



Hark! The Herald Basil Sings

Happy holidays everyone!

The year is coming to a close, but I still have plenty of friends who will be celebrating the festivities of the season in our shelter.

While it's the comfiest one around, my holiday wish is for my brothers and sisters to get to spend it in a home, maybe curled up beside a nice fireplace with a belly full of treats. Mm-mm-mm!

Did you know that you can **short-term foster** one of my fellow felines for just the holidays? It's a great way to give 'em a little space outside the shelter (and hopefully plenty of belly rubs!) Some of 'em are old timers and have been here quite awhile, so I'm sure they'd love to see the world beyond their cage.

Speaking of shelter, we've got a bunch of **shelter upgrades** underway thanks to our super amazing community — check 'em out on page 9. Our donors are the best cat people around, that's for sure, and now all my brothers and sisters can enjoy some quality of life upgrades.

I made LOADS of new friends this year, but one of the coolest "cats" around is in fact a new human in the shelter: **RVT Becky** (her first name is not actually RVT, but we've already got an important Becky around here and we cats might get confused). She's keeping us all happy and healthy for the holidays. I even heard she has some **safety tips** for the holiday season, too.

However you choose to celebrate the holiday season, whether it's surrounded by people or cats, just know that we're thankful for readers like you, so cheers!

If you need me, I'll be hibernating in a cubby in the **Working Cats Enclosure** with a couple of special Tiny Lions. Not only are they the first to check out the new digs, they're hilarious!

Until then,

Basil, OUT



Holiday 2022

Introducing RVT Becky's Best Practices

We are ecstatic to introduce Registered Veterinary Technician Rebecca "RVT Becky" Clement to the ASAP team. A certified cat-lover coming to us from Santa Barbara County Animal Services, Becky has been working there as a registered vet tech for the past 10 years; in total she has over 30 years in the veterinary field — a real animal ambassador!

"For so long in my career in veterinary medicine, I have heard great things about the care ASAP provides to the cats in our community," says Becky, "and I am excited to help support that." We are very fortunate to have a registered vet tech on staff, adding to the health and wellness of our entire team — especially for our cats.

To get everyone ready for the season, RVT Becky has some best practices to share for the upcoming holidays, which are sure to keep your pets safe and merry.



Both the Pinstripe Calathea and the Pink Polka Dot are great non-toxic holiday plants to have around

Be wary of mistletoe, poinsettias, lilies, and holly.

Although these plants are sure to bring some festive cheer, they can cause gastrointestinal upset and cardiovascular problems if ingested. Make sure you decorate out-of-paws' reach.

Keep snowglobes somewhere safe. Snow globes are made with ethylene glycol, which is highly toxic to all pets. If they break, their sweet smell can attract pets to taste, so be sure to keep them away from pets and be quick on cleanup duty.

Decadent treats can cause disaster. We know it's the holiday season, so that calls for some tasty food, however fatty, sweet, and spicy foods, as well as turkey or chicken bones, can all be dangerous to our furry friends. Err on the side of safety!

Stronger Than Her Setbacks: Althea's Story



Sweet Althea was found beneath a bush covered in dirt, with severe injuries to her body and legs, likely caused by a car. Medical examination made it clear her tail and leg had been too damaged to save.

But her fighting spirit convinced us she deserved a chance. She would persevere, but just needed someone to step in and give her a hand. Enter: ASAP Cats.

After facing extensive surgeries to repair a tib-fib fracture, amputate the damaged parts of her tail and leg (it ended up costing her the whole tail), and repair several lacerations along her abdomen, she made it to the recovery phase of her journey. She is undergoing physical therapy and will be adoptable soon after this article releases, and is currently resting with two of our loving fosters.



Althea's story is a familiar one to the ASAP team. We've encountered hundreds of cats who had the odds set against them, whether it be injuries sustained from accidents or medical issues that arise, but we're not willing to give up on a single one of them when there's humane hope.

Some injured or sick cats are brought in to us by teary-eyed owners unsure what to do, as medical expenses and surgeries quickly add up. Others are loved community cats, who are rescued by good samaritans or are found by our team of heroes.



