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On the Cover:

Dr. Wailani Sung, Senior Director of Animal Admissions and Wellbeing at Joybound and a shelter guest

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From Our CEO

Greetings!

I hope this finds you and your furry best friends enjoying the first weeks of spring. This early in the year, I'm already struck by the remarkable support for pets and their people your partnership has made possible.

In January, when thousands of families and their beloved pets were traumatized by the LA wildfires, Joybound swiftly mobilized to help. Close collaboration with Los Angeles County Animal Care & Control allowed us to quickly evacuate scores of dogs and cats, clearing precious shelter space for LA's lost and displaced pets. Your support made it possible for Joybound's dedicated staff and volunteers to do whatever it took to ensure the safety and comfort of these sweet pets.

The LA evacuation is one of countless high-impact mission moments during Greg McCoy's remarkable 32 years as Joybound's Board President. As Greg transitions into new Board roles, we celebrate our organization's remarkable growth under his leadership. Greg's vision, wisdom, and constancy grew a grassroots strip mall rescue into the highly effective human-animal bond organization Joybound is today, rescuing and adopting more animals than ever and working to keep pet families together.

Jennifer Hall, Joybound's new Board President, brings both deep organizational knowledge and her own innovative vision for helping Joybound form and support even more joyful bonds between pets and their people. You'll find an inspiring preview of Joybound's future under her leadership in this edition of Joy.

Your strong partnership allows Joybound's mission of hope and transformation to thrive. No matter the challenges we may face, together, we're building a future where more people can feel the unconditional,

reciprocal love only a pet can share. All of us at Joybound are so very happy to advance this life-saving, life-enriching work with you.

Thank you!

Susan

Susan Lee Vick Chief Executive Officer



Connect with us online at joybound.org and on social media.









The Evolution of Shelter to Service

Expanding Veterans' Support with Streamlined Training and Lasting Bonds

ncredible things happen when you take a bold step toward inclusivity. That's exactly what Joybound's Shelter to Service program did last year when it expanded its reach to include those facing mental health challenges in addition to Veterans. Now, first responders, survivors of violent crimes, and others with qualified medical referrals can also access psychiatric service dogs, offering hope and stability to more people in need.

This expansion marks a significant shift in the program's mission, as it broadens its impact and makes service animals available to a wider community. The positive community response to this inclusivity has been overwhelming, as people recognize the power of the human-animal bond in healing and supporting mental health.

This expansion marks a signficant shift in the program's mission, as it broadens its impact and makes service available to a wider community.

Additionally, Joybound's commitment to holistic care now includes generating trained facility dogs and cats to provide support in group settings. These animals work in Veterans centers, courtrooms, hospitals, and behavioral therapy and crisis centers, offering comfort and assistance in environments where mental health challenges are often most acute.

Joybound's expanded Shelter to Service program is more than just a resource for those with psychiatric needs. It's a transformative initiative that fosters connections and provides essential support. By offering psychiatric service animals to individuals from all walks of life, Joybound not only addresses immediate mental health challenges, but is also working toward long-term healing and stability for diverse groups in the community.

This inclusive approach has created new partnerships and opportunities with organizations like Embark Behavioral Health and Berkeley Youth Alternatives joining forces to further extend the program's impact. Joybound recognizes the evolving needs of the community and is building a stronger, more connected support system for all.

Ready to learn more? Head over to **joybound.org/shelter-to-service** to discover how you can help turn shelter guests into psychiatric service dogs.



Joybound's Life-Saving Rescue Runs

Helping Shelter Animals During the Palisades Fire



Joybound employee, AnneMarie, helping to intake puppies from the Palisades fire

n January 13, 2025, Joybound jumped into action to help animals in desperate need. With the Palisades fire sweeping through Los Angeles County, shelters were overwhelmed and struggling to keep up with the influx of displaced pets. So, when Los Angeles County Animal Care and Control called us for help, we jumped in.

"This wasn't just about getting animals to safety—it was about making sure the shelters could continue their important work of reuniting pets with their families."

That day, our Animal Admissions team packed up and drove 400 miles from Walnut Creek to Palmdale, where they met with local shelter staff to coordinate the first of two rescue runs. We brought back 33 animals, creating space for the pets that were being evacuated because of the fire. It was a whirlwind, but every step felt worth it knowing we were giving these animals a better chance at safety and, eventually, a reunion with their families.

