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## **PIERCE COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER LAUNCHES FUNDRAISER FOR MOBILE VETERINARY UNIT TO MEET GROWING DEMAND**

TACOMA, Wash. – The Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County announces the launch of a fundraising campaign to acquire a mobile veterinary unit, aimed at meeting the increasing demand for veterinary services within the community. This mobile veterinary unit will enable the shelter to provide essential veterinary care to pets beyond its walls, addressing a growing need in the community.

### **Rising Demand for Veterinary Services**

The need for veterinary services extends beyond unowned animals. Local veterinary clinics are experiencing appointment waitlists as long as six months, leaving pet owners with limited options for essential preventative care, including spay/neuter surgeries and vaccinations.

“The mobile veterinary unit will provide essential access to care for those who struggle to find available appointments or lack transportation to reach veterinary clinics,” says Dr. Jennifer Bennett, chief veterinary officer at the Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County. “By bringing veterinary services directly to these underserved areas, we can ensure more pets receive the necessary care, preventing illnesses and reducing pet overpopulation.”

### **Shelter’s Support Services: 2023 vs. 2024**

“The rising cost of living has forced many families to choose between basic necessities and pet care. This financial strain is evident in the rise of our shelter’s pet support services in just the first five months of 2024 compared to the same time period in 2023,” notes Bennett.

- **Owner Surrenders:** Compared to the same time last year, dogs surrendered increased 26.5%.
- **Spay/Neuter & Wellness Vouchers:** 863 applications received from income-qualifying pet owners in the first five months of 2024.
- **Vaccine & Wellness Clinics:** Pets served increased approximately 241% in 2024 compared to the first five months of 2023.
- **Pet Rehoming Support Requests:** More than doubled from 652 in the first five months of 2023 to 1,725 in 2024.
- **Pet Food Distributed:** Increased from 33,838 pounds in the first five months of 2023 to 47,156 in 2024.

### **Addressing Key Challenges**

In addition to addressing the demand for veterinary care for owned pets in the community, the mobile veterinary unit will help the shelter tackle three other major challenges: rising animal intake, limited veterinary space in the shelter, and the overpopulation of community cats.

“Over the past three years, the shelter has seen an 18% increase in animal intake. This equates to over 1,400 additional shelter pets needing comprehensive veterinary care in 2023 alone,” explains Bennett. “The mobile veterinary unit will not only provide essential preventative care but also serve as a crucial intervention tool, helping to keep pets out of the shelter and with their loving families.”

### **Features of the Mobile Veterinary Unit**

The 26-foot mobile veterinary unit will be equipped with a surgery suite with a hydraulic swivel table for animals of all sizes, preparation tables, an autoclave for sterilizing surgical tools, and other essential veterinary surgical equipment. The unit will have the capacity to house approximately 17 animals at a time for pre- and post-operative care.

### **Call the Action**

The Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County invites community support to raise a total of \$316,773 to fund the new mobile veterinary unit. Thanks to early supporters, the shelter is already over halfway toward its goal. Thanks to a matching gift from the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, community members have the opportunity to double their contributions up to \$30,000.

Donations will go directly toward funding the mobile veterinary unit as well as toward the care of the thousands of lost, injured, and neglected pets who enter the shelter each year.

For more information or to donate, visit the shelter’s website at [www.thehumanesociety.org/mvu](http://www.thehumanesociety.org/mvu).

### **About the Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County**

The Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County was founded by a handful of compassionate community members and has grown into one of the state’s largest animal welfare agencies. Each year, we find loving homes for more than 6,000 pets, reunite over 1,100 animals with their overjoyed owners, and provide care for thousands more in our community. Additionally, we offer several comprehensive programs and resources, including Spay/Neuter & Wellness Vouchers, a monthly Vaccine & Wellness Clinic, a Pet Food & Supply Pantry, behavior advice, and private rehoming services. Learn more at [www.thehumanesociety.org](http://www.thehumanesociety.org).

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