Wherever these cats come from, in whatever condition they're found, ASAP always puts their lives at the top of our list of priorities. They all deserve a chance to find a loving home, so even if they're found covered in dirt and have suffered major injuries like Althea, we will still do everything in our power to rescue and rehabilitate them.

Presenting the Working Cats Enclosure

If you've visited the Memorial Garden at the rear of the ASAP shelter recently, you may have seen an interesting brown structure: the Working Cats Enclosure (WCE).

Built in 2021 thanks to generous donations from friends of ASAP and the community, it's designed to provide space for non-social and semi-social cats designated as Alternate Placement, or Working Cats. These cats, due to not feeling comfortable around humans, are more stressed than most cats in the indoor shelter environment.

The WCE provides enrichment, exercise, and fresh air for working cats awaiting program placement on ranches, farms, nurseries, and some residential properties. As a welcome alternative to a regular cage, the enclosure provides two appropriately-sized, enclosed and adjoining spaces for cat movement and play. It also provides more options for cats to choose their activities and where they can rest.

Former Tiny Lions (non-social kittens taking part in the ASAP Tiny Lions kitten socialization program), Tully and London were the first official residents of the WCE, starting in mid-November 2022, prior to their placement at their new home on a ranch. A cat cam placed in the enclosure captured their nocturnal hijinks as they jumped, climbed, and chased each other happily about one of the two rooms of the enclosure. They were able to stretch, play, and get exercise prior to departing for their new home on November 19, 2022.

ASAP plans to have many pre-placement working cats in the enclosure to give them a much-needed break from cage life.

If you have any questions about the Working Cats program, or the Working Cats Enclosure, feel free to contact Mary Scott, Working Cats Program Director at workingcats@asapcats.org or 805-699-5739.



With trees to climb and scratch and cubbies to hide in, the Working Cats Enclosure is perfect for enrichment.

Love By The Pacifica: Working Cat Rescue

We had the pleasure of rescuing three “Pacifica Kittens” (now named Coco, XiGua, and Huijiao by their adopters), who are currently enjoying the high life as recently adopted Working Cats in Montecito!

What do those Chinese names mean? XiGua means watermelon, Huijiao means black pepper, and of course Coco means, well, Coco!

The Pacifica Kittens’ story starts at the Pacifica Suites on Hollister Ave. near the ASAP shelter. ASAP received a call from a good samaritan at the Suites saying there was a stray mother cat and her kittens on the property.

At that time, the Suites were occupied by the cast and crew of “Love Island,” while filming took place in Goleta, and there was a handful of caring crew members who were feeding the cats. It was mid-July and filming was going to end soon, so Community Cats Coordinator Gina Sunseri jumped into action and trapped all three of the very shy kittens. The next day Gina trapped the mother cat — no small feat getting all four cats within 24 hours.

While the mother cat named Pacifica by the ASAP team turned out to be friendly and adoptable through our regular adoption program, the three kittens were found to be not as social, and were designated as Working Cats.



Enter Mary Scott, whom Gina had been communicating with on the three four-month-old cats. Working Cats Program Director Mary had an adopter ready to go after he acquired a cat house donated to ASAP for the backyard of his beautiful Montecito property. Brian and his wife were eager to give the cats a home, especially knowing they would help deter rodents on their property.

Gina and Working Cat Placement Specialist Belinda Burns set the cats up at Brian’s in Montecito with loving care on a warm day in early September.

Brian and Mary are still in touch, and he says the cats are doing great! Another happy ASAP ending for cats who started as homeless strays in our community.



Taming Tiny Lions

by Cheryl Rawlings, Tamer



It is extremely rewarding to be a Tiny Lion tamer. From the time I first read about the program, I wanted to sign up — then Covid hit, so I had to wait. I have lots of experience with non-social cats and kittens, so once trained on ASAP protocols, I was eager to start.

Many kittens arrive being fearful of people, but they love meaty baby food. Some need to be fed this treat from the end of a chopstick for quite a while, but other bolder Tiny Lions switch to eating the baby food from my fingertip pretty quickly.

