

animal

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WRITES



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You can't put a price on love: My experience at the VHS's Because They Matter event

A version of this story was published in the Daily Hive.

On July 24th, I was in the Downtown Eastside sharing emergency veterinary resources and handing out pet supplies as part of the annual Because They Matter event. The tables were laden with bright new leashes, harnesses, and toys; tempting treats; and sturdy carriers and litter boxes.

I spoke with a man who carefully fitted new shoes onto his dog's feet, telling me how she would now be safer walking around on the sidewalks. As one person switched her dog's collar for a well-fitting harness, she turned to me and said, "You folks are angels." A sweet pup walked over carrying a new toy in his mouth and rested his paws on my knee when I bent down to greet him. His tail wagged until he and his smiling guardian rounded the corner out of sight.

The Downtown Eastside is one of Canada's most placed-at-risk communities, where many residents spend their days on the streets. Many people are living on extremely limited incomes, like disability assistance or pensions, and can't afford the ever-rising cost of living in our city.

In the heart of the Downtown Eastside, where life's hardships often loom large, there's a remarkable testament to love and resilience in the form of pet guardians. Each year, I hear stories of connection, family, sacrifice, and unconditional love from people with pets. I have heard people say they didn't know how they would afford groceries that week, but they had bought a new bag of pet food with their last \$30. In turn, their animals provide companionship and joy that helps get them through difficult days.

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One couple I spoke with had taken in a dog and her litter of puppies twelve years earlier from a friend who could no longer care for them. They spent long nights caring for the newborns and ensuring they were all receiving enough food. Eventually, they rehomed all but one of the dogs. The runt of the litter, Remy-Roo, became like their own baby. When she was afflicted with a life-threatening pyometra infection before they had a chance to have her spayed, they scraped together funds for her emergency surgery. As I saw the three of them together, Remy-Roo snuggled into them, licked their faces, and looked at them like they were her whole world. Her bright eyes and slightly greying fur spoke of a lifetime of happy memories.

Their story – taking in a pet from someone who didn't have the capacity to keep their animal at home anymore – was echoed by nearly everyone I spoke with at Because They Matter. A man had taken in a cat from his ailing mother. A woman was regularly watching and walking a dog whose senior guardian had limited mobility. A man cared for his neighbour's dog each time she had to work.

This mutual aid within the community is sorely needed. In the wake of rising costs of living, people living in poverty face a growing number of barriers to keeping their pets. Financial struggles continue to be one of the top reasons people surrender their pets to shelters. And with animal shelters across Canada still struggling to meet the surge in demand, there is often nowhere for animals to go.

The Vancouver Humane Society's McVitie Fund program aims to address these financial barriers. The program provides life-saving veterinary support to pet guardians living on a low income, saving them from the heart-wrenching decision of watching their pet suffer or giving them up to get the help they need to survive. Demand for the program has skyrocketed over the past five years, rising from about one animal helped each week in 2019 to an average of 15 each week in 2024.

By embracing empathy and support, we can ensure that these human-animal families stay together, because they matter.

Chantelle Archambault
Communications Director

Helping farmed animals at the Happy Herd



The VHS' Executive Director, Amy, spoke at The Happy Herd's annual vegan dinner fundraiser. "Being an advocate for legal changes is important, but what matters most to legal changes is the number of people asking for them. The biggest change we can make is to be advocates with those we share our lives with."

Amy also shared, "for those of us that have had challenging

experiences watching animals be abused, coming to the Happy Herd is a form of therapy. It allows for us to heal and remember that it is possible for animals to feel safe and trust."

The VHS is partnering with The Happy Herd Farm Sanctuary for Giving Tuesday this December 3rd to make life better for animals!

For the ninth year running, donations made to the Giving Tuesday campaign will go towards helping the Happy Herd care for their animals and continue with upkeep of the sanctuary, as well as to supporting the VHS's advocacy work and veterinary assistance program.

