

Chair Adam and Honorable Members of the Board,

As a volunteer for many years, I would like to take this opportunity to give you an update on changes at the Santa Barbara County Animal Shelter as a result of the AHA Report.

As you know, one of our big concerns was being grossly understaffed. We are all very encouraged that over the last several months Animal Services has been given the budget to hire additional staff, including an extra Kennel Attendant (Animal Welfare Specialist), an Outreach Coordinator, full time Vet Tech, and Dog Behaviorist. I hear an Operations Manager is also in the works.

Our new Outreach Volunteer Coordinator, Jeanne Saadi, has been a wonderful addition to our team of volunteers. She has reconstituted both the *foster program* and *new volunteer* orientations that were previously dropped by Animal Services, and she is expanding and building new relationships with more rescue partners. Jeanne is *customer service* oriented and works well with volunteers, staff and the public. She has also reached out on social media and to our local news stations to get even more exposure for our shelter dogs, and I am thrilled to say we are at our lowest numbers ever with these new outreach programs, along with our on going & successful volunteer project, *Give a Dog a Home!*

There have also been some very innovative programs introduced by volunteers and rescue partners including “play groups”, which Animal Services has agreed to implement. This is a great way to socialize dogs, make them more adoptable, and give them a better quality of life during their stay at the shelter.

We have been moving in a forward direction, but there are still many issues that need to be addressed, including better communication and transparency between Animal Services and their volunteers and rescue partners -- especially when decisions about euthanasia are on the table and nobody is informed until after the fact. We must also take a look at old policies that continue to have a negative effect on animals. *Protective custody dogs* and dogs that Animal Services deems *not adoptable* from the shelter languish in kennels way too long without any enrichment, exercise, or contact with volunteers. We need to come up with better solutions to make sure that each and every dog gets the same humane treatment.

In closing, I think it's a very good idea to create a *Commission on Animals* and maintain permanent oversight to ensure that Animal Services has continued success.

Thank you very much for being a partner in making our county shelter the best it can be.

Sincerely,

Lynne Shaw
Volunteer