

PAHS photo montage script

What if animals could speak for themselves?

The hard-working horses and mules of Palo Alto's early labor force would have demanded an occasional drink of water, as they carried heavy burdens through city streets.

Cats and dogs would have spoken up, too, to keep police from shooting their lost brothers and sisters on sight.

Animals in the shelter would have resisted being taken and subjected, against their will, to painful and lethal experiments.

Of course, animals can't speak for themselves. But those in the San Francisco Bay Area peninsula community gained a voice on June 19, 1908. That's when a group of citizens formed the Palo Alto Humane Society, known as PAHS. Local leaders such as David Starr Jordan, Stanford University's first president, joined the cause.

PAHS gave working horses and mules the public watering trough they couldn't ask for. PAHS built a shelter to care for lost, abandoned, and abused animals, and it stopped police from shooting strays. PAHS spoke up to keep shelter animals from being seized for experimentation. PAHS operated an animal ambulance, saving lives from the Coast to the Bay and San Mateo to San Jose.

If animals could speak for themselves, they would teach us to treat them with compassion, no matter what their station in life. They would beg us not to torture them on factory farms or in laboratories. They would implore us not to abandon them to certain death when disaster strikes.

PAHS has heeded these cries and more. PAHS initiated humane education for adults and children in the Palo Alto area. PAHS worked with the Red Cross to formulate disaster and emergency plans that included animals. PAHS founded the National Greyhound Protection League, campaigned against abuse of elephants in the entertainment industry, fought successfully to ban the steel-jaw leghold trap. PAHS supported the California Prevention of Cruelty to Farm Animals Act, to give all animals the space to sit, stand, turn around, and extend their limbs. PAHS subsidizes the spaying and neutering of 1,000 pets in need and homeless animals each year, saving millions of pets from homelessness and harsh struggle on the streets.

For 100 years, PAHS has spoken up for animals. It has rescued them from human cruelty and natural disasters. It has made life better for working animals, pets, farm animals, and wildlife. And it has done so entirely through support by generous, compassionate people in the community, without funding from the government, other humane societies, or national affiliates.

If animals could speak for themselves, PAHS' work might be done. But, of course, animals can't speak for themselves. With your help, our work will continue for another century or more. Because PAHS intends to be there for animals, as long as they need us.