

August 29th – 30th

Kelly Paolisso's involvement 8/29



Christian Gonzalez

August 29, 2023 at 3:04 PM

RE: Clarification about animals transferred to your care

To: Kelly Paolisso

Hi Kelly below is the zoom log in information. Wanted to get it to you before our meeting. See you soon.

Email me if you have any issues getting the meeting started.

Humane Society of Southern Arizona is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Meeting with Christian

Time: Aug 29, 2023 03:30 PM Arizona

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87921442041?pwd=eW0xUFdJTlhTMFZZbXJnWmhncXp5QT09>

Meeting ID: 879 2144 2041

Passcode: 109222

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87921442041?pwd=eW0xUFdJTlhTMFZZbXJnWmhncXp5QT09>

One tap mobile

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Kelly P. and Carrie K's call with HSSA Christian Gonzalez and Steve Farley on 8/29 at 3:30pm

- Kelly States she reached out to Eileen and HSSA to ask about the animals because the news story stated they were going to multiple rescues and no rescue could be found that had the animals.
- Christian states there was a lot of misinformation that went out. Says there wasn't any at all any sort of rescues that were going to be utilized besides one private rescue that they were going to be going to and this is something that we had originally planned out with San Diego humane that they were going to bring the animals here.
- Says he was actually going to meet with SDHS half way but they decided to just come all the way down to Tucson because they were going to be the dog Bulma so decided to go to HSSA instead of meeting halfway.
- States that the private rescue that they are using has a facility or rather a building that they rent out in Phoenix so the original plan was on the way down SDHS was going to stop by Phoenix and he was going to go help them and facilitate taking the pets up there but they decided to go to HSSA.

- States that is when he decided maybe since they were coming to HSSA, he would just house them at HSSA and take them up to Phoenix himself but once they got there he noticed that some of the enclosures were small so it was probably best to transport them out that night so that is what he did.
- States he thinks where the miscommunication fell and people just kind of started coming to their own conclusions was that HSSA decided not to do anything to our social media page because two or three years ago they took in pocket pets from a transfer and could not get them adopted out and the city took it as an opportunity to dump a lot of pocket pets there and they became inundated. He states that in the end that transfer “blew up in our face’ so that is the reason for no publicity.
- He states SDHS knew they were not doing anything media wise because they “were just kind of like the middle people if you will on this one because we we wouldn't be able to take, we wouldn't be able to take the pets in and then I could just have them sit on them here until they got adopted.”
- Carrie asks Christian what year that happened
- Christian says it was about three to five years ago
- Kelly asked if they know how many animals that they received.
- Christian says he believes it was almost 200 but states a lot of them were Guinea pigs and rodents who had had babies so they were counting them as well
- Carrie asks if he had a total count of animals.
- Christian says it was 311 the last he heard
- Carrie ask if all 311 were at the private rescue at this very moment
- Christian says they were all transferred to the to the rescue that very same day
- Kelly asked if it was over 200 carriers.
- Christian states it wasn't that many and the mamas with babies were in bigger carriers but the rabbits were in smaller carriers.
- Carrie asked if it was rabbits, guinea pigs, and what other kind of animals?
- Christian states it was rabbits, guinea pigs, some rodents like rats and hamsters.
- Carrie asked if there was any other animals.

