MEDIA CONTACT:
Nina Thompson
619-372-0916 *cell*
nthompson@sdhumane.org

San Diego Humane Society In Need of Community's Help
With shelter locations over capacity, community is asked to assist in caring for animals

SAN DIEGO — This holiday season, San Diego Humane Society (SDHS) is facing unprecedented challenges in housing animals who need help and is turning to the community to assist in creating much-needed space in their shelters.

On top of being at- or over capacity at its locations in Escondido, El Cajon, Oceanside and San Diego, recent cases of canine distemper virus (CDV), are adding to the challenge. CDV is a contagious and sometimes fatal viral infection in dogs and some wild animals such as raccoons, foxes and skunks. Vaccinated dogs are immune to CDV but unvaccinated dogs are not. Shelter dogs who have either tested positive or been exposed to CDV, are being quarantined, according to appropriate disease management protocols. **In order to prevent and minimize further exposure, the organization has temporarily suspended the intake of owner-surrendered dogs until Jan. 15, 2023.**

San Diego Humane Society currently has 1,201 animals in care. More than 600 of them are available for adoption. **"For every dog we adopted out in 2022, we took in two more who needed our help,"** said Dr. Gary Weitzman, president and CEO of San Diego Humane Society. "Now, with our shelters full we are calling on our community to help us create additional space to house animals in need. And while there is never an ideal time to face these challenges, CDV, as well as reduced capacity due to construction at our San Diego Campus, is making our appeal for adopters and fosters more urgent than ever."

Here are five ways community members can make a direct impact:

1. **Foster.** SDHS has a critical need for foster homes for dogs, especially those who have been exposed to CDV and are under quarantine. Getting these deserving pets into foster care will reduce the spread of disease, increase the quality of life for dogs during their quarantine period, and free up space in at-capacity shelters. Support will be provided to fosters every step of the way. Learn more or sign up at sdhumane.org/foster.

2. **Adopt.** If you have been considering adding a pet to your home, now is a great time to adopt. In addition to giving a deserving animal a home for the holidays, you'll create much-needed shelter space for animals with nowhere else to turn. Visit sdhumane.org/adopt to view pets who are ready for new homes.

3. **Seek support.** If you are considering relinquishing your animal, we have resources to keep pets with their families through challenging times. Visit sdhumane.org/supportservices for more information.

4. **Rehome pets.** If a community member cannot keep their pet, we ask they try rehoming them before bringing them to the shelter. SDHS offers rehoming resources that can help. These tools allow pet owners to create a profile for their adoptable pet and place the animal directly in their new home — eliminating the need for a shelter stay.

5. **Reunite stray animals with their owners.** Many stray pets are found close to home! If you find a stray animal, there are steps you can take to reunite them directly with their owner, skipping a trip to the shelter. Visit sdhumane.org/found.

For up-to-date information about the temporary modifications at SDHS during canine distemper virus, visit sdhumane.org/distemper. You can also call 619-299-7012 or email info@sdhumane.org.

Suggested Tweet: @sdhumane is asking the community to help create much-needed space in their shelters! They are especially in need of fosters for dogs, including those exposed to canine distemper virus (CDV). Visit sdhumane.org/distemper for updated information Call 619-299-7012 or email info@sdhumane.org for more information.

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. Follow the SDHS Media Relations department on Twitter @sdhumane.

###