparalleled. We receive detailed medical and behavioral notes in addition to photos, videos and personal experiences/notes for each and every animal.

The scope and breadth of what is provided is unlike any of that provided by any of our other partners. I am able to review all of the animals included in the request and can make decisions on which pets to pull without having to go back and forth to gather additional information. Having this amount of information is paramount to making this process efficient and helps us place SFACC's animals quickly and appropriately, which is best for each animal.

We work with over 30 source shelters annually and hands down working with SFACC is my favorite. I enjoy working with Katy and the team so much we've increased our transfers from them 275% in the last 2 years.

All in all, I have nothing but good things to say about our relationship with SFACC and I look forward to continuing it in 2023 and beyond.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks!

Kind Regards,

Emily [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear Commissioner Torres,

I am writing to support your recommendations to San Francisco Animal Care & Control, which you presented at the March 9th meeting. I'm very pleased that the commission voted to adopt them. I understand that they are not policies, only recommendations but as you said in the meeting, they are common sense measures that are not overly taxing to the organization and would benefit SFACC and the community. I applaud the idea of "gatherings" between SFACC, Friends of SFACC, and partner groups, at any interval and even with a few groups--whoever would like to meet in person. And thank you for offering to facilitate collaborative meetings--that is extremely generous. As you stated in the meeting, in-person meetings are the most efficient way to communicate, to discuss and clarify issues, and to get to know each other. I agree with that. When Ann Dunn from OAS spoke at the meeting and described how beneficial the gatherings are for OAS, I was struck by her point that it is an opportunity to brainstorm new and creative ways that the groups can work together. This approach needs to happen at SFACC. There is no downside. Thank you for making the strong case for this approach and continuing to work with D.D. Corso on this and other recommendations. ...Although SFACC has many active rescue partners, the communication that takes place for transfers is done by the B&T staff and is a lot of work. Some of that work could potentially be alleviated by new programs and initiatives that might come about from a meeting of the minds, as it were.

Unfortunately--possibly due to technical difficulties with microphones--I was unable to hear most of the answers to questions and general statements that Deputy Director Corso made in response to the recommendations. I was especially interested in the CIP policy but I could not hear her explanation (or indicate to the commission that the audio was not working properly, i.e. in a chat or by raising a hand). I was able to hear you and the other commissioners, but DD Corso and some of Commissioner Tobin's comments were not audible, possibly due to microphone issues.

I cannot find any information about a "Good Samaritan" policy on the SFACC website and would like to echo Comm. Tobin's concern that the public is unaware that it is a) the same as the CIP policy, and b) that it is in effect at all. And because I could not hear DD Corso's response, this question is still open in my mind. My guess is that her response was focused on public safety (i.e. unacceptable dog behavior) but I'm wondering specifically about medical issues that cannot be solved by SFACC (or a rescue partner) for budget reasons but that the interested party may want to pay for or raise funds for, on any animal--cat, dog, or small. It seems that a case-by-case basis is warranted for this type of policy. Will the commission be able to confirm the details of the Good Samaritan policy and how it is communicated to the public by SFACC? Perhaps as you mentioned in the meeting, through the Friends of SFACC newsletter.

Yesterday I received an email from the volunteer coordinator at SFACC (sent to volunteers) mentioning new positions that have been filled recently at the shelter, including three ACOs (officers), a Service Representative, and an Animal Care Attendant. According to the SFACC website, there is currently only one job opening (for an ACA). This is good news as it means

positions have been filled. It's probably the kind of positive news you would like SFACC to include in updates.

Thank you again for your dedication, skill, and thoughtfulness in facilitating the ongoing discussions around SFACC. The commission provides an important forum for public input and public education as well. Although SFACC takes input from the public, in my opinion, the only party that has influence on their policies is this commission. My hope is that SFACC and the City Administrator can make the changes the commission has recommended and fulfill their mission to serve the community and SF's animals in the best way possible. That is the goal all parties want to achieve.

Sincerely,

Lisa [REDACTED]

From: Rebecca [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 10, 2023 8:07 AM
To: Torres, Michael Angelo (DPH - Contractor) <michaelangelo.torres@sfdph.org>
Subject: Animal Commission Recommendations to ACC on Cats

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for your efforts and support for reinstating ACC services and the CIP system for cats.

Cats are our beloved companions. Lost cats and their guardians deserve ACC reunification services just as much as dogs. Abandoned cats are worthy of compassionate care from ACC the same as dogs. ACC needs to become an open admission shelter once again.

Unfortunately ACC does not want to engage with the community including stakeholder cat rescuers. There are many ways ACC could handle community concerns. What would be so hard about saying "Gosh, we didn't realize that CIP was so important to you. Let's take a look at how we can achieve the same outcome for cats if for some reason we can't reinstate CIP."?

Given ACC's recalcitrance, the recommendations of the Commission are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Rebecca [REDACTED]
Inner Richmond

Anna [REDACTED]

To: Torres, Michael Angelo (DPH - Contractor)

Thu 3/9/2023 4:48 PM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Hi Michaelangelo,

I have some feedback about my experience working with the staff at SFACC as a transfer partner that I'd love to share with you:

Working with the staff at SFACC is an absolute pleasure. To put it lightly, our line of work is not easy—it takes a big heart, and a thick skin. The staff at SFACC face an uphill battle daily, with each day bringing in more animals than are exiting. It's incredibly difficult to be on the front lines of this issue, and to spend every day desperately trying to find a positive outcome for animals in need. I am truly amazed at their ability to work as tirelessly as they do for their animals while keeping a sense of humor and positive attitude through everything. On top of that, they are a fantastic transfer partner to work with. They are transparent with every animal's needs, ensuring we always have the necessary information to make the best decision for our shelter. Their animals are always vaccinated on intake, medically & behaviorally vetted, and the staff will go above and beyond in any way possible to find a good placement for their animals. We at [REDACTED] deeply value our partnership with SFACC.

Please let me know if there's anything else we can assist with!

Best,

Anna [REDACTED]

From: Loree [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 9, 2023 3:35 PM
To: Torres, Michael Angelo (DPH - Contractor) <michaelangelo.torres@sfdph.org>
Subject: Katy [REDACTED]

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

I have been working with Katy, for a number of years now. I found that her communication and dedication for the animals and towards my rescue has been exemplary.

Katy tries very hard to match the correct animal to the correct rescue in order to have a success rate on both ends. She is very honest and her evaluations of the animals. Katy also helps to provide transport to San Jose wherever possible. She is always available for clarification on a dog or her ability to supply additional information.

Our toy dog rescue and [REDACTED] animal welfare, foundation of proud to have katy to net work with and to save lives. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] Rescue

[REDACTED] foundation.org

Sent from my iPhone
Loree [REDACTED]

From: Anna [REDACTED]

To: Torres, Michael Angelo (DPH - Contractor)

Thu 3/9/2023 4:48 PM

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Please let me know if there's anything else we can assist with!

Best,

Anna [REDACTED]
Admissions & Animal Care Manager