



SCOTTSDALE INDEPENDENT

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(SUBMITTED GRAPHIC)

An artist rendering illustrates the new Arizona Humane Society facility to be built on Van Buren Street in east Phoenix, near the Scottsdale border. The cost of the facility is \$46 million, made up of donations and legacy funds provided by AHS.

SUBSCRIBER EXCLUSIVE

Arizona Humane Society to break ground on new \$46M Papago Park campus

State-of-the-art facility aims to save, treat Arizona pets

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By Melissa Rosequist (mailto:mrosequist@newszap.com)
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The furry friends that hold a special place in our hearts leave lasting impacts that are oftentimes unforgettable.

From the childhood dog you grew up with, to the cat you adopted while living alone who became your roommate — pets and their quirky behaviors can bring countless benefits to humans.

Not all four-legged friends are so lucky. In Phoenix, thousands of domesticated animals are homeless and living in harsh conditions. Whether born unhoused or left behind by previous owners, shelters

around the city reported 90,000 unwanted suffering animals turned over in 2012.



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Only half of those animals made it out alive, Arizona Humane Society officials say, due to needless euthanasia. AHS practices an “ethical no-kill philosophy,” stating they won’t euthanize pets for space or length of time.

Enter Dr. Steven Hansen.

Hansen, a Scottsdale resident, has led an overhaul at Arizona Humane Society since he took the reins in 2013. He was formally with the ASPCA of New York.

“Over the last eight years, the Arizona Humane Society has led the single largest transformation for homeless animals by any community in the U.S.,” says Hansen.

The AHS president says during that time, the transformation has led to:

- A 57% reduction in intake/pet surrenders;
- An 84% reduction in euthanasia;
- 115,000 pet lives being saved.

Melinda Gulick, longtime Scottsdale resident and community advocate, was chair of Arizona Humane Society’s board of directors when Dr. Hansen was hired in 2013.

“We knew that he would transform animal welfare in Arizona and ultimately everywhere by his vision and experience,” Gulick said.

Arizona Humane Society doesn’t just rescue homeless pets, however. The 60-year-old organization offers veterinary services, training and pet behavior programs, rehoming and adoption services, in addition to a number of lifesaving programs.

Officials say that comprehensive medical, behavioral rehabilitation, surrender intervention and spay/neuter initiatives have helped AHS become a safety net for the Valley’s most vulnerable pets.

Further, the organization is now reaching more animals in-need across the Southwest. Hansen says in early October, AHS rescued a group of dogs from the San Carlos Apache reservation, a common service provided.



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Now that the AHS transformation is well underway, the humane society is embarking on its next era: A state-of-the-art facility to offer best-in-class services to Arizona’s animals.



(/uploads/original/20211008-130328-Jamie and Bella[7684].jpg)



(/uploads/original/20211008-130131-Dr. Hansen and kitten medical[7693].jpg)



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From left is Paradise Valley resident Jamie Middleton, who is a member and contributor of the Capital Campaign Committee; Dr. Steven Hansen, president and CEO of Arizona Humane Society; and Scottsdale resident Melinda Gulick, who has long been involved with AHS. (Photos courtesy of Arizona Humane Society)

A campaign to transform

Arizona Humane Society isn't the animal shelter it used to be, officials are touting.

With successful animal-lifesaving programs in its repertoire, Arizona Humane Society is putting its money where its paw is.

Come November, Arizona Humane Society will break ground on its new campus near Papago Park. The location is in the 5500 block of Van Buren Street, near the Arizona State University municipal baseball stadium, the Phoenix Zoo and the Botanical Gardens.

"We work very collaboratively with the zoo and Botanical Gardens, so we see this as an animal and environmental corridor that we're becoming a part of in this neighborhood," Hansen said.

Designed by Animals Arts, a New York-based veterinary architecture firm, and built by Ryan Construction, the new AHS facility will transform the look and feel of the humane society.

Plans show a two-story, 72,000-square-foot campus on 5 acres with a price tag of \$46 million. Mike and Cindy Watts donated most of the land.

"It is zoned appropriately for the animal facilities we need, and it's just like the stars aligned — it's a fabulous location," Hansen said.

Officials say at this campus, AHS' medical complex and veterinary teaching hospital will be expanded.

Currently, AHS operates its animal trauma hospital out of its original 1957 Sunnyslope campus on 13th Avenue in Phoenix.

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When the new campus is complete, the humane society will be able to treat 25% more homeless animals who require medical care, which officials say will reduce the number of animals euthanized in shelters around Arizona.

Of the \$46 million, AHS invested \$18 million and Ryan Cos. donated \$1 million — leaving \$28 million to be funded elsewhere.

To achieve the massive undertaking, AHS has developed a capital campaign committee comprised of Valley residents passionate about the organization.

