



1,954 | animals saved
 9,898 | air transport miles
 43,810 | ground transport miles
 265 | pets adopted through Petco



Lucy loved Pitties

HONORING A SPECIAL LADY



We want to pay tribute to Lucinda Zimmer, known to all of us as, simply, Lucy. In 2005, one year after New Beginnings began, there was an article about New Beginnings in the newspaper in which Sharon asked for volunteers. She received twelve calls, eleven of which were people requesting her to take their animals. And then there was Lucy—the only one who actually called to volunteer! Ever since then, she has been an important figure in New Beginnings, giving hundreds of animals lifesaving care.

Lucy was the “Big Sis” to nine siblings. Maybe that explains her penchant for travel! She joined the Air Force and was stationed all over the world, serving at Castle in Atwater for three years before retiring as a Major in 1983. Twenty years of travel!

Lucy has received recognition and commendations for her involvement with the wounded during the Viet Nam War. In 1969, at age 29, she was stationed in the Philippines. She was one of two medevac flight nurses that were on each of the C141 planes that carried thousands of wounded soldiers out of Viet Nam. These planes were retrofitted to accommodate stretchers “sometimes stacked four high,” Lucy reported. What a horribly difficult thing to do.

In New Beginnings her life of service continued. She drove both the long and short hauls, sometimes seven days a week. The rescues came to know that she loved food and would have Jelly Bellys and other treats ready for each visit.

At a moment’s notice she would take injured animals to the vet. For many years she was at every loading and all the health checks. She fostered and helped with all the hoarding cases. Gail, another volunteer from way back, said that the first time she met Lucy was when she arrived at her house at 5am to pick up four boxers. “I remember thinking, Lucy is like a savior...arriving at the crack of dawn to get these dogs to rescue. And she’d be back at my gate many, many more times throughout the years.” Gail also recounts a time when Animal Services requested help with a hoarding case and she, Lucy and Sharon became involved. “There were about 20 something small dogs...mainly Shih Tzus, and none were socialized. They were everywhere, under sofas, cabinets, everywhere. We got towels and just grabbed ‘em! They snapped and bit and ran like crazy. When I’d catch one, Lucy would run over to vaccinate it. It took a couple hours but we got them all.” There was hardly anything Lucy wouldn’t do. She did the tiring stuff. She did the messy stuff. The disheartening stuff. She did it all.

Sadly, we lost our Lucy on February 11. Lucy was a no-nonsense, “tell it like it is,” lady. But underneath a sometimes crusty exterior lay a soft, mushy interior. Her whole life revolved around doing for others. In New Beginnings as in Viet Nam, she has been the guiding light for hundreds of beings needing rescue. Rest in peace, dear Lucy.



Lucy doing what she loved.



FOLLOW US

HELP! HELP! HELP!

Please Don't Litter



Spay or Neuter Your Critters!

Too often it feels hopeless. It's disheartening to partially clear out the shelter with a transport, only to see it full again within a week. Year after year. Cute little kittens, darling puppies, and gorgeous adults of all ages. So, what can you do when confronted with a seemingly insurmountable pet overpopulation problem? Meet it head on!

Not that we will lessen our involvement in transport or medical assistance, but we are accepting the additional challenge of starting a low-cost spay and neuter clinic here in the Merced/Atwater area. By June 1st we hope to find a suitable building and begin requesting donations for its operation. If you know of any parcel of land or any building, whether donated, rented or leased, please contact Mindy at 209-756-4650.

Our thought is to initially open the clinic at least three days a week. For that we need medical personnel! If you know of any Veterinarian or Registered Veterinary Technician who might be interested, please contact Sharon at 209-769 2122.

In the past we have never seen so many litters dumped as now. The explosion of unwanted animals, the shortage of vets and diminishing adopter needs at our receiving rescues have catapulted us from critical to crisis level. For twenty years we have been aware that we were only addressing the symptoms by transporting the animals that are here. Over and over through the years we've heard, "Somebody needs to do something!!!" So that did it! We ARE! Please help us make a change in Merced County's animal crisis. We simply MUST do this.



In Memory & Honor

We are honored to have received memorial donations in the names of:

Micki Rucker
Lucy Zimmer
Amy Kasiersatt
Jeff Winton

Suzanne "Sissy" Randol
Campbell
Augie Miranda
Pamela Raymond
Adrián Bowers

Tucker
Vito
Pita

Boris, Jailey and Buster
Daisy, Duke & Pepper
Havoc, Danga, Gabby,
Taylor, Vanna, Reba and
Frankie
Julene's kitty Sophia

We are honored to have received tributes in the names of:

Joseph Leonardo's birthday
Steve and Cathy Benner



LUCY'S HONOR FLIGHT



It was wonderful, yet lump-in-the-throat emotional and bittersweet. On February 13, two days after she left us, 70 cats and 42 dogs soared to secure futures in Washington on our honor flight with Wings of Rescue dedicated to Lucy Zimmer. The sendoff was attended by lots of people with flags, banners and signs. It's always uplifting to see them take off; this time even more so. A handmade sign saying, "We Love You, Lucy" accompanied the animals on their trip and the pilot requested that the sign be kept in their hanger. As Sharon said, "Lucy's spirit is on that plane."



Wings of Rescue pilots Anji and Kate.



OUR STATS FOR 2023

There have been lots of changes in the business of animal rescue that affect what we've been able to do. Our number of animals saved in 2023, while still impressive, was lower due to several factors: One is that nationwide, adoptions have decreased but the number of animals needing homes has increased. Another is that people who are adopting dogs are choosing dogs under 40 pounds. Our partnering rescues are facing the same issues as seen nationwide—slower adoptions, the influx of animals locally needing help and adopters adopting animals under 40 pounds. This limits the number of animals we can send, especially large animals.

We used to log in huge numbers of ground miles for transport. In 2023 we still did short runs but only one long haul. However, that's a GOOD thing! Our long trips were flights—much easier on animals and drivers alike.

The shortage of vets and increase in public use of veterinary services have made it impossible for us to continue our voucher program. Our remedy for that is—well—read the "Help, Help, Help!" article in this issue.

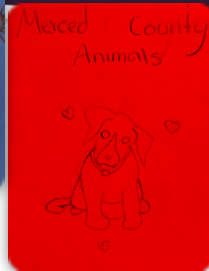
Attributable to the capable efforts of Marla, there was a nice increase in the number of animals adopted out through Petco in 2023. Nice work, Marla!

No question—we are always busy. It just looks a little different now.

THESE 7TH GRADERS HAVE HEART!

We are so lucky to have Ellen Avellar and her seventh graders as supporters! As last year, these young animal lovers have chosen New Beginnings to receive the money their teacher gave them to donate. No stranger to animal welfare, Ms. Avellar's family includes three rescue dogs and she is a monthly supporter of New Beginnings.

After deciding on their charity of choice, each student is asked to write a letter to the group explaining their reasons for selecting it. The letters we received are mature, thoughtful and uplifting. Christopher wrote, "I chose to donate to your charity because I see you guys work to cure sick dogs...." "I chose to donate to this organization because...it goes towards providing to homeless animals," states Brianna. Comments Valeria, "I am deeply sorry that animals have to suffer due to human actions. I am thankful that you guys are helping them...so they can find trust in humans again." Wow. What insight. These kids are like bright stars for our future. Their teacher is nurturing a sense of selflessness that will hopefully carry them into further commitment to animal welfare. Many thanks, kids. Keep it up—the animals need you!



New Beginnings for Merced County Animals

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WANNA BE A "GREENIE?"

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SCAN ME

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