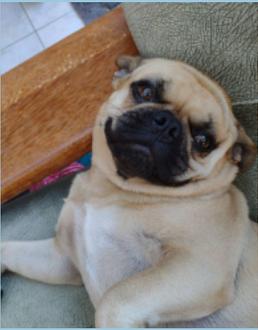


animal

www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca
VOLUME 88 SUMMER 2025

WRITES



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Layla’s story

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Win for companion
animals in
Vancouver

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"What you have done for me is a true miracle. No words I can say can express the gratitude I feel. The gift of saving Opi has been the greatest thing to have happened to me."

Christine, guardian to Opi

Opi received life-saving treatment for an intestinal obstruction thanks to the McVitie Fund.

 **~24**
pets helped each week

\$500 
average cost per pet

 **900+**
animals expected to return home to their families this year, thanks to the McVitie Fund

Double your impact to help pets come home safe

Each day, the Vancouver Humane Society’s McVitie Fund program is flooded with an ever-increasing number of applications and calls from distressed pet guardians seeking urgent veterinary care funding for their loved companion animals. The people who turn to the McVitie Fund are facing not only the stress, trauma, and uncertainty of a sick or injured animal but also the daily challenges of poverty. Women, Indigenous people, seniors, and individuals living with disabilities are among those most affected by these hardships—and most in need of support.

So far this year, the McVitie Fund has helped more than 400 animals in low-income homes across B.C. receive life-saving veterinary care. By the end of 2025, that number is expected to grow to 900 pets helped.

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The McVitie Fund remains the only program in B.C. offering year-round emergency vet care funding at this scale. Every person who applies receives compassionate, trauma-informed support from the VHS team, whether or not they qualify for financial aid.

Right now, thanks to a generous anonymous donor, your gift to the McVitie Fund will be matched, dollar for dollar, up to \$25,000. This means right now your gift goes twice as far to help pets make it back home safely to the ones who love them most. As the bond of pets and their guardians is immeasurable, so are the true and lasting impacts of the McVitie Fund and the support of donors like you.



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“Bobo is the only one I spend time with every day. I am very grateful to you for helping him through this difficult time so that he can continue his life.”

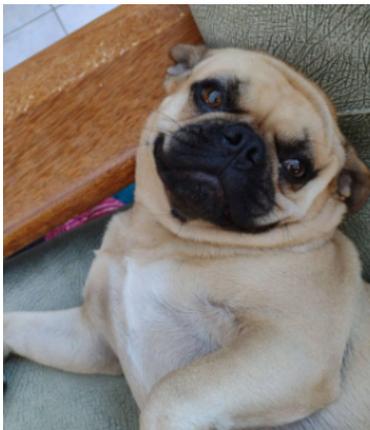
Elaine, guardian to Bobo

Bobo received surgery for a life-threatening urinary blockage.

Layla and Mandy's story

VHS received a touching story and request. Rather than paraphrase it, we wanted to share it with you in Mandy's own heartfelt words:

“Layla came into my life when I needed her the most. Seven years ago, she was just a tiny, wrinkly puppy with the biggest, most soulful eyes. From the moment I held her, I knew she was special. She isn't just a pet. She became my lifeline, my safe place, and my reason to keep going.”



“

“She became my lifeline, my safe place, and my reason to keep going.”

Four years ago, I found the strength to leave an abusive relationship, and Layla was the reason I finally left. For years, I endured the pain, telling myself I could handle it. But when I saw the first signs of abuse directed at Layla, I knew I couldn't let her suffer the way I had. Unlike me, she didn't have the ability to make that conscious choice so we walked away together, and she has been my rock ever since.

Now Layla is in urgent need of veterinary care due to a rapidly growing mass that has changed in size and color within the past day. The growth has ballooned, with the end of it turning bright pink, and she has become lethargic and not acting like

herself, which is deeply concerning. She has always been full of love, enthusiasm, and happiness, but now she is struggling, and I feel helpless.

Unfortunately, financial hardships have left me unable to afford the vet care she urgently needs. I work hard in landscaping, but with the high cost of living, I have exhausted all my options. I have reached out to multiple organizations for help and have been turned away, leaving me with nowhere else to turn.

I am desperately seeking assistance to get Layla the medical attention she needs. I love her deeply, and the thought of losing her because I can't afford care is unbearable. Any help would mean the world to both of us. Thank you for considering my request.”

VHS funded Layla's life-saving mass removal surgery. Can you donate to the McVitie program, to make sure we can say YES to more animals like Layla?

Because They Matter is back!

