

AMERICAN HUMANE SOCIETY

RESCUE. CARE. PROTECT.

SPRING & SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER





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American Humane Society in the News

A Message from Dr. Robin Ganzert

President and CEO,
American Humane Society



Dear Friends,

Every day, animals change the world for the better, and every day, compassionate people step forward to change the world for them.

This Spring, I was reminded once again that hope often begins in the most unexpected places. Sometimes it begins with a tiny terrier named Thaniel, who was left shivering in the cold and survived unimaginable hardship and found healing through the kindness of rescuers, veterinarians and supporters like you. Sometimes it begins with a remarkable Hero Dog named Bo, whose determination helped bring a missing child home safely during a dangerous winter storm. And sometimes it begins with visionary conservationists and animal care experts who dedicate their lives to protecting animals, advancing veterinary medicine and safeguarding wildlife across the globe.

In the pages ahead, you will meet extraordinary people and animals whose stories embody the very heart of our mission. You will learn about groundbreaking conservation work to protect vulnerable species like the giant anteater, bold efforts to secure a future for rhinos across Africa and our dedicated Rescue team, who deployed in Texas to save over 75 dogs living in horrific conditions.

At American Humane Society, we believe every animal deserves to live a life free from suffering and filled with care and protection. None of this work happens alone. It happens because a community of people, supporters, partners, scientists, veterinarians, first responders and animal lovers come together with a shared belief that animals matter.

I hope the stories in this issue inspire you as much as they inspire all of us. This work cannot continue without you. **Right now, animals are waiting for rescue, care and protection and we hope you will join us to help reach them.**

Thank you for being part of our community,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin R. Ganzert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robin R. Ganzert, Ph.D.
President and CEO



American Humane Society's Rescue Team Brings **Over 100 Dogs** from Crisis to Comfort

In March, we deployed our Rescue Team to Ellis County, Texas, where more than 75 dogs and puppies were found living in horrific squalor after a devastating fire. The dangerous conditions left many of the animals in urgent need of lifesaving care.

Responding swiftly, our rescue experts worked alongside local partners to bring the animals to safety, coordinate emergency veterinary treatment and begin the long road to recovery for each dog. **Without immediate intervention, an already heartbreaking situation could have become far worse.**

For over a month since the initial rescue, our Rescue Team has remained on the ground, continuing to check

in on these animals and support their next chapter. From monitoring medical progress to helping coordinate placements, the team has worked tirelessly to help usher each dog safely into a new home where they can be comfortable, loved and given the care they deserve.

Our team gave these animals a second chance at life, but countless others are still at risk. Without the support of our donors, none of this work would be possible. **With your generosity, American Humane Society can be on the ground wherever animals are in crisis when every second matters, rescuing them from natural disasters, cruelty and neglect.**



Sweetie and Her Pups

A Story of Resilience and Hope

Among those rescued was Sweetie, a one-year-old dog whose story captured hearts across the deployment. She was found suffering from a severely injured paw, and she was pregnant. Sweetie was rushed into care, and thanks to expert medical treatment and the compassion of an incredible foster family, Sweetie has safely delivered her puppies in a loving foster home. Today, she is thriving, surrounded by care and comfort, while her puppies grow stronger every day.

Sweetie's remarkable recovery is a powerful reminder of what rescue makes possible. Every animal rescued from cruelty, disaster or neglect deserves a chance to heal and begin again.



**From the Field:
Our Rescue Team in Action**





Mike with service dog Justice; Scott with service dog Mars; and Chris with service dog Pepper

Scott on how the Pups4Patriots program helped him:

"The effects on my symptoms and my life are almost magical and I couldn't imagine a single day without Mars by my side."

An Evening of Healing, Hope and Heroes

The 2026 Pups4Patriots™ Dinner Dance

This spring, an inspiring community of supporters gathered for the eighth annual Pups4Patriots Dinner Dance, an unforgettable evening celebrating the heroes who have served our nation and the remarkable service dogs who help them heal.