- Christian says that was pretty much it. They were all pocket pets and if there were going to be any dogs or cats he would have kept them at HSSA.
- Carrie asked if there was definitely rats and hamsters and Christian confirms. She then asked if they were all at the rescue.
- Christian says they were all there and they were in the process of getting them adopted out. He states they have a rabbit they were wanting to send back stating it had an eye issue and they would be taking her back and said he told them he would take any of the hamsters or guinea pigs that were not able to place in the next week or so.
- Carrie questions that the rescue is not in Tucson?
- Christian states “no it's in phoenix.”
- Carrie questions if it was one big private rescue and if they had a bunch of fosters
- Christian states the rescue had fosters and these people were “originally a contact through our old CEO and that we have here and you know they've been helping us for like the past eight or nine years.” He states that they have helped bring stuff down from phoenix and they do a lot of work in Cochise County. He states they step in if there is ever a need with the TNR program and they pick up food and litter and take old food and take it to the reservations. He states they do it to be kind and “they don't really do fundraising. I mean that these people come from a pretty good amount of money they've never taken a single penny from us.” They buy their own supplies and he's been working with them for “about eight or nine years probably.”
- Carrie asks if they have a name
- Christian states they do have a name but “because of everything that's been going on I, we were a little bit reserved as far as like you know saying their name.” He states that he did have a conversation with them about what was going on and “they we're a little taken aback because it's obviously you know this whole thing was supposed to be just everybody just kind of helping each other out.”
- Carrie questions “OK so we are not allowed to have their name?”
- Christian states “They were they were they were concerned about as to where the reason you know as far as like their name and stuff like that they were, they were, they were concerned about um um as to why the reason, like you know I was I was I was honest with them as to what was going on and so they they were a little taken aback with it and they're like listen (“we don't want anybody coming after us.”)”
- Christian goes on to say “They were like we're happy to help you so they were a little scared you know”

- Carrie shares her concern that they have not posted pictures anywhere of pers available for adoption. She goes on to share that she posts all of her animals and it seems odd that they have not.
- Christian shared that he asked the “rescue what their resources were and they shared that they've been doing this for a really long time and they don't really take a lot of animals from a lot places you know because they do it go and help out a lot of people in the community that they had a lot of resources as to where they would go.”
- He goes on to share that “when the Humane Society of San Diego first called me, I said you know what I don't think that we can do this but I said I do have a rescue who comes and helps us from time to time. Let me call them up and see if they're able to do that and I think at the time I mean what was the number that they had like 2700?”
- Steve shared that he though SDHS had around 3,000 animals but he was not sure where they came from.
- Christian said this number was the amount that they felt comfortable with taking and could find them homes. He states that they started working on finding homes for them before they starting working out logistics on their end. They had a month to figure out homes. He states the timing was not necessarily the best because it was so hot and when SDHS got to HSSA they “just kind of act quick on whatever we were going to do.”
- Carrie asked if the animals ever came to Tucson. Christian states they did.
- Christian went on to say again that SDHS was supposed to meet up with them so they knew where the animals were going but they decided to go to Tucson instead because they were taking the dog back to San Diego and wanted to take a tour of the shelter.
- Christian shared that they brought the animals down and spent the night. He stated that when he saw the carriers he grabbed a few employees and told them he did not feel comfortable leaving the animals at HSSA in the carriers so he asked if they were up for the trip to phoenix so they could just get the animals to rescue.
- Christian shared they were heading out and it was the “perfect storm.” He stated “We have the really nice little shuttle bus that we had put everybody nice and comfy in there and as we're heading out and literally heading out of our parking lot thank God we weren't too far away that would have been a disaster. The shuttle bus decides to just break down and we're heading out of the parking spot and so we had to think fast. He states one of the hoses busted and the vehicle started blowing hot air and it was really hot so they grabbed 3 vans and himself and two employees went up to phoenix, got there at midnight and got back at 2:00 in the morning.
- Kelly asked “So they never actually went into the facility, they were just loaded from the truck into vans?”