The VHS is thrilled to announce that the Because They Matter fundraising event is returning for its fifth year on Sunday, July 20th!

This meaningful event brings together compassionate individuals to distribute pet supplies and share information about accessing veterinary care with animal guardians living on the streets of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

At last year's event, participants handed out thousands of essential pet supplies, thanks to the generous support of local businesses and organizations, along with hundreds of pamphlets about the Vancouver Humane Society's McVitie Fund program.

The event plays a crucial role in

supporting people living on a low income who are facing the stress, trauma and uncertainty that can arise when a beloved companion animal becomes sick or injured. It also provides an opportunity for residents of the neighbourhood to pick up much-needed supplies for their animal companions.

This year, our goal is to raise \$16,000, which will help meet the growing demand for the McVitie program's veterinary care services. These services now total over \$300,000 annually, and are 100% donor funded.

Want to help make a difference? Everyone is welcome to participate, whether in person or by fundraising online. Visit www.vancouverhumane.ca/because-they-matter to get involved.



Shining a light on the plight of exotic pets



Many wild animals kept as pets suffer. Often, these animals are sold as "beginner pets", are confined in inadequate enclosures, lack proper care, and are unable to express

natural behaviours. Exotic animals have complex needs that are challenging to meet in captivity. The Vancouver Humane Society's new campaign is shining a light on the welfare, environmental, and public health concerns of the exotic pet trade.

As part of this work, the VHS has launched a public education campaign to raise awareness about the issues with keeping exotic animals as pets. VHS staff have also reached out to organizers of exotic animal expos in B.C., including the British Columbia Reptile Club (BCRC), to share our concerns about a number of issues witnessed at a previous BCRC expo where animals were available for sale. **The VHS shared feedback regarding the transportation of animals,**

including from out of province, for the expos; housing and keeping of animals in small, barren containers; and sales practices and processes, including frequent handling of animals and information shared with the public.

Through education, science-based evidence and respectful engagement, the VHS aims to engage stakeholders around key exotic animal welfare issues. With your support, the VHS is advocating for a shift in how society views wild and exotic animals, not as pets or entertainment, but as complex beings with their own needs and worth.

Learn more about the campaign at www.vancouverhumane.ca/exotic-animals.

Hastings horse death ahead of race season reignites demands for change

On April 13, 2025, a 3-year old horse named Wynn Magic suffered a compound fracture to the left front leg during a timed workout at Vancouver's Hastings racecourse and was euthanized. **The incident happened just weeks before the start of the 2025 racing season and comes after a contentious 2024 season that saw four horse fatalities at Hastings.** The previous year, Hastings recorded eight horse deaths.

The VHS spoke out about Wynn Magic's death and is urging the public to re-think attending horse races and for decision-

makers to support alternative events that bring the community together without putting animals at risk.

The VHS is also raising concern about welfare issues in horse racing, such as the use of aversive training methods, painful equipment like whips and bits, breeding practices that prioritize speed over skeletal health, and the ultimate fate of retired horses after their short careers.

Learn more and pledge to not attend horse races at www.vancouverhumane.ca/horse-racing.



VHS podcast highlights farmed animal well-being with experts across the country



Maha Bazzi, Mercy for Animals

The Vancouver Humane Society's podcast, The Informed Animal Ally, continues to shine a light on the many ways caring individuals can help protect animals—especially those raised on farms.

This year, the podcast has featured thoughtful conversations with leaders in the animal protection sector. Maha Bazzi of Mercy for Animals joined the VHS to discuss the Animal Welfare Scorecard for Canada, which evaluates major food companies based on their welfare commitments. Melissa Matlow from World Animal Protection also appeared as a special guest to talk about the Animal Protection Index, a global report that measures how countries, including Canada, are performing when it comes to protecting animals through policy and legislation.

Other recent episodes explore a range of timely topics, including the role of farm sanctuaries and practical tips for discussing vegan choices with family, friends, and others in your community.

Whether you prefer to listen or read along, all episodes and written transcripts are available at www.vancouverhumane.ca/podcasts.



Melissa Matlow, World Animal Protection

Advocacy efforts ramp up for rodeo season



Photo: Jordan Rivers / We Animals Media

As this year's rodeo season gets underway, the VHS and advocates are continuing to speak up for animals used in inhumane rodeo events.

You'll likely recall that last year's Calgary Stampede rodeo and chuckwagon races were the deadliest of the past five years, with three chuckwagon horses and one cow from a steer wrestling event killed. The VHS, which has tracked Stampede rodeo and chuckwagon fatalities since 1986, raised awareness about the incidents in local and national media outlets and delivered a report to Calgary City Council outlining growing concerns and forward-thinking recommendations.

