

S.A. SCENE

Discarded

S.A.'s unwanted animals and the volunteers committed to saving them

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Scene People

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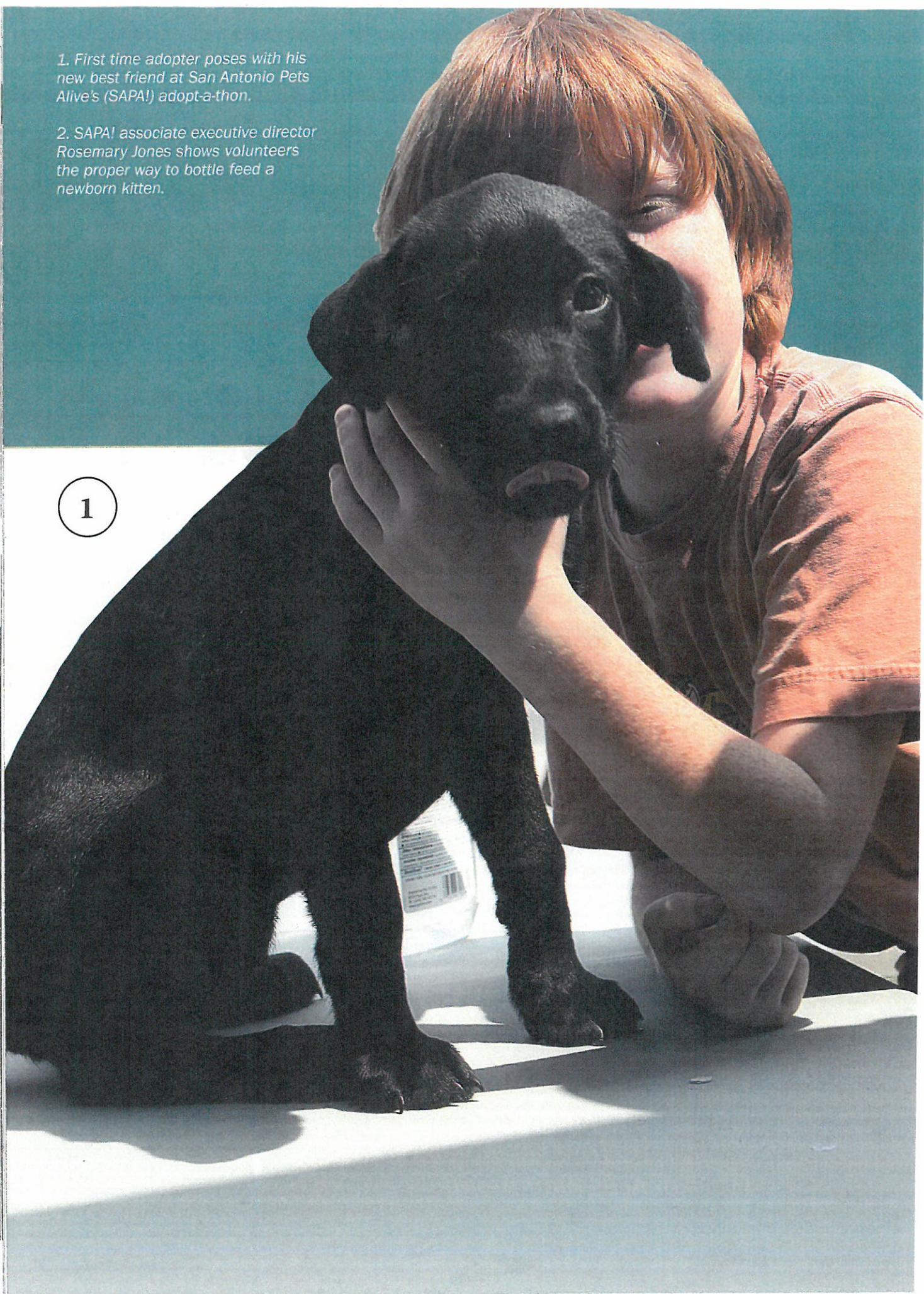
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Celebrating 15 Years AS SAN ANTONIO'S PREMIER CITY MAGAZINE

1. First time adopter poses with his new best friend at San Antonio Pets Alive's (SAPA!) adopt-a-thon.

2. SAPA! associate executive director Rosemary Jones shows volunteers the proper way to bottle feed a newborn kitten.

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THE KEY TO NO KILL

VOLUNTEERS

Thousands Work Behind the Scenes

STORY BY RANDY LANKFORD | PHOTOS BY TIM LUUKKONEN

San Antonio is reaching its goal of becoming the largest no-kill city in America. In the first quarter of 2013 Animal Care Services (ACS), the city's code enforcement and animal protection agency, had a live release rate of more than 80 percent, **the highest in San Antonio's history.**

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3. Caleb Garduza holds a puppy as Trevor Chayer and Kenya Capers bring in equipment for SAPA's adopt-a-thon.

