

Wellspring

The Power *of* Pets

Doctors Say Perfect Pairing
Can Help Your Health





Warm & Fuzzy, Green & Growing

From the cover of this edition of *Wellspring* you can see our health magazine staff decided to focus on a different kind of practitioner who helps with healing—some with four legs and some with feathers.

Particularly interesting is our own “pet rescue” hero, our trauma neurosurgeon, Dr. Jeffrey Dembner, who on his way home from work climbed a retaining wall near our Fairfield hospital to rescue a kitten in distress.

And, of course, we feature some of the cutest hospital volunteers anywhere—PAWS for Healing. This nonprofit group uses canine companionship at the bedside to comfort the lonely and help the healing process.

So don’t be surprised if after your next doctor’s visit you get a prescription that includes seeking man’s best friend to help fix what ails you.

While I’m not really a pet person, I did marry a woman with a love of furry felines and canines. So I have some exposure, but I’m no expert. I will leave that to the physicians, nurses and others who have great stories to tell about how your pet can help you heal.

There’s some big news in this edition, as well.

None is bigger than the \$200 million investment we are making in our two hospitals and on our campus in Green Valley. We have a two-page spread inside on our plans to bring more advanced medicine and state-of-the-art facilities to Fairfield, Vacaville and Green Valley.

The downtown Fairfield campus project comprises major modernization and replacement of the older parts of the hospital, some of which are 30-plus-years-old. While no new services or capacity will be realized, key departments will have new, high-tech facilities. A new lobby entrance and new café for visitors and staff will be a centerpiece.

In Vacaville we will be building a state-of-the-art NorthBay Cancer Center and adding something unique to Solano County—a medical fitness center. Check out the story to learn more about that.

And finally, we are pleased to distribute NorthBay Healthcare’s 2013 Annual Report. As our part of our “green” initiative, it is all online at NorthBay.org for your perusal. It’s a look back at a pretty remarkable year for Solano’s only locally-managed, independent healthcare system. By going “green” this year and eliminating the pulp-and-ink printed version we are saving a few trees.

Good reading.

Gary J. Passama

Gary Passama
President and Chief Executive Officer



2 On the Cover: Go Walk Your Dog

Dr. Bruce Hewett enjoys taking his dogs for a romp through Lagoon Valley Park in Vacaville. Lily (the small, golden mixed breed) and Moose (the big brown dog of indistinguishable breed) get along famously, as long as everyone acknowledges that Lily is in charge, says Dr. Hewett.



7 Wellness through Wildlife

Michelle Katzaroff, D.O., may be a primary care doctor during the day, but she’s also known as “St. Michelle of Martinez,” because of her propensity for nurturing pets and wildlife on her Martinez property. She and her husband own nearly a dozen cats and a dog, and care for everything from deer and raccoons to foxes and gophers.

Pets & People, A Positive Pairing

Face it, our furry and sometimes feathered friends just make us feel better. People and pets, pets and people—it has a nice ring to it.

What’s more, there’s medical proof that pets can lower our stress, improve our appetites, and remind us of our need to exercise and socialize.

Pets are better than pills, at least that’s what some patients—and a number of our doctors—say.

In this issue, you’ll hear stories of how rescue pets helped one physician recover his sanity, and how another hopes her pet will someday be a therapy dog. There’s the patient who is training guide dogs for the blind, and another who volunteers his time and know-how with the PAWS for Healing program. A pediatrician who believes interactions with pets have helped some of her autistic patients communicate; and a pediatrician who jokes, “Take two dogs on a walk and cancel your doctor visit!” Fairfield veterinarian Kelly Palm agrees. She hopes that someday physicians prescribe pets as a cure for what ails people.

Sometimes an interaction with an animal goes the wrong way, as the Emergency Department knows all too well. Read about how our skilled physicians and medical staff assisted a young girl attacked by a stray dog. Animals can also bring infectious diseases, and our specialist will share some of the most common problems.

Yes, animals are amazing. Want to share your pet story? **Find us on Facebook, search for NorthBay Healthcare.** 

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9 Birds of a Feather

Life is never dull with Jazzy and George, a couple of umbrella cockatoos that are part of the family for Donna Dabeck, R.N., manager of nursing recruitment and retention for NorthBay Healthcare, and her husband Rick.



12 Horseplay a Pleasure

Stephen Kreisman and Rachel Lefkoff enjoy their ride at Horseplay Therapeutic Riding Center.

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Forget the Aspirin...

What do you get when you take a couple of empty nesters and add four cats and two dogs? One big, happy family. At least that's how pediatrician Bruce Hewett describes his Vacaville household after Moose, Lily, Barney, Floyd, Gomer and Ernie T. joined him and his wife, Kristin, a Padan Elementary School kindergarten teacher.

His children were actually teenagers when Moose joined the family in 2006. Moose was about 2 when he was found wandering the streets of Vallejo and was brought to the Solano County Animal Shelter.

The big, brown dog of indistinguishable breed was quickly identified by the staff as a very adoptable fellow because of his friendliness and ability to follow commands. But after three weeks, there were no takers.

The reason was because whenever a person stopped at his cage, he would roll around on his back and moan like a wounded cow.

"Fortunately, I interpreted those crazy behaviors as a mixture of happiness and submission to my presence," chuckles Dr. Hewett. "Sure enough, when we put him on a leash he was the perfect dog who followed my commands and walked on the leash

without tugging. Within an hour I was the owner of a happy, healthy dog. It turned out to be the best \$85 I ever spent."

Lily is also a rescue, a mixed small breed dog who was adopted while on display at a local pet supply store in 2011.

"The pecking order is complicated, but as long as everyone recognizes that Lily is in charge then there is peace and harmony in the house," jokes Dr. Hewett.

Most of his pediatric patients and their families know Dr. Hewett is an advocate of a family pet because of the many health benefits to dog ownership. "But before anyone adopts a dog, they should understand that most dog breeds enjoy work and therefore they need physical exercise to be happy and content," says Dr. Hewett. Many dogs with behavior problems can be remedied with exercise alone, he says, noting that there's also a huge benefit for the family that walks the dog, citing exercise and improved sleep.

"It's been proven that children who get physical exercise during the day and exposure to daylight boost their production of melatonin and have better quality sleep. Good quality sleep is the foundation for good

performance in school." (Dr. Hewett is an expert on sleep issues in children, and has several videos with advice for parents on www.NorthBay.org/mysleepdoc.)

"If families would turn off their televisions and smart phones, and replace that activity with 60 to 90 minutes of walking their dog each day, I would be writing fewer referrals to dietitians for obesity," says Dr. Hewett. "It would improve many aspects of family dynamics and communication and children would have less need for behavior counseling."

But perhaps the most important benefit is the emotional growth that develops when a child cares for and bonds with a pet.

"A parent modeling caring behavior is the most powerful influence they can have on their children's behavior," he says. "So when a family shares the experience of taking good care of their pet, the children learn compassion and caring behaviors that result in happier relationships."

While a pet isn't for every family, it is a wholesome, positive choice for many, he says. "I have offered my services to hundreds of kids to help them pick out a dog at the animal shelter but so far no one has taken me up on that offer," he says with a smile. "Of course, it is a long-term commitment and therefore should be given serious consideration."

Still, if a family is seriously considering it, Dr. Hewett recommends they consider adopting from the Solano County Animal Shelter.

"The cost is reasonable and the staff has screened the dogs for health and safe behaviors," he says. "They are also excellent at helping you understand all the components of responsible dog ownership." ❧

Take Two Dogs on a Walk!

"If families would turn off their televisions and smart phones, and replace that activity with 60 to 90 minutes of walking their dog each day, I would be writing fewer referrals to dietitians for obesity."

~Dr. Bruce Hewett

Tips for a Happy Walk

- 🐾 The first 20 minutes of the walk should be relaxed. Let your dog sniff and smell at their own leisurely pace as you walk.
- 🐾 The last 40 minutes is the time for you to take control by tightening up on the leash and keeping the dog's head up so they can't sniff the ground. During this phase of the walk, go as fast as you can. It takes practice, but if you are good at taking the lead and keeping the dog's head up, you will both get better exercise.
- 🐾 The most common misconception is that having a large backyard allows the dog to get plenty of exercise.
- 🐾 Most dogs need a good 60 to 90 minutes of leash walking each day so they can smell and explore the world around them and get physically tired.
- 🐾 If you are taking your dog for long walks in rural areas, you need to be cautious about fleas and ticks, which can carry disease.

Dogs Need Fitness Too! 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾

If you start a fitness campaign that includes walking or running with your dog, make sure your dog is up to the task. A couch potato dog, or an overweight dog, needs to work up to long walks and runs, just like its owner.

"Most dogs benefit from regular exercise, and some dogs, such as border collies and labs, can walk all day," says Kelly Palm, DVM. "Other dogs, such as English bulldogs, are not built to exercise. That's why it's so important when adopting a pet to choose a breed that is compatible with your lifestyle."

If you start walking a dog and it becomes lame or refuses to finish the walk, you are probably doing too much. You may want your vet to look at the dog in case it has a hidden cardiac or pulmonary disease or orthopedic problems.



Checkups, Shots and Dips Part of Solid Strategy

Healthy Pets = Happy Owners

The bonds between people and their pets far outweigh the health risks, says Fairfield veterinarian Kelly Palm of Cal West Pet Hospital. And when you maintain healthy pets, there is very little risk that they will pass on disease to their owners.

Keeping your animal friend healthy starts with an annual checkup, Dr. Palm says. Your dog or cat will benefit from a regimen of regular flea control, deworming, and a physical exam that can detect health problems early when they are easier to treat.

Keeping current on vaccinations is important for both cats and dogs, especially the rabies vaccine, because it is fatal if not treated (*see page 15*).

When you maintain healthy pets, there is very little risk that they will transmit disease to their owners.

Dogs and cats share the same fleas and the fleas can travel from animal to animal. That's why it's important that all of your pets receive a monthly flea preventive. Flea bites do much more than cause the misery of itching. An extensive flea infestation can make

your pet anemic, especially puppies and kittens. Fleas can pass tapeworms on to your pets, which can then be transferred to people through contact with feces. Fleas can also cause itching red bites on your skin.

Keeping your pets dewormed will control not only tapeworms, but other worms that can pass from pet to human through contact with feces. "It's especially important to deworm your kittens and puppies," Dr. Palm says. "Puppies and kittens have the potential to be born with intestinal parasites and can also pick them up in their environment." Thanks to modern medicine, your pets can easily be saved from the misery of fleas and worms. There are several safe products available from your veterinarian or over-the-counter that protect your pets from both.