You can support the Happy Herd and the VHS's work this Giving Tuesday by donating or by purchasing items from supporting businesses!

An anonymous donor has committed to matching up to \$4,000 in donations made towards Giving Tuesday.

Vegan Yarn will be donating 25% of their sales on December 3rd to the campaign.

Sprouted Oven will be donating 3% of their sales on December 3rd to the campaign.

Stay tuned for more businesses and individuals who will be supporting Giving Tuesday this year, including by committing to matching donations made to the campaign.

Would you or your business like to partner for animals this Giving Tuesday? To learn more about getting involved and partnership perks, please reach out to claire@vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca.

Animals getting the urgent care they need

An update from the McVitie Fund



Yoda is back home with his loving guardian, Kara!

After some difficult life circumstances, things were finally looking up for Kara and Yoda. They unfortunately fell upon tough times again recently when Yoda was attacked by another dog. In addition to sustaining severe injuries from the attack, the vet also found a mass in Yoda's mouth that was suspected to be cancerous.

After exhausting her limited funds for the initial appointment and wound cleaning, Kara was unable to afford the costly wound repair and surgery for the mass. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, Yoda was able to receive the urgent care he needed.

Yoda is now back home with Kara, settling back into his normal life and showing signs of his vibrant personality again!

Kara is grateful for the outpouring of support they received in their time of need.

Copper needs life-saving surgery

Sweet young Copper is full of life and loves to climb everything he can find. Sadly, his curiosity landed him in a difficult situation recently when his guardian, Janine, came home one day to find that he was limping on his back leg.

A trip to the vet for some X-rays determined that Copper's femur is badly broken. Janine believes he likely fell from a high surface while climbing.

Copper is experiencing a great deal of pain. Due to the severity of the break, the vet has recommended a full amputation to mitigate the risk of a potentially life-threatening infection occurring.

As a senior on a pension, Janine is unable to afford this costly procedure. She knows it is the safest route of treatment to ensure that Copper lives a happy and full life. With help from the Vancouver Humane Society's McVitie Fund program, Copper began getting the care he needed right away and will have his surgery as soon as possible.

Can you donate today toward the surgery that will help Copper get back to moving around and enjoying life at www.vancouverhumane.ca/copper?



Changing opinions spell hope for an end to inhumane rodeos

This summer, the VHS and supporters were hard at work advocating to end the suffering of animals in rodeos.

This year's Calgary Stampede rodeo and chuckwagon races were the deadliest of the past five years, resulting in the deaths of four animals: three horses used in chuckwagon racing and a cow used in steer wrestling.

The VHS team closely monitored events to ensure these tragic incidents were tracked and shared with media. Stampede organizers only shared information about animal deaths after the VHS's team and media contacts made inquiries.

The VHS's Calgary Stampede campaign ran throughout the summer, reaching millions of people through online messaging, billboards across Calgary, and 43 media broadcasts and articles including on Global News, CTV News, CityNews Calgary, and the CBC. Survey results have since shown a significant increase in public opposition to inhumane rodeo and chuckwagon races and to government funding of these events. You can read more about the survey results and take further action at www.vancouverhumane.ca/rodeo-poll, or read more about the campaign at www.rodeotruth.com.

With the shift in public opinion comes an important opportunity for meaningful change. Decision-makers have previously pushed back on calls to end the rodeo and chuckwagon races at the Calgary Stampede, citing public support. The new survey results show that support is rapidly dwindling, marking a turning



Ridge Runner, a horse used in bucking events at the Coombs rodeo, later fell back against a fence and was kicked twice in the head. Jordan Rivers \ We Animals Media.

point for the increasingly controversial animal events.

The VHS will soon be sharing the poll results and the #SayNoToRodeo pledge, which has received more than 9,500 signatures, with Calgary's municipal decision-makers and Calgary Stampede organizers as part of a call to remove rodeo events and chuckwagon races from the Stampede program.

