







## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I could not be prouder that Wine Country Animal Lovers is wrapping up our TENTH year of rescuing homeless, injured and abandoned dogs and cats this December. You'd think that after that long, our team of volunteers might have seen it all, but that couldn't be farther from the truth.

My personal focus and priority as a foster is helping those animals with special medical conditions, including neonatal puppies and kittens who might not otherwise survive. Last year, Peggy Sue was my first foster kitten that required amputation of more than one limb. She lost one hind leg and one hind foot as an infant and, once healed, was adopted along with another orphan kitten that she met in WCAL's incubator. Peggy Sue blew my mind with her 2.75 legs and loving personality and it was so special to see her thrive. This winter I am raising a kitten who has had both of her hind legs amputated after she was crushed as a baby. Ariel the purrmaid is quite an unstoppable force and her loud purr tells me that she's going to live a wonderful life just like Peggy Sue.



Understandably, not everyone is as enthusiastic as I am about raising a litter of bottle puppies or finally seeing a stunning Siamese cat emerge after treating a bald, itchy kitten for the most resilient ringworm infection we have ever seen. Each of our volunteers has something they are passionate about and that's the special thing about Wine Country Animal Lovers. Our true strength is the variety of volunteers and foster families who have joined our team over the years to work together improving the lives of animals. From photography to fundraising to specializing in senior pets or feral cats, we each contribute something unique. There's always a new skill to learn or an opportunity to grow while making a difference. By supporting the passions of our volunteers, I am confident that Wine Country Animal Lovers will always have something new and exciting to offer in exchange for the many lives saved along the way.

*Alissa McNair*

Alissa McNair  
WCAL Board President



## 10 YEARS OF ANSWERING THE CALL TEAMWORK SAVES LIVES

Every animal we rescue represents a small leap of faith: that our team can provide the help needed; that WCAL can raise enough funds to cover the medical care; that there will be an available vet appointment; that a volunteer is able to transport or foster; that adopters will welcome these animals into their homes.

In Jelly Bean's case, WCAL agreed to spay and vaccinate an outdoor cat that had recently appeared and was being fed. She was welcome to stick around, but the caller was concerned about her growing belly and wasn't able to pay for any medical care or bring her indoors. The stars aligned and that week there was a surgery cancellation on a day that worked perfectly for the finder. Kitty would be spayed and returned to the neighborhood she knew with a caretaker to feed and look out for her as an outdoor cat. Easy enough - or so we thought.

Around 11:00 am we got a call that the calico cat that had arrived at the vet was not just a little round. The vet had determined this kitty was VERY PREGNANT and due to give birth any day. They explained that she was friendly and her kittens were at full term, then asked if we wanted to continue. Our team began brainstorming and asked for an X-ray to determine how

many kittens to expect. What had started out as a simple, one-day, \$200 commitment to help a single kitty, suddenly turned into a 3-month long, \$2,000+ rescue of a nice mama cat and her seven babies! A spare bathroom was converted into a nursery and by 4:00 pm, the WCAL rescue van was en route to pick up Jelly Bean from the vet and deliver her to the home of a volunteer who would supervise the birth of her kittens. We made room where there wasn't any because that was the right thing to do in this situation.

Once we've heard an animal's story, connected with the humans involved, set aside funds and made arrangements to help, we are invested in a positive outcome for everyone. The saying, "Leap and the net will appear" encourages us to take a chance and trust that our experienced team will find a way. Our dedicated volunteers and generous supporters are the net for Wine Country Animal Lovers. After ten amazing years of animal rescue, we are still leaping to help animals in our community.



### WCAL Board of Directors

- Alissa McNair, President
- Camille Lina, Vice President
- Donna Leverenz, Secretary
- Wendy Brooks, Treasurer
- Mark Doherty, Board Member
- Dr. Steve Franquelin, Medical Advisor



## SENIORS FOR SENIORS: CALLING PET LOVERS 65+

Seniors for Seniors is a special program that connects senior pets with caring humans 65+ without all the usual concerns about adoption. This program includes WCAL's full financial support for pet supplies, medical care and other assistance, plus a lifetime safety net just in case!

Ms. Tweetie is just one of our loving senior cats who qualify for the Seniors for Seniors Program. Many older people would love to have a cat or a dog for companionship but worry about the expense and what would happen to their beloved pet should they no longer be able to offer care. So many wonderful older cats and dogs with years of love to give languish in animal shelters (or worse) because they get passed up in favor of kittens and puppies.

Wine Country Animal Lovers "Seniors for Seniors" program plays matchmaker for the benefit of all!

- A no-cost long-term "forever foster" program for senior people and senior pets
- Senior people 65+ in the upper Napa Valley
- Senior cats and dogs 10+



*Ms. Tweetie is waiting to find her purr-fect senior parent.*

- Senior people, you provide an older cat or dog with companionship, love, and shelter for as long as you're able to care for them
- WCAL pays for all food, supplies, and medical care with our veterinary partner at the Calistoga Pet Clinic, and there's no cost to you!