Regular grooming is another way to maintain a healthy cat or dog. Some animals have thick coats that can mat or tangle easily. Matted hair can hide a variety of skin infections as well as mites and ticks. Your veterinarian can help rid your pet of matted fur, especially if the animal becomes hard to handle when you groom it. Keeping your pet's nails trimmed can also help you avoid serious scratches.



Kelly Palm, D.V.M.

Keep your animals and their living spaces clean. This includes regular cleaning of the cat's litter box, washing pet beds and blankets, and refreshing dog houses. Clean up after your pet outdoors too, because feces can spread many diseases.

Spaying or neutering your pets can prolong their lives and keep them from roaming. In addition to preventing unwanted litters, castrating your pet helps it avoid disease as it ages. "A spayed or neutered pet is much easier to live with," Dr. Palm adds. "They are calmer and quieter because their focus isn't on finding a mate."

When it comes to pets and disease, much of the responsibility falls on the owners who should provide their animals with good health in addition to lots of love. ❧

Kelly Palm, D.V.M., is a graduate of the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. She has practiced in Fairfield for 20 years and is the shelter vet for the SPCA of Solano County. You can reach her office by calling (707) 425-0292.

SPCA Offers Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic

To help control animal overpopulation, the SPCA of Solano County offers a low-cost spay and neuter clinic at their Vacaville facility. Call (707) 448-8750 for information or visit www.solanospcaclinic.wordpress.com.

Myths Animals & Health



1 A cat will suck the breath out of an infant.

FACT | There has never been a case where a cat has suffocated an infant in this manner. Cats seek warmth and comfort, and curling up next to a baby meets both of those needs. However, a large cat could press up against a small infant's face and hamper its breathing. For this reason, it's best to keep cats out of the nursery.



2 A dog's mouth is cleaner than a human's.

FACT | People once believed that a dog's saliva was antiseptic and had healing properties. Today we know that dog saliva contains its own population of bacteria and other infectious organisms. People have come down with salmonella poisoning after receiving a dog lick to the face. There's a reason for the term "dog breath." People with weakened immune systems and young children probably should not have direct contact with dog or cat saliva.



3 You can buy a hypoallergenic pet.

FACT | Studies have shown that homes with allegedly hypoallergenic pets contain just as much of the prime dog allergen as those with other breeds. There is no environmental evidence that any particular dog breed produces more or less allergen in the home than another one.



4 Animal allergies are caused by exposure to pet hair.

FACT | Pet hair itself does not cause allergies. It's the saliva, skin, or other proteins carried by hair that cause the problem. Allergens (particularly saliva proteins) can latch on to the hair and dander and then spread throughout your house as the animal sheds.



5 Pregnant women cannot live with cats.

FACT | While toxoplasmosis is a risk for fetuses, a woman is more likely to catch it from handling raw meat or digging in the garden than from her cats. Cat owners can protect themselves from cat-related exposure by emptying the litter box daily or having someone else clean it. ❧

“They’re good for me, and I’m good for them. It’s a perfect match.”

—Dr. Michael Ginsberg with little Toby and Lusi

Who Rescued Whom...?

Did Dr. Michael Ginsberg save the lives of two rescue dogs, or did two rescue dogs save the life of Dr. Ginsberg? Hard to say, but before Toby and Lusi came into his life, he remembers feeling extremely grumpy and downright despondent after a 2.5 hour commute home to the Bay Area one Friday night.

These days, he’s greeted at the door with a whole lot of tail-wagging and licking. “Now, I’m giggling and laughing when Lusi and Toby greet me at the door,” he says. “Dogs will make you smile every day.”

But dogs are not for everyone, warns the affable pediatrician, who practices at the Hilborn Road Center for Primary Care in Fairfield. “I’d never tell someone to get a dog if they didn’t really want a dog. It’s a big responsibility and a commitment. But it can also be a very rewarding proposition for a family, especially to teach lessons of responsibility and routine to their children.”

Lusi was his first rescue. A backyard breeder sold her to a family

in Yuba City, but a medical crisis forced them to give her up. She was only in the shelter for three days when Dr. Ginsberg claimed her.

He has tremendous respect for the folks who run dog rescues, saying he’ll never purchase a purebred. “These people at the rescues are doing it as a labor of love. They’re angels,” he says.

When Lusi was first adopted at the age of 4 months, she weighed only 22 pounds. Two weeks later, she had gained a healthy 10 pounds and now weighs in at 63. She loves people, especially children, and always wants to play fetch, he says.

Toby came along in 2011. He was in a shelter for three to four months after he was found wandering around a playground in Modesto. “We don’t know too much about him,” says Dr. Ginsberg. “He was skittish and fearful. And although he’s warmed up a lot, he’s still not as friendly as Lusi. But he is her protector, even though he’s only one-third of her size.”

When Lusi had to go to the vet for treatment, Toby sat at the door and

waited patiently. And when she came home, he guarded over her while her leg was in bandages. “We know who he loves best,” jokes Dr. Ginsberg.

Still, Toby has made a lot of progress from that frightened little fellow that first came home with him three years ago. “I started saying his name, but he wouldn’t come. He wouldn’t even come out for treats. What kind of a dog doesn’t come out for treats?” he asks. “A very damaged dog,” he answers quietly.

But Toby is well on the road to recovery, if you trust his Facebook page where he has a positively cheerful collection of happy puppy pictures. Yes, he has a Facebook page, as does Lusi, who shares such thoughts as “Why sit on dry grass when you can lie down in a mud puddle?” and “Someone throw the ball, please!”

They make sure their master gets plenty of exercise and sunshine, which is a pretty healthy prescription for just about anyone, agrees Dr. Ginsberg. “I think they’re good for me, and I’m good for them. It’s a perfect match.”

St. Michelle of Martinez

Helping people is her vocation. Helping animals sustains her.

Michelle Katzaroff, D.O., an internist at the Center for Primary Care in Green Valley, and her husband share their Martinez home with 10 cats and a German Shepherd, as well as the wildlife that moves across their property with the changing of the seasons. Deer, raccoons, foxes, gophers, wild turkeys and flocks of birds find safety and sustenance at the Katzaroff home.

“Helping animals is so therapeutic,” Dr. Katzaroff says. “It takes a lot of time to care for everyone, but in their individual ways they are taking care of me.”

Study after study shows that caring for animals can improve a person’s emotional and physical well-being. “I think we have a responsibility to help and protect the animals around us,” she says.

She happily keeps the bird feeders full of seed and makes sure running water is always available. And she keeps a watchful eye on them all. “One year we had a group of wild turkeys living in our yard,” she says. “One hen was lame, and the other hens began picking on her. I don’t know how many fights I broke up, but they were determined to drive her out. So I set her aside and fed her, and finally she joined another flock that accepted her, gimpy leg and all.”

Every July the raccoons stop by, enjoy a few cans of cat food and have their babies. “They know me and they

follow me around the yard,” she says. “They come right up to the front door and let me know they’ve arrived.”

There’s also “Guy” the gopher, who gets his meals sneaking into the bird feeders and all the injured critters she carefully delivers to a wildlife rescue.

The cats came a few at a time. The couple had not planned to share their home with 10 cats. They set out to adopt two cats from the local shelter. Then a stray came to their door during freezing weather. Another stray arrived in their yard and promptly had kittens. They had the mom spayed and kept one kitten. And so it went. For a while, they seemed to be stray cat magnets and they dutifully took each one to be altered.

“My husband calls me ‘Saint Michelle of Martinez’ after St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals,” Dr. Katzaroff adds. “But I couldn’t live any other way.”

Dr. Michelle Katzaroff and her cat, Fantine.

The Power *of* Pets

Sam the Poodle Helps Elias and His Family Deal with Autism



Elias Ochoa and his therapy dog, Sam.

Dr. Judy Yang believes in the power of pets, especially when it comes to reaching out to an autistic child. While animal-assisted therapy is still a novel approach, there is increasing evidence that it can be helpful in specific conditions such as autism. To illustrate, Dr. Yang points to Sam the Poodle and his young master, Elias, as proof positive.

Elias Ochoa was 6 when his mother, Sarah, first took him to see Dr. Yang. He'd been diagnosed at an early age with autism, and his mother had already done a lot of research. "I was looking for a different treatment plan," says Sarah Ochoa, "and Dr. Yang was very supportive from the start."

She wanted a service dog to bond with her oldest son, because she'd read about how autistic children who interact with animals have shown positive social behaviors when the animal is present. But the price was cost-prohibitive. "They wanted between \$7,000 to \$15,000 for a fully trained service dog," says Sarah. "So I decided we'd try training a dog ourselves."

It was a courageous decision, given that she and her husband, Joshua, had three other children, all younger than Elias, including Gianna who was only six-months old at the time. "We were raising two babies at once," she chuckled.

Sam, a black standard poodle, was the calmest, quietest dog from his litter and he and Elias hit it off from the start.

Before Sam arrived, Elias had a habit of rocking. "If he got really upset, he'd hit his head against a wall. All sorts of things could trigger it, such as loud noise. He'd scream and run all over the place," remembers his mother. "But once we got Sam, Elias wasn't so scared. Sam was like his security blanket. If Elias started to get nervous, Sam would come and sit on his lap or lay on him. The weight and warmth would calm him down."

Before Sam, Elias rarely spoke. "He could say a few words, but he would rarely say anything to me," remembers Sarah. "Then one day, I was walking down the hall and I heard his voice. I peeked into the room and he was talking to Sam! He was making an effort to communicate."

The family, which recently moved from Vacaville to Texas, encourages other families with autistic children to consider a therapy dog. "Sam has made a big difference to us. But if they can't afford it, and they want to try training the dog themselves, I'd support it 100 percent, but with a warning," says Sarah. "It's not easy. It's a huge investment of time and energy. You have to be consistent with your training and not give up."

"Service and therapy animals can help children with significant mental health or developmental issues. These animals need to be specifically trained to manage these behaviors, especially in those with unpredictable and/or explosive tendencies, in order to keep both family members and the animal safe," says Dr. Yang. "A regular house pet cannot take on this role without appropriate and adequate training."



Dr. Judy Yang with Tatiana Butler, 4, and Mr. Bingley.



Jazzy & George

Feathered Friends are Part of the Family

Donna and Rick Dabek and their feathered friends Jazzy (left) and George are familiar sights in their Fairfield neighborhood.

Can your pet tell you in plain English when it's time to go to bed or when it wants to go on an adventure? Donna Dabek's pet can...