Even the timid kittens like to play with a fishing-pole toy, chasing the mousie at the end; these Tiny Lions get more used to my hand near them, or even touching them, when they are absorbed in play. Then, it's a joy to be able to feed them baby food from my fingertip.

After I work with kittens in a crate, I write up how I was able to interact with each Tiny Lion. The person working with them the next day can then see my notes and tips, and note their experiences with each Tiny Lion.

It's especially exciting to see non-social kittens I've worked with get moved to "kitten row," where they are ready for adoption. I make it a point when I come in for my regular care shift to first start with the Tiny Lion graduates on kitten row. They are now getting more exposure from all volunteers, as well as potential adopters, and need reassurance from me and other tamers that all is OK, that touching and holding feels good.

The big payoff, of course, is when these once non-social kittens are adopted. We have many who are "teenagers" now and need to connect with their future people. Consider adopting a Tiny Lion graduate!



Tiny Lions love feeding on meaty baby food.

ASAP Is Its Volunteers



As the holiday season is in full swing, we're feeling very thankful for our wonderful community — and we especially wanted to take a moment to appreciate our team of volunteers for their tireless work.

ASAP is its volunteers; our shelter cat care and surrounding support programs are run almost exclusively by a group of dedicated and motivated volunteers, coming from all walks of life. Our volunteers do it all, including caring for the cats at the shelter by cage cleaning, feeding, socialization, and grooming; providing loving care for cats in their home through fostering and matchmaking; maintaining administrative systems, including social media, marketing, and outreach; and a whole lot more.

"I am always in awe of our volunteers and their genuine love for our cats and kittens," says Volunteer and Foster Program Coordinator Elizabeth Jimenez. "Every day, weekend or holiday, kitten season or SECOND kitten season, these caring individuals show up and give individualized love and care to each cat. They learn their personalities and provide whatever is needed."

We were thrilled to celebrate our volunteers throughout the year at various events — including our Bash Thank You Party and our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic (pictured here) — but there aren't enough words to express our gratitude to these people. For the love of cats everywhere, thank you to our team!



Special congratulations to Volunteer of the Year Kate Zitnik!

A Heart of Gold: Marie Morrisroe

We are very lucky to have a warm and considerate community that is ready and willing to care for our shelter and our cats, and we want to highlight someone truly special who embodies ASAP Cats' mission.

ASAP recently unveiled the Marie Morrisroe Surgical Suite, named after one of our most loving donors.

Marie recently made a donation in order to support upgrades and improvements to this life-saving facility. The surgical suite is especially important in taking care of our cats who need treatment. Marie's support allows us to continue to save the lives of cats and kittens in Santa Barbara County and beyond, and for that we are eternally grateful.

In November, ASAP had a small event to unveil the new suite and honor Marie. She was positively thrilled to know her donation would go directly to serving the cats at our shelter.

This isn't the first time Marie's generosity has impacted ASAP Cats; the garden and cat runs behind the shelter are also named for Marie. She has given so generously to our shelter and certainly is creating a legacy for years to come.

We have several naming opportunities available at ASAP. If you are interested in hearing about the options, please reach out to Director of Development Amy Marshall at amy@asapcats.org or (414) 687-7980.



Marie has always had a soft spot for sick kittens.



Executive Director Jessica Wiebe, Marie, and Board President Bernard Kelmenson in front of the Marie Morrisroe Surgical Suite.

WONDERING HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE?

ASAP Cats is proud of its mission in protecting the lives of cats in Santa Barbara County. Through generous donations from our awesome community, to spreading the word of our mission, to adopting and fostering our cats, there are many and various ways you can help us make a difference.

To donate to our cause, visit our website at www.asapcats.org, or stop by our shelter at 5473 Overpass Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93111 next time you're in town. We also have several volunteer opportunities available!

Director's Corner



As the holidays draw near, our hearts are filled with gratitude for everyone who makes our work possible at ASAP Cats. We are indebted to our staff, volunteers, nonprofit partners, and community members who remain committed to helping improve the lives of cats — not only during the holidays, but 365 days a year.