Hosted by Dr. Robin Ganzert, the evening shined a light on the profound impact of the Pups4Patriots program, which provides specially trained service dogs at no cost to veterans and retired first responders living with post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury and other invisible wounds of service. **In the United States, an estimated 17 veterans die by suicide every single day and over 50 U.S. veterans and service members are diagnosed with TBIs daily. We know that a loving, healing dog can help. However, waiting lists for service dogs are long, and the process is expensive, with training costing upwards of \$30,000 per service dog—this is where Pups4Patriots comes in.**

Thanks to the compassion and generosity of the evening's supporters, the Dinner Dance continues to make these life-changing partnerships possible. **Since the program's inception, more than 300 healing**

leashes have been delivered, connecting veterans with service dogs who restore hope, confidence and independence.

Guests heard deeply moving stories from several veteran-service dog teams whose lives have been transformed through the program. Their experiences are powerful reminders that healing can come on four paws.

American Humane Society extends heartfelt gratitude to the generous partners who made the evening possible, including Coleman All Natural Meats, Powerex, Sunny Sessa and the Kazma Family Foundation. Their leadership and compassion are helping ensure that more veterans receive the loyal companions who stand beside them on the path to healing, proving that no hero should ever have to walk alone.



Herb Jablin

July 28, 1934 – November 25, 2025

The evening honored the memory of Herb Jablin, a veteran, philanthropist and passionate advocate for fellow veterans whose legacy continues to inspire the mission of Pups4Patriots.

From Tragedy to Triumph: Thaniel Gets His Second Chance

Thaniel, a two-year-old terrier mix from North Dakota, found himself in an unimaginable situation. He was struck by a car and left overnight in subzero temperatures, alone and without help. When rescuers finally reached him, the extent of his injuries was heartbreaking; frostbite, internal trauma, tissue loss and skeletal damage so severe that he could not sit or lie down without being in excruciating pain.

But Thaniel's story does not end there. Thanks to the dedicated team at Coco's Heart rescue, an extraordinary veterinary team and the support of American Humane Society's Second Chance Grant® program, Thaniel received the life-saving care he needed. He underwent orthopedic surgery, physical therapy and laser treatments for his injuries, and has healed beautifully. In an ending that feels tailor-made for him, **Thaniel was adopted by the very foster family who cared for him throughout his entire recovery. He has truly received his second chance.**

Thaniel's recovery was made possible by the generosity of Trupanion, a longtime partner whose deep commitment to animal welfare aligns with our own. Through their generous gift, Trupanion has funded six Second Chance Grants in total, giving five more animals like Thaniel an opportunity to heal, recover and find the brighter futures waiting for them.

You can help us support even more dogs like Thaniel and save the lives of pets in dire need.



Hero Dog Bo is Saving Lives Again

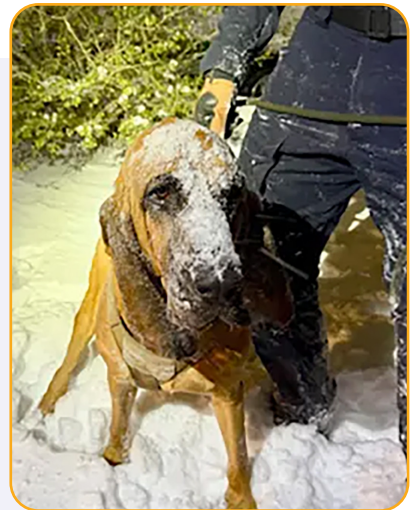
Our 2024 American Humane Hero Dog Award winner, Bo, is at it again. The bloodhound from Gastonia, North Carolina, has a prolific history of tracking down missing people and criminals. This past winter, he added another remarkable rescue to that record.

During a severe snowstorm that blanketed the Carolinas with record snowfall and near hurricane-force wind gusts, a 13-year-old boy with special needs left his home without warm clothing and went missing. With dangerous, freezing conditions and limited visibility, the Gastonia Police Department turned to Bo and Sgt. Rowland for help. First responders established a perimeter while Bo was given some of the child's possessions to catch his scent.

Bo went to work. Through the snow and bitter cold, he followed a trail that no human could have found alone. Their determination paid off and Bo tracked down the boy, bringing a frightening night to a safe ending. The child was cold and was returned to his family.