- Christian states “absolutely yeah we never went into the facility. He then goes on to say “We did unload a couple into our area in the back because they wanted to keep them for at least a night” but when we saw the carriers he asked the rescue if it was better to let them stay in the carriers or take them tonite. He states the rescue said to bring them that night.
- Kelly asks if it was a vetted rescue with a 501C3 rescue
- Christian states that “it's not really something that ever came up and I'll take the full blame for that for not asking any sooner.” He then says the rescue was working on their 501C3 so “it's not because they don't go out and fundraise or do anything like that it was something that they said that they were that they had been thinking about and working on and.”
- Carrie stated that they do not have their 501C3 because they are not listed on the IRS website and the only one in Arizona that's listed on the website for the IRS that takes in hamsters is her.”
- Christian said that him and Steve had a discussion about the rescue not having a 501C3.
- Carrie asked if they knew how to care for these small animals.
- Christian said they 100% in fact we did and that he usually “calls them when we have any sort of question about a certain breed or certain you know stuff like that and yeah they've always been super helpful super helpful for us.”
- Carrie asked if Christian physically saw the animals himself when they arrived at HSSA.
- Christian states that he helped load them up and was part of that crew.
- Carrie asked if any were examined to make sure that they were OK during the trip.
- Christian stated they were examined at San Diego Humane Society before they came down to Tucson.
- Carrie shared that it was 10 hours before when they were health checked.
- Kelly shared that she was concerned about how the animals did on the trip that long and in the heat.
- Christian stated they do PSA's on the heat and not keeping animals out but these animals were never really in the heat and they cooled their shuttle an hour before SDHS got there.
- Kelly states it was a refrigeration truck not an air conditioning truck.

- Christian states “it wasn't like ice cold" and “we were absolutely looking at the animal to make sure that they had water and we reloaded a lot of water bottles.” States they pride themselves on animal care and he takes that “110% serious.”
- Carrie clarifies that no exam was done. Christian states “an exam was not done here. no the exam was not done here no because we needed to just kind of get them out of the heat...”
- Carrie asked if any of them were inputted into the Humane Society system and whether they were assigned control numbers?
- Christian states “no because we were at this point we were just kind of getting them you know out ... we kind of set this up so we were just kind of like the middleman if you will.”
- Carrie asked if any microchips were recorded in HSSA’s system
- Christian said Michelle who is looking at the paperwork but could not get to it due to the thousands of animals that come through and stated “you know this was something that Steve has an incredible relationship with doctor Weitzman that we were trying to help out.” “So we did you know the transport as far as bringing them in and setting it up.” “Then you know we've been slowly kind of working on getting the microchips and all that stuff you know and for the ones that were microchipped a lot of pocket pets are not microchipped.”
- Carrie states that the rabbits were microchipped and shared that she knows it’s HSSAs so procedures to microchip the Guinea pigs as well. States that apparently HSSA was not able to do that since they didn't do an exam and didn't really intake them into the shelter. She states that her biggest concern is that this other rescue wouldn't know to vet the adopters. She shared the importance of having microchip numbers in case of a dumping situation.
- Christian states he shares her concern but “it's one of those situations where you know we were just really truly just trying to do the best thing and and help them out and with 3000 pocket pets.”
- Carrie lets Christian know she can take hamsters and mice.
- Christian asked for her to send him her email. States that the reason why we kind of deal with somebody out of phoenix is we don't typically deal much with rescues in Tucson.
- Carrie shared that she has worked with HSSA as a former volunteer but was never contacted about this.
- Christian remarked, “leave it to the big wigs to like mess it all up. You know its fine like literally done within CEO to CEO, chief operations to chief operations.” He stated, “I met up with their COO. Like we didn't really because we were not going to really be intaking any of them here so I did not get my staff involved. So that was another thing that we, and trust me we have learned so much from this.”

