

JOY

THE MAGAZINE OF
joybound[®]
PEOPLE & PETS

SPRING 2026

THRIFT, CATS,
REPEAT: THE
PURR-FECT
COMBO IS HERE

Meet Our
Volunteer of
the Year

PLUS

A Cat Who
Coaches
Canines





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On the Cover:
Spoon and Karima, Joybound's
Shelter to Service Facility Cat
and Specialist

Photo Credit:
Mawiyah Johnson

Publisher:
Susan Lee Vick

Editor:
Mawiyah Johnson

Writers:
Jim Oswald
Mawiyah Johnson

From Our CEO

Dear Friends,

As we step into a new year, I find myself filled with gratitude and excitement for what lies ahead for Joybound People & Pets and for the thousands of pet families we serve throughout Contra Costa County.

Each year reminds me just how deeply connected we are to our community. From those magical first meetings that turn into love at first sight, to the ongoing support that keeps pets healthy, happy, and at home with the people who love them, Joybound is there, every step of the way. Whether in Walnut Creek, Concord, Richmond, and beyond, our work continues to strengthen the human-animal bond and meet families where they are.

Your compassion makes this possible. When SNAP benefits were unexpectedly delayed last fall, your immediate and overwhelming response to our Fill the Bowl fundraising campaign ensured families didn't have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pets. Moments like these remind me that Joybound is not just an organization, it's a community.

In this issue of Joy magazine, you'll read how our partnerships with Contra Costa County Animal Services and Petfinder — including vital Measure X funding — are helping us expand access to care and deliver lifesaving programs across the county.

I hope you're as excited as I am as you read the news of Joybound's new Concord location. Our former thrift store has been expanded, refreshed, and re-imagined. Now occupying a large, glassy corner storefront, it's filled with vintage treasures and fresh purpose. Home to both thrift store operations and the city's first Cat Lounge, visitors are welcome to roam, relax, shop, and adopt.

As Joybound continues to innovate, we remain grounded in our mission to form and support the human-animal bond. This year, we look ahead to breaking ground on a new boarding and daycare center that will house our behavior and animal care teams, while also beginning the strategic planning that will guide Joybound into 2027 and beyond.

Thank you for believing in this work and for being part of everything we do.

With gratitude,

Susan Lee Vick
President & Chief Executive Officer



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

Spring Pet Safety Tips



A little sunshine and a lot of pet safety go a long way toward keeping pets healthy and happy this spring.

Spring is finally here and our pets are ready to enjoy it right along with us. But along with the sunshine come a few things to watch out for, from curious kittens to itchy allergies and pesky parasites. With a little know-how, it's easy to keep pets safe and comfortable. Here are a few simple spring pet safety tips to get you started.

Don't Be a Kitten-Napper

Finding kittens outdoors doesn't always mean they need rescuing. Mama cats often leave their babies temporarily to find food and usually return within a few hours. Kittens have the best chance of thriving with mom by their side, so if the kittens are quiet, resting together, and appear healthy, the kindest thing to do is watch from a distance. Wait at least 6 hours to see if a mother cat returns to her kittens before intervening. And, during overcrowded kitten season, fostering instead of surrendering can be a lifesaving choice.

Prevent Sniffles and Scratching

Spring allergies aren't just a people problem. Dogs and cats can suffer, too. Pollen, dust, and mold may cause itchy skin, watery eyes, and sneezing. Help your pet feel better by wiping paws after walks, washing bedding regularly, and staying consistent with flea prevention. If symptoms stick around, your veterinarian can help create a customized allergy relief plan.

Keep Fleas and Ticks in Check

Fleas and ticks may be small, but they cause big irritation, and can even spread disease. Keep dogs and cats protected with vet-recommended preventatives, regular grooming, and quick checks after outdoor adventures. Washing bedding and tidying yards help, too. A clean yard leaves fleas and ticks with fewer places to hide. A little prevention now means less scratching later.

Happy Tails Adoption Updates!