Enjoy the benefits of having a pet without the concern of expenses, medical care, or long-time planning. Help an older cat or dog by giving it a safe and caring home to enjoy its golden years! Please call or text us today for more information (707) 800-5058.



## MAKING LEMONADE

Local kids Tab & Junie were thrilled to have a litter of WCAL kittens named after them recently. In honor of their rescue namesakes, these cool kiddos hosted a good old-fashioned lemonade stand to raise donations and help us rescue more animals! The lemonade stand was a huge success! These little animal lovers (with help from their parents and grandparents) raised \$798 for WCAL!



## WAYS TO GIVE

Your support of Wine Country Animal Lovers is what allows our foster volunteers and veterinary partners to provide loving homes, good nutrition and quality medical assistance to the animals in our care. While it may sound like a cliché, it's true - we really couldn't do what we do without you.

### THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO HELP:

- Visit [www.winecountryanimallovers.org/donate](http://www.winecountryanimallovers.org/donate) and use your credit card to make a one-time donation or set up a recurring monthly gift
- Use the enclosed envelope to send us a check
- Donate something from our Chewy wish list: <https://t.ly/oEns>
- Set up a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA; you may give up to \$100,000 per year tax-free or use your gift to satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution after you turn 72\*
- Donate appreciated stock that you've held for at least one year; WCAL receives the full value and you may be eligible for income tax savings\*
- Consider a bequest or endowment to Wine Country Animal Lovers as part of your estate planning

*\*This information is not intended as legal or tax advice; please consult an attorney or tax advisor before making decisions that involve your investments.*



## HUCKLEBERRY

Our tiny rescue group was created in response to an urgent need during a time of drastic cutbacks. When the budget for animal control was eliminated in Calistoga, Dr Steve Franquelin began receiving injured stray dogs and found cats because there was nowhere else for his community to turn to. His creative solution was to invite a seemingly random selection of his clients from the Calistoga Pet Clinic to dinner. A realtor, a banker, a winery manager, a contractor and an architect, we came from different backgrounds and were honored to join forces and form an animal rescue, guided by our love of animals.

Wine Country Animal Lovers has blossomed into an impressively flexible and nimble organization that dabbles in a little bit of everything. Running a foster program full of adoptable animals is perhaps what we are best known for, but WCAL also has a crisis care program to provide financial support to owned pets and our network of trappers keep local feral cat colonies in good health. Our hotline responds to a wide variety of calls for help, providing training advice and helping to rehome animals who might otherwise land in a shelter. Transporters deliver homeless animals from crowded shelters to communities with room to help. Free spay/neuter programs are perhaps our most impactful work as they prevent thousands of accidental litters. We remain focused on helping local animals and have committed all our funding and foster homes to supporting animals from Napa, Lake and Sonoma counties.

When we got a call that a young dog and her two puppies had been left in front of the veterinary hospital in Middletown, our volunteers sprang into action. Huckleberry spent one scary night in a cardboard box, but he and his sister Rosebud as well as their mother Jessie quickly graduated from our foster program and now each have loving families of their own.



*Huckleberry, adopted from WCAL in January, 2022.*





“Gigi blossomed from a scared puppy to a social, outgoing teenager after puppy class. She’s working on learning new cues and is thriving because she’s learning positive rewards and has an eagerness to learn, communicate, and trust.

- Charlotte ”

## TRAINING LEADS TO A LIFETIME OF HAPPINESS

It is essential to us that all our dogs continue to have positive learning experiences after leaving their foster homes. Puppies are a big commitment, but they’re worth it!

Just ask Charlotte, who adopted a shy puppy named Gigi from us earlier this year.

We ask that all WCAL puppy adopters commit to attending a four-week-long reward-based training class as soon as their new puppy turns 16 weeks old. We help all our adopters find a qualified, dog-friendly trainer near them.

Reward-based training is the best way we know how to help you bond with your new pup, give you access to current training techniques and ensure that your new dog becomes a well-rounded member of society.

When asked what sets WCAL apart, Charlotte recounts, “I was impressed that WCAL cares about who adopts their pets, tracks their progress, and is available for follow-up questions and help. We were looking for a small dog to take with us when we travel, on car rides, etc. Gigi fit the bill. She was the runt,

tiny but fierce, adorable, and potty trained! We are forever grateful to Gigi’s foster mom.”

We believe in being proactive and know from experience that the best time to train a dog is NOW! It’s crucial that the dogs we rescue get the very best start. In fact, we offer a \$150 refund on our puppy adoption fee after completing a reward-based training course. Thanks to this pup’s dedicated family, “Gigi is thriving and curious.”

We wish them a lifetime of happiness!



## FOSTER PROFILE: JENNY

When Cotati resident Jenny Steuernagel was a child, her family raised puppies for Guide Dogs for the Blind, so she had first-hand experience assisting animals in getting ready for their forever homes.