We are grateful that our mission to provide assistance to community members and compassionate care to the cats of Santa Barbara County has been sustained post-pandemic. We remain committed to supporting this community we love so much.

From all of us at ASAP Cats, we wish you a safe and joyful holiday season, filled with the love and companionship of your furry family members!

With gratitude, Jessica Wiebe

Shelter Projects & Improvements

We are thrilled to see how a community can come together to protect one of its own, and this time, we're talking about our humble ASAP Cats shelter.

In need of various functional repairs and cosmetic upgrades, we were ecstatic to see the response from our community and their willingness to support us. As a result, we are fully funded and in the process of updating our railings on the front steps; installing several new air conditioning units to increase filtration;

and giving the outer walls a fresh coat of paint! And don't worry, we're keeping our cats away from all the noises of construction.

Pictured on the bottom left is the old railing with the front steps — soon to be replaced with a sleeker, safer one — and on the right are some of our new, high tech filtration systems. These things really purr once you start them up!



Our front step railings have been regularly in use for the past several years, so they're definitely ready for an upgrade.



These AC units help filter all the air in the shelter, keeping our cats snuffle-free.

Happy Kitten Testimonials

We like to follow up with our adopters to see how their cats and kittens are adapting to their new homes, ensuring the process is a smooth one and that human and cat alike are happy!

Take a look at some testimonials we've gathered, and see if you can spot some familiar faces from around the shelter:



Andrew Barton

"My family and I are so happy to adopt Andrew! At first he was shy, but now he likes to walk around the house and around us. He likes to play with his toys, he is so sweet and kind, and he doesn't scratch us. He goes to his litter box with no problem, and he's eating and drinking water very well."



Winona

"Winona is adapting so wonderfully to her new home! We absolutely adore her and we are thrilled to have her as a new member of our family. Her transition to her new home has gone very smoothly. She's a very confident kitty and we were pleasantly surprised with how quickly she wanted to explore her new surroundings. She was also VERY interested in getting acquainted with our Bernese Mountain dog from the moment she stepped foot inside our home!"



Lucy

"This little girl is unique! With my other rescue kitties, it's taken up to 10 days before they've wanted to come out of the bedroom they were initially sequestered in, but not Lucy. After two days she was crying to get out and trying to escape. She is probably THE most affectionate kitty I've ever known, and is equal parts loving, bold, and fierce. She loves everyone and while she likes to follow us around, she doesn't flinch when strangers come to the house. It was clear from the time she woke up in her cage to greet me, and then by the instant snuggles as she melted into me, right there at the shelter, that I was hers."

"Mittens has been such a joy. She is eating/drinking well and using her litter box regularly. She loved her wand toys and her scratching stand, and she is very social and loves brushing too! She's not afraid of other people or the vacuum, and never tried to hide since she's been here. She seems very relaxed and 'at home' overall."



Mittens



Yerba Mate

"For the first few days, we kept Mate in a single room so he wouldn't be overwhelmed by the new space, but now he has access to the whole house and loves exploring his little kingdom. He has favorite nap spots and a little corner devoted to his cactus-shaped scratching post and other fun little toys. He was affectionate and brave right off the bat, so we were really thankful for that, and that hasn't changed!"

P.O. Box 357
Goleta, CA 93116-0357

805 683-3368
info@asapcats.org
www.asapcats.org

 Facebook.com/asapcats

 Instagram.com/asapcats

Want to join the ASAP team?

ASAP Cats is always looking for new volunteers to add to the team. Are you ready and willing to work with cats of all shapes and sizes? Do you have a soft spot for kittens in need? Consider joining the ASAP team and working alongside a crew of feline lovers! You'll get plenty of time to make some new furry friends and will be supporting a good cause. Stop by our shelter and join today!



Volunteers Andy, Tammy, Thu, and Silvana gather 'round to celebrate the Volunteer of the Month, recognizing the hard work and dedication it takes to look after these cats.

ASAP - Animal Shelter Assistance Program

Shelter location: 5473 Overpass Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93111
ASAP is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization ■ Federal Tax ID: 77-0283500