Just a week later, on January 22, the team made the trek again, bringing back 15 more dogs. This second trip was crucial for the Palmdale shelter, as it allowed them to open up to receive new animals impacted by the Hughes Fire. In just two trips, we helped free up critical space and gave more animals the chance to find shelter in the chaos.

This wasn't just about getting animals to safety—it was about making sure the shelters could continue their important work of reuniting pets with their families. The connection between us and our shelter partners in Los Angeles has never been more important. As always, we're here to help, no matter the distance or the challenge.

Cinder's Second Chance

A Rescue Dog Finds Love After Surviving the Los Angeles Fires

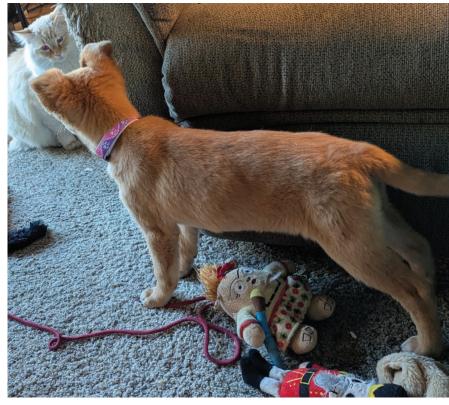
ometimes, the perfect dog comes into your life when you least expect it, bringing healing and joy when you need it most. That's exactly what happened to a family in Mendocino County when they adopted Cinder, a puppy who was rescued by Joybound during the Los Angeles Palisades fire rescue runs.

The family shared their heartwarming story with us: "In 2017, horrific fires swept through Sonoma and Mendocino counties on the same night. We lived in Mendocino and volunteered to foster dogs displaced by the fire. We ended up with a puppy who had lost her mother and littermates to the fire. That foster turned into an adoption, and we loved that dog. She passed away in June 2024, leaving us heartbroken.

When we heard that Joybound was bringing a truckload of dogs up from the LA fires, we knew our late dog had her fine paw in this. We made the three-hour trip down to meet some of the dogs, and it was love at first sight with Belle, who we renamed Cinder."



Cinder, a Palisades rescue dog, enjoying time with her doting new paw-rents Su and Ken



Cinder, with her new sibling, Loki, a large Flame Point Siamese

Cinder quickly settled into her new home with devoted parents who are retired and can spend all their time with her. She's thriving on their large country property and has already learned basic commands like "sit," while eagerly mastering leash and house training. "She has a perfect temperament and is eager to learn," the family shared. "Her loving nature is exactly what our hearts need to heal."

"Sometimes the perfect dog comes into your life when you least expect it, bringing healing and joy when you need it most."

Cinder is now part of a loving family, and she's found a playful sibling in a large Flame Point Siamese named Loki. Despite being smaller, she's already enjoying wrestling games with her new furry brother. The family's gratitude for Cinder—and for Joybound's efforts to bring her into their lives—is clear. They've even encouraged two friends to visit Joybound in search of their own perfect pet.

The Unexpected Joys of Fostering

A Journey of Trust and Playfulness

ot all foster stories end in adoption, but when Bowie strutted into his foster mom's life, it was game over. Goofy, confident, and full of sass, Bowie knew he was home—even if she didn't realize it right away.

Fresh from a life-changing divorce and preparing for surgery, Jane, a Joybound volunteer, became a foster mom for some kittens. "I knew I was going to be sad and lonely during my recovery," she recalls. "So, I decided to focus on loving and nurturing kittens instead of feeling sorry for myself."

"Fostering brings so much joy and fun and I laugh every day and feel so happy while fostering."

Enter Bowie. He arrived at just five weeks old, fragile, and in need of care. As Jane nursed him back to health, an unshakable bond formed. Bowie trusted Jane completely, even relaxing in her arms for nail trims and medication. That trust turned into a lifelong friendship filled with adventures and endless love.



Squirrel! Bowie watching the television intensely



Bowie enjoying bath time

Bowie was a social butterfly, a bit of a bully to his kitten siblings, and always up for a new trick. By three months old, he was performing commands like "sit" and "shake hands." He loved bath time, fearlessly splashing around with his toy fish, and even dunking his head under the faucet. His joyful antics never failed to bring smiles.