You can read the VHS's two opinion pieces about the public opinion polling and the future of the event, published in the Daily Hive, at www.vancouverhumane.ca/opinion.

Here in B.C., the rodeo season once again saw many concerning incidents of animal suffering. The VHS monitored these events, where video footage revealed animals being dragged around the arena by a rope, thrashing in chutes and becoming trapped in unnatural positions, and being agitated through stressful practices like ear pulling.

In one particularly concerning clip from a rodeo in Clinton, a

stressed bull resists handlers' attempts to move him in the pens next to the arena. The clip goes on to show handlers kicking the bull, twisting his tail and using an electric prod on the animal repeatedly, including prodding the animal on the anus. The VHS submitted an animal cruelty report in response to the incident, which appears to violate rules around electric prod use. The VHS also submitted a cruelty report regarding harsh handling of horses and inhumane use of electric prods at a rodeo in Coombs this August.

The B.C. government continues to fund the suffering of animals in rodeo, with more than \$680,000 in taxpayer dollars awarded to events that include rodeos this year alone. The VHS is calling for an end to provincial funding of rodeo events and for legal protections to prevent animal suffering in rodeo. You can send a pre-written, editable email to provincial decision-makers using the quick action tool at www.vancouverhumane.ca/bc-rodeos.

The VHS's silent auction returns October 17!



This beautiful print, *Kasatka* by Elena Markelova, will be available for purchase through the silent auction.

Back for the fifth year running, the VHS's annual silent auction goes live this fall! Bidding opens on October 17th and will continue until the auction closes on October 27th. All funds raised from the auction will support the VHS's programs and advocacy work to build a kinder world for animals.

Plan ahead for the holidays; find unique gifts for loved ones or something special to treat yourself! The auction website is being updated daily. Items for sale include gift certificates to plant-based restaurants, fitness

classes, event tickets, art, pet supplies and more.

This year the VHS is aiming to raise \$11,250 through the silent auction. You can feel good knowing funds raised will go straight to helping animals in B.C. and across Canada.

Register your account to bid in the auction, learn more, and pre-browse available items by visiting: new.biddingowl.com/VHS. For any questions please email: claire@vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca or call 604-266-9744.

Two more horses die at Hastings Racecourse

On August 9th, a two-year-old horse named Kiki's Song of Life was euthanized after sustaining a compound fracture during a timed workout at Hastings Racecourse in Vancouver. Less than a month later, two incidents in a single day on September 6th left one horse named Lucky Cowboy dead and another named Be Sparky injured.

This marks the third death of this year's racing season in B.C., after last year saw 11 horse fatalities at the province's two racing venues.

The Vancouver Humane Society continues to ask that people choose entertainment events that do not put animals through pain, stress, and risk to their lives. Learn more and take the pledge not to attend horse racing events: www.vancouverhumane.ca/horse-racing.

Right now is a key time to make change for horses, as horse sentience and well-being are being covered in media around the world. Some examples:

In May, the bill to ban live horse exports for slaughter passed at the House of Commons and is now at its second-to-last reading in the Senate. Late last month, protests gathered across Canada when news broke about the Canadian government under-reporting horse deaths in transit.

Show jumping, which has been criticized due to serious animal welfare concerns, will no longer be a part of the modern pentathlon at the Olympics after this summer's event.

Finally, a recent study published in Applied Animal Behaviour Science by Louise Evans, Heather Cameron-Whytock, and Carrie Ijichi showed that horses plan and think strategically. The lead researcher on the study, Evans, said, "Generally, when we start to think that animals may have better cognitive abilities than previously thought, their welfare does improve." She also noted that the study shows horse training does not require aversive tools, which subject animals to pain, fear, and stress.

