

PAUSE FOR PAWS

Surviving Irma



They were orphaned and alone, but then you stepped in to help!

IT WAS JUST AFTER LABOR DAY WHEN THE NEWS STATIONS STARTED WARNING US – Hurricane Irma was expected to sweep through the state of Florida with record CAT 3 to CAT 5 level winds and rain.

After Irma blew through, we started the recovery process without electricity and with trees down across our campus. **Almost immediately, we received calls about animals left injured or orphaned by the storm.** One call was from a family who found two tiny kittens alone in the bushes. They waited to see if the kittens' mother was around and, as time passed, the family worried that something had happened to her. Knowing the kittens would not survive on their own, the family brought them to our shelter for help.

Upon arrival, we saw the two baby kittens had just opened their eyes and were not even able to walk yet. How they survived outside in a hurricane, we will never know! We named the kittens Windy and Storm and found them a foster home. Because they were so young, they required round-the-clock care.

"It wasn't easy bottle feeding kittens without electricity," their foster parent, Eric, told us. "We had to make sure we had ice to keep their formula cool, which was almost impossible to find. We then had to figure out a way to warm up the formula before each feeding. [This] was particularly challenging in the middle of the night when we had to wake up to feed them in the dark."

Despite these challenges, Windy and Storm thrived and became more independent by the day. "It was hard at the

time, but looking back I laugh at all of the crazy stuff we did to ensure their wellbeing," Eric said. "I'm just so grateful that we had SPCA supporting us and talking us through each challenge we faced." After eight weeks in foster care, Windy and Storm were old enough to find their forever home.

Windy and Storm were just two of the many animals in need before, during and after Hurricane Irma. The funds and materials you helped provide not only enabled us to care for orphaned and displaced animals, but we also were able to transport most of the adoptable animals out of the state before the storm even hit. In addition, we provided shelter during the storm to owned pets for people with disabilities **all thanks to you!** Whether it's helping an animal in the wake of a natural disaster, or helping a pet find a new forever home, your generosity continues to make a difference in the lives of animals every day!

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WE NEED FOSTER KITS!

Just **\$75** will help us provide enough supplies to care for a litter of underage kittens or puppies.

Hooked and Unable to get Free!



This turtle received life-saving surgery after being found with a hook through his nose

“WE NEED YOUR HELP! IT’S GOT A HOOK STUCK IN IT’S FACE!”

This was the first call of the day for SPCA Tampa Bay Investigation Officer Rick Levi. “It really isn’t an unusual start to the day,” Rick said. “During the busy season, I alone will get about 20 calls daily from people finding an injured or orphaned animal.”

A family in South Pinellas who found an injured turtle in their backyard made this particular call. When Officer Rick arrived at the home, he saw a fish hook piercing the turtle’s nose. The towel the family had wrapped the turtle in was covered in blood. “I knew that if we didn’t remove the hook, he wouldn’t make it,” Rick said. The hook affected the turtle’s ability to eat properly and the exposed wound was at risk of infection.

Supporters like you not only help us care for homeless cats and dogs, but help fund a special wildlife program that is vital to our community. **Because of you, people have a number to call if they see an animal in the wild in need of help.** SPCA investigators respond to those calls, help answer questions and pick up the animal, if needed. Depending on the situation, investigators will then work with local veterinary partners and rehabbers in an effort to return the animal to its natural habitat.

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In the case of the turtle, Officer Rick ended up taking him to our shelter veterinarian for surgery and then drove him to one of our local rehab partners, Urban Wildlife Center, for recovery. The rehabbers made sure the turtle was swimming properly and got him to finish his medications before releasing him. “The whole process took only six days, from the initial call where I picked him up to the rehabbers letting him go,” Rick explained.

Without you, this turtle would not have received the life-saving treatment he needed. SPCA Tampa Bay Investigators respond to calls seven days a week. We are able to respond in a timely manner and help these animals because donors like you care. **We are working together to build a community where every animal matters,** and your compassion is leading the way.



The recovered turtle was released in a private pond just 6 days after being found injured

This Birthday is Goin' to the Dogs!

WHEN IT COMES TO BIRTHDAY PRESENTS, MOST CHILDREN ASK FOR TOYS OR MONEY -- but 4-year-old Trent Cole had something different in mind. He decided to forgo the gifts and ask his friends and family to “help the doggies” instead.

Trent does not have a dog of his own yet, but he loves to say hi to dogs whenever he sees them in public. He will make sure to ask permission first, then proceeds to ask all sorts of questions about the dog. He calls dogs his friends (if you're reading this, we know you're guilty of doing it, too!).

You and Trent have something in common: A big heart for animals!

His mom, Danielle, told us that he came up with the idea to donate his birthday all on his own. “He had heard a few people that we know tell stories about finding a stray dog ... So he kind of knew that there

were places that helped doggies who didn't have homes,” she told us.

After Trent's birthday celebration, he and his family stopped by the shelter to give all of the money, toys, food and treats he received to the animals. “When we heard about Trent dedicating his birthday to the dogs, we were ecstatic,” SPCA Tampa Bay's Youth Education Specialist Mercedes Wood said. **“It was shocking to me that someone his age was as compassionate as he was.”** His mom was helping and supporting him, but it was really all his idea. He genuinely wanted to help.”

Trent got a special scavenger-hunt-style tour of the shelter and a certificate of appreciation for his efforts. “I just wanted him to be able to put a memory



Trent received a Certificate of Appreciation for helping the doggies

and a connection to what he did,” Danielle said. “This experience was just so memorable for him because it was tangible. He could see that the animals didn't have homes and was able to put it together that he helped them.”

Danielle says that they're not ready to get a dog yet, but they plan on adopting one in the near future. **We appreciate Trent's generosity and know that he and his family will give a dog a very loving home!**





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From Martha's Desk | Our First Year in St. Pete



NEAR THE END of 2017, we celebrated the first year of operations at our new Veterinary Center in St. Petersburg. It's hard to believe something so central to our mission has existed for such a short time. What a year it has been!

In our first year, thousands of loving pet owners brought their pets to be seen by our skilled veterinarians in St. Pete. Building on the SPCA's decades of animal care experience, the Veterinary Center provided state-of-the-art services for cats and dogs at every stage of life. By year-end, we had logged **NEARLY 14,000 PATIENT VISITS.**

Our doctors completed at least 925 surgical procedures last year, ranging from tooth extractions to tumor removals to broken bone repair. Owners developed trusted relationships with our staff and appreciated the chance to "paw it forward," knowing a portion of their fees supported our Largo programs for homeless pets. And our specialized spay/neuter team in St. Pete did 2,500 surgeries, most for pet owners who understand the benefits of spay/neuter for their pets and the community. Nearly 400 free-roaming or community cats were also sterilized by our amazing team.

While we cared for more than 8,500 homeless animals at our Largo campus in 2017, opening the Veterinary Center allowed our compassionate, professional team to touch the hearts and lives of thousands more. **THANK YOU FOR HELPING TO MAKE THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS COME TO FRUITION** by believing in our vision, and please join me in congratulating our team's efforts to **spread the humaniLaity!**