4. Foster parent sits and hesitantly waits for his foster pup to be adopted.

5. Puppies like these eagerly greet visitors hoping to find their forever-homes.

6. Foster and fundraising marketing volunteer extraordinaire Lena Scalerio shows off one of the puppies up for adoption.

7. SAPA! volunteer Destiny Dalesandro gets kisses from a dog after while a younger volunteer waits to lead her away.

The wider San Antonio animal welfare community, dozens of agencies dedicated to rescuing homeless or abused animals in Bexar County, had a live release rate of 73 percent.

While a commitment by city and county leaders and the collective will of the community are two key factors in San Antonio's march to become a no-kill city, the third leg of that stool is an unassuming army of thousands of volunteers, all with their own reasons for, and ways of, getting involved.

Linda Larson socializes homeless cats. "I do it because I believe all animals have value," Larson says. "Sometimes when cats come in, maybe the family moved to a new home and can't keep it, or maybe it was transferred from Animal Care Services, you can see that they're very frightened. I like to hold them close and let them know they're loved. You can feel them trembling, but sometimes, they'll calm down if they feel your heart beat."

Alex Nicholson wanted to teach his daughter Jayda responsibility before letting her have her first puppy, so they volunteer side-by-side cleaning cages and socializing dogs. "I love all kinds of animals," explains Jayda. "And so does my dad. For us to be able to spend time together and help animals, that really is a way for us to connect with each other."



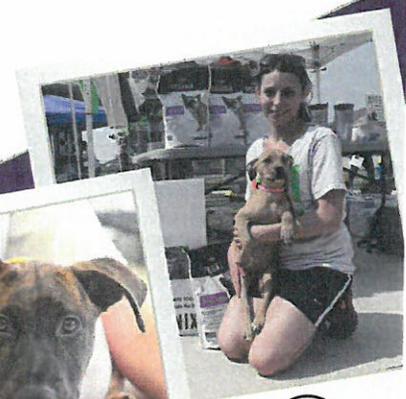
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“Someday,” adds Alex, “my daughter is going to have children of her own. I’d like her to be able to say she’s following in their grandfather’s footsteps, that she’s teaching them the lessons and the values he taught her. And, if that’s the case, if she’s going to follow in my footsteps, I want to make sure they’re footsteps worthy of following.”

Larson and the Nicholsons are among a number of volunteers being recognized for their contributions in the “Why me?” video series (youtube.com/user/sahumane) created for the San Antonio Humane Society by a team of volunteer videographers who donate their time and equipment.

Numerous feral cat coalitions throughout San Antonio rely on volunteers to trap homeless cats that are then spayed or neutered and returned to their colonies, creating a reproductive dead end. Adoption events, held outside high-traffic businesses almost every weekend, are manned by even more volunteers. Several agencies offering reduced-cost or free spay and neuter services have volunteers prepping dogs and cats for surgery in order to keep costs down.

One of the most urgent volunteer needs in making San Antonio a no-kill city is fostering animals too young or too sick or injured to be adopted immediately. When San Antonio’s multiple shelters are full, incoming animals are turned away. Foster-focused organizations, such as San Antonio Pets Alive (SAPA) and Spay-Neuter-Inject-Protect San Antonio (SNIPSA), use foster family networks to temporarily house overflow animals.

For more information on how and where to volunteer, visit the “community” page at talkaboutitsa.org. Talk About It! is a program of the San Antonio Area Foundation bringing together more than 30 animal welfare partners. 🐾

8. Volunteering becomes a family affair as a mother and her two children help SAPA! by bathing and walking.

9. Volunteer holds small puppy, enticing visitors to play with him just for a little bit.

10. Baby kitten sits in box, looking up at potential foster parents.

11. Happy, playful dogs greet every visitor as they come to the Animal Care Services Facility.

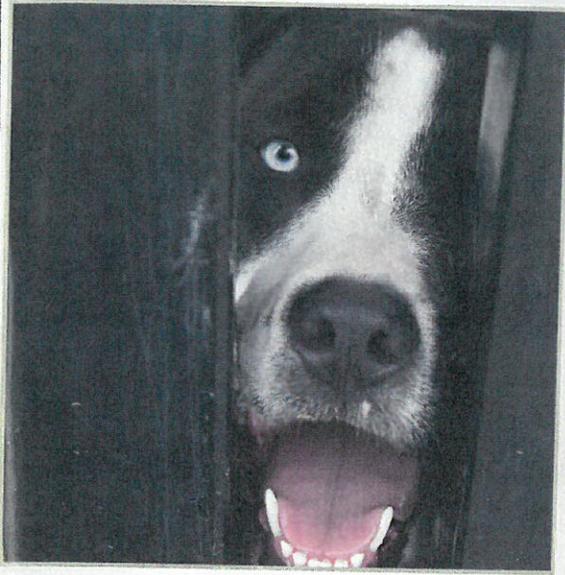
12. Navy volunteer reigns in the excited power of three lovable puppies at a SAPA! adoption event.



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All dogs and cats photographed are up for adoption and many more need foster parents. To find out more about adoptions or fostering, please contact adopt@sanantoniopetsalive.org or foster@sanantoniopetsalive.org.