Visit joybound.org/story to Submit Your Adoption Story



Hello from Nala!



Hello from Haru!



Hello from Bodie!

”

She loves hugs and kisses and gets excited riding in the car. She has brought me so much love and joy.

”

We got Haru from Joybound two years ago and he's been the best possible pet addition to our family!

”

We didn't just adopt Bodie. He adopted us. And honestly? He nailed it.

Shout Out to Our Corporate Partners

Their Support Helps People and Pets Find Help, Hope, and Each Other



From a Scroll to a Second Chance

How Petfinder & Joybound Helped Rio Find His Way Home

Sometimes the right dog doesn't just change your life. He finds you exactly when you need him most. For many families, adoption begins during a moment of transition, when a home feels a little quieter than it used to. That was true for Kate and her family, who were navigating the loss of a longtime companion while deciding if they were ready to welcome another dog.

"I like to think of it as if we were actively searching for a dog to rescue me."

For them, that moment began with a quiet scroll through **Petfinder**. After recently losing their beloved 14-year-old dog, Cheeno, a black Mini Pinscher mix, grief had settled heavily into their home. While browsing, they came across Rio, another black Mini Pinscher mix who felt instantly familiar. "I like to think of it as if we were actively searching for a dog to rescue me," Kate shared.

Determined to meet him, the family made the 70-mile drive from Patterson to Joybound People & Pets in Walnut Creek. The timing, however, wasn't quite right. Rio wasn't feeling well and wasn't up for a meet-and-greet. Still, something about him lingered. The very next weekend, they packed up and made the drive again.

This time, it was instant.

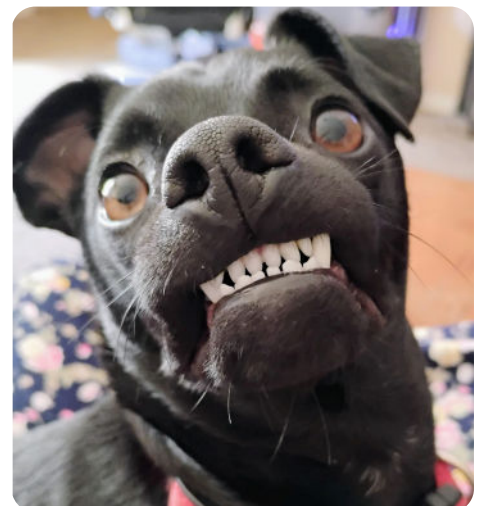
On June 13, 2025, Rio officially joined the family and quickly made himself at home alongside canine siblings Macho, Nacho, and Monkii. Kate describes Rio as a champion snuggler, loyal walking buddy, and playful spark. Kate tells us that "Rio also has a playful side that keeps the household buzzing. He constantly encourages our family's other two dogs to play and brings an extra dose of joy with his funny little noises, almost like he's trying to talk."

Joybound is proud to partner with **Petfinder** to help dogs like Rio find the families who need them most.

"He brought a lot more fun into the house," Kate said. Sometimes, that's exactly what healing looks like. 🐾



**Partnering with
Petfinder to help
pets find homes**



An Unlikely Teacher with Whiskers

How a Former Rescue Cat Helps Prepare Service Dogs at Joybound

At first glance, Spoon might seem like just another friendly office cat. But Spoon's Joybound journey began long before he ever strolled across a keyboard or greeted a coworker with his signature quiet confidence.