The police department credited the rescue to the swift coordination of their team and the remarkable abilities of Bo, whose nose and tenacity made all the difference when time was running out.

Actions like this are a powerful reminder of why recognizing and celebrating hero animals matters. Bo is not just a dog doing a job, he is a devoted partner who shows up when it counts most. Its heroes like Bo that inspire us to keep championing the animals who serve and protect us.





Pups4Patriots Graduates Trish & Colby



Hope is in Bloom This Spring at the American Humane Society Sanctuary

Your Support Can Help us Continue to Grow

This spring marks an extraordinary chapter for the American Humane Society Sanctuary in sunny Palm City, Florida, generously supported by the Kazma Family Foundation.

Since construction began in October 2025, the transformation of our kennels has moved forward with remarkable momentum. **Today, we are proud to share that the foundation of this vision is nearly complete.** Essential internal systems, including electrical, plumbing and HVAC, are now in place, creating a safe and comfortable environment for the animals who will soon call the Sanctuary home.

With your help, the space can truly come to life and the final steps will ensure every animal feels at home here.

Behind the scenes, progress continues just as powerfully. Our programs are growing alongside the physical space. A dedicated full-time Pups4Patriots™ dog trainer has joined the team, strengthening connections across our national network and laying the groundwork for meaningful expansion. **There is so much work still to be done at the Sanctuary, with opportunities for you to help it grow into a larger beacon of hope for animals in need.**

The Sanctuary has also become the central hub for all Pups4Patriots direct services. From application processing and trainer coordination to veteran engagement and team pairing, this centralized approach allows us to better serve every individual who turns to us for support.

Already, the impact is tangible. Two veteran-service dog teams have been successfully paired at the Sanctuary, and in February, we hosted a veteran's retreat, deepening our commitment to connection, healing and community and making life-changing partnerships that reflect the heart of our mission.

As we look ahead, excitement continues to build. The next phase of development is our Ark of Hope, which will expand our capacity to serve even more animals in need, further strengthening the Sanctuary as a place where lives are transformed every day. **And we need your support to bring the Ark of Hope to life. Every project underway brings us closer to a future where our Sanctuary is full of more than just animals, but stories of resilience, compassion and hope.** Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

Service Dog Justice



Trish, Colby & Jazzy (Mare)



NAMED GIFT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE AT THE SANCTUARY

We still need your support to create a lasting legacy and help animals in need! Your donation could help provide a home for a rescued horse, or train a dog to be a life-saver for a veteran in need.

To learn more, please call our Philanthropy Team at 866-242-1877.





How to Keep Your Pets Safe This Hurricane Season

As warmer months roll in, so does hurricane season, and our furry and feathered family members are counting on us to have a plan. In an emergency, every second counts, and being prepared will not only help save the lives of our beloved animals, but also the lives of owners, volunteers and first responders.

Before the storm, taking a few simple steps now can make all the difference when conditions worsen.

- ✓ Microchip your pets and put a tag on their collar with your name, current address and cellphone number.
- ✓ Consult with your vet about options to alleviate your pet's stress, like thunder jackets and pheromone sprays.
- ✓ Tie down or anchor outside objects that might fly away and injure someone.
- ✓ Bring all pets inside and prepare an emergency kit with food, water, a carrier, first aid supplies, leashes, bowls, sanitation materials, chew toys and medication.
- ✓ Aim for a minimum of three days' worth of supplies, but ideally seven to 10.
- ✓ Secure exits and cat doors so pets cannot escape into the storm.
- ✓ If your family must evacuate, take your pets with you and leave as early as possible.

During the storm, if evacuation is not possible, keep your pets close and stay calm.

- ✓ Choose a safe interior room without windows, like a basement or storm shelter, and keep your emergency kit there with you.
- ✓ Know your pets' hiding places, as that is where they may run.
- ✓ Do not tranquilize your pets. They will need their survival instincts should the storm require it.

After the storm, patience and caution will go a long way in keeping everyone safe.