The VHS also monitored several

rodeos in B.C. last year, shared footage with the media, and called for an end to public funding of inhumane rodeo events. Polling showed increased opposition to rodeo events across Canada following last year's highly publicized incidents.

It is a crucial time to grow the increasing awareness about rodeo cruelty into real change for animals. **This year, the VHS will build on the momentum from last year's efforts through a prominent public awareness campaign in Calgary and Alberta, engagement with government decision-makers, and direct support for advocates and concerned community members about rodeos in their community.**

The VHS joins animal organizations across Canada in hosting animal protection debate



Nathaniel Erskine-Smith
Liberal Party



Alistair MacGregor
NDP



Yves Perron
Bloc Québécois



Elizabeth May
Green Party

For the second time ever, an all-party animal protection debate shed light on the positions of Canada's federal parties leading up to the election. The debate was once again hosted by the VHS and other animal organizations across Canada: Animal Justice, SPCA Montreal, BC SPCA, and World Animal Protection.

As parties battled it out on the campaign trail, this debate was

crucial in ensuring that animal protection remained on candidates' radar. It also encouraged stronger commitments from parties on topics such as national animal protection legislation, wildlife, animals used in research, and animals kept in captivity.

The debate was especially key in drawing attention toward farmed animals, a group who suffer greatly on a massive

scale. Candidates discussed concerns related to horse exports for slaughter overseas, fur farming, intensive animal agriculture, plant-based policies, international agricultural trade, and antibiotic use on farms. To see a replay of the debate and understand each party's position on animal topics leading into the new parliamentary cycle, visit www.animalelectiondebate.ca.

Thank you to our donors

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

Dr. Hinda Avery, in memory of Mary Auerbach
Clara Chan, in memory of Puss Tabby
Lauren Williamson, in memory of Charlie Dog
Sigrid Bjarnason, in memory of Thelma
Bonnie Mutton, in memory of Raven
Carol Froese, in memory of Koko
Kim Price, in memory of Miles the Wonder Cat
Anonymous, in memory of Ruffle & Finn
Garson Lo, in memory of Chloe
Maryah Mckibbon, in memory of Zissou
Lindsay Hamelin, in memory of Rex and Earl
Emile Fuchs in memory of Pokey

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

Shoshana Somerville, in honour of Dusty Rose Bud and Rosabella
Richard Menkis, in honour of Simon Jonathan Laber
Kaylie Fraser Pirrotta, in honour of Tessa
Nicole Kloos, in honour of Erwin and Alexis Rose Kloos
Tess Dingman, in honour of Pepper & Dart
Jakkapan Karnjanavijaya, in honour of Rhino
Heather Peacock, in honour of Meesha
Michelle Bischof, in honour of Lady Clarisse
Kuljeet Dulai, in honour of Sakura
Tamara Petrollini, in honour of Flower
Jennifer Woodroff, in honour of my little friend Pili
Courtney Zimmerman, in honour of Kacie
Lisa Cathersides, in honour of Wilma Hunter
Sandra Helin, in honour of all our furbabies everywhere

Bryan O'Connor, in honour of Miro O'Connor
Denise & Jeff Hoskins, in honour of Denise
Joe Thatcher, in honour of Claire
Ashley O'Mara, in honour of St. Valentine
Cathy Watson, in honour of Todd Smith
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Alison Stewart, in honour of Rhonda
Caroline Stern, in honour of Heidi Ugaz
Claire Yarnold, in honour of Joe, Drew & Nebula
Katrina Leppan, in honour of Fudge Fudge
Tam-Lynn Coxworth, in honour of Maggie

We thank those who have generously left a gift to VHS in their will. Their memories will live on in our work for animals:

Sinee Theys
Blair Arthur Plumridge
Tevie Smith
Dennis Enomoto
Deborah Lynne Donn
Richard Lister
Phyllis Taylor