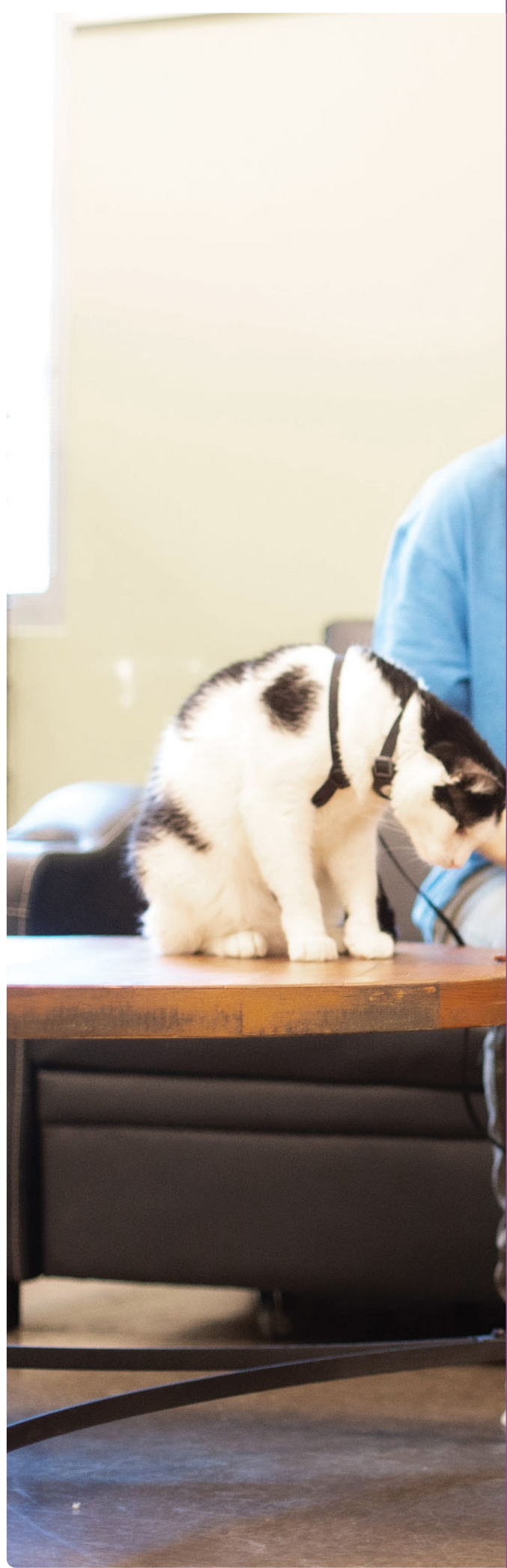
Spoon was rescued from an extreme hoarding situation in Hollister, California, arriving severely underweight, battling a lingering upper respiratory infection, and in need of extensive dental care. At just four pounds, an alarmingly low weight for an adult cat, he required time, medical attention, and patience to recover.

With the help of Joybound's veterinary team and Karima, a **Shelter to Service**™ Specialist who helped rescue Spoon and chose him as her first foster cat, Spoon slowly healed and gained strength. As he recovered, his true personality began to shine. He emerged as a calm, confident cat, remarkably unfazed by loud noises, new environments, or other animals. It didn't take long for Karima to fall in love. Before long, fostering turned into adoption, and Spoon officially found his forever home.

Today, Spoon works alongside Karima as a **Shelter to Service**™ facility cat, supporting the training and assessment of dogs preparing for service work. He helps evaluate how candidates manage distractions and remain focused in stimulating environments. For participants who have cats at home, Spoon also assists with assessing feline compatibility. Some introductions even end with Spoon and a candidate sharing treats.

When people meet Spoon, reactions are refreshingly low-key. As Karima puts it, "He's an average Joe." But at Joybound, Spoon's steady presence, resilience, and quiet charm make him anything but ordinary. 🐾

Interested in becoming a Foster Parent like Karima? Visit joybound.org/foster



Shelter to Service™ Specialists Karima and Anne Marie oversee a calm introduction between Spoon and service dog candidate, Woody.



Measure X in Action

How County Funding Helps Keep Pets Healthy and Families Together

On Nov. 4, Joybound was recognized by Contra Costa County Council on Homelessness for its outstanding partnership and collaboration.



In November 2020, Contra Costa County voters passed Measure X — a half-cent sales tax designed to protect the county’s most vulnerable residents. For many families, that includes the four-legged loved ones who share their hearts and lives.