Jazzy is a 10-year-old umbrella cockatoo with a vocabulary of 250-plus words. And she's not shy about using it. When it's time for bed, she'll announce, "Night." And if you don't respond, she'll say, "Night. Up." And if there's still no response: "Night. Up. NOW!"

Donna, the nursing recruitment and retention manager for NorthBay Healthcare and her husband, Rick, rescued Jazzy four years ago from a family that just couldn't keep her.

Rick, a retired wine industry quality specialist, worked as an animal trainer at a theme park when he was in college and has a real affinity for birds. "He knew within an hour she was trainable," says Donna. She wasn't so sure how comfortable she'd be with a cockatoo, but now Donna can't imagine life without her.

There were a number of time-outs in the beginning to get Jazzy to stop biting. But now she's good with strangers, especially children, and loves to go on "adventures" to meet people. "Cockatoos are very social creatures," explains Donna. "When I get out her

harness and a special outfit, she gets very excited."

Jazzy has been known to dress in NorthBay colors and special T-shirts and attend public events, posing with pride for the cameras.

Since her life expectancy is 70, Donna and Rick have had to make plans for her future. "She's going to outlive us, and we don't want her to be alone." So last year they started looking for another bird. Along came George, another umbrella cockatoo.

"We had to take Jazzy to Modesto to meet George, and then we asked her if she wanted us to take George home. She said, 'Yes!'"

"When we put them to bed at night, each one has their own cage, but they're side-by-side, and we wrap the cages together," says Donna. "As you walk away from the room, you can hear Jazzy say, 'Night, George.'"

But before anyone can go to bed, there's the nightly ritual of singing, "The Hokey Pokey," and dancing around the house. "It helps the birds get rid of some energy and start to settle down," explains Donna.

It may look odd to an outsider, but then so do their walks through their Fairfield neighborhood. Rick has a

bird on his shoulder, Donna has a bird on her shoulder, and their three cats, Cognac, Baucus and Franc, trail them. Yes, they really do walk their cats. "Rick trained them to come along, too," says Donna, "and they seem to look forward to it." The parade doesn't stop there. Usually several neighborhood children join in the festivities.

Jazzy can do several tricks, and loves to entertain, says Donna. One trick is "The Eagle," where she spreads her wings and screeches. George does his version, which Donna calls "The Screaming Eagle."

They're very smart creatures, she says, with the intelligence of a toddler. "That's the blessing and the curse. When you take on a bird like this, you have a toddler for the rest of your life," she says with a smile. But Donna doesn't mind.

"Our house is full of laughter," she says. "I don't ever have to turn on the TV to be entertained."

Want to see Donna arguing with Jazzy? Her Youtube video has gone viral. Visit www.youtube and search for "Woman Argues with Cockatoo Over Stuff." And now, Jazzy has her own Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Jazzythecockatoo/>



AH-CHOO!

Do Your Pets
Leave You Sneezing
and Wheezy?

Are you among the one in five people who are allergic to pets? You know you're in this special club, says Kristin Woodbury, D.O., a Fairfield Ear, Nose, Throat and allergy doctor, "if you have itchy eyes, a runny nose and start sneezing after visiting a home with an indoor cat or play with a dog."

What triggers the allergic reaction? It's not pet hair, like most people believe. "Pet hair is basically harmless all by itself," Dr. Woodbury notes. It's when we inhale allergens on the hair and they negatively interact with our immune system. "For some, their immune system sees these non-harmful substances as 'foreign invaders' and mounts a response as if they were facing a virus or bacteria." Our immune systems attack the "threat" with a chemical called histamine.

That's when we start sneezing, get a runny nose, rashes and itchy skin, and other symptoms.

These troublesome allergens are actually proteins found in airborne dander, saliva, urine and secretions from sebaceous glands. They can settle on upholstery, rugs, bedding, as well as in your hair or on your clothing.

It's not unusual for only one person in a family to be allergic to an animal, Dr. Woodbury notes. "Some people just don't develop that over-reactive immune system response, even though they're similarly exposed to the pet's allergens. However, children with allergic or asthmatic parents are more likely to be allergic, and sometimes asthmatic."

Cat allergies are more common than dog allergies, she adds, and it may be due to higher levels of exposure to cat allergens. "Cats more often live in homes, spend time on furniture and little time outside, compared to dogs."

Some people may experience sudden and dramatic symptoms when exposed to animals, which makes diagnosis easy. Others experience persistently low-grade symptoms, which they could confuse with a virus or cold. "The first step in diagnosing an allergy is to discuss the patient's history. More definitive evaluations like skin or blood testing can be helpful in cases where the allergic triggers aren't clear."

While most pet allergies can be bothersome, the symptoms can be managed by taking steps to limit exposure to the allergens. "Some people may choose to adapt, while others may not have a choice. If someone develops allergy-induced asthma, which can be life-threatening in severe cases, I would then strongly recommend a pet-free home."



While most pet allergies can be bothersome, the symptoms can be managed by taking steps to limit exposure to the allergens.

Manage Your Pet Allergies

Have allergies and know your pet is the cause? There are steps you can take to keep your pet and manage the symptoms, but they will involve changing your environment and some of your habits.

- * Keep pets out of sleeping areas and close bedroom doors.
- * Washing pets twice a week can reduce allergens by 85 percent. Use a damp microfiber cloth to rub down pets regularly.
- * Vacuum with a good high-efficiency particulate absorption (HEPA) filter, which will remove tiny airborne pollutants.
- * Dust frequently.
- * Wash your hands after handling a pet, and avoid rubbing your eyes and nose when around animals.
- * Use antihistamines to relieve mild allergy symptoms, or check with your doctor to see if prescription nasal sprays or eye drops will help.
- * Consider allergy shots if symptoms are severe.
- * Perhaps consider an alternative pet, such as a turtle, fish or gecko.

Rescue Dog has a Bright Future

Dr. Angela Lim's Yorkie-terrier mix, Lulu, is a true rescue dog. She was one of 100-plus dogs saved from a Dixon puppy mill, and one of the very last of the lot to be adopted.

"When I spotted her at the shelter, all I saw was a white poof of hair. She was down below a bunch of other hyper dogs trying to sniff them all," she remembers.

Lulu still has high energy, but she's also very calm and friendly. And as far as Dr. Lim is concerned, she's great therapy dog material. "I'd love to train her to be a therapy dog," she says. "Pets can have such a calming effect on people."

A doctor of osteopathy who specializes in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM) at the Center for Primary Care in Vacaville, Dr. Lim has seen therapy dogs in action. During her residency in

Grand Rapids, Mich., she had a friend who started a private practice—with her dachshund, Ally, as a fixture in the office from Day 1.

"It was wonderful how comfortable the patients were with her. Ally would follow her around from appointment to appointment. Sometimes she'd be dressed like a princess and you'd find her curled up next to the charts."

Dr. Lim didn't have time for pets during her residency, but a month after she established her practice in Vacaville, she started visiting the Vacaville SPCA and soon found the right match.

Now she has two pups, later adding a 4-month-old cockapoo named Oliver. "He's got a similar temperament to Lulu, but not quite as calm. She just flops in your arms like a stuffed toy. She's calm,

she doesn't jump, she's not skittish around moving doors or loud noises," she notes, ticking off Lulu's virtues.

Dr. Lim loves to talk to patients about her pets, and they share stories about theirs. "It's a great conversation starter. It humanizes me to them, and my patients to me." She also uses pets to promote exercise. "Often, I'm trying to encourage my patients to get moving. Having a pet that needs to be walked is a great motivator."

Of course, not everyone has the wherewithal to adopt a dog or cat. "If they love animals but aren't ready to take on the responsibility, they might consider volunteering at a local shelter," she says. "Volunteer to walk a dog and get some exercise at the same time. It's a win-win situation."

Local Shelters Provide Wonderful Pets

If you want to add an animal friend to your family, visit your local animal shelter. You'll find pets in all shapes and sizes, from puppies and kittens to adults and oldsters, all seeking a second chance in life. You'll also meet the dedicated staff and volunteers who can help you find a companion who matches your lifestyle, family and home. Pets aren't limited to cats and dogs, either. You'll often find rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs and rats, as well as the occasional farm animal.

Most animals land at the shelter through no fault of their own. They are often the victims of a death, illness, divorce, or a move that didn't include them. Adopting a shelter pet not only saves a life, it's one more way to combat animal overpopulation.

In Vacaville, the SPCA of Solano County is located at 2200 Peabody Road. Call (707) 448-7722 or visit www.solanospca.com. In Fairfield, the Solano County Animal Shelter is located at 2510 Clay Bank Road. Call (707) 784-1356 or visit www.solanocounty.com/depts/sheriff/animalcare.



Dr. Angela Lim loves relaxing with her dynamic duo, Lulu (in her arms) and Oliver.

Horseplay a Pleasure

For nearly 20 years, Solano County residents of all ages have enjoyed the unique health benefits that come from riding a horse, thanks to Horseplay Therapeutic Riding Center of Vacaville. “Therapeutic riding uses equine-assisted activities to improve the mental, physical, emotional and social well-being of people with disabilities,” explains Dave Rybicki, president of the nonprofit organization.

The local program, which is a member of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl., formerly NARHA), is one of 800 member centers worldwide dedicated to improving lives through horsemanship.

“A disability does not have to keep a person from riding horses,” Dave says.

“In fact, because the rhythmical motion of a horse moves the rider’s body in a manner similar to a human gait, riders with physical disabilities often show improvement in flexibility, balance and muscle strength.

In addition to the therapeutic benefits, horseback riding also provides social and recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities.”

For Stephen Kreisman, 34, of Fairfield, diagnosed with borderline autism, weekly riding sessions have been his No. 1 activity since age 15.

“Sports didn’t interest him and he had a hard time focusing in school,” says mom Carol Kreisman. “We heard about Horseplay and Stephen agreed to try it. When Stephen first got on a horse, it was amazing,” she remembers. “When you have a mental disability, everyone is telling you what to do. On horseback, he felt the power of being ‘in control’ of the horse.”

Each rider begins the program accompanied by a team of three volunteers. One leads the

Riding Program Feeds Mental, Physical, Emotional, Social Needs

horse and a spotter walks along each side of the horse to ensure the rider’s safety. Riders are given tasks to complete depending on their condition and goals. Stephen was asked to steer the horse through three patterns and he did it with ease.

“His high school teachers couldn’t believe he could follow directions, but the horse totally captivated him,” Carol says. “Riding is primary to his life now. He will give up anything for Horseplay.”

Through the years, Stephen has moved from being a “general rider” needing a team of three volunteers to keep him safe, to what the organization calls an “independent rider,” with the skill to ride alone in the arena. He has participated in Horseplay horse shows and has done drill team demonstrations with another rider.