“Every one of my pets came from WCAL,” she said proudly. She adopted her dog Ember and cats Fia, Ray and Hurley from Wine Country Animal Lovers and had always thought about fostering. “I felt it would be great to help out because there’s a lot of need with so many homeless kittens.”

While she loved the idea of becoming a foster for WCAL, her job as an IT professional at a local bank meant long hours in the office, which wasn’t conducive to volunteering.

And then the Covid lockdown happened. Jenny started working from home, which gave her the perfect opportunity to dip her toes back into fostering. She thought about her pets’ personalities and realized, “It

must be the WCAL fosters that make these animals so wonderful. They are just doing it right.” So, Jenny completed the foster application from our website.

Now for the past “three kitten seasons,” she’s been a staple in our team of volunteers, working exclusively with cats and kittens. “Ember loves kittens,” she gushed when asked how her Staffordshire Terrier mix reacted to the stream of new felines coming into their home.

Over the past two years, she’s fostered thirty felines, including special needs kitten Angel with her crushed pelvis and leg amputation; pregnant mama Tuna, who delivered six babies while in Jenny’s care; and countless feisty and playful litters. When asked about the time commitment for fostering, Jenny estimates it’s a couple of hours a day, depending on the animals. “Pregnant mamas do all the work, and they are among the easiest [fosters] I’ve



*Fia is one of the four lucky animals Jenny has adopted from WCAL.*

had because they do all the work nursing and cleaning up the babies.”

“Fostering is something you can do to make the world a better place, and it’s in your home. It is so easy to love these animals. It’s so fulfilling!”

Jenny now posts her own foster stories and adorable kitty photos online, and we hope her posts will attract other fosters because, without them, we cannot save the lives of so many animals.



## HAPPILY EVER AFTER - ERNIE

WCAL hosts a private Facebook group where adopters can stay in touch, ask questions, and share updates, photos and milestones. We love seeing posts about the dogs and cats from our program and we encourage all adopters to engage with the group. One such adopter is Roxanne Joe. At the beginning of the year, she and her husband Stephan, who live in Napa, adopted Ernie, a fun-loving tabby.

Roxanne recalls, “This ridiculous stinker came into our lives six months ago when I was going through two of the most difficult things I’ve ever experienced: the loss of our four-year-old kitty

Sam to genetic kidney disease and my own recovery from surgery to remove a brain tumor. Then in walks Ernie (formerly “Shiso” of the Japanese litter), full of love and mischief and purrs and cuddles.”

“I’m obsessed with Ernie,” admits Roxanne. “He became a part of our family instantly, never needing an adjustment period. Even big (cat) brother Woody let him share his toys and the spotlight... We’re a family of four and the newest addition fit right in.”



Over the past year, Roxanne’s photos and video posts on our Facebook adopter’s group have kept us entertained. Some of Ernie’s antics have included swiping kitty treats directly from the container, climbing into bags full of produce from the farmer’s market, dismantling cat toys, and napping in amusing positions.

Roxanne knows that if they ever have a question about Ernie, they can post it in the adopters’ group and one of our volunteers will help. Plus, it’s also helpful for adopters to have a place to connect with each other and share tips on anything from the best kitty litter to the most engaging toys to vet referrals.

An added perk of our Facebook group is that foster parents get to stay connected with the animals they helped raise. “It warms my heart to see updates on the animals that I’ve fostered,” recounts Frances, a Calistoga WCAL foster. “I just love seeing them flourishing in their forever homes.”





**Wine Country Animal Lovers**  
P.O. Box 3  
Calistoga, CA 94515  
[info@WineCountryAnimalLovers.org](mailto:info@WineCountryAnimalLovers.org)

**LEARN MORE  
ABOUT US!**



[www.WineCountryAnimalLovers.org](http://www.WineCountryAnimalLovers.org)  
**(707) 800-5058**

## OUR TINIEST KITTENS NEED YOUR HELP

Orphan kittens coming to us at just one or two days old often have their umbilical cords still attached. If their mother has passed away or isn't able to raise them, they not only require a bottle feeding every few hours, but also need specific temperature control as they mature. As they are unable to stay in an animal shelter, taking in these fragile babies is something we can do to make a real difference.

This is a very hands-on and daunting labor of love, and our team has found a special niche raising these bottle babies. In fact, over one third of the 150 kittens adopted from our rescue so far this year have been hand raised. They have thrived and, due to their intimate interactions with their foster volunteers, make extraordinarily loving house pets.

WCAL's incubator is an incredibly important piece of equipment in the success of these cases. It has lasted three great years, saving the lives of many underage neonatal kittens who needed its warmth and humidity to survive. Sadly, our current incubator is now broken and cannot be repaired, so it has raised its very last litter of kittens.

We're hoping to raise approximately \$2,000 this winter to replace our incubator and purchase a compatible oxygen concentrator and battery backup.

Visit [www.winecountryanimallovers.org/donate](http://www.winecountryanimallovers.org/donate) and use your credit card to make a one-time donation or set up a recurring monthly gift. With your support, we look forward to saving even more neonatal kittens in 2023.