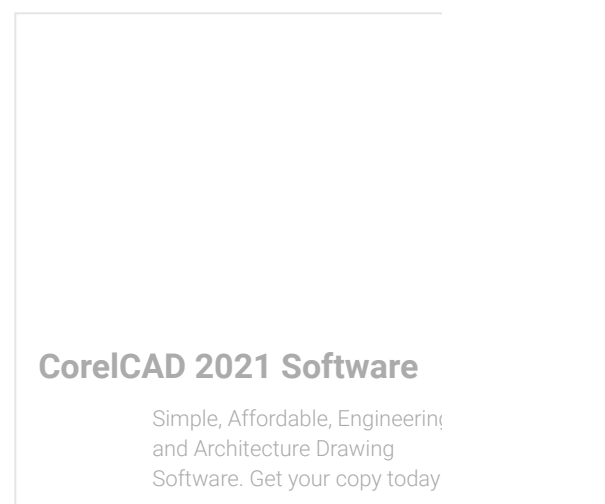
Paradise Valley resident Jamie Middleton, one of the capital campaign members, personally donated \$2 million to the effort.

Gulick, also a volunteer of the capital campaign committee, has supported the cause, and says their efforts have been underway for some time.

“We have been fundraising quietly for a few years and are pleased that we will break ground on the new facility on in November. It’s a perfect location for the Valley and for the facility with great disability and freeway access for individuals who visit our campus,” Gulick said.

Gulick says her family has supported the Humane Society capital campaign from the very beginning.

“We always had rescue dogs and I still have two — Nigel and Liberty — who provided lots of love and comfort to John when he was sick and to the boys and I since he has passed,” Gulick said. “We support the mission and vision because pets are an integral part of our family and so many others. Our priority is to keep pets in loving homes and provide care for homeless pets that is like no other shelter anywhere.”



The Papago Park campus plans include intensive care units and a teaching hospital for emerging veterinary students. Officials say, there is a shortage in the veterinary profession right now.

With the new campus, AHS believes it will be able to expand its lifesaving services

to meet the area’s rapidly growing population.



Local funds for local animals

After entering retirement, Jamie Middleton was seeking a cause worthy of her time and energy.

After checking out other Valley nonprofit organizations, Middleton was introduced to the humane society by joining a friend at AHS's annual luncheon, Compassion with Fashion.

"I was blown away," Middleton said. "It was so moving what they were doing to help animals. I've always been an animal lover, but they were just over the top. They were organized, they were loving, they were informative."

Middleton says she walked away from the luncheon completely moved, and started asking how she can be involved.

Over the years, Middleton has continued to volunteer for AHS and support the organization's mission. As talks for the new campus began ramping up, Middleton says she asked to see the property.

"I contacted Dr. Hansen and I said you know what, take me to where this is, what is this, where is this?" Middleton explained. "Just seeing how many more animals we would save with the new building, is just astronomical. We save thousands now, but the amount we will be able to save with a new trauma unit, a new intensive care unit and the new baby-bottle-feeding units."

Middleton donated \$2 million to the capital campaign — a decision she said was easy to make.



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“Our building that we’re currently in — it was built in 1957 — and it is so archaic, but it is amazing when I did my tour at the trauma campus, in an area that is approximately the size of my kitchen,” Middleton said.

“They take care of animals that are run over by cars, that

are caught in air-conditioning vents, all of these things, and they take care of them in a space that is archaic in electricity, in plumbing, in lighting, everything. And they are doing an amazing job. What will they be able to do with state of the art equipment and facilities?”

Achieving a new vision

Since Hansen joined AHS in 2013, the organization has implemented several programs that extend the life of pets and animals.

The AHS president spoke about and views animal fostering and adoptions similarly to human families. Hansen has two dogs, and is fostering a third, Kevin, who is recovering from some gashes. All three were present in his home office during the Independent interview.

Kevin was dropped off at a shelter overnight in the West Valley, Hansen says, with injuries to his back.

After taking the helm at AHS, discussions for a new campus started early, and they first met with their architect in 2014.

“These projects do take a long time, but currently our status is that our construction documents are at the city of Phoenix, pending approval. We will break ground the first week of November,” Hansen said.

Of the numerous aspects AHS will be able to offer Valley residents and pet owners alike, Hansen says he’s most excited for the ability to better manage diseases.



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Canine parvovirus — commonly referred to as parvo — is a highly contagious viral disease of dogs. Hansen says when a dog with parvo comes to a veterinary facility, the disease can spread to other animals before the medical providers can determine the virus.

“We have great difficulty containing those diseases. This building will allow us to contain those animals when they come in, treat them, and save their lives, essentially,” Hansen said. “We do that now, but it’s a struggle for us.”

In the new “Parvo Puppy ICU” the humane society says it will be able to care for 34 dogs at once, which equates up to 1,750 a year — currently, they serve 15 dogs as once, or 300 per year, for parvo.

For more information, go to www.azhumane.org/campaigntotransform.