Bowie also had a soft side. As he got older, he became a devoted snuggler, always by his mom's side or nestled in a cozy fort she rigged up on the couch just for him. When Jane left for a year-long stay in Bali, she wasn't sure if he'd remember her. But the moment she walked through the door, Bowie raced around in joy, proving their bond was truly unbreakable.

Bowie may have started as a foster, but he became so much more—a best friend, a playful spirit, and a furry reminder that sometimes the best things in life aren't always planned. If you're considering becoming a foster volunteer, take Jane's advice and do it! "Fostering brings so much joy and fun and I laugh every day and feel so happy while fostering. Watching kittens thrive and knowing they'll go to loving homes is incredibly rewarding. And it's perfect for those who aren't ready for a lifelong pet."

Become a Joybound foster parent at joybound.org/foster.

Meet Joybound's Volunteer of the Year

Doris has Been Caring for Animals (and Humans) for More Than 15 Years

f there's one thing Doris Hasegawa knows, it's that dogs and joy go hand in hand—and she's been spreading that joy at Joybound for over 15 years! With such dedication to service, we wanted to find out more about this incredible lady.

What has kept you motivated to continue volunteering over the years?

There are so many different opportunities to try—potty walks, trail walks, puppy socials, handling animals for photos among other things. The best motivation is the dogs! There are so many who have been my favorites over the years and every week I get to meet and work with new ones."

Can you share a memorable experience or story that stands out during your time volunteering?

"Years ago, I worked with a beautiful Rottie mix who was very reactive to other dogs and wasn't adopted for a long time. Every week I walked her, fed her, and cleaned her condo. Afterward, she'd bring out a toy for me and we'd lie together on her huge pillows, chat, and play. One day she finally got adopted by a couple who brought her back for a training class. I came by to see her after class. She gave me a cursory kiss, then turned her back and went with her new parents. It made me happy to see how she bonded with her new family and had no more need for me."



Doris snuggling a puppy



Doris receiving the 2024 Volunteer of the Year award at the Volunteer Appreciation Event

Your homemade dog treats are legendary. When did you start making them (and will you share the recipe?)

"I started making dog muffins about 25 years ago for friends' dogs. They were such a hit that I started making them for the dogs at Joybound. I reserve these muffins for my favorite dogs and for dogs who are picky eaters. 99% of the dogs who've tried them are in love with them. I'd rather not share the recipe, otherwise, the dogs wouldn't find my visits and treats so special!"

"There are so many different opportunities to try

— potty walks, trail walks, puppy socials... The
best motivation is the dogs!"

What advice would you give to someone considering volunteering with Joybound?

"Come to orientation and find what clicks for you.

Volunteering is a way to give back, but you get so much more in return."

Become a volunteer. Visit joybound.org/volunteer.

Turn Playtime into Learning Time

4 Fun Tips to Teach and Bond with Your Feline Friend



Dr. Wailani Sung clicker training a shelter guest

Clicker Train for Pawsitive Reinforcement. It is a powerful method for teaching cats by marking the exact moment they perform a desired behavior, and it helps them understand exactly what action earned them a reward. The clicker is a small handheld device that makes a distinct "click" sound when pressed. It's a fun way to teach tricks, reinforce litter box habits, and even help reduce unwanted behavior. Start with simple tasks, like teaching your cat to touch and sit, and build from there.

Keep Sessions Short and Fun. Cats, unlike dogs, tend to have shorter attention spans, so it's important to keep training sessions brief ideally around 1 to 5 minutes. If you go longer, your cat may lose interest and become distracted, which can make training less effective. During each session, focus on one behavior at a time to keep things clear and manageable. Make sure to keep the atmosphere light and fun—incorporate toys or games if possible to maintain your cat's excitement and curiosity.

Private and Group Training Classes at Joybound!

Is your furry friend ready to learn new tricks and build better behavior? Joybound offers a variety of cat (and dog) training classes. Join us! joybound.org/training

Start with Simple Cues. When first teaching your cat new behaviors, it's best to start with simple, straightforward cues. Cats are intelligent and can learn a variety of tricks, but starting with basic actions ensures you build a solid foundation for more complex training later on. Easy-to-learn tricks, such as "touch," "sit," "come," and "high five," are purr-fect for beginners because they require minimal effort and are natural for cats to perform.

