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Pygmy Hippo Celebrates Birthday With Zoom Party and Cake *Hannah Shirley's wildlife friends surprise her with socially distanced well-wishes!*

Ramona — North America's oldest living pygmy hippo, Hannah Shirley, celebrated her 47th birthday at San Diego Humane Society's Ramona Wildlife Center today with a Zoom party and cake. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Hannah Shirley was not able to get together with her friends, but that didn't dampen the celebration, which included a cake made out of her favorite grains, fruit and veggies all held together with pumpkin purée —and yummy cucumber-melon water in a big bucket. Hannah Shirley's caretakers set up a "living room" in her habitat for her party, with pumpkin goodies, photos of her friends (including other sanctuary animals), a Zoom feed and a number of enrichment stations. Despite being a nocturnal animal, Hannah Shirley decided to take part and enjoy the occasion.

Hannah Shirley is one of 24 ambassador animals at San Diego Humane Society's Ramona Wildlife Center. She has lived there since 2002, when she was discovered in a residential backyard in Escondido. Luckily for Hannah, she was rescued and transported to what was then The Fund for Animals Wildlife Center. San Diego Humane Society acquired the facility on Sept. 1, 2020, and has since assumed care of the beloved animal.

"Because it is so rare for a pygmy hippo to live beyond 40 years, we value each day with Hannah Shirley here at the Ramona Wildlife Center," said Andy Blue, campus director at San Diego Humane Society's Ramona Wildlife Center. "Watching staff love on her and treat her like a queen every day warms my heart. We are so lucky to have such a unique animal in our care."

Hannah Shirley weighs about 500 pounds and lives in a 13,000-square-foot paddock, complete with a swimming pool and natural pond to play in. She enjoys a deservingly pampered life that includes back rubs, sprinkler showers and lots of food-related enrichment activities.

Photos, b-roll and sound for media use can be downloaded here: <https://bit.ly/3h3Z22T>

Suggested Tweet: Happy Birthday, Hannah Shirley! @sdhumane's beloved ambassador pygmy hippo celebrates her 47th birthday! Her wildlife friends surprised her with socially distanced well-wishes via Zoom and a cake made out of her favorite grains, fruit and veggies.

About San Diego Humane Society

San Diego Humane Society's scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. We offer programs that strengthen the human-animal bond, prevent cruelty and neglect, provide medical care, educate the community and serve as a safety net for all pet families. Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society has campuses in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego. For more information, please visit sdhumane.org.

