



The Pet Adoption Center of Orange County

For Immediate Release

CONTACT: April Josephson, Executive Director

PHONE: (949) 858-1000

EMAIL: april@adoptopets.org

South County Pet Lovers Create a Life-Saving Alternative for Orange County's Shelter Pets

New nonprofit pet adoption center seeks crowd-funding support to help the county's struggling shelter reduce its euthanasia rate and bring healthy, adoptable pets to South Orange County people and families.

Laguna Hills, CA – July 1, 2015 – A new and unique pet adoption center is coming this summer to South Orange County, a community that has been yearning for access to shelter pets for decades. And today they launched an online crowd-funding campaign at <http://igg.me/at/adoptopets> to gather support for their cause.

Background

The Pet Adoption Center of Orange County was founded by local businesswoman, animal welfare advocate, and longtime South County resident April Josephson to help alleviate Orange County's pet overpopulation and animal shelter overcapacity. The center—designed to be a pilot for future centers throughout Orange County—will be located in Laguna Hills. OC Animal Care (OCAC) operates the only Orange County Animal Shelter in Orange, CA. It was built in 1941 to serve the county's then-200,000 residents. Now, that same facility serves over 2 million. It is the only county shelter in California to serve a population greater than 500,000 with a single facility. Despite a remodel and expansion in 2008, the facility is still inadequate: overcrowded and unable to serve Orange County's ever-growing population of people and their pets.

After allocating \$5 million for a new county shelter in 1996, the Board of Supervisors committed those funds in 2009 to building what's expected to be a \$25 million shelter at the former Tustin Marine Corps base. Nearly five years later, though, the new shelter is still many years away.

"The county is committed to building the new shelter in Tustin, but they never anticipate it would take this long for the federal government to release the land. With the new shelter still



The Pet Adoption Center of Orange County

being several years away, I felt it was time for South Orange County to step up and make an impact—reducing the shelter’s euthanasia rates and bringing some adoptable pets south to awaiting families,” says Ms. Josephson.

Many residents of South County, despite their cities contracting with the county for animal care services, don’t consider OCAC when looking to adopt a pet because of the distance to Orange (which can be upwards of an hour in traffic). Even a new shelter in Tustin would not be convenient to residents of the southernmost cities.

Response to Need

Ms. Josephson, who has lived in South County since 1976 and serves as chairperson of OCAC’s Community Outreach Committee, saw an opportunity not only to bring access to shelter pets to her community, but also to help alleviate OCAC’s overcrowding—and ultimately save more shelter pets’ lives.

“Unless they’ve ever had a reason to use the county shelter, most residents in Lake Forest, Laguna Hills, Rancho Santa Margarita, and San Juan Capistrano don’t even realize that shelter in Orange *is* their city’s shelter. They go to local city shelters for adoptions, leaving Orange County shelter pets with fewer possibilities of adoption.”

The Pet Adoption Center of Orange County will take animals from local animal care agencies like OCAC as well as other animal welfare organizations. Their focus will be on rescuing highly adoptable dogs whose personalities are overshadowed by their fear of the shelter environment. “It can be scary for many dogs,” Ms. Josephson explains. “They’re lost, confused, scared, and retreat to the back of their kennels. Potential adopters often don’t see their true personalities. Out of that setting, though, they blossom.”

The Pet Adoption Center of Orange County was designed under a contemporary cage-free model. Adoptable dogs are free to lounge as they would do at home, with plenty of socialization. At night, dogs bunk in pairs in doggie suites. This is less stressful on them, which makes them happier, social, and more comfortable to be themselves. “Potential adopters have the opportunity to observe and interact with dogs in a setting that puts everyone at ease,” says Ms. Josephson.



The Pet Adoption Center of Orange County

Plans for the center include space for up to 20 dogs at a time. Ms. Josephson anticipates dogs will spend on average two weeks before being matched with new families (approximately 40 adoptions per month).

To support the community, they will also offer public education to encourage humane animal care and responsible pet ownership, support sterilization programs, and reduce shelter euthanasia rates and pet overpopulation.

To oversee strategy, planning, and finances, The Pet Adoption Center of Orange County has assembled a high-quality board of directors consisting of post-graduate educated members with more than 70 years combined business experience, and over 40 years combined animal welfare experience, along with several decades of governmental policy experience.

Fundraiser Launch

If you want to support The Pet Adoption Center of Orange County, a crowd-funding campaign will be available through July 24, 2015 to raise the funds they need to build out their facility: eight dog suites, an exercise area, a multi-purpose gathering area, an isolation room, a grooming room, and a HEPA filtration system. Top-tier donors will earn a suite named in their honor.

To support the Pet Adoption Center of Orange County, visit their fundraising website:
<http://igg.me/at/adoptocpets>

The Pet Adoption Center of Orange County is a non-profit, adoption-only companion animal facility located in Laguna Hills, CA. Its mission is to reduce the number of healthy, adoptable companion animals being euthanized in overcrowded animal shelters by providing a facility that encompasses comprehensive animal care, adoption services, and public education. For more information, visit www.adoptocpets.org.

###