Be Patient and Consistent. Training a cat often requires more patience than training a dog, as cats are generally more independent and can be less eager to please. Unlike dogs, who are often highly motivated to work for attention or treats, cats tend to train at their own pace. They may take a little longer to learn a new behavior or command, and they may not always respond right away. However, with patience and consistency, you can teach your cat a wide variety of tricks and behaviors.

With patience and consistency, you can teach your cat a wide variety of tricks and behaviors.

Dr. Wailani Sung, Senior Director of Animal Admissions and Wellbeing





New Grants Support Contra Costa Pets

Making Veterinary Care Affordable for Pet Families

hanks to two generous grants in partnership with Contra Costa County Animal Services, Joybound People & Pets is stepping in to support pet families and ensure essential veterinary care like vaccinations, microchips, and spay/neuter services are accessible for pets across the county.

Contra Costa County has seen an increase in the number of families struggling with financial or practical barriers to pet guardianship. According to Forbes Advisor, nearly two-thirds (63%) of pet guardians reported they would struggle to cover a surprise veterinary bill, putting many pets and their families at risk of heartbreaking decisions like abandonment, economic euthanasia, and surrender. With rising veterinary costs, essential services like vaccinations and spay/neuter procedures are out of reach for many.

In response, Joybound's Pet Safety Net program offers solutions. By providing these essential services, we help families avoid tough choices and ensure that pets remain healthy and with their families. The need for this support is expected to continue growing, and we are committed to help address this gap in care.

The first of the two grants, Measure X, is a three-year award supporting low-cost spay/neuter services in partnership with Animal Fix Clinic, to spay/neuter more than 3,000 pets over three years.



Joybound vaccine clinic participants



Trained Joybound volunteer vaccinates a dog during a vaccine clinic

This funding also supports free community vaccine/microchip clinics and pet retention services, allowing us to provide vaccination services for more than 3,000 pets over the next three years. Another 500 pet families will receive the funds they need to keep their pets in their homes and prevent the need to surrender their pets for financial reasons.

The second, the Animal Benefit Fund, is a one-year grant that funds low-cost mobile and in-clinic spay/ neuter services for pet families. With this support, we will spay/neuter an additional 170 pets. Additionally, we will provide transportation assistance to and from veterinary services for pet families facing transportation barriers to veterinary care.

We are incredibly grateful for our partnership with Contra Costa County Animal Services and the vital funding they provide. With the ongoing rise in veterinary costs and service shortages, these grants will make a significant difference in keeping families together and pets healthy across the county.

To schedule your pet for a vaccination or spay/neuter, check our upcoming clinics at **joybound.org/ solutions.**

Joyful Reflection and a New Chapter

Jennifer Hall Steps into Leadership as Greg McCoy Continues Joybound's Legacy

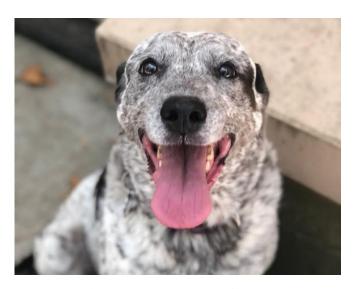
new chapter in Joybound's story began in January as Jennifer Hall officially commenced her tenure as President of the Board of Directors. After serving the organization as Board President from its very earliest days, Gregory L. McCoy will continue on the Board as Immediate Past President. The leadership transition's thoughtful planning and coordination reflect the mission-minded governance guiding Joybound's work on behalf of the human-animal bond.

Mission-Focused Legacy

If you have ever adopted a Joybound dog or cat or accessed one of the organization's services for pet families, you have benefited from the vision Greg McCoy helped define and bring to life. McCoy was part of the team that founded the beloved organization, first known as Contra Costa County Animal Rescue Foundation, later as ARF, and now as Joybound People & Pets.

What started as a local mission flourished under McCoy's guidance. "I have this sort of old-fashioned belief that you ought to try to leave things better than they were before," McCoy reflected.