- Christian goes not to stay “we really did not tell the staff about this because we're like OK we're not even taking them.” States he took it upon himself because, “I always tell my staff I wouldn't do anything I wouldn't ask you guys to do you know.” Goes on to say that he misses being with the four-legged animals rather than the two legged ones. Said “I think it was like the perfect quick storm that's just kind of like blew itself up.”
- Carrie asked if anyone got pictures of the animals.
- Christian he said no because his main concern was getting them out of the weather. When the back of the truck was open “I could feel like it was just like super cold, super hot you know it's like I'm just transferring them over we did it so fast.” Says the van broke down and then says no the shuttle broke down. “It became night time and then we were driving in the middle of the night just trying to get them there.” States, “I regret it so much that we did 1,000,000% that we didn't.”
- Carrie- Carrie asked if the rescue did intake on them and took pictures.
- Christian says he asked the rescue for pictures and pictures of adopters and asked them to send those his way.
- Kelly states there needs to be picture and video proof the animals are ok.
- Christian states he has just been busy and has not bothered to ask them for pictures. Says he asked them and they said they would and that is when they were talking about the baby rabbit and said no it was not a baby it was a female rabbit with an eye issue. He states the rescue asked if they could bring her back so the vet can look at her since he has round the clock vet care. They also shared that they have some hamsters, mice, and guinea pigs left so he would take those if they did not get adopted in the next week or so.
- Carrie shared that she can take the hamsters and mice but needs to know how many. She talks about how on the news there were baby guinea pigs and that those needed to be separated from mom if they were male at 3 weeks old so they do not impregnate the mother. Carrie shared that she would love to connect with the rescue to make sure they knew this.
- Christian said he would assume they knew but said he would tell them other people would help out so they didn't have to do it all themselves.
- Kelly asked why San Diego Humane Society is saying the animals were being disbursed to schools throughout Tucson
- Christian states, “I have no idea. Nobody had ever said anything like that.”
- Carrie clarified they never ended up in schools.
- Christian and Steve both said “no we never heard anything about that either yeah we have our own education program here.”

- Carrie shared that she has worked with the HSSA education department before.
- Christian stated, “I promise that me and Steve will never be involved in anything like that again. Both laughing. We will not ruin this - more laughing.
- Carrie states that she wants to make sure whoever is adopting the animals is educated on their care.
- Christian states “Our biggest thing, 1 million percent making sure these animals were OK, they were healthy.”
- He states his driver was so hot and exhausted he threw up and it was so muddy because there was a monsoon. He stated “it was just like it was really bad, you know the timing was really bad. In retrospect I really wish that we would have just kind of waited a bit longer for the weather until it was better.” He state that “it all needed to be, it all needed to happen so fast just to make sure that the animals were OK.” “Then with our shuttle breaking down and so is said lets go grab the vans and empty them out.” “Our outside adoptions team weren't necessarily happy with us because it was after hours and we had to unload all their equipment from the vans just to get them loaded into the van you know.”
- Kelly asked if we could reach out in a week or if they could get pictures and documentation. Christian says absolutely.
- Carrie talks about typical rescue procedures. Christian states that he wishes he knew what the adoption process was but they reached out and asked about the health of the animals and asked the proper questions. He states “they told me about the rabbit awhile back and said they were going to see what they can do and finally they were like you know what the eye seems cloudier.”
- Carrie asked if they had a vet. Christian stated they do have a vet but the Humane Society should really take care of this for them. “So the rescue asked if they could bring it down and I said yeah we'll take it back.”
- Carrie asked what color the rabbit was. Christian says he does not know but said “I did tell him that we would get together in the next couple of days or so to have them bring it down.”
- Carrie expressed concerns about waiting if there was health issues with the rabbit. Christian states it was acting fine. Carrie states that prey animals hide illnesses. Christian then states “that’s when they said hey well let’s just go ahead and we will bring it down because I think they are going to do something with the TNR program here.”
- Christian stated “like I said you know this was supposed to be something that was all about just helping out and and it really just turned itself into the perfect storm.” “A big piece of that like I said was no communication to miscommunication and miscommunication was the only communication out there and you know I you know I take full responsibility for that.”

Kelly P. and Carrie K's call with SDHS Jessica Des Lauries and Jennifer Grantham on 8/29 at 4:30pm