- ✓ Assess damages before allowing animals outside and keep dogs on a leash and cats in a carrier.
- ✓ Keep animals away from downed power lines and contaminated water.
- ✓ Be sensitive to behavioral changes in your pets and comfort them with kind words and gentle reassurance.

Our beloved animals depend on us to make the right decisions for them. Click the QR code to download the American Humane Society Pet Preparedness Guide.



Celebrating a Bold Conservationist Protecting an Iconic, Vulnerable Species

2024 Kiessling Prize Winner Dr. Arnaud Desbiez's ambitious effort to save the giant anteater

Across the vast grasslands and forests of the Cerrado, a tropical savanna in central Brazil, one of South America's most remarkable mammals faces an unexpected and growing threat. **The Giant Anteater, an iconic species recognized as vulnerable to extinction by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is at risk as expanding roads cut through its natural habitat.**

Over the past 35 years, more than half of the Cerrado has been converted into pasture or agricultural land. What remains of this once-continuous habitat is increasingly fragmented by highways and roadways. For Giant Anteaters, these roads have become deadly barriers.

To confront this challenge, conservation biologist Dr. Arnaud Desbiez has launched an ambitious initiative: the Anteaters & Highways Project.

This four-year effort will gather critical data on how roads affect giant anteaters in the wild. By studying how highways influence their behavior, health and population structure, researchers hope to better understand the true scale of the threat. The team will also investigate factors that could undermine long-term survival.

Dr. Desbiez is well known for pioneering conservation work on elusive species, such as the Giant Armadillo. The findings from his research will help guide practical solutions to protect vulnerable species. **We are proud to support conservation innovators like Dr. Desbiez through our annual Kiessling Prize.**



Applications for the 2026 Kiessling Prize are now open and will be accepted through June 1, 2026.

By recognizing conservation heroes across the globe, we continue to inspire the leadership and innovation needed to protect wildlife for generations to come.





Moving Giants, Saving a Species:

The Global Humane Conservation Fund of Africa Helped Secure a Future for Rhinos

Across Africa's savannas, the future of one of the world's most iconic species is at risk. **Thousands of rhinos have been killed over the past decade due to demand for rhino horn in the illegal wildlife trade.** Currently, there are nearly 2,000 southern white rhinos in a high-risk location where poaching has escalated, and they are extremely vulnerable. But we are helping to rescue them. Earlier this year, the Global Humane Conservation Fund of Africa helped safely translocate a large group of southern white rhinos to a protected reserve in South Africa.

Each rhino safely moved by our expert team represents a race against extinction, but moving these 4,000-pound animals to a new home is just part of the challenge. GH-CFA is also helping combat poaching. **The rhinos were fitted with tracking devices to monitor their movements and help ensure their safety at their new home.**

Southern white rhinos once stood on the brink of extinction in the early 1900s, with only a few dozen remaining. Dedicated conservation efforts helped



**GLOBAL HUMANE
CONSERVATION
FUND OF AFRICA**

the population rebound, **but without support and protection, poaching could erase decades of progress.**

Every successful translocation brings renewed hope, but more work is needed to keep these animals safe. Thanks to visionary partners like the SeaWorld Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, the Wildlife Emergency Fund, African Parks, and the compassion of donors who believe wildlife deserves a future, these extraordinary animals now have the chance to roam safely, thrive and raise the next generation in the wild.



To help ensure their safety from poaching, we cannot share details on the rhino's new location or the number of animals that have been relocated.

Watch this video to learn more about how Global Humane Society is saving the white rhino and how you can help.

Healing Invisible Wounds: Three New Pups4Patriots Teams



How Your Support Can Help us Save Heroes' Lives

Every day, thousands of veterans and retired first responders wake up carrying invisible wounds. While their service may be behind them, the impact of trauma is not. **Since 2000, over 450,000 U.S. service members have been diagnosed with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and over 80% of first responders experience trauma on the job.**

We are working tirelessly to give them the help they need. Through our Pups4Patriots™ program, specially trained service dogs are paired with those struggling from invisible wounds of war and service—offering not just companionship, but lifesaving support. Today, we're proud to introduce three new teams whose journeys have just begun.

