

Two puppies, nine kittens and a momma cat make it official: the Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society is back to saving lives

Join other animal lovers at the “Purrcasso Arts & Crafts” benefit on November 6-7 to support the group’s rescue efforts



Just four months ago, the Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society was wondering how it would survive the devastation of the May 20, 2010, early-morning fire that left the 83-year-old institution homeless and financially strapped. Today, the award-winning animal welfare organization has much to purr about as it takes its first major steps on the long road back to full recovery.

First, Berkeley Humane recently resumed its lifesaving efforts with the arrival of two adorable puppies, nine cuddly kittens, and a momma cat. By late November, the group

hopes to re-occupy a portion of its fire-damaged facility at 2700 Ninth Street in Berkeley, subject to approval by the City of Berkeley. Following required clean-up and repairs, the interim restoration of the space makes it possible for Berkeley Humane to re-open its resident hospital and onsite sheltering of some animals, along with such public services as the spay/neuter clinic and adoption center. (The only services that were not interrupted by the fire were the dog training and advice line, PAWS/ East Bay and Pet Food Pantry programs.)

“We are thrilled to be moving forward, because getting back to our mission of saving dogs and cats from possible euthanasia is our top priority,” says Executive Director Stacey Street. “The need has never been more urgent. As the recession deepens, more and more animals are ending up in municipal shelters that are already at capacity. So, sadly, along with the loss of the 15 cats who perished on May 20, the tragedy of this fire has been the estimated 400 or more animals that did not get rescued because our facility was damaged.”

Adds Virginia Gray, president of the board of directors: “We are deeply grateful to everyone who helped us reach this milestone – particularly our amazing staff, the hundreds of caring volunteers and local businesses who organized

fundraisers, and the thousands of individuals whose donations are crucial to our long-term rebuilding effort. At this time, however, the expense of our day-to-day operations is our most compelling challenge. We very much need cash donations and foster homes to make it possible for us to achieve our goal of returning to full operations when we reoccupy our facility as soon as temporary permits are issued.”

The non-profit organization, which receives no public funds, is currently waiting on proposals and cost projections for the final reconstructive phase of its aging facility, built more than 80 years ago. Based on early estimates, a minimum budget of \$4 million will be required. Approximately \$600,000 has been received thus far from over 4000 donors, all of it restricted to the Shelter Fire Relief Fund.

Animal lovers can help support Berkeley Humane three ways:

- Join other animal lovers at “The 5th Annual Purrcasso Arts and Crafts Sale” next Saturday and Sunday, November 6-7. This fun-filled annual fundraising event features donated pet-inspired artistic masterpieces from as far away as Japan – as well as the movie studios Pixar, Disney, and Dreamworks. For complete details, go to www.Purrcasso.org.
- Make a cash donation by mail, credit card or phone. To contribute online, go to www.BerkeleyHumane.org. By phone, call (510) 845-7735, ext. 204. Or feel free to mail a check to the Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society, Attn: Development Department, 2700 Ninth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710.
- Become foster parents to animals in need. For details, please visit www.BerkeleyHumane.org.

In April 2009, Berkeley Humane received national acclaim as a recipient of the Maddies Fund Lifesaving Award with The Berkeley Alliance for Homeless Animals Coalition. It was the first time a coalition in the state of California was selected for the prestigious honor. Berkeley Humane has also distinguished itself by saving and placing over 40,000 homeless dogs and cats – more than 800 of them in 2009 alone – since it was founded in 1927. The group has also performed over 35,000 spay-and-neutering surgeries to help prevent overpopulation, and distributed more than 2,500 pounds of food, along with donated collars, leashes and other pet supplies to low-income pet guardians since founding its *Pet Food Pantry* program just last February. Among its other unique services, Berkeley Humane has matched up hundreds of seniors to pets in *their* golden years; trained thousands of owners and their dogs on how to live a rewarding coexistence; and provided pet-related services to over 100 low-income seniors and people with life-threatening illnesses or disabilities. It also continues to host a monthly support group to help grieving animal lovers through their pet losses.

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PHOTO CAPTION: Staff members Mary Giuffrida and Jane Townley welcome the first arrivals as the Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society begins restoring its life-saving programs for homeless dogs and cats.

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