That commitment to continuous improvement led to Joybound's evolution from a local rescue operation to a national leader in the benefits of the human-animal bond – a concept McCoy champions with genuine enthusiasm.



Sierra, one of five dogs Greg adopted from Joybound



Gregory L. McCoy, Immediate Past President, Joybound People & Pets with his Joybound adopted dogs Coby and Mocha

"The focus on the human-animal bond, which has been one of this organization's greatest strengths, grew out of those early years when we said, 'Gee, we really want to do more,'" said McCoy. He saw before many others how programs that both formed and supported the bond shared by people and pets charted a natural path for mission-aligned growth.

Reflecting on the organization's successful advancement and reputation, McCoy gives much of the credit to the roles played by volunteers through the years – both board members and those directly engaged in operations. "The volunteers are just fantastic," McCoy said. "They are there every day and you just can't give those people enough recognition for the work they do."

McCoy contemplated timing for his leadership transition in a thoughtful process that aligned with a milestone birthday.

"I'd been thinking about the transition for a year, then decided this was the right time—actually a fantastic time—to do it," McCoy said. "One of the things that excites me most today is the strength of the Board. It just generates excitement and new ideas."

McCoy looks forward to Hall's presidency. "Jennifer is going to be great. There couldn't be a better prepared person to step into that role at this stage. She is creative, energetic, and an extremely strong leader."



Jennifer Hall, Joybound's new Board President

Eyes on the Horizon

Jennifer Hall brings both professional expertise from her groundbreaking career at Intuit and a lifelong love of animals to Joybound.

A Bay Area native who now resides in Nevada, Hall is a lifelong animal lover who grew up with horses, chickens, dogs, and cats.

When considering retirement, Hall was moved to devote time to nonprofit leadership. That intention came up in a meeting with Dave Duffield, founder of Workday and the nationally respected animal welfare organization Maddie's Fund. As Maddie's had a longstanding partnership with Joybound, then known as ARF, Dave recommended that she explore a Board role with the organization.

That suggestion led to years of Board service, with Jennifer bringing invaluable organizational development skills that helped prepare Joybound for growth.

Joybound's impact became deeply personal for Hall when she accompanied an early Pet Hug Pack therapy animal visit to John Muir Hospital. "One patient had obviously been at the hospital for a while," Hall recounts. "We walked into the room, and she greeted our dog—and then she showed me her book of all the cards from all the Pet Hug Pack animals that have visited her. Her face completely lit up."

Under Hall's leadership, Joybound remains committed to both core rescue and adoption operations and other expressions of the mission such as therapy animals, service animals, and pet-related vocational training.

"Our mission has not changed," Hall said. "What we've evolved to over time has just broadened the way we serve it. It's not only about helping animals and people connect and create bonds, but also all the things that make those bonds sustainable. The educational component is key to what we do."

Honoring McCoy's role in the organization's commitment to education, in April, Joybound will formally name the southwest wing of its Walnut Creek location as the McCoy Education Center.

"Greg's always kept the mission in the forefront to do what's best for the organization," Hall said, lauding McCoy's presidency. "He has led with the mission at the heart of every decision."

Through this leadership succession, Joybound remains committed to both its foundational principles and pioneering new ways to connect and support pets and the people who love them. ■



Riley, Jennifer's Joybound adopted dog

Unleash the LOVE

An Exciting Festival of Hope and Loving Homes

ast month, love was in the air and tails were wagging at Joybound's secondannual Unleash the LOVE: Festival & Adopt-a-thon. This free event brought the community together for an unforgettable afternoon filled with love, fun, and furry friends! Over 1,400 attendees gathered at our Walnut Creek campus, a huge jump from last year's 900 participants.

Attendees met adorable adoptable animals from Joybound and nine Northern California partner shelters, with many finding their forever friends. Guests enjoyed food trucks and a relaxing beer garden. Free ice cream, glitter face painting, popcorn, and giveaways added to the festive atmosphere.

Over 1,400 attendees gathered at our Walnut Creek campus, a huge jump from last year's 900 participants.

The event also featured live training demos and a behind-the-scenes tour of our veterinary clinic. Hands-on craft stations and inflatable play areas kept kids entertained, while expert trainers and veterinarians were available to answer any pressing pet-related questions.