- States Christian and Jessica worked together. She personally reached out and connected to Christian to “get things rolling.”
- Jessica and Janina drove the animals
- SDHS worked for 3 weeks to prepare. SDHDS had a list of all animals and checked them off as they were loaded. 318 animals but does not know breakdown of species
- Rented a temperature-controlled truck (confirmed to be enterprise reefer truck) and could see temperature from the cab. Checked animals along the way as they stopped for gas and made sure none of the hundreds of crates shifted.
- Met at shelter and unloaded into 3 different vans
- Jessica personally moved the animals from a temperature-controlled truck to the 3 vans then they went to the private rescue but does not have the name of the rescue or know where it is. Then states 5 minutes later in conversation that rescue is in phoenix.
- States that “I saw every single animal we loaded and unloaded into their vehicle.” They all took the trip fine and everyone had food and water and no water was below half and none needed refilled.
- Jessica says she cannot speak to if rescue was vetted because she just transferred the animals to HSSA and they transferred to rescue. States “I mean we have a relationship with HSSA and they are reputable and I have that trust”
- Jennifer states “we don't know because we don't work with that rescue”
- Again says unloaded into their vehicle but not a lot of pictures because it was hot. (video and pictures show loading on to the HSSA transport bus – not vans)
- Says “we told stories and didn't close the loop on story which is why we released the update.”
- Blames old rabbit photos and poor details of the HSSA update 8/25 on new marketing director at HSSA
- Says SDHS has pictures in data-based records of all animals sent
- States they are trying to get pictures of adopted animals
- Jessica says she arrived at 5:00 and two people (now known to be Chad Hartz and Chris Meek) and Christian showed up later as well to try to get them moving along since it was a long day.
- States she checked every single water bottle as she unloaded and they were fine.
- Says she can't speak to why Nina (PR news person) said they were going to be placed in schools. She says she doesn't know but they may have been placed and are trying

to get outcomes. (Stated in 8/11/23 emails see above that the animals were placed in schools)

- When asked if they don't get pictures of outcomes what actions would they take – Says we are trying to reach out. Says the senior leadership team would have to discuss that.
- Says they want to make sure animals are in a great circumstance.
- Jennifer state “If I heard the conversation correct the other day, AZ Humane has worked with this rescue as well in the past.”
- Says Christian told her they were working with rescue network to get placed and she knew they were going to a rescue.
- Jessica says they did not see them drive away because it was a long day and before 6 she backed the truck and unloaded some carriers into a holding area. Departed at 6:00 to go to the hotel to eat. Next day they got dog and left at 8:45am
- When asked if it was 3 vehicles, she said yes. Then says one is a shuttle and not a standard van.
- Carrie raises concerns about how we know the standards of the rescue.
- Many have already been adopted. Says she can't speak to how adopters were founded. When asked if they were concerned and how we know if they are not being given for reptile food. They say they have a long-standing relationship with HSSA and we hope that other folks would understand if we take animals, we would vet rescue. HSSA has worked with this rescue for some time so it “provides us a little bit of confidence we do have confidence in HSSA and Christian's work and relations.”
- Carrie states she was not able to partner with HSSA because she did not have her 501C and this rescue does not.
- The reason for transport is that they were not getting adopted.
- “We didn't have rescues pulling any animals but we have the ability to take care of them but our shelter is overrun with dogs and cats so it is hard to take care of small animals.”
- Ends call



Christian Gonzalez

August 30, 2023 at 2:42 PM

RE: Clarification about animals transferred to your care

To: Kelly Paolisso

Hi Kelly. Thanks again for meeting with me and Steve yesterday. Could I get Cari's email. I want to update my contact list and start utilizing her and run stuff by her. And I also want to see once I get the rescue group to give me a list of what is left that she can still take some. I hope this email finds you well. Thanks for the information in advance.