At Joybound People & Pets, Measure X funding has transformed what compassion looks like in action.

Through this critical investment, Joybound has expanded its Community Solutions pet assistance programs to ensure families can access essential services to keep people and pets together — vaccinations, microchipping, spay and neuter services, veterinary care, behavior & training and more — without facing impossible financial choices. A three-year Measure X contract supports subsidized spay and neuter surgeries in partnership with Animal Fix Clinic, with a goal of altering approximately 3,000 pets. The funding also provides free vaccine and microchip clinics on track to exceed serving at least 3,600 pets and Pet Safety Net assistance helping nearly 500 families avoid the heartbreak of surrender.

As veterinary and pet-related costs continue to rise, nearly two-thirds of pet guardians report struggling to cover unexpected medical bills.

Measure X funding ensures that love doesn’t have to come with an impossible price tag. It’s important to remember that every one of those impact numbers has a story, like 12-year-old chihuahua, Tommy.

“When we returned to the vet, I was encouraged to seek financial assistance,” his guardian shared. “When I applied to Joybound, everything changed.”

Thanks to Measure X–funded services, Joybound provided the veterinary care Tommy needed. Tests revealed not only a mild tracheal issue, but a serious level-four heart murmur. Joybound subsidized the cost of diagnostics, medication, and follow-up veterinary care, giving Tommy’s family something priceless: clarity and hope.

“Because of Joybound, I was finally able to get answers and a plan for Tommy’s care. The compassion, patience, and support we received meant more than I can express. Joybound gave us clarity, relief, and hope during a time when we truly needed it.”

Together with Contra Costa County, Joybound is keeping pets healthy, families intact, and hope alive — one story at a time. 🐾

Joybound Thrift Store Transforms!

Come for the Deals, Stay for the Cats

Joybound's Concord location debuted its newly transformed space in February. Reimagined from its former home next door into a fresh and welcoming environment. Joybound celebrated with an official ribbon cutting hosted by the City of Concord Chamber of Commerce, joined by Chamber ambassadors, community partners, local elected officials, including Walnut Creek Mayor, Kevin Wilk, and dedicated Joybound supporters.

Guests gathered to hear remarks from Joybound leaders, tour the refreshed space, and celebrate the positive impact this expansion will have on pets and people throughout the Concord community and beyond. The event highlighted Joybound's continued commitment to creating accessible, inviting spaces that bring people together while supporting animals in need.

A representative from City of Concord read a proclamation declaring February 11, 2026 as Joybound People & Pets Day!

The newly updated space is home to **Joybound's Thrift Store**, where shoppers can browse a wide variety of treasures, from cozy couches and home décor to clothing, books, and one-of-a-kind finds, all at a fraction of retail prices. Every purchase directly supports Joybound's life-changing programs for pets and the people who love them.

The **Cat Lounge & Adoption Center**, the first of its kind in Concord, offers a warm and welcoming place to relax, connect, and spend time with adoptable cats. Home to a small group of friendly adult felines, the lounge gives guests the opportunity to meet potential furry companions in a calm, comfortable setting designed to help cats and people connect naturally.

This milestone marks not just a new chapter for Joybound, but a shared celebration of compassion, community, and connection. 🐾

Fun Fact: Joybound got its start in Concord in 1991, originally known as the Contra Costa Animal Rescue Foundation.



1950 Market Street, Suite I
Concord, CA
joybound.org/thrift



Seven Years of Service, One Big Heart

Joybound Names Mie Schoolcraft 2025 Volunteer of the Year



Mie, pictured left, at Joybound's Volunteer Appreciation event in October, 2025.

Sometimes the biggest impact comes from the quietest acts of kindness, and that is exactly where **Mie Schoolcraft**, Joybound's 2025 Volunteer of the Year, shines.

"Caring for dogs comforts me," Mie shared. Over the past seven years as a Joybound volunteer, that care has taken many forms, from fostering and hands-on dog care to tackling the never-ending laundry that keeps bedding and toys clean. "Doing laundry is a big job at Joybound," she added. Through it all, her calm presence turns everyday tasks into meaningful impact.