Stephen’s success is one of many logged by Horseplay riders over the years.

“Kids live for this program,” says Carol, who long ago joined the organization’s board of directors. She has seen parents’ tears of joy when their child responds to a horse.

Some riders have stayed with the program for seven or eight years, Dave says. He can’t remember anyone staying less than one or two years. Therapeutic riding can help those with autism, brain injuries, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, learning disabilities and spinal cord injuries, to name a few.

“We have riders not strong enough to sit on a horse for 45 minutes,” Dave says. “When they get tired, we have them lie down on the horse for a while, and week by week their strength increases.”

The program currently has six horses, carefully chosen for their good manners and quiet nature to ensure an enjoyable and safe experience. Maintaining six horses is incredibly expensive, Dave says, and the \$35 cost of each ride only partially pays for the program’s upkeep. The organization relies heavily on financial donations and volunteers are always needed. Volunteers must be age 12 and older, and participate in a free training session before assisting riders.

Horseplay accepts riders age 4 and older and they must have medical clearance from a doctor. The only restriction is a weight limit of 200 pounds for the safety of the horse and the side walkers. Dave urges anyone interested in the program to come out and watch a 45 minute session. The program operates at Black Tie Arabian Ranch just off Highway 80 in Dixon.

For the first time ever, Horseplay doesn’t have a waiting list. For further details, visit www.horseplayriding.org.



Neurosurgeon to the Rescue

While neurosurgeon Jeffrey Dembner, M.D., has performed countless complicated brain and spinal surgeries and saved hundreds of lives, it was his rescue of a stranded kitten that one Dana Drive resident will always remember.

That’s because the kitten in distress was hers.

Dr. Jeffrey Dembner was driving out of the NorthBay Medical Center onto B. Gale Wilson Boulevard in February when he spotted the black and white kitten on a retaining wall.

“I thought, is that cat OK? I came to the conclusion that he was stuck.”



So he turned his vehicle around and enlisted the help of a NorthBay employee who helped coax the kitten closer. Dr. Dembner climbed a stoop next to the wall and grabbed him. “I thought if I set him down, he’d just trot home. But he just sat there staring at me.”

The kitten obviously belonged to someone. It was healthy and wearing a collar. And, it reminded him of how he stumbled upon his own pet, a cat he calls simply “Cat.” He rescued Cat from the plastic bag he had been dumped in outside his office in Newport Beach.

Dr. Dembner took the kitten home and posted flyers in the neighborhood the next day, hoping the owner would call. “I mentioned it to Security Supervisor Deborah Candate. A few days later, she spotted a woman who seemed to be looking for something,” he says. “She turned out to be the cat’s owner.”

The security guard showed her the poster with Dr. Dembner’s office number, and the next day she called. “The woman had two small children, and they were delighted to get their kitten back,” He recalls. “I did warn her, though — that kitten likes to climb. You might want to keep him inside.”

◀ Stephen Kreisman of Fairfield has ridden with Horseplay for 19 years.



Sophie Martinez (center) with (left to right) Dr. Sam Khoury, M.D., Rowyn Graves, R.N., and Peter Zopfi, D.O.

Dog Attack

It's Every Parent's Nightmare

The stray dog Shasta Moxley's nephew brought home one afternoon last September seemed kind and friendly. The 18-year-old planned to keep the playful pit bull as a pet and it romped in the Fairfield family's yard.

Then the dog began chewing a Hello Kitty toy and Shasta's 5-year-old daughter, Sophie Martinez, instinctively reached to reclaim her favorite toy. In a flash the dog was upon her, latching onto her head and biting fiercely. Sophie screamed and blood was everywhere.

"The dog had Sophie's head in its mouth and my husband and I had to beat it to free her," Shasta remembers.

After the attack, Sophie floated in and out of consciousness, her head bloody and torn, her eye gashed open.

"We were in a panic and didn't think to call 9-1-1. We just grabbed her and ran to the car and headed to NorthBay Medical Center," she says.

The Emergency Department's staff rushed the young girl into a trauma room, where

it was determined that Sophie would need immediate surgery to close her wounds, according to Heather Venezio, R.N., trauma program director. Plastic surgeon Sam Khoury, M.D., was called in to handle the delicate facial repairs.

To the relief of her parents, Sophie's eye was not damaged in the attack. "She had stitches in her eyelid and the doctor said she's very lucky," Shasta adds.

"She took everything in stride—the treatment, the stitches, the staples—everything until the rabies shot, which I understand is very painful. Sophie's reaction to the needle in her hip was to swing at it so hard that the thin shaft bent and the nurses had to start over with a new dose."

The accident happened two weeks before school started and Sophie took a lot of teasing from the other children, her mom says.

Today, the David Weir Elementary School kindergartener is doing well in school, but she's been left with a lasting fear of big dogs. ❧

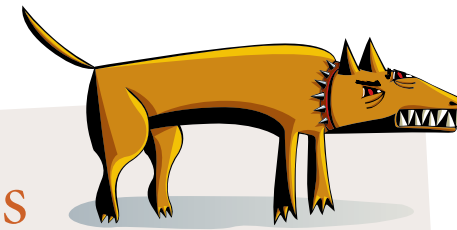
How to Prevent a Dog Bite

Each year approximately 4 million Americans are bitten by dogs, with about 800,000 seeking medical treatment. Although most dog bite attacks are not provoked, there are several measures that adults and children can take to decrease the possibility of being bitten.

Here are some tips:

- ▲ Remain calm when you feel threatened by a dog.
- ▲ Never tease or startle a dog.
- ▲ Never approach an unfamiliar dog.
- ▲ Never run from a dog or scream in the presence of a dog.
- ▲ Stand still and avoid eye contact if approached by a dog.
- ▲ If knocked down, roll into a ball and freeze in place.
- ▲ Children should never play with a dog without an adult present.
- ▲ Do not disturb a dog that is eating, sleeping or caring for puppies.
- ▲ Do not pet a dog without letting it first sniff you.

Serious Bites Tetanus & Rabies Risk



Almost 90 percent of the animal bites seen in emergency departments are from dogs and most occur among children ages 5 to 9.

In addition to physical damage, two deadly viruses can be passed by dogs: rabies and tetanus. That's why it is important to be able to identify and find the dog that has bitten you. Observation by a veterinarian is appropriate when the vaccination status of the animal is unknown. If the animal cannot be quarantined for 10 days, the dog bite victim should receive rabies immunization.

Most dog bites do require medical attention, because in addition to cleaning the wound, the patient may need antibiotics, a tetanus shot, and/or treatment to prevent rabies. Seek immediate medical care for multiple or serious bites, especially in younger children and bites that involve the child's head and neck.

After a dog bites, stop any bleeding by putting direct pressure on the wound. Then clean it extensively by flushing it with saline or water to remove as much bacteria as possible. Unless on the face or severe, most bites are not sutured, but left open to heal from the inside out.

Rabies Precautions



Rabies is an acute viral infection that humans contract when bitten by an animal infected with the virus. It can also be spread by contact with an infected animal's saliva through contact with a cut, scratch or wound. All mammals can develop rabies and it is usually fatal.

Once in your system, the virus travels from wound to brain, causing inflammation and death. Vaccinating your pets against rabies is the best way to prevent the spread of the disease. In the United States, vaccination programs have all but ended the risk of being bitten by a rabid dog. However, rabies precautions are still taken if a dog's vaccination status isn't known.

Today, it is interaction with wild animals that places you at risk for rabies. Almost three quarters of rabies cases develop after contact with bats. Rabies is also seen in raccoons, skunks, foxes, coyotes, wolves and bobcats. Always avoid animals that are acting strangely, especially nocturnal animals such as skunks walking around in broad daylight.

Cats' Sharp Teeth Can Deliver a Big Infection

When the cat bites, pay attention.

While dog bites can do widespread damage that obviously need care, cat bites can be overlooked because they seem so small.

Cats' sharp teeth often penetrate deeply, creating punctures that may not seem serious but often include bacteria from their mouths. When cat bites get infected, wounds may need to be surgically cleaned. A Mayo Clinic study found that of 193 patients who came in for cat bites on their hands over a three-year period, 30 percent had to be hospitalized for an average stay of 3.2 days.

If you have a cat bite that gets swollen or red, consult your healthcare provider or go directly to an emergency room.



.....
Every 40 seconds,
someone in the
United States seeks
medical attention
for a dog bite.
Most of the victims
are children, and
most of them are
bitten on the face.
.....



Celeste McBee enjoys a visit with Sophie and Meir Horvitz at NorthBay Medical Center.

Special Dogs Lend a Healing Paw

The unconditional love of a dog can lower stress levels and improve a patient's mood. And, for a while, they can forget their problems.

There's something about a dog that can bring comfort to the sickest patient. For 12 years, PAWS for Healing volunteer Meir Horvitz of Fairfield has witnessed the magic that the friendly face and wagging tail of a happy dog brings to the halls of NorthBay Medical Center and NorthBay VacaValley Hospital. He is on one of eight teams assigned to the local hospitals.

"There's something about the unconditional love of a dog that changes people," Horvitz says. "Their stress level drops and their mood changes and for a while they can forget their problems."

Every Thursday afternoon, Horvitz and his Shih Tzu dog Sophie spend an hour or two visiting patients and staff at NorthBay Medical Center. "I stop at each nursing station and ask if there is anyone I can't visit," Horvitz explains. "I'm welcome in every department, from medical-surgical units to ICU to the ER, but I don't visit patients in isolation or those too sick to benefit from a dog's visit."

As he makes his rounds, it's obvious that the staff enjoys his visits as much as the patients.

"We're always welcomed with smiles from the nurses," Horvitz says. "They need stress relief as much as the patients and I'll often hear 'you've made my day,' which of course makes my day, too."

The comfort dogs bring is not always measured in smiles. Horvitz remembers walking into a room with an empty bed and a solitary man sitting in a chair. He gathered the dog into his lap and sobbed. "You don't realize what this dog is doing for me," he told Horvitz. The man's mother had just died and the dog gave him a safe outlet to express his grief.

PAWS for Healing is a nonprofit organization that uses canine companionship to help heal the sick and comfort the lonely. In addition to hospitals, the volunteers visit convalescent homes, adult day centers, special education classes and assisted living facilities.

Founded in 1998 with a handful of dogs and handlers, they now have more than 200 active teams visiting more than 160 facilities throughout Solano, Napa and Sonoma counties.

