



MEMORANDUM

Date: September 25, 2020

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: Pima Animal Care Center Director Transition

Pima Animal Care Center (PACC) Director Kristen Hassen, has informed me of her plans to resign effective November 1, 2020. Her attached letter summarizes some of the significant accomplishments of the PACC team during her tenure and is worth your time to review.

Kristen's leadership has helped transform the way we think about animal welfare in this community and how it is inextricably linked to the health of Pima County. As Director, she has assembled a terrific management team that is prepared to move PACC forward. We certainly wish her the best as she transitions into a policy and advocacy role with a national animal welfare entity.

I have appointed Deputy Director Monica Dangler to serve as the Interim Director of PACC effective November 2, 2020 and extend for a period not to exceed 6 months. Ms. Dangler is a seasoned animal sheltering professional, with years of leadership experience in four shelters. She has a strong background in volunteer and community engagement.

Dr. Garcia will be developing a plan to fill that role on a permanent basis.

CHH/dym

Attachment

c: Jan Leshar, Chief Deputy County Administrator
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,
Health and Community services
Kristen Hassen, Director, Pima Animal Care Center
Monica Dangler, Deputy Director, Pima Animal Care Center

Date: September 22, 2020

To: Chuck Huckelberry
County Administrator

From: Kristen Hassen *KH*
PACC Director

Cc: Francisco Garcia *FG*
Deputy County Administrator

Re: **Pima Animal Care Center's Role in the Community and Director Transition**

Over the past four years, PACC has transformed into a true community animal resource center, built on the belief that 'it takes a village' to help the animals who need us. That village includes the Pima County Board of Supervisors, the thousands of PACC volunteers and foster caregivers, the hardworking staff, PACC's partner social services agencies, rescue partners, the PACC Advisory Committee, the Friends of PACC, and the countless people who donate time and resources to help local pets. Thanks to the tireless, dedicated work and support from every corner of our community, PACC is a place of hope, support and second chances, as well as a place where pet owners can come for help. PACC does this in partnership with the jurisdictions it proudly serves, including the City of Tucson, the Town of Oro Valley, the City of South Tucson, and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. Our community has worked tirelessly over the past decade, driven by the belief that animals' lives are worth saving and that when we help animals, we also help the people who love them.

This memorandum offers a synopsis of some of the many ways PACC contributes to the overall health and benefit of our community today, and how far the organization has come from the days when we were known as the 'pound.'

The New PACC Facility. In 2014, Pima County taxpayers voted to support the construction of a new and partially renovated PACC facility. The new PACC facility, which was completed in July of 2018, is nearly 90,000 square feet and can house more than 1,000 animals. It has a state-of-the-art medical clinic for routine and emergency medical care, group housing rooms for cats, double-sided kennels for all animals, play yards for dogs, three lobbies for various functions, a field services office, a large volunteer office, and medical isolation rooms for cats and dogs. Additionally, the campus has an indoor/outdoor multi-use space that is used for public meetings, training for staff and volunteers, dog training, and food, microchip and vaccine clinics. This year, PACC is also utilizing part of the facility to provide medical care, food and supplies to pets owned by people experiencing impacts of COVID-19. Since the opening of the new facility, PACC has seen a dramatic reduction in common contagious illnesses. Also, since the new facility opened, PACC has not experienced one day of the shelter being above its intended capacity for care, which means zero animals have been euthanized due to lack of space to adequately house them.

Lifesaving. Today, PACC saves more than 90% of the nearly 20,000 animals who come through its doors each year. Thanks to the support of volunteers, foster caregivers and donors to the friends of PACC, every animal, from tiny, day-old kittens to geriatric senior dogs receive urgent, individualized care and attention with the goal of a live outcome. In 2019, for the first time in PACC's history, fewer than 1,000 animals were euthanized, with the vast majority of animals being adopted, rescued or returned to their homes and families.

Field Services, Animal Protection, and Public Safety. PACC's Field Services and Animal Protection unit is made up of 25 staff members, including supervisors, investigators, officers and dispatchers. They respond day and night to emergency cruelty, neglect, and dangerous dog calls, as well as calls regarding sick and injured lost animals found by Good Samaritans. In addition, officers conduct rabies investigations and respond to bite complaints, stray dog reports, and found animal reports. PACC officers spend all day, every day, helping animals in need and keeping our community safe from aggressive dogs. Over the past four years, this unit has transformed from a primarily enforcement-based approach to a community policing approach. Today's officers have a diverse array of professional experience with backgrounds in education, social work, law enforcement, animal management and public health. They provide support, education and resources to pet owners and in partnership with human social services agencies in our County, they work to address the root causes that lead to neglect, hoarding and other common issues. This year, in partnership with the Pima County Health Department, Field Services added two public health nurses, who assist officers with hoarding and neglect cases, in an effort to help the overwhelmed caregivers themselves and to prevent recidivism. A far cry from the 'dog catchers' of the past, today's officers are viewed as a resource in our community, providing donated food, fencing, dog houses, and more to residents who are in need of extra support.