One of Mie's most rewarding experiences was fostering Ember, a long-term shelter guest, in her home for several months. While Ember struggled in the shelter environment, his personality blossomed once he was in a home. He loved curling up on the couch, snuggling close, and

spending time with other dogs. "It was my longest stint as a foster," Mie shared, "and the experience was filled with joy and learning." After waiting more than a year, Ember was finally adopted, a moment Mie describes as both joyful and deeply fulfilling.

"I feel like I have become a more easy going person."

Mie has also seen the impact of Joybound's public training classes. "It's so clear how training helps strengthen the bond between people and their animals," she said. Volunteering has shaped Mie's personality as well. "I feel like I have become a more easy-going person," she reflected.

When Mie was named **Volunteer of the Year** at Joybound's Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, which celebrated more than 150 dedicated volunteers, she was genuinely surprised. "It was so unexpected," she said, still surprised. To Joybound, her dedication and quiet reliability speak volumes. 🐾

Interested in becoming a volunteer like Mie? Visit joybound.org/volunteer

Unleash the LOVE: Festival & Adopt-a-thon

A Celebration of Community, Compassion, and Connection



Joybound's third-annual **Unleash the Love** was a joy-filled success! The tail wagging event was held on Saturday, February 7, and was an unforgettable day of community, celebration and fun on Joybound's Walnut Creek campus.

This year drew our biggest crowd yet, with over 1,700 attendees bringing the party spirit to this festival overflowing with heart, happiness, and the bond between people and pets.

The day kicked off with our inaugural **Tails on the Trail Fun Run & Walk**, where over 100 participants and their four-legged companions took to the 1-mile walk or 5K run routes.

Spirits were high as families, friends, and pets dashed, or strolled through the morning together. The Festival & Adopt-a-thon followed, transforming the campus into a lively hub of music, food, and community connection.

Guests enjoyed delicious local food trucks, a buzzing beer garden, colorful face painting, and a fun array of games and activities for all ages.

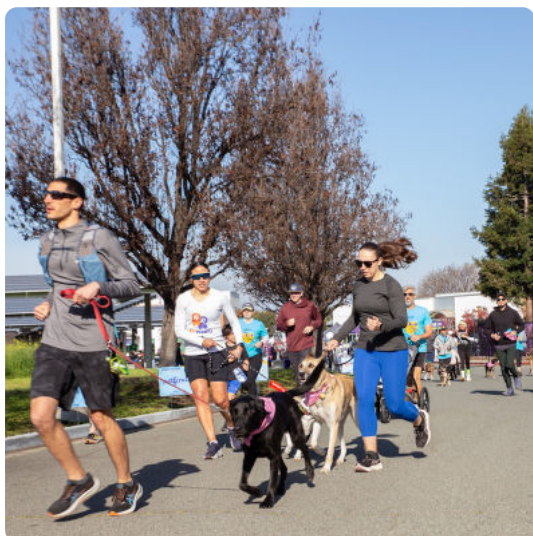
Nineteen shelters and rescue groups from across Northern California joined us, giving countless pets the chance to find loving homes.

By the end of the afternoon, 40 animals had been adopted into new families.

Unleash the LOVE 2026 truly lived up to its name, celebrating pets, people, and the joy they share. Love a good festival? Mark your calendar now for Joybound Around Town on Broadway on Sunday, September 13!

Relive all the fun (or check out what you missed) at

joybound.org/UTL2026





2890 Mitchell Drive
Walnut Creek, CA 94598

Join us for the
UNLEASH HAPPINESS *Gala*

SATURDAY, MAY 30 ✦ 5:30 PM
JOYBOUND, WALNUT CREEK

SPECIAL GUEST:

**Jackson Galaxy, Animal Planet's Famed
Cat Behavior Expert @thecatdaddy**

Step into a night of sparkle, disco, and purpose!

JOYBOUND.ORG/GALA