Horvitz is now a mentor to other teams of volunteers and their dogs. The organization



Purple Heart for Healing Dog

Little Amos, the miniature poodle who was Meir Horvitz's first PAWS for Healing partner, garnered many honorary titles during his years of service. None was more important than the Purple Heart lapel pin he received from a returning veteran.

"We were visiting the Aeromedical Staging Facility at David Grant Medical Center," Horvitz remembers. "This is where injured soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan stay before being transferred to hospitals closer to their homes."

Horvitz was talking with three soldiers, when one of the men walked away. He assumed the man didn't like dogs. Instead, the soldier returned and pinned the lapel pin from his Purple Heart set on Amos' jacket and said "This is for the dog." The lapel pin is the part of the set that soldiers can wear on their civilian clothes.

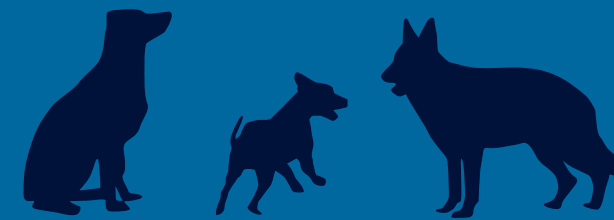
"I cried," Horvitz says. "Tears rolled down my cheeks. I'm retired military and I know what the Purple Heart means to these soldiers."



welcomes all breeds of dogs and accepts them into the program based on an evaluation of their temperament and suitability for the job. If a dog shows any sign of aggression, it is rejected, he explains. Among the successful PAWS for Healing dogs are an Irish Setter, a pit bull, a miniature poodle, a dachshund, a golden retriever, an American Eskimo, a Jack Russell cross and two Labradoodles—a breed first developed to be guide dogs.

"We don't train dogs, we train people," Horvitz explains. Prospective volunteers attend an introductory meeting, and then by appointment bring their dog in for a professional evaluation. Once the dog is accepted, the volunteer gets classroom training on protocol, safety and sanitation. The final step is shadowing their mentor in the healthcare setting. On their first visit, the new volunteer shadows their mentor for a day. On the second visit, the mentor shadows the volunteer and dog, giving them advice and support as needed.

Teams can take free advanced training and continuing education classes and workshops are offered by PAWS for Healing several times a year. Visit www.pawsforhealing.org for more information about the Napa-based organization. ☘



Not All Dogs are Equal

In the eyes of the law, not all dogs are created equal. Here is an at-a-glance look at the differences between service dogs, therapy dogs and emotional support dogs:

Service Dogs & Service Dogs-In-Training

Service dogs and service dogs-in-training are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act to have access to anything their masters might encounter, as long as the dogs are clean and well-behaved. That means service dogs have access to everything from the post office and grocery store to schools, apartments, hotels, libraries and restaurants, regardless of a pet policy.

Service dogs can aid in navigation for people who are hearing- and visually-impaired. They can alert an epileptic individual before a seizure occurs; they can warn a diabetic when their blood sugar is low. They can sense an increase in blood pressure, sniff deadly allergens, and calm an individual who suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Some are even trained to dial 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency.

Therapy Dogs

Therapy dogs are generally very calm and well-behaved. They bring comfort and joy to the afflicted, but are not protected under the ADA. They are trained to go into nursing homes, hospitals, pediatric facilities and schools to provide therapy and education to patients and students. They have no right to enter a pet-restricted area, such as a grocery store, a restaurant or public transportation, unless they are invited.

Emotional Support Dogs

Emotional support dogs provide comfort, affection and companionship for individuals who are suffering from various mental and emotional conditions. They are not protected by the ADA. They are not required to perform any specific tasks for a disability. They are meant solely for emotional stability and unconditional love. They often help individuals with anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder/mood disorder, panic attacks, phobias and other psychological and emotional conditions. They are covered by the Fair Housing Amendment Act and the Air Carrier Access Act, regardless of pet policy.

DISEASES Can Pass from Pet to Person

Diseases that pass from animals to humans are called zoonotic diseases, and can be caused by viruses, bacteria, parasites and fungi. They are very common, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 75 percent of emerging infectious diseases originate in animals, with about six in 10 considered zoonotic.

There are two ways diseases pass from animal to human, according to Dr. Gregory Warner, an infectious disease specialist at NorthBay Medical Center. Disease can spread directly through contact with the saliva, blood, urine or feces of an infected animal, or by being bitten by a tick or mosquito (often called a “vector”) that carries disease.

Zoonotic diseases can result from contact with infected live poultry, rodents, reptiles, amphibians, insects and other domestic and wild animals.

“Rabies is the most widely known zoonotic disease because it is fatal if not treated,” Dr. Warner says. “It is a virus spread by contact with an infected



Infectious Disease Specialist Gregory Warner, M.D., with infection preventionists Vicki Norris, R.N., (left) and Mercille Locke, R.N., at NorthBay Medical Center.

animal’s saliva, such as through a dog bite. In Solano County, bats are the main carrier of rabies.”

Dogs and cats carry a variety of germs in their saliva and feces that can make people sick. For example, *Campylobacter* is a type of bacteria that can live in the digestive systems

of animals. People who come into contact with these bacteria can experience unpleasant symptoms such as diarrhea, abdominal pain, and fever.

Bartonella henselae is a type of bacteria that causes what is known as cat scratch disease. A person who gets bitten or scratched by a cat that has been infected with the bacteria may develop swollen and tender lymph nodes, headache, abdominal pain, and fever.

Dogs who drink from stagnant water can pick up *Giardia*, a microscopic parasite that causes the diarrheal illness known as giardiasis.

“You can avoid most of these conditions with basic cleanliness,” Dr. Warner advises. “Avoid contact with animal saliva and feces, including letting your dog lick your face, is my best advice,” Dr. Warner says.

West Nile virus is a disease that has been carried to California by birds. There is active surveillance of the disease during the warm months, when it can spread to humans and horses by mosquito bite. Three human cases were reported in Solano County last year, according to Dr. Warner. In 2012, California saw 479

human West Nile virus cases, with 20 deaths.

Ticks are responsible for passing along several diseases, depending on the area of the country you live in. If you hike outdoors, or take dogs outdoors, be sure to check for ticks when you return home. In Northern California, blacklegged ticks are responsible for passing along a form of Lyme disease.

Salmonellosis, a bacterial infection caused by salmonella infection, is common and can be contracted several ways, Dr. Warner says. Contact with animal feces and not washing your hands is one way it spreads. It is also associated with handling reptiles, such as turtles, lizards and snakes, and baby chicks and ducklings. Symptoms usually begin from 12 hours to three days after you are infected and can include diarrhea, fever, abdominal cramps and

headache. These symptoms, along with nausea, loss of appetite and vomiting, usually last for four to seven days.

Toxoplasmosis is an infection caused by a parasite and carried by cats and passed in their stool. Pregnant women are advised to avoid cat litter boxes because the parasite can cause problems with pregnancy, including spontaneous abortion. However, people are more likely to get toxoplasmosis from eating undercooked meat or gardening than from contact with pet cats, according to the CDC.

A person’s age and health status may affect his or her immune system, increasing their chances of getting sick. Children younger than age 5, organ transplant patients, people with HIV/AIDS, and people with cancer can be more susceptible, as can the elderly and those with diabetes. ❄

Ringworm is a Contagious Fungus

Ringworm is the most commonly seen zoonotic disease, says Fairfield Veterinarian Kelly Palm. It’s a skin infection caused by a fungus called *tinea*, not a worm as the name suggests.

Ringworm is very contagious and spreads easily from person to person, pet to person and person to pet. It is also spread by contact with items contaminated by the fungus, such as combs, unwashed clothing, and shower or pool surfaces.

Ringworm is often associated with cats, especially kittens, but dogs can spread it too. In animals it shows up as irregular patches of hair loss, usually around the face or feet. In humans, it appears as circular, reddish-edged patches on the skin.

Ringworm is usually treated with an antifungal lotion or cream and takes about four weeks to cure. Your physician may prescribe antifungal pills for severe or reoccurring infections.

Tips to prevent ringworm:

- ❏ Don’t touch pets with bald spots.
- ❏ Don’t share personal items such as towels, hairbrushes, headgear or clothes.
- ❏ Wear sandals or shoes at gyms and public pools.
- ❏ Keep your skin and feet clean and dry.
- ❏ Shampoo regularly, especially after a haircut.

Don’t Blame Fido if You Get Head Lice

If your child has head lice, don’t blame the dog. Unlike fleas and ticks, head lice is “species specific.” This means that lice don’t jump from pets to humans and vice versa, according to Fairfield veterinarian Kelly Palm.

People get head lice by head-to-head contact with an already infested person. This is common during play at school, at home, or elsewhere (camp, sports activities, slumber parties). Lice don’t have wings, so they don’t fly, hop or jump. But they are fast!

The good news is that head lice are not known to spread disease. They can be an annoyance because their presence may cause itching and loss of sleep. Sometimes the itching can lead to excessive scratching that can sometimes increase the chance of a secondary skin infection.

If you are unsure whether someone has head lice, check with your health care provider.



How to Avoid Animal-Borne Diseases

- ❏ Wash your hands often, especially after you touch, feed, or clean up after a pet.
- ❏ Wear gloves while cleaning animal cages or cat litter boxes.
- ❏ Avoid washing your pet in the kitchen sink or bathtub; if you do, always disinfect it with bleach immediately afterward.
- ❏ Don’t let pets lick your cuts, scrapes or healing wounds.
- ❏ Don’t let pets drink out of the toilet.
- ❏ Maintain the veterinary care recommended for your pet.
- ❏ Don’t handle wild animals or birds, especially if they appear sick.
- ❏ Use EPA-registered insect repellents that contain 20 percent or more DEET on any exposed skin for several hours of protection from insect bites.

Serenade at Your Service

Trainer Gets a Special, 16-legged Hospital Visit

During his four-day recovery from hip replacement surgery at NorthBay Vaca-Valley Hospital, Mark Helgeson of Vacaville had an unusual request.

Doggone it, he wanted company—visitors of the furry, four-legged variety. And so, friend Nora Salet delivered, with four—count 'em—four approved guests well-heeled in minding their Ps and Qs. Therapy dog Elko (a lab) and service-dogs-in-training Summit (a golden retriever), and Hibachi and Serenade (both

labs), trotted in to give Mark just the boost he needed—and charmed staff and other patients alike in the process.

Serenade came back one more time for a visit before his release, and, according to Joint Replacement Program Manager

Cynthia Giaquinto, R.N., she was very well-behaved and serious about her job. “I could see the immediate effect that the dog had on Mark, putting him at ease.”