MEET THE NEW TEAMS



Marc & Harley

Marc served in the U.S. Navy for more than six years and now lives in Iowa. He was partnered with Harley, a steady and intuitive Labrador Retriever.



Lionel & Vainui

After 17 years in the French Army, Lionel lives in France and was paired with Vainui, a devoted Labrador Retriever.



Matthew & Victory

Matthew served more than five years in the U.S. Marine Corps and now lives in North Carolina. He now has Victory by his side.

Service dogs like Harley, Vainui, and Victory are trained to perform critical tasks that directly mitigate the symptoms of PTSD, including:

- Interrupting panic attacks and grounding their handlers
- Creating physical space in crowded environments
- Waking veterans from night terrors
- Providing a constant sense of safety and companionship

For many recipients, these dogs are the difference between surviving and truly living. Despite the proven impact, the need far outweighs the resources available.

Training and placing a single service dog can cost tens of thousands of dollars, and thousands of veterans remain on waiting lists—some for years. Without increased support, too many will continue to face their struggles alone.

Right now, more veterans and first responders are waiting. Waiting for relief. Waiting for stability. Waiting for a partner who can help them reclaim their lives.

Your support can help us train and place more lifesaving service dogs—at no cost to the heroes who need them most. Because no one who has served should have to fight their hardest battles alone.

“Harley is my rock. She knows when my anxiety is elevating and helps to “interrupt” it and bring me back to center.

— Pups4Patriots Graduate Marc



Reuniting Military Working Dog Darco with His Former Handler, Kellee

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, American Humane Society recently reunited retired military working dog Darco with his former handler, SPC Kellee, bringing an extraordinary partnership back together after months apart.

Darco, a 9-year-old Belgian Malinois, served for seven years protecting U.S. military installations overseas. Stationed in Germany and Italy, he was trained to detect narcotics and apprehend criminals, playing a vital role in maintaining safety and security on base.

In 2023, Darco was paired with Kellee while stationed in Vicenza, Italy. **From the start, their bond was undeniable. Through daily training, patrols, and shared challenges, they built the deep trust that defines the relationship between a military working dog and their handler.** Darco responded only to Kellee's commands, reflecting the strength of the connection they formed while serving together.

When their time working side by side ended, Darco and Kellee were separated for six difficult months.

Determined to reunite them, American Humane Society stepped in with the support of compassionate donors who made the reunion possible.

Darco traveled more than 4,400 miles from Italy to Maryland, where he was finally placed back into the arms of the handler who knew him best.

Donor support made more than the reunion possible. It also ensured Darco could receive the medical care he urgently needs. **After tearing his ACL in the line of duty, Darco required surgery to repair the injury. Thanks to donor generosity, we covered the cost of that surgery, and his ongoing veterinary care, helping ensure this hero receives the treatment and comfort he deserves in retirement.**

For Kellee, having Darco home again means everything. Now reunited, she can stand by his side as he recovers, just as he once stood by hers while serving their country.



This Season on Robin's Nest

Dr. Robin Ganzert, president and CEO of American Humane Society and Host of Robin's Nest, has shared some of the most inspiring conversations yet, bringing listeners into the heart of animal welfare, conservation and heroic partnerships. From cutting-edge science to acts of extraordinary courage, each episode celebrates the remarkable individuals and animals making the world a better place.

Robin's Nest PODCAST

S3.E8



Dr. Temple Grandin

Sharing her groundbreaking work at the intersection of science, empathy, and animal welfare.

Robin's Nest PODCAST

S3.E6



Dr. George Church

Offering visionary insights into genetics and the future of conservation.

Robin's Nest PODCAST

S3.E9



Sgt. Bo and Faye Okert

2025 Hero Dog Award winners exemplifying courage, loyalty and the life-saving bond between humans and canine heroes.

Also featuring Dr. Kathleen Dudzinski, 2025 Wolfgang Kiessling International Prize Winner

Demonstrating visionary leadership in protecting wildlife and advancing global species conservation.