Christian Gonzalez

Chief Programs and Operations Officer

Humane Society of Southern Arizona

Compassionately serving pets and the people who love them since 1944

Animal Cruelty Taskforce of Southern Arizona

Enforcement, Education, Training

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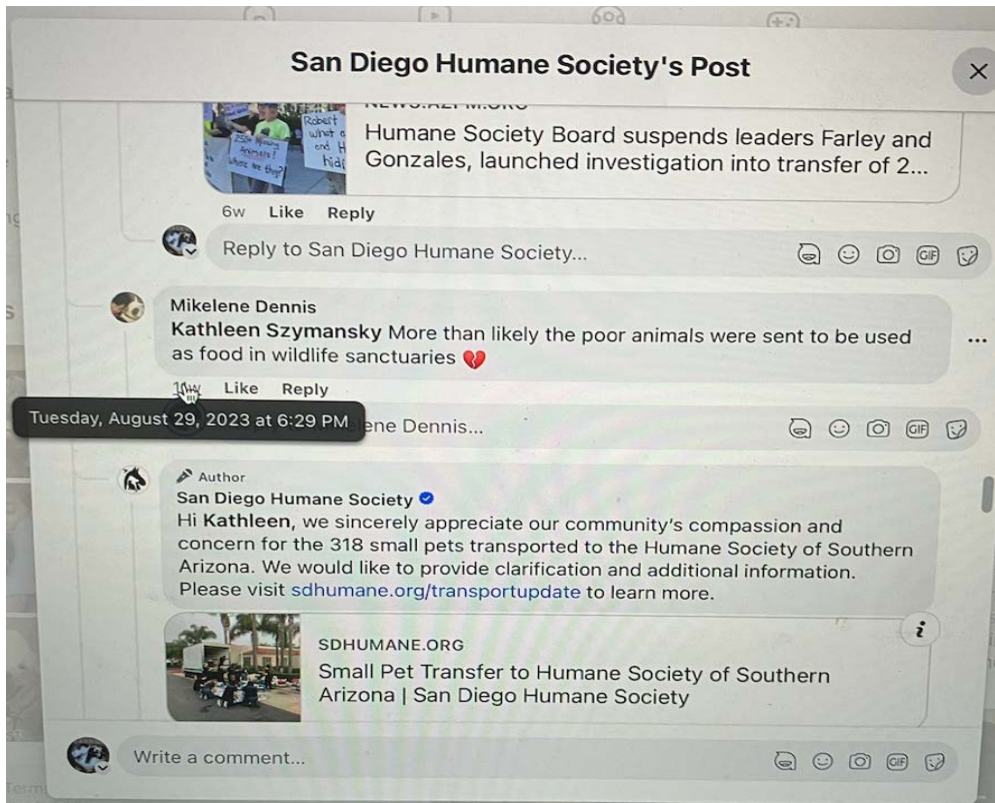
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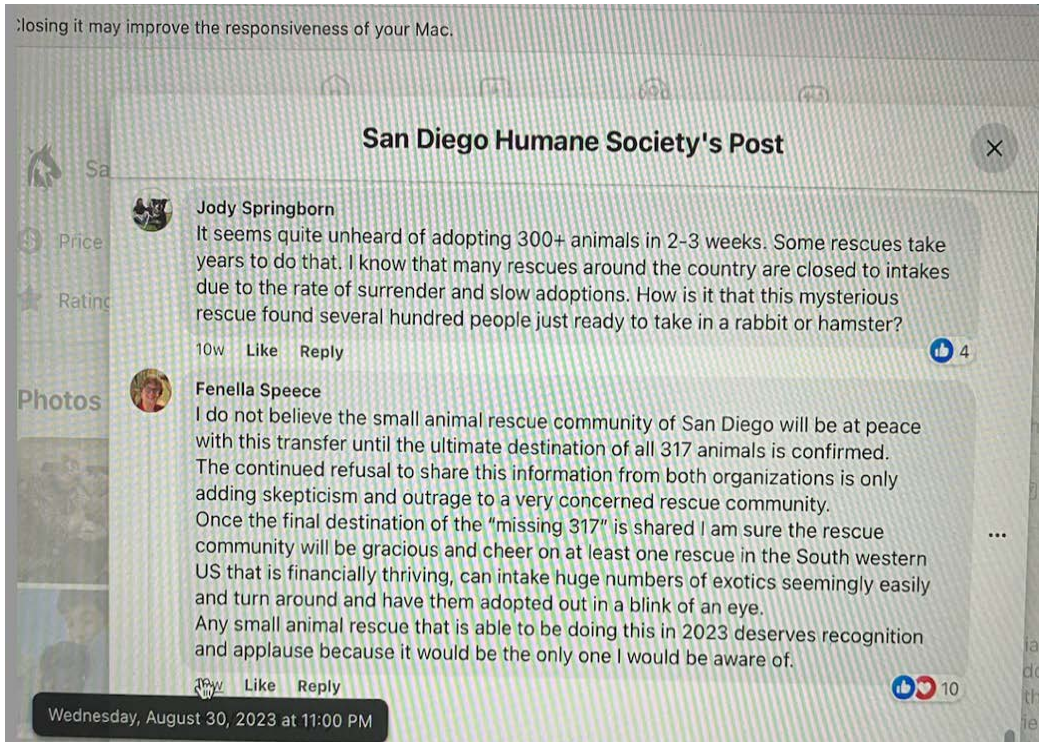
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[See More from Christian Gonzalez](#)