Of course, not all pets are allowed in the hospital. Therapy dogs, service dogs and service-dogs-in-training are the exceptions. However, Cynthia and her team have been known to coordinate a visit outside with a patient and a pet.

“I welcome the visits because I find that people who connect with their animals really benefit during recovery from surgery,” says Cynthia. “It’s much like having your child or relative come visit. Many people are motivated to get back to normal sooner, knowing that they have a beloved pet waiting for them.”

For the service dogs, a visit to the hospital, or library or grocery store is all in a day’s work, explains Nora, who with her husband Chris, are leaders of the Solano County Puppy Raisers Club. The group includes about 16 local families (both raisers and puppy sitters)

Caleb was happy to care for Serenade, walking her or taking her to school.

who are raising nine puppies to be guide dogs for the blind.

Among them are Mark and his son Caleb, 17, who are raising Serenade. They hope she will graduate this summer (if she passes all her tests) and will be turned over to a new master to be his or her eyes.

This is the first time Mark and his son have tried their hand at training. Caleb had been asking to do this since fifth-grade, when he had the chance to help a teacher with the training of a dog. Now a student at Buckingham Charter Magnet High, the timing was finally right.

The family didn’t realize that Mark was going to need surgery, but it really didn’t cause any problems, says Mark. “Caleb has been able to take Serenade to school, and Nora has helped out by taking Serenade to her work at the Solano County Government Center a few days a week,” he explained, noting that he was “grounded” during his recovery.

“The first week I kept her at home with me, but she was quite bored,” he says. He knows he’ll be sidelined from his job as a building contractor for about six weeks, during which time he’ll have to do a lot of therapy.

Part of the responsibility in training is to socialize the dogs, making sure that they behave properly in all settings—from school to work to restaurants, and yes, even hospitals.

Service dogs and service dogs-in-training are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act to go anywhere a handler would—into stores, public transportation, restaurants—as long as the dog is clean and well-behaved. Therapy dogs do not have the same rights and are only allowed to enter areas when invited to visit.

Service dogs are trained in different areas—some are guide dogs for the blind, such as Serenade and Summit. Others are trained to sense when seizures are about to occur for an epileptic, or sniff allergens that can be life-threatening for some people.

In Serenade’s case, it’s important that the family teach her not only to be social, but to

avoid games such as fetch, which could pull her away from a blind master.

“We try to consider the way the world would be for a blind person, what they’d have to deal with if they had the dog,” says Nora. “It’s all verbal communication, no hand signals, because a blind person couldn’t see that.”

Adds Caleb, “We have to prevent the dog from grabbing toys or other items that are not theirs. We also teach them to touch a person with their nose when they come; it’s a message to the blind person.”

When he first started taking Serenade to school, some of the other students wanted to pet her and play, but Caleb explained that it was important for the dog to only react to their trainer. “She has to stay by my side, and not go after anything that distracts her,” he says. “She’s energetic, and that can be challenging. But at other times she’s very mellow.”

Serenade isn’t the only dog in the Helgeson home. She joined Sadie, who Mark lovingly calls a mutt. And although Sadie will stay,

Mark knows it’s going to be hard to say goodbye to Serenade when the time comes. She’ll be called up to the Guide Dogs for the Blind training center and headquarters in San Rafael for her final training, which, if she passes, includes a two-week session to live, work and bond with her new master.

The Helgesons will be invited to attend her “graduation” and will officially turn the leash over at the ceremony. At that time, they’ll be given the opportunity to take a new puppy home.

Caleb doesn’t think he’s going to have time to do it again. He’s working as a junior firefighter and also has a job at Gold’s Gym. And, in addition to school, he’s working on his Eagle Scout project.

But Mark is positive that he will take another dog. “I’ve grown to love Serenade so much, it’s hard to let go. But I know it’s the right thing to do. I’ve been lucky in so many ways, and this is a way I can pay back and help someone else. Serenade can be a blessing to a blind person.”

Mark Helgeson (center, seated) is surrounded by support for his dog training mission: his son, Caleb (left) and Serenade, along with Chris and Nora Salet and their dog, Summit.



Furry, Friendly & Spreading Joy to Seniors

Joyce Bristow has a new pet on her lead—a miniature horse named Tyke. The PAWS for Healing volunteer, who has been bringing her dogs to the Adult Day Center for more than 10 years, says Tyke is always on the lookout for a nuzzle on her muzzle. These characteristics make her a very popular visitor, according to Sandy Perez, program manager of the NorthBay Adult Day Center.

“I’ve worked in elder and Alzheimer care for more than 30 years, and I’ve always found a way to include pets as part of my programs,” Sandy reports.

“Pets are like children—they offer unconditional love. Most seniors, unless they’ve had a bad experience, respond well to animals. In fact, I’ve seen seniors, who don’t really get along with other people, enjoy the attention of visiting pets.”

Animals are welcome visitors to retirement homes and senior centers, but they can also be desirable additions to a senior’s home, Sandy says. “Pets make loyal and approachable companions and they are especially good for someone who lives alone. Having a pet around can take away that sense of isolation. It’s like having another life in the home, another soul is there.”

Having a pet in the home can also give a senior a reason to get up and move more, especially if it’s a dog that needs a daily walk, Sandy adds.

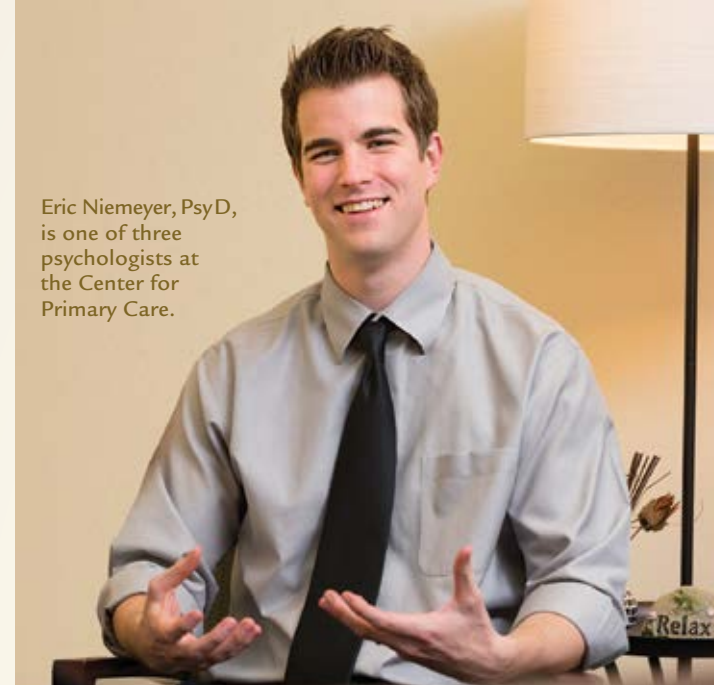
Any senior thinking about opening their home to a furry companion should consider a few things first, such as what kind of animal they’d prefer, and its size. “Large dogs may

be hard to handle, take up a lot of space, and could present a trip and fall risk. Puppies might have too much energy for an older person to handle,” Sandy says. On the other hand, an older dog may have just the right amount of energy for a senior and is already house-trained.

Cats make excellent pets for seniors because they don’t need to be walked and are typically quiet, while still providing companionship and affection. Other low-maintenance pet alternatives may include parakeets, canaries, rabbits or hamsters.

The Solano County Animal Shelter at 2510 Clay Bank Road in Fairfield offers a senior discount on all licenses, and a discount on adoption fees for any animal six years old and up. For information, call (707) 784-1356. ☘

Joyce Bristow (left) and Tyke spend a moment with Viney Martin at the NorthBay Adult Day Center in Vacaville.



Eric Niemeyer, PsyD, is one of three psychologists at the Center for Primary Care.

Down But Not Out

Pets Can Lift Spirits of Those Fighting Depression

Feeling blue, lonely, tense? Maybe what you need to lift your mood can be found at the end of a leash, rather than in a bottle of pills.

There are many ways that pets can lift your mood, reduce tension and give you a renewed sense of direction, and that may be just what the doctor ordered for people suffering from mild depression, according to Eric Niemeyer, PsyD, psychologist at the Center for Primary Care in Vacaville.

“Pets are so non-judgmental and accepting of us. The moment you walk in the door, they don’t care if you had a bad day at the office; they’re just happy to see you. It seems as if pets see us the way we want to be seen, and treat us the way we want to be treated.”

For people suffering from mild depression, that non-judgmental greeting may be just enough of a boost to get them feeling better in other ways. “I’m honest when I tell my patients that battling depression will mean you’re going to have to do things you don’t feel like doing,” Dr. Niemeyer says. “If you have low energy, you’re going to have to find a way to get some physical activity, because it will help you to feel better. If the dog needs to be walked, that might be an incentive to get off the couch or out of bed.”

That’s important, because depression can be isolating, making people pull back from those they care about, and activities they enjoy. But having a pet means you’re not always alone. “It’s funny how it works; you have to walk the dog, so maybe you take the dog to a dog park, and now you’re out, getting fresh air, a change of perspective, and perhaps some socialization. It helps you feel better.”

Studies have shown that people feel better when they have physical contact with others, and that petting a dog or cat can lower heart rate and blood pressure, reduce stress hormones, and even boost those feel-good chemicals in the brain.

“But, if you find that even a pet can’t improve your mood, and you’re having a hard time engaging in the activities of daily living,” Dr. Niemeyer says, “it may be an indication that you should seek the assistance of a professional.” ☘

Loss of a Beloved Pet Can Be Difficult Coping with Grief

Pets are with us through so many of our life events—marriages, births, children growing up and even death. So when the pet dies, it’s not unusual to mourn the loss, says Linda Pribble, volunteer and bereavement coordinator for NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement.

“Pets are family members, and losing that pet can be tough,” she says. Whether a dog, cat or bird, it’s a loss just the same, and it will be normal for people to grieve.

How deeply and how long you grieve the loss is a personal process, and there’s no specific timeline, she stresses. “While everyone’s grieving process is different, it is important to allow yourself the opportunity to grieve the loss and honor what the pet meant to you.”

As with all grief, the process can unfold in stages. You may experience different feelings such as denial, anger, guilt, depression, and eventually acceptance and resolution. Others find that grief is more cyclical, coming in waves, or a series of highs and lows.

Still, even years after a loss, the sight of a favorite pet toy, the sound of a familiar bark or meow, or a special anniversary can spark memories that trigger a strong sense of grief. It’s important to be patient with yourself and your feelings, and allow the process to take its natural course.