Robin's Nest PODCAST

S3.E2



In partnership with iHeartRadio, Robin's Nest continues to reach audiences nationwide, connecting hundreds of thousands of listeners to stories of hope, innovation, and the profound bonds between humans and animals.

Tune in and be inspired by the extraordinary people and animals who remind us why compassion, creativity and courage matter, every day. Episodes are available wherever you listen to podcasts, and each story is a reminder that **together, we can build a brighter and more compassionate future for all.**



American Humane Society in the News

Learn how we are shaping vital animal welfare conversations as a trusted thought leader, across U.S. and international media outlets.



February 5, 2026

I'm a vet. Pet vaccine skepticism is barking up the wrong tree.

BY THOMAS EDLING

A dangerous form of medical skepticism is no longer confined to human health – it has quietly spread to America's pets. As unwarranted doubt about vaccines grows across the country, more pet owners are considering skipping routine immunizations.

That exposes dogs and cats to preventable, often deadly, diseases. The consequences are already being felt in veterinary clinics across the country.

A 2023 survey found that 52% of pet owners held negative views of dog vaccines, with more than one-third believing the false claim that vaccines could cause canine autism. Sentiment around the lifesaving tool has almost certainly soured further since that poll was conducted.

Vaccine skepticism has mutated to a new form. The reemergence of measles, a virus thought to have been effectively eradicated among Americans, underscores what is at stake. There were outbreaks across the country in 2025, including in Texas and South Carolina.

The common thread? It's occurring in areas where human vaccination rates are sliding. Now, the United States is set to lose its official measles elimination status, which we've had since 2000.

While pet infections are not monitored as closely as human virus cases, it's not difficult to imagine a similar trend playing out among animals. The same people who are persuaded by a podcast or an X post to skip vaccinations for themselves or their children are likely to apply the same misguided logic to their dogs and cats.

Anecdotally, I am hearing more and more stories from veterinarians who are forced to justify the value of pet vaccinations to their clients.

On this topic, the science is settled. Like in humans, mountains of research conducted over decades prove that pet inoculations meaningfully prevent common, often fatal, diseases in dogs and cats.

Dog, cat vaccines offer long-lasting protection with few side effects.

Studies consistently find that vaccinated pets are strongly protected against illnesses like parvovirus, distemper and panleukopenia, among others.

Early-life shots are particularly important because maternal antibodies wane. Staged vaccine schedules for puppies and kittens are specifically designed to cover this high-risk window.

Without these timely doses, it's reasonable to conclude that young animals will experience higher rates from vaccine-preventable infections.

The protection is also long-term. In a controlled study, cats vaccinated for attacks otherwise healthy cells in bone marrow and lymph nodes – not more than seven years.

The health benefits of immunization are large. Large cohort studies involving animals report adverse side effects in 0.5% of cats.

The few negative reactions that do occur, such as lethargy, a mild fever or localized swelling, are of minor orders of magnitude.

Human lives are at stake here, too.

A well-immunized pet population is a public health effort. The rabies vaccine is the single most effective way to prevent the virus.

Modeling and epidemiological studies suggest that vaccinating roughly 70% of canines or locally eliminate dog-spread rabies kills thousands of people every year. It suggests a pet-focused rabies reduction program is economical in the short run than the cost of human deaths.

Responsible pet owners want to protect their family members. While misinformation has gained traction, it's facts. Vaccines save lives – for pets and for humans.

Dr. Thomas Edling is the chief animal ethicist at American Humane Society.

Boston Herald

April 21, 2026

AI Is Opening the Door to a New Era of Animal Innovation

BY DR. ROBIN GANZERT

Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming how Americans work, learn and interact with one another. Less obvious, but no less consequential, is how the tool is redefining the relationship humans have with animals. Quicker and smarter computing is helping society limit animal suffering, improve welfare and restore natural ecosystems in ways that were unimaginable just a decade ago.

Put another way, AI and resourceful entrepreneurs are opening the door to a new era of "Animal Innovation."

A clear example is in biomedical research. For decades, medicine relied heavily on animal testing for the development of new treatments and therapies, an approach backed and funded by the federal government. However, a growing body of research has shown that animal models often fail to reliably predict human outcomes. Significant biological differences between animals and humans make it uncertain to translate results. In fact, fewer than one in 10 drugs tested on animals ultimately prove safe and effective for people.