*When questioned if the animals could have been sent as reptile food on 9/29, they just referred to the update they posted as a result of public pressure and the phone call.



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SDHS update on transfer 8/30

Update as of August 30, 2023

Some members of the public have expressed questions regarding our recent partnership to relocate small pets from San Diego Humane Society (SDHS) to the Humane Society of Southern Arizona (HSSA). We would like to provide clarification and reassurance that the transport was a success and we have been informed that all of the animals involved are safe and thriving.

On Monday, Aug. 7, SDHS transported 318 small pets — including guinea pigs, rats, hamsters and rabbits — to HSSA. This was the largest single transport in SDHS history. Because SDHS shelters have been over capacity for more than eight months, we were extremely grateful for HSSA's assistance to help us find homes for so many animals. At the same time, SDHS took in a dog from HSSA who needed behavior intervention and is now available for adoption at our San Diego Campus.

Transferring such a large number of animals is no small undertaking, and our organizations spent weeks working together to coordinate the logistics. The animals were safely loaded into an air-conditioned truck in San Diego, and Fear Free methods were employed throughout the transport to keep the animals calm and safe. All 318 pets arrived safely in Tucson, where HSSA took custody of the animals and immediately transported them to a local private rescue.

HSSA has confirmed that all of the animals survived the journey and arrived at the rescue safely, and that many have already been adopted into new homes. They shared that 317 of the animals were placed with the local private rescue, while 1 rabbit was returned to HSSA for care due to ongoing ophthalmologic medical needs.

While we shared information about the transport with local media in San Diego, and on our social media pages, HSSA made an intentional decision not to share this information publicly. In the past, publicity around large-scale intake resulted in a significant increase in relinquishments to HSSA, and they shared that it was essential to avoid a surge in intake when shelters are already over capacity.

Additionally, HSSA shared that the local private rescue that took in the small pets specifically requested to remain anonymous. HSSA confirms that it is an organization with which they have had a long-standing history of successful partnership. If HSSA is given permission by the rescue to share additional information, they will provide more detail. HSSA shared that the local private rescue has played an essential role in giving hundreds of animals a second chance, and in the spirit of good partnership they are committed to respecting the rescue's wishes.

We sincerely appreciate the compassion shown by those who have inquired about the animals' well-being. We can assure our community that compassion for animals is our top priority, and that HSSA shares a deep and long-standing commitment to act in the best interests of the homeless pets who need us. We are very grateful to HSSA, a 79-year-old organization which has placed more than 1 million animals into new homes, for their long-standing partnership with SDHS. They generously came to our aid when we put out a call for assistance. This transport was coordinated to give hundreds of hamsters, guinea pigs, rabbits and rats a second chance, and we are grateful to have had this opportunity to work together for their benefit.

We will continue to update this page if we receive additional information.

[Link to photos and video provided to media on Aug. 7, 2023.](#)

[Link to news story on ABC 10 News on Aug. 31, 2023.](#)

[Link to Facebook update posted by the Humane Society of Southern Arizona on Aug. 31.](#)

Link to photos and video provided to media on Aug. 7, 2023.
Link to news story on ABC 10 News on Aug. 31, 2023.
Link to Facebook update posted by the Humane Society of Southern Arizona on Aug. 31.

San Diego Humane Society team loading the truck



San Diego Humane Society team transferring the small pets to Humane Society of Southern Arizona



Photos provided by HSSA



Photos provided by HSSA



Updated 11/9/2023 at 11:50 a.m.