

Lessons learned from California

MARIN HUMANE (CA) - Nancy B McKenney, MNPL, CAWA, CEO/President

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In October 2025, Marin Humane Society in Novato, California, hosted a free community clinic in the Canal Community—and the response was extraordinary. **115 families and 186 pets** received vaccines and wellness services, surpassing Marin's previous record of 171 pets.

From vaccinations and microchips to food and supplies, the team provided everything pets needed to stay healthy and safe. Volunteer veterinarians even treated minor ailments like ear infections and eye injuries, ensuring pets left feeling better than when they arrived.

People were lined up by 7:00 a.m., and the last pet was seen at 3:00 p.m. It was a long day filled with wagging tails—and yes, plenty of feisty little dogs! Animal Services Supervisor Kate, who has experience handling alligators, spent much of the day at a station dedicated to these spirited pups.

The gratitude from pet owners was overwhelming. One woman, living in her car with her dog, shared that she had just secured a spot at Homeward Bound, a transitional housing facility that requires pets to be vaccinated. As she left with her vaccinated dog, a bag of food, and a new collar, she said she was relieved—because now she could keep her space and stay with her beloved companion.

This is what access to care looks like: **hope, health, and keeping families together.**

Lessons learned:

1. Always expect more pets than planned
2. Be prepared for behavioral pets – experienced handlers are a must
3. Be respectful of staff and volunteers and your hours – be sure to build in set and break down