As scientific understanding advances, it is becoming increasingly clear that this legacy approach is not only flawed but unnecessary. The federal government has begun phasing out some animal testing, recognizing that better alternatives exist.

Now, AI is making it possible to go even further. Machine-learning models can mimic biological systems and predict potential harms before a single conventional lab experiment is conducted. AI simulations are replicating human responses with growing accuracy, allowing researchers to conduct more humane science while delivering faster, cheaper and often more reliable results.

Beyond laboratory settings, the technology can help zoos and aquariums better serve as responsible stewards of the animals in human care. These institutions have long relied on human observation to detect subtle behavioral changes that could signal health problems. Now, digital

monitoring systems can more closely track animal movements, vocalizations and social interactions.

Such systems can flag early signs of distress or illness before caretakers or veterinarians can feasibly do so. Experts at zoos and aquariums can then intervene early to stop minor health issues from snowballing into serious medical complications. Further investment in exploring practical applications can make these tools the norm at modern zoos and aquariums around the U.S. within the next decade.

AI can also be invaluable in efforts to preserve or restore biodiversity in the wild. Monitoring systems can be deployed to better track migration patterns and provide real-time data on animal populations across regions ranging from America's Great Plains to the African savanna. The data can sharpen existing conservation policies, ensuring that laws like the Endangered Species Act are focused on the right animals at the right time.

Additionally, the technology is driving innovation for a novel conservation tool called rewilding. The approach seeks to reintroduce native plants and animals to ecosystems that have been thrown out of whack by human behavior. With the capability to quickly model migration corridors, food availability and habitat stability, AI-powered computer simulations can help determine where species can be released with the greatest chance of success.

Next-generation tech alone will not solve the animal welfare and conservation challenges of the 21st century. Many of these problems are deeply political and shaped by economic forces that resist change. However, artificial intelligence gives us the opportunity to navigate these obstacles better than ever before.

Dr. Robin Ganzert is president and CEO of American Humane Society.

Visit our
newsroom to
read more.



March 13, 2026

I served with my dog Dasty in Afghanistan. Dogs are man's best friend on the battlefield.

BY MICHAEL FLETCHER

America is celebrating its 250th anniversary this year, a milestone made possible by the service members who have answered the call of duty since 1776. But the story of our country — and how we got here — is incomplete without including the contributions of the four-legged heroes who have served alongside our brave men and women in uniform.

These dogs deserve an extra treat and belly rub this Canine Veterans Day (March 13) — especially my Dutch Shepherd, Dasty.

Courageous canines have fought alongside U.S. troops since the Revolutionary War, helping guard munitions stockpiles and serving as battlefield messengers. Fast-forward more than 150 years, and the K-9 Corps was officially formed during World War II, with roughly 1,600 working dogs now serving in our armed forces.

Whether as bomb sniffers, trackers or assault support units, the American soldier has no better ally than man's best friend. My four-legged sidekick is part of this patriotic legacy.

Our story began in 2018 when I was paired with Dasty — 3 years old at the time — at Fort Huachuca out west. Although we initially worked alongside the base police department, we were soon sent to Missouri for explosive detection training, a 60-day course that taught us to work as a team to uncover deadly weapons. From there, we deployed to Afghanistan.

Dasty and I shared a modest tent at Forward Operating Base Dahlke in the Logar Province, where twin-sized mattresses awaited both of us. My canine partner provided a huge morale boost on base and, as you can imagine, was quite popular among the service members. Other soldiers frequented our tent just to spend time with Dasty — petting sessions that I can assure you he enjoyed just as much as they did.

Beyond bringing comfort to soldiers far from home, Dasty also saved lives. He located enemy IEDs and weapons,

which too often prove deadly to American service members, and performed admirably in combat situations. While under enemy contact, Dasty stayed calm and focused.

After the deployment ended, we and were stationed at a military base where Dasty's important work continued in multiple Secret Service missions. Biden and Donald Trump, and we military canine teams. It was gratifying to see such strong bonds with their dogs that I had come to treasure in my own life.