Shoppers explored our boutique marketplace for unique gifts, and those looking to add a little edge to their weekend got permanent flash tattoos.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for an afternoon packed with joy, laughter, and a lot of love. With so much fun and community spirit, we're already looking forward to next year! ■

Attend an upcoming Joybound event! **joybound.org/events**

Photo 1: Young attendees with the face paint artist Photo 2: An attendee meeting an adoptable dog from one of our partner shelters Photo 3: Joybound staff







Kristi and Chris's Joybound Love Story

From First Date to Forever



Kristi and Chris with their pups Hank and Maya

ho knew a "Yappy Hour" could lead to happily ever after? That's exactly what happened when Chris, a long-term Joybound volunteer matched with Kristi on an online dating app in 2020.

Because of their shared love for animals and good old-fashioned fun, Chris was confident that Joybound would make the perfect setting for their first date. The "Yappy Hour" event was filled with trivia, games, and refreshing beverages from Calicraft. To top it off, the couple won the grand raffle prize—tickets to a Miranda Lambert concert—making their second date an absolute nobrainer!

As their relationship blossomed, their love for animals remained a central part of their connection. They soon started volunteering together as dog walkers at Joybound—a bonding experience that deepened their relationship. "Chris's volunteer work was one of the first signs

that he was 'the one,'" Kristi recalls. "I was so touched by his generosity and how kind he was with the animals."

Their journey came full circle on May 13, 2023, when they said "I do" surrounded by the love of family and friends. "Now, volunteering together is one of the highlights of our week," they shared. "It's not only time spent together, but we get to work as a team. When we're not volunteering, we check the adoption notices and celebrate when our favorites find their forever homes."

And now, as they prepare to welcome their first child, Kristi and Chris are excited to raise their little one surrounded by animals and the values of kindness and community that have been the foundation of their love. Their story proves that sometimes, just like with dogs, love is meant to be—and it all begins with a wagging tail.

A New Playground for Pups

Solo's Play Yard is Now Open!

magine a place where adoptable dogs can run, jump, and be their playful selves—well, that place is Solo's Play Yard. Thanks to a generous anonymous donor, on December 10, 2024, Joybound unveiled a brand-new outdoor space designed to give our adoptable dogs the freedom to run, leap, and explore in a safe, natural environment. The grand opening event featured a dedication, ribbon cutting, and reception.

Named after Solo, a playful pup who loves nothing more than being outside, this space will allow our dogs to show their true personalities while being closely supervised by our skilled staff and volunteers.

At Joybound, we know that playing is essential to a dog's well-being. Solo's Play Yard will provide a perfect spot for our shelter dogs to reduce stress and relax, helping them present their happiest selves to potential adopters.

Solo's Play Yard will provide a perfect spot for our shelter dogs to reduce stress and relax.

Visitors will also have the opportunity to see firsthand the joy and companionship these dogs can bring to a home, helping to strengthen community bonds.

The play yard also offers a neutral space for introducing dogs to each other, promoting positive interactions that can lead to successful adoption matches. We're excited for all the wagging tails and happy memories that Solo's Play Yard will bring in the years ahead! ■



Photo 2: Solo enjoying the new play yard

Photo 3: Joybound Trainers engaging with shelter guests







Six Ways to Get Involved

Your Support Helps us Create Stronger Bonds Between Pets and People

Foster a Future Service Dog

Help transform shelter dogs into service or facility dogs.

joybound.org/servicefoster



Have Your Dog Groomed

Pamper your pup at Joybound's Grooming Salon.

joybound.org/grooming



Become a Volunteer

Make a meaningful impact in the lives of pets and people.

joybound.org/volunteer



Attend an Upcoming Event

Don't miss out. Be part of something special.

joybound.org/events



Foster a Cat or Dog

Open your heart and home by fostering a cat or dog.

joybound.org/foster



6 Make a Donation

Support brighter futures for people and pets.

joybound.org/donate



Joybound People & Pets is a privately funded, 501(c)(3) non-profit based in Walnut Creek, CA. With dog and cat rescue and adoption at the heart of our mission, Joybound forms, supports, elevates, and celebrates the human-animal bond through services such as training and veterinary care, food and supply assistance, therapy and service animal programs, and rich learning resources for all pet families.