The process may be complicated if there are some around you who devalue the loss of your pet. Some people assume that pet loss shouldn’t hurt as much as human loss, or that it is somehow inappropriate to grieve for an animal. They may not understand because they don’t have a pet of their own, or because they are unable to appreciate the companionship and love that a pet can provide. Seek support from others who have lost pets, because they may be able to suggest ways of getting through the grieving process.

Should you replace the pet? “Some may find it helps the healing process to adopt another one, while others may find it too difficult and need time. It really depends on the individual,” Linda says. ☘



Linda Pribble

BIG PLANS AHEAD

Using the stage of its grand opening for the Green Valley Health Plaza, NorthBay Healthcare in March outlined major construction projects on its two hospital campuses to keep pace with the community's medical needs.

Explaining that nearly \$200 million will be invested in the local economy before the end of the decade, President and CEO Gary Passama said, "The landscape of health care, as everyone understands by now, is changing. And we are changing with it."

Grand opening festivities for the 37,000-square-foot medical office building in Green Valley included self-guided tours of the Center for Primary Care, NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement, Health at Home and a gastroenterology specialty practice. "This is pretty special for us since it represents the continual growth of the only locally owned, locally governed healthcare system in Solano County that is open to all," Passama said.

Of the upcoming projects, the largest is the modernization and replacement of older sections of NorthBay Medical Center in Fairfield, which will take three to five years to complete. Up to \$140 million will be spent to build a new three-story wing and a new lobby entrance.

Construction in Vacaville begins first with the NorthBay VacaValley Hospital campus adding a new, state-of-the-art medical fitness center—a first for Solano County—and becoming home for the NorthBay Cancer Center, currently located in Fairfield.

VACAVILLE

VacaValley Hospital Campus

Changes to the hospital campus on Nut Tree Road will be the most dramatic. "Our vision for Vacaville includes a health village with approximately half of the campus devoted to services outside of the hospital," said Passama. "Construction will begin with a ground-breaking as soon as October."

In addition to the NorthBay Cancer Center, the 105,000-square-foot complex will include a new diagnostic imaging center. Other features will complement NorthBay Healthcare's expansion into Functional Medicine, which combines natural and conventional approaches to healing, including osteopathic manipulation, nutritional medicine and biofeedback.

The Cancer Center will share the facility with something completely new and unique to Solano County: a medical fitness center. While it will have many of the features of a health club—exercise equipment, indoor running track, pools and spas—it will have specialized therapy equipment for patients. The staff will be highly trained and work collaboratively with physicians and specialists.

"By the end of 2015, or early in 2016, the Cancer Center and medical fitness center could be in operation. It represents an investment of \$30 million to \$40 million in Vacaville and could create scores of new jobs," said Passama.



NorthBay Unveils Designs for Fairfield, Vacaville Hospital Campuses



FAIRFIELD

NorthBay Medical Center

While the long-range blueprint for the Fairfield hospital campus spans the next 10 to 15 years, groundbreaking for the first phase could come late in 2015 when work gets under way on a new three-story wing.

The \$140 million, 77,000-square-foot addition will:

- Expand the Emergency Department from 19 to 32 treatment bays;
- Create room for six new surgical suites and two cardiac catheterization labs;
- Relocate and modernize the cafeteria and the hospital kitchen;
- Expand and modernize the diagnostic imaging department; and
- Create the space to move 22 patient beds from the oldest portion of the hospital.

In addition, the first phase includes a new lobby and public café. The existing lobby will become part of the expanded Emergency Department.

"Know that this is only the first phase," noted Passama. "When we eventually finish all construction, modernization and replacement of the older sections, it could exceed \$400 million during the next decade or longer."


Changes will take into consideration the surrounding neighborhood. Generous buffers will be created to separate hospital buildings from residences to the north. "We will meet all those challenges because we are committed to remaining in the heart of the city, knowing we provide an economic benefit to the area."

GREEN VALLEY

Health Plaza

A joint project with NexCORE Group, the health plaza is the second building to open on NorthBay's Green Valley Business Center Drive property. It is adjacent to the administration and conference center, which opened six years ago.

Nine primary care physicians and staff take up most of the second floor of the new building, which features energy-efficient construction and design, plus plenty of natural light. DPR Construction was the general contractor. The building includes 6,400-square-feet of "shelled space" that will accommodate additional medical services as needed.

It was the second move in two years for Bereavement, which was previously located on Oliver Road in Fairfield. The new facility has a comfortable, spacious meeting room that can accommodate workshops, counseling and bereavement support groups. 

Join Moms to Give the Gift of Life

Kawasaki disease is a rare condition that causes inflammation of blood vessels in a child's body, fever, rash, swelling of the hands and feet, irritation and inflammation of the mouth, lips and throat.

The "Kawasaki Moms" of NorthBay Healthcare are on a roll, inspiring the donation of hundreds of units of blood in their quest to pay forward the gift of life.

Three successful blood drives were held this past spring, generating nearly 100 units in donations for BloodSource blood bank, and three more are scheduled this fall. Watch NorthBay.org for signup information and links.

All three Kawasaki Moms had children who suffered, but eventually recovered from Kawasaki disease. Phlebotomists Dana Aleman and Leticia DeGracia and Elizabeth Gladney, R.N., stepped up again this year to support the drives and raise awareness of the disease.



The Kawasaki Moms of NorthBay Healthcare and their children pose with blood drive coordinator Katie Lydon for a quick photo. They are (left to right) Phlebotomist Dana Aleman, her son Levi, Katie Lydon, R.N., Eric and his mom, Elizabeth Gladney, R.N., and Jacqueline DeGracia and her mom, Phlebotomist Leticia DeGracia. The moms have made it their mission to try and encourage blood donations to pay forward the gift of life their children received, through treatment for Kawasaki disease.

It's a rare condition that causes inflammation of blood vessels in many parts of a child's body, fever, rash, swelling of the hands and feet, irritation and inflammation of the mouth, lips and throat. Complications include coronary artery dilations and aneurysms.


Treatment requires intravenous immunoglobulin, which is produced from 1,000 units of blood. Dana's son and Leticia's daughter each required two treatments. So in all, the Kawasaki Moms' three children used 5,000 units of blood.

"That's a lot of blood to make up for," says Leticia, "but we're determined to keep at it. These donations will save lives. They saved the life of my daughter Jacqueline, and for that I'm forever grateful."

Katie Lydon, R.N., director of Women's and Children's Services at NorthBay Medical Center, and Rowena Vince-Cruz, clinical lab scientist, coordinated the events. They organized the first drive in the spring of 2013 after a Dixon mother's life was saved, thanks to emergency blood transfusions. A drive in April that year elicited the donation of more than 100 units of blood in a single day at NorthBay Medical Center.

The Kawasaki Moms intend to continue their support. "I'm grateful that NorthBay is willing to help us not only champion the donation of blood, but also to raise awareness about Kawasaki disease," says Dana. "I'd never heard of it before my son got so ill."

Levi was just 3 when a doctor at the Center for Primary Care in Vacaville diagnosed it, and had his parents take him directly to UC Davis for urgent treatment. The disease is tricky, because it can't accurately be diagnosed until Day 5, and the window for treatment is short. If a child is not diagnosed and treated between Day 5 and Day 10, critical complications can occur, even death.

"I'm just grateful we caught it in time. And I want parents out there to know the symptoms," says Dana. "Knowledge is power." 

Welcome New Physicians



Ruby Ali, M.D., a neurologist with Specialty Care, a NorthBay Affiliate, in Fairfield, earned her medical degree at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. She completed an internship in internal medicine, a residency in general neurology, and a fellowship in neurophysiology at UC Davis Medical Center. She is board-certified in neurology. In addition to English, Dr. Ali is fluent in Hindi, Urdu, Spanish and Arabic.



Corinna Press, Psy.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist at the Center for Primary Care on Hilborn Road in Fairfield. She earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from The Wright Institute in Berkeley. Dr. Press comes to NorthBay from Children's Hospital and Research Center in Oakland.

Grant Funds New Tool to Help Trauma Victims

Thanks to a grant from the Solano Community Foundation's Leslie Anderson and Virginia May Anderson Fund and funds from the NorthBay Guild Golf & Tennis Classic, NorthBay Medical Center now has a specialized, metal-free ventilator to aid trauma patients in need of an MRI.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a key diagnostic tool used to help physicians determine best courses of treatment for trauma victims. But, a critically ill patient breathing with the help of a regular ventilator cannot have an MRI, because no metal is allowed near the machine.

The new piece of equipment, called an MRI Ventilator, has no metal parts, which means that patients who need help breathing can be put on this special ventilator before undergoing an MRI.

"Now that we have a MRI Ventilator we've been able to provide advanced diagnostic imaging and make real differences in treatment decisions and people's lives," says Becky Prenton, clinical manager of Respiratory Care Services at NorthBay Healthcare.

InQuicker at VacaValley Gives Patients Options

This spring, the Emergency Department at NorthBay VacaValley Hospital rolled out a new program designed to get folks with low-level emergency care needs treated as quickly as possible. Called "InQuicker at VacaValley," the program allows patients to register online and wait at home until just before their appointment time.

"It's part of our effort to provide exceptional service to our community," explains Elnora Cameron, vice president of strategic development.

Appointments are offered between 3 and 10:30 p.m. seven days a week, says Sarah Jewel, director of Business Development, who developed the program with

Our goal is to have the patient seen by a provider within 15 minutes of their appointment time.

InQuicker, a company out of Nashville that provides the scheduling software to emergency departments in more than 300 hospitals nationwide.

"Our goal is to have the patient seen by a provider within 15 minutes of their appointment time. And although it's impossible to predict how long something will take, it is our goal to have the patient in and out within an hour," says Sandy Bauman, clinical manager for Emergency Services.

"We have the capability at VacaValley Hospital," explains Sandy. "We can't do this at NorthBay Medical Center's Emergency Department because we're at capacity with the current volume of patients, but we can make a difference now at VacaValley, and perhaps that will ultimately reduce some of the burden on NorthBay as well."

If something does come up that inundates the emergency room, the InQuicker software can quickly send out notices to patients to reschedule them, giving staff breathing room to address the crisis of the moment.

"It's the perfect service for a parent whose child is growing progressively sicker during the evening," explains Sarah. "Mom doesn't want to wait until morning, but dreads the idea of dragging her child to an emergency room where she could be waiting quite a while. This will allow the child to stay at home in a comfortable setting and still be seen by a physician without a long wait at the hospital."

Strike Out Cancer at River Cats

For the fourth year, Genentech and the Sacramento River Cats will team up to help NorthBay Cancer Center patients.



Genentech has again promised to donate \$100 for every strike-out a River Cats pitcher tosses during home games, up to \$25,000, as part of its “Strike Out Cancer” event.