Finally, in 2022, I said goodbye to a new career in Wisconsin and started a family. While I was looking forward to life, the change meant I had to part with Dasty. I hoped it would not last forever, but it was his final chapter.

When it was time for Dasty to be reunited with his family, we contacted American Humane Society. They had heard about — to see if they could help. The organization stepped up in a big way from Arlington, Va., to my home in Wisconsin, pledging to cover any future veterinary support proved invaluable just a few months later. A nonprofit paid for a spinal surgery to help him walk.

U.S. military dogs are paws of the world — helping safeguard American strategic national security interests of independence. Dasty is one of the heroes who deserves recognition. I can fetch some well-earned rest — a final chapter.

Michael Fletcher is a retired U.S. Marine in Green Bay, Wisconsin.



May 11, 2026

Opinion: How North Texans Can Better Confront Animal Cruelty and Neglect

BY CESAR PEREA

In April, American Humane Society's rescue team deployed to the Lone Star State to intervene in a case involving more than 75 dogs. These animals were found across three separate properties, living in conditions of severe neglect. From newborn puppies to senior canines, the animals were found in horrific squalor — an environment that was brought to the attention of authorities following a devastating fire.

Without immediate, lifesaving intervention to stabilize the scene, this tragic situation would have undoubtedly resulted in further loss of life.

One specific case serves as a stark reminder of the stakes involved. Our responders discovered a one-year-old dog named Sweetie on one of the properties in the aftermath of the fire. She was in critical condition with a severe, untreated injury to her paw. However, during her initial veterinary examination, our team faced an unexpected and sobering reality. To the medical staff's shock, the examination revealed that Sweetie was also pregnant with a litter of puppies.

This discovery immediately increased the complexity of her care, requiring our team to manage her traumatic injuries while simultaneously preparing for the arrival of a vulnerable litter. Through swift medical intervention and dedicated care, we were able to save Sweetie, who safely gave birth. These lives represent a critical victory for our team, but they also highlight the profound vulnerability of animals trapped in such environments.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident. It is estimated that approximately 250,000 animals become victims of hoarding every year, and many more suffer due to abuse or neglect. A significant factor in this ongoing crisis is that too many cases go unreported, leaving animals to endure prolonged suffering without assistance.

To address this epidemic of animal neglect, we must prioritize early reporting: if you see something, say something.

In many instances, pet hoarding is overlooked because neighbors or friends observe warning signs but hesitate to speak up. Some may dismiss the situation as a personal matter or believe it does not warrant official intervention. However, even if

not every case constitutes a criminal offense, it is critical to notify local officials and law enforcement as soon as possible. Delaying action places animal lives at risk.

Texans should be aware of the common indicators of animal hoarding. These often include an individual's refusal to allow others to see the animals, a strong and persistent odor emanating from a residence, or pets that frequently escape and roam the neighborhood. Often, individuals involved in these cases insist they are rescuing animals in need, yet they lack the resources to provide proper care.

If readers observe these indicators, they should swiftly report it so authorities can conduct a wellness check. Severe neglect often exists in plain sight, and early assessment can prevent a crisis from escalating.

Beyond individual vigilance, our legislators can implement systemic changes to identify and stop the most egregious offenders. There is a broad consensus that convicted animal abusers should be prohibited from acquiring more animals. Establishing a statewide animal abuse registry is a pragmatic step toward this goal.

Texas can draw on the successful models established by other states. Tennessee launched such a database in 2016, and Florida implemented a similar tool this past January. These registries allow animal shelters and retailers to screen potential adopters, ensuring that animals are not placed in the homes of known offenders. Texas policymakers should consider emulating this strategy to strengthen the state's protective framework.

There is no single solution to eliminate animal cruelty and neglect. However, we can improve how we identify these situations so rescue organizations can take action. While a significant portion of the responsibility rests with everyday Texans, elected leaders in Austin also have a critical role to play in protecting the welfare of animals across the state.

Cesar Perea is the Associate Vice President for American Humane Society's rescue team.





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