RACE 6 **SCRATCHED** **WICKED NIGHT**

LUCKY COWBOY
ANTONIO AMBROSIO REYES

TR	W	P	S	Earnings
5	4	0	0	22449.00
0	0	0	0	0

BREEDER GLADYS DITTLÖFF & KAREN DITTLÖFF
SIRE BAKKEN **DAM** BRICE'S FIRE

Lucky Cowboy was euthanized after sustaining a compound fracture during a race on September 6th. Hastings Racecourse official live stream.

Thank you to our donors

Thank you to the following, who remembered loved ones with a gift to help animals:

Susan Sinotte in memory of David
Karen Lam in memory of Sugar
Karenn Krangle in memory of Freddie
Leslie Williams in memory of Whisper
Danine Hall in memory of Akil Nadeem
Connie George in memory of Charlie, Lester, Lucy and Scarlet
Linda Burns in memory of Angie & Quincy
Patricia Plumley in memory of Brave Sir Robert
Michael Winkle in memory of Alannah Marsh
Laura Jarvis-Whitehead in memory of Finny & Char
Arjun Shankar in memory of Daisy Shankar
Denise Ormerod in memory of Tigger and Tiger, two of Denise's beautiful rescued cats
Helen Schiele in memory of DoDo
Kimberly Cizek Allen in memory of Bella Boo
Amanda Rogers in memory of Ember, aka the best tortie kitty
Misty MacDuffee in memory of Atticus
Sheryl Smith in memory of Gypsy
Samantha Shortt in memory of Jack
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James & Mia Matterson in memory of Scarlett
Kimberly Prystay in memory of Babe
Kristy Reynolds in memory of Sheila Kolodziejek
Katie Slater in memory of baby boy Blaze
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Ryan Bencic in memory of Sir L
Scott Van Bolhuis in memory of Louie
Lara Menzies in memory of Baby Menzies
Ed Graham in memory of Samuel Graham
Sandra Morris in memory of Woody
Sharon Levine in memory of Irene
Marjory Simpson Gettel

Thank you to the following, who honoured others with a gift for the animals:

Leah Porter, Eleanora Falzone in honour of Kat
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Teresa Sankey in honour of Saoirse and Grainne Sankey
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Rena Miller in honour of all animal martyrs
Sheril Jospy in honour of Rocky
Catherine McLachlan in honour of Amy Morris
Frances Fasano in honour of Bean
Carly Breitberg in honour of Jawa, Mikko, and Mojave
Debra Lingard in honour of Audrey Chisholm
Tanya Montagliani in honour of Claudia
Matteo Montagliani in honour of Zoey
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Michelle Bouchard in honour of Elliot & Valentin
Kathryn Galan in honour of Spooky
Jensen Gifford in honour of Clue
Jennifer Fletcher in honour of Honey Morrison
Penny Osborne in honour of Jack & Yvonne Osborne
Laurie Robertson in honour of Terry
Hector Bitar in honour of Blue Buffalo & Pereira O'Dell
Kimberly Munro in honour of Teddy and Oreo Munro
Fernando Pires in honour of Harvey Wipp

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NHV Natural Pet
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Vegan Supply
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RC Pets
Khyber's Dog Company
Catoro Pets
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Andre & Trudel Kroecher Fund, through Nicola Wealth Private Giving Foundation
Small Changes Foundation, held at Vancouver Foundation

We are truly grateful to our amazing volunteers, who give their time to support our work.

Our monthly donors are our heroes. Thank you to all of you, from the bottom of our hearts!



Wins for animals!



It can feel like an uphill battle to address the suffering that animals face. But take heart—progress is being made! Here are some recent wins for animals in Canada and beyond.

Fishes and other wild animals

New protections are being put in place for farmed fishes. The Canadian government announced a five-year deadline for open net salmon farms to be phased out in B.C.! This is a major win for wild fishes, who suffer when waste, disease, parasites, and chemicals seep

out of farms into the surrounding ecosystem.

Fines for illegal hunting and fishing have more than doubled in B.C. The ministry said the new penalties “better reflect the serious nature” of wildlife offences and acknowledge the importance of wildlife.