The season-long effort officially kicks off at a River Cats game on Saturday, June 28. Expect to see a large contingent of NorthBay and Genentech employees as they cheer on River Cats pitchers and the special guests who will be feted at the game.

The guests—NorthBay Cancer Center patients who received Genentech cancer-fighting drugs—will have their stories featured in a special pre-game video, and will be invited to throw out the first pitch.

More than \$164,000 has been raised through the Strike Out Cancer collaboration over the past three years, and the donations have been used to purchase infusions chairs, a blanket warmer, and transportation services to bring patients to their treatments, among other things.



Green Power!

Decked out in their green NorthBay shirts, more than 200 NorthBay Healthcare employees, their friends, family and even a few pets assembled April 12 to participate in the 2014 Run for Good. The event, which benefits the Matt Garcia Youth Center and the Fairfield Police Activities League, was changed this year to include a half-marathon run, as well as a 5K, 10K and Kids Race. More than 1,000 runners and walkers participated, wending their way through downtown Fairfield—and in the case of the 10K—through downtown Suisun as well. Organizers say the event raised more than \$30,000.



Craig and Francie Bryan celebrate winning a new car at the Jubilee.



New Venue Draws Same Great Crowd

Neither a change in venue, nor a rainstorm could keep crowds of Jubilee fans from returning for the 27th annual event. And, happily, one of the Jubilee’s original sponsors, Craig Bryan of Bryan-Braker Funeral Home, won the raffle’s grand prize: a new car, donated by Rami Yanni, general manager of three Vacaville dealerships.

Fairfield’s Specialty Event Center was given a thumbs up by attendees, who found the former retail building’s brighter lights, open spaces and indoor flooring to be a bonus.

Vendors enjoyed not only the new venue, but the response from the crowds to the food and drink they served. “We love coming to the Jubilee and wouldn’t miss it,” said Chef Peter Garcia from Ahi’s Seafood and Chophouse at the Hilton Garden Inn in Fairfield.

In addition to the food and beverage tastings, ticket-holders browsed among silent auction tables and danced to the Time Bandits.

All signs indicate it was an extremely successful night, said Brett Johnson, president of NorthBay Healthcare Foundation. “We netted nearly \$300,000 and we’re especially grateful for the strong support we received from sponsors.”

“None of this would be possible without the contributions of all who help the Jubilee become the most anticipated event in our community, year after year,” added Bill Seiden, Jubilee chairman. “I hope we never lose sight of our mission: to make it possible for those needing hospice or bereavement care to receive services regardless of their economic circumstance.”

Community Health Education Classes

The Art of Breastfeeding • Learn the “how- to’s” of breastfeeding. This class addresses the health benefits for mom and baby, the role of the father, the working mom and more. Cost: \$15. Call (707) 646-4277.

Brothers & Sisters To Be • Prepare children ages 3–9 for the arrival of a new baby. Cost: \$10 per family. Call (707) 646-4277.

C-Section Preparation • Individual counseling available to women delivering at NorthBay Medical Center who may require a C-section. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-4277.

Labor of Love • A six-week prepared childbirth class for moms and dads or coaches; register in fourth month of pregnancy or earlier. Cost: \$75. Call (707) 646-4277.

Labor of Love in Review • One-session childbirth refresher course for moms and labor partners. Pre-requisite: previous attendance in a prepared childbirth education course. Cost: \$20. Call (707) 646-4277.

Labor of Love—Weekend Class • A prepared childbirth class for moms and dads or coaches. Held Friday evenings and Saturdays. Cost: \$75. Call (707) 646-4277.

Prenatal Care • Expectant mothers learn important information about pregnancy. Topics include nutrition, exercise, fetal growth and development, “pregnancy do’s and don’ts,” and much more. It is recommended this class be taken as early in pregnancy as possible. Cost: \$10. Call (707) 646-4277.

Newborn Care • Expectant parents are instructed on daily care, nutrition, safety and development for the first few months of life. One-session course. Cost: \$15. Call (707) 646-4277.

Maternity Orientation and Tour • A tour of the NorthBay Medical Center’s maternity unit. Information about hospital registration, birth certificates, and available birthing options provided. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-4277.

Siblings’ Birthing Preparation • Parents who are considering having children present during delivery can have one-on-one counseling. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-4277.

Breastfeeding Support Group • A postpartum support group for moms meets Wednesdays from 12 to 1 p.m. in Fairfield. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-5024 or (707) 646-4166.

Healthier Living • A six-week class offered several times during the year, taught in conjunction with Solano Public Health and the Area Agency on Aging. Classes are free but space is limited. Call (707) 646-5469 for information or to register or visit NorthBay.org/healthierliving.

Caregivers’ Support Group • For anyone involved in caring for a loved one with Alzheimer’s disease or a dementia-related illness. Meets second Wednesday of month, 7 to 9 p.m. at the Adult Day Center. Cost: Free. Call (707) 624-7971.

Grief and Bereavement Support Groups • Four adult support groups meet on a weekly basis in Fairfield. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-3517.

SAND (Support After Neonatal Death) • Friendship and understanding for parents experiencing grief for the loss of a pregnancy or infant. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-5433.

Widows Grief Support Group • A grief support group for widows meets every other Tuesday. Cost: Free. Call: (707) 646-3517.

Teen & Children’s Bereavement Support Groups • Teen support group meets every other Saturday for eight weeks. Children’s support group meets every Wednesday evening for eight weeks. Parent/Guardian approval required for participation. Cost: Free. Call: (707) 646-3517.

Adult Grief Support Class, Journey Through Grief • Class meets weekly for ten sessions. Limited to 12 people per group. Participants follow a step-by-step approach using a book and journal. Cost: Free. For schedule and to register, call (707) 646-3517.

Grief & Bereavement Support Group for Adults Who Have Lost a Loved One to Suicide • Meets every other Monday from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-3517.

New Beginnings Support Group • For stroke survivors, caregivers and family members. Third Tuesday of the month, 10 to 11:30 a.m. in the NorthBay Medical Center Annex, Fairfield. Cost: Free. Call: (707) 432-5710.

NorthBay Cardiac Education Series • This ongoing series of classes related to heart disease and other topics of interest meets quarterly on the fourth Tuesday of the month from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-5072.

Nutrition Class for Cancer Patients • Join NorthBay Dietitian Rhonda Buckles, R.D., to learn what to eat before, during and after cancer treatment and how to eat to enhance your response to treatment. Cost: Free. Limited seating. Call (707) 646-4014.

NorthBay Cancer Support Group • Connect with other cancer patients to offer support, resources, education and coping tips. First and third Tuesdays, 1 to 2 p.m. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-4045.

Look Good, Feel Better • A program to help women currently undergoing cancer treatment cope with appearance-related side effects of treatment. To register, call the American Cancer Society, (800) 227-2345. Cost: Free.

Journey to Health • A seven-week class offered several times during the year. Taught by physicians, registered dietitians, a physical therapist, a psychologist and nurses. Cost: \$60 per person, or \$100 for two family members. Teens are welcome to attend with a responsible adult. Call (707) 646-5489.

Laugh Out Loud • A class on urinary incontinence. Do you control your bladder or does your bladder control you? Learn the latest treatment options, including pelvic floor exercises. Cost: Free. For class dates and to reserve your seat, please call: (707) 646-4150.

Pulmonary Education Series • A three-session course that meets on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon at NorthBay Medical Center in Fairfield. A new course begins each month. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-5072.

Annual Report is Just a Click Away

NorthBay Healthcare’s thorough, easy-to-access 2013 Annual Report is now online. It is the first time the summary of achievements, accomplishments and challenges of the past year has been published only in an electronic format.

This year’s report to the community, <http://annualreport2013.northbay.org>, covers more services, programs and financial data than ever before. It includes not only more articles, but more photographs and the addition of videos.

The “Year in Review” section includes accounts of cost-saving measures undertaken in 2013, plus the addition of neurosurgery and further development of the NorthBay Trauma Center. A financial report is included, as are results of an employee satisfaction survey.

The tremendous amount of charity care that NorthBay provided in 2013 is detailed, an astounding \$100 million-plus last year. NorthBay Healthcare Foundation is featured as well, as are a long list of community benefits.

Online readers can also connect with the 2013 Annual Report by using the convenient links on NorthBay.org.



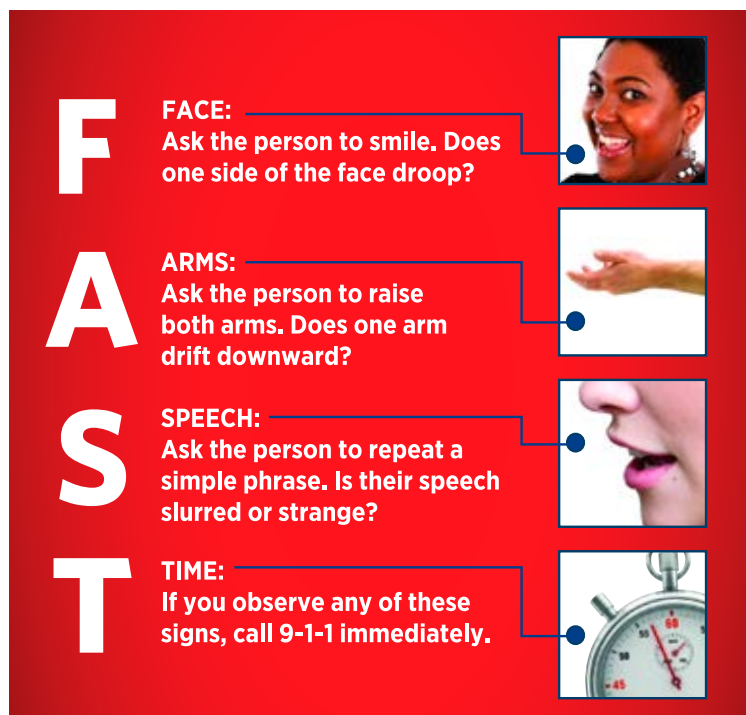
Act FAST for stroke


Stroke is an emergency and a brain attack. Learn how to act FAST and call 9-1-1 at the first sign of stroke.


National Stroke Association has easy ways for you to learn more about stroke before it happens to you or someone else.


Here are a few ideas:


- Learn FAST to help remember stroke warning signs.
- Sign up for regular email updates at www.stroke.org.
- See a healthcare professional to assess your personal stroke risk.



F **FACE:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop? 

A **ARMS:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward? 

S **SPEECH:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange? 

T **TIME:** If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately. 

Learn more at www.stroke.org