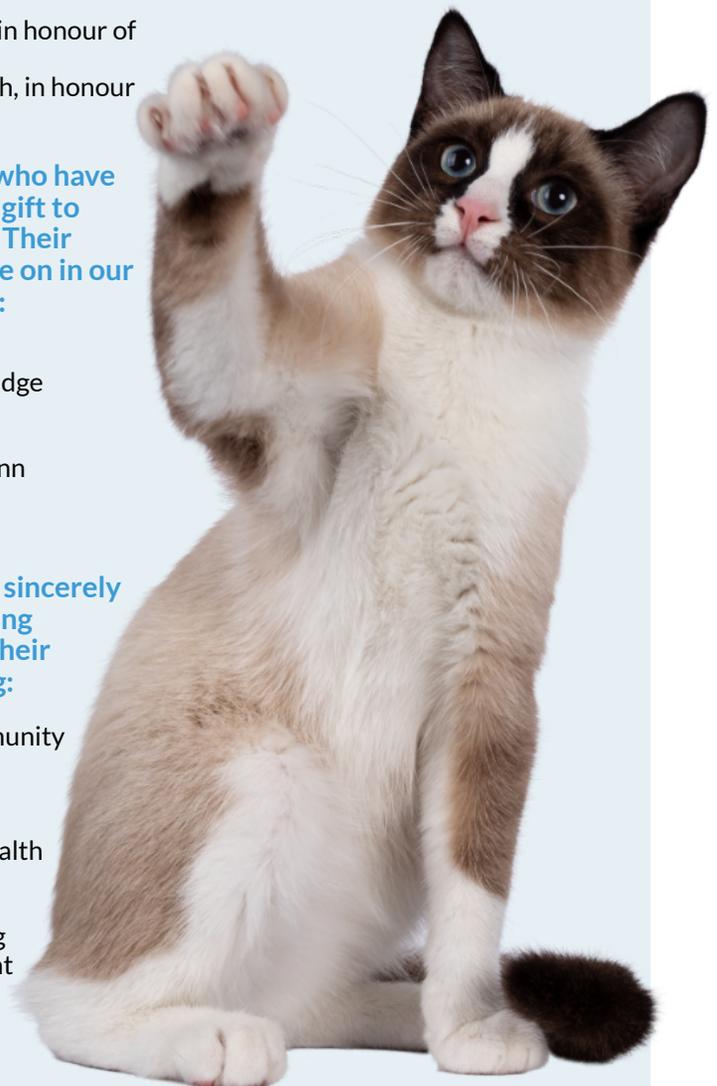
We would like to sincerely thank the following foundations for their generous funding:

North Shore Community Foundation
Andre & Trudel Kroecker Fund, through Nicola Wealth Private Giving Foundation
Peter & June Young Legacy Fund, held at Vancouver Foundation

Dr. Hinda Avery Foundation Fund held at and administered by Vancity Community Foundation
The Moore Family Foundation
Leo and Hilda Sturrey Fund, held at Vancouver Foundation
Gary Steven Loo Animal Welfare Endowment Fund, held at Vancouver Foundation
Heppell Family Private Giving Fund

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!



Two motions improve life for companion animals in Vancouver

Many Vancouver pet lovers are celebrating after a local win for companion animals in April. **The VHS's Executive Director, Amy Morris, spoke to Vancouver City Council in support of two motions to create a kinder city for companion animals, both of which were passed unanimously.**

Vancouver City Council voted to push for more pet-friendly housing by asking the Province to eliminate no-pet clauses, and reviewing local housing policies to make sure renters aren't punished for having a companion animal. Council also passed a motion to formally consider funding for essential stray cat services, which have been pioneered free of charge for the city by the Vancouver Orphan Kitten Rescue Association (VOKRA) for decades.

The VHS thanks the City of Vancouver for their compassionate decisions!



Try it at home: Silky chocolate pudding

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 block silken lite firm tofu (349g)* (or soft dessert regular tofu)
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 5-6 dates
- 1-2 tbsp pure maple syrup
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract

*Note: You can use either kind of tofu, but the silken variety will give you an extra creamy texture.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Soak dates in water for a few hours, then drain.
2. Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth and creamy.
3. Place into dishes and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes to set.

This recipe was developed by Emma Levez Larocque, Plant-Based RHN 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!

WEAR YOUR SUPPORT ON YOUR SLEEVE

WITH VHS MERCH

Want to support more progress for animals while proudly showing your love for all species? The Vancouver Humane Society has you covered! Shop the exclusive line of tote bags, t-shirts, tank tops, sweatshirts, and hoodies, available in sizes Small through 5XL. Every purchase directly supports the VHS's life-saving programs and advocacy efforts that promote compassionate, animal-friendly policies. Whether you're treating yourself or looking for the perfect gift for a fellow animal lover, you can wear your values with pride with VHS merch.



SHOP ONLINE:

Visit the online store today to browse the collection and place your order: urstore.ca/group/vancouver-humane-society.



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HELPING PEOPLE HELP ANIMALS

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