Farmed animals

A law was passed in the UK banning the live export of farmed animals like cows, pigs, sheep, horses, and goats for slaughter and fattening abroad.

Here in Canada, a similar bill to ban the live export of horses for slaughter is currently in the Senate after being passed at the House of Commons.

Earlier this year, a landmark court decision was made in Ontario to strike down much of Ontario’s ag-gag law, which aimed to silence those who expose the suffering of animals raised and killed in the agriculture system.

Companion animals

A new bill to criminalize coercive control, including violence and threats toward a partner’s companion animal, passed unanimously at the House of Commons and has passed its first reading in the Senate.

The Preventing Unethical Puppy Sales Act passed in Ontario! The bill has received Royal Assent and includes a prohibition on operating puppy mills.

Try it at home: Flavourful & comforting pumpkin seed “meatballs”

INGREDIENTS:

Ingredients:

- 3 cups cooked brown rice, cooled
- 3 cups roasted pumpkin seeds
- 1 1/2 cups packed roasted red peppers
- 3 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 cup sliced green onions
- 4 1/2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 3 medium sized cloves garlic
- 1 tbsp dried oregano
- 1 tbsp dried basil
- 2 tsp sea salt (reduce to 1 if using salted pumpkin seeds)
- 1 tsp backstrap molasses (optional)
- 1 1/2 cups rolled oats

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large food processor, add all ingredients except oats and using 2 3/4 cups of pumpkin seeds (and reserving the remaining 1/4 cup). Puree until well combined, scraping down the bowl as needed.
2. Add oats and pulse through several times to incorporate.
3. Add the reserved 1/4 cup of pumpkin seeds, and pulse in again, to slightly incorporate but keep some texture.
4. If possible, refrigerate for about an hour.
5. When ready to bake, preheat oven to 375°F. Take scoops of mixture (about 1–1 1/2 tbsp; should yield 54–60 meatballs), and place on 2–3 baking sheets lined with parchment paper.
6. Bake for 18–20 minutes, until golden or just firm to the touch (do not over-bake; they will dry out).
7. Remove and serve with pasta and tomato sauce, or with rice and sauce of choice.

This recipe was developed by Andrea Potter of Rooted Nutrition and brought to you by the VHS’s PlantUniversity platform. Find more plant-based recipes at www.plantuniversity.ca and see how you can stand up for animals every time you sit down to eat!

JOIN OUR MONTHLY GIVING COMMUNITY



Monthly gifts to the VHS are a simple, cost-effective way to make the biggest possible difference for animals. By making your gift monthly, you help the VHS plan ahead for long-term goals and spend every dollar effectively where it is needed most.

“Every humane society does good work; the Vancouver Humane Society distinguishes itself by just how well it does its good work. It distinguishes itself too by taking to heart the interests of animals of all sorts—not just the cutest cats and most lovable dogs. I can't think of a better organization to contribute to on an ongoing basis.”

**Don LePan, VHS monthly donor
Nanaimo, BC**

To become a monthly donor to the VHS visit: <https://vancouverhumaneociety.bc.ca/donate> and select “Recurring” or email claire@vancouverhumaneociety.bc.ca

Read the VHS's latest opinion pieces in the Daily Hive!

1. A stressful and fear-filled glimpse into an animal's first rodeo: www.vancouverhumane.ca/first-rodeo
2. The Calgary Stampede rodeo is cruel, stagnant and stuck in the past: www.vancouverhumane.ca/stuck-in-the-past
3. The overwhelming love of pet guardians in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside: www.vancouverhumane.ca/price-on-love
4. Most Calgarians are against Stampede rodeo and chuckwagon events: www.vancouverhumane.ca/most-calgarians



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Web: www.vancouverhumaneociety.bc.ca
Email: info@vancouverhumaneociety.bc.ca
Phone: 604.266.9744

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Editors:

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