Adoption and Foster Care. With 13,000 cats, dogs and other animals being adopted from PACC last year, PACC adopters are one of the keys to PACC's lifesaving success. Today, the length of time an animal stays at PACC is under 10 days, with most pets going home to their new families or to a foster home in about a week. PACC also manages the nation's largest municipal animal shelter foster program, sending more than 5,000 pets to foster homes, annually. Foster caregivers, who provide TLC and excellent care for PACC's most vulnerable residents, have helped ensure that orphaned, sick, injured, elderly and fearful pets get individualized, around-the-clock care. This year, PACC received a grant to create an intake-to-placement program, with the goal of getting more animals to foster and adoptive homes within hours of arriving at the shelter. The goal of this program is to further reduce the length of time animals live in the shelter, reducing the risk of stress and contagious illness that can result from shelter confinement and saving tax dollars.

Owned Pet Support Services. In 2017, PACC opened a pet support call center to assist struggling pet owners. For the first time, Pima County residents were able to access immediate help for issues from needing to rehome their pet to struggling to pay for medical care to needing advice about handling a behavior issue. Today, the pet support call center receives 4,000 or more calls each month and keeps thousands of animals out of the shelter each year. Funded entirely through grants and donations, the pet support center is a lifeline for pet owners, offering a wide array of solutions to prevent animals from being surrendered to the shelter. Whether people need medical assistance, help finding pet friendly housing, or need temporary boarding because they're facing a short term life crisis, PACC's pet support center can help. In early 2019, in partnership with the Friends of PACC, PACC expanded these services, creating a 'Keeping Families Together' specialist who works in the intake area of the shelter, providing these same services and resources in person, during regular business hours. Over the past two years, the

pet support center has also worked to form a number of partnerships with human services agencies like hospice, homelessness services and housing groups, to give these agencies the ability to refer clients to PACC for needed services.

Volunteer Support: In 2019, more than 1,000 volunteers provided 90,000 hours of service to PACC, helping in virtually every area of PACC operations. PACC simply would not exist as it does today without the tremendous care and dedication shown by its volunteers. In addition to providing core support for enrichment, adoptions, exercise and care, PACC volunteers go the extra mile to give every animal individual love and attention. Volunteers serve as community outreach specialists, preparing and distributing food and supplies to pet owners in need. They assist with administrative tasks, as well as marketing of adoptable pets and providing information and resources to people looking to adopt. Volunteers help get lost pets home and assist people who need to rehome their animals. They help from early in the morning to late in the evening, making sure every animal is attended to and that staff are alerted immediately to any issues or problems. Over the past several years, PACC has worked to ensure volunteers have access to the animal shelter database, increasing transparency. Staff and volunteers have worked together to improve communication, resolve issues, and create programs and policies that are inclusive and celebratory of volunteers. In addition, PACC welcomes volunteer groups of adults and youth and has welcomed business and community groups for days of service at PACC. This year, PACC is further improving the volunteer program by adopting a user-friendly volunteer management system and creating a new range of volunteer roles, many of which are designed to meet the new animal services needs brought on by COVID-19. Volunteers are the spirit and backbone of PACC and are essential to everything PACC does.

Data and Transparency. Each month, PACC publishes monthly data reports which are publicly available on the PACC web page: <https://webcms.pima.gov/cms/one.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=30940>. These reports include the number of intakes and outcomes of animals, including the number of animals adopted, transferred to rescue groups, euthanized, and returned to their owners. It also includes the number of spay and neuter and other surgeries performed by PACC, the number and types of animal protection calls for service, the number of dogs licensed, donation and licensing revenue, the live release rate, and the number of animals sent to foster homes. Additionally, PACC shares a narrative animal services report on a monthly basis that details the activities that have happened at PACC over the previous month, PACC's media coverage, volunteer service hours, outreach activities, community cat information, and information about adoption events and community gatherings involving PACC. PACC also creates and shares an annual report, highlighting this same data for the entire calendar year: https://webcms.pima.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/Government/Animal%20Care%20Center/PACC%20Advisory/2019%20Annual%20Report%201-2-2020.pdf.

Outreach and Community Partnerships. PACC has close to daily presence in the community, at strategically chosen locations throughout Pima County. Partnering with other Pima County agencies, homeless shelters and service centers, parks, veterinarians and local businesses, PACC provides food, supplies, microchips, vaccines and spay and neuter vouchers to vulnerable pet owners. As part of this outreach effort, PACC funds more than 4,000 spay and neuter surgeries for owned pets and community cats, helping to reduce the overall pet population in Pima County. PACC's homeless outreach food and supply distribution provides much-needed food and basic supplies like paw booties (to protect paws in hot weather), sweaters (to keep pets warm in cold weather), water bowls, leashes, and collars. Volunteers for this program also help with basic grooming and nail trimming. These programs serve thousands of Pima County pets annually. So far this year, approximately 200,000 meals have been

served to hungry pets in our community. These programs are guided by PACC's mission to help pets and the people who love them, providing support to help keep animals with their families, even in tough times. Finally, in 2018, PACC began a partnership with the University of Arizona's Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health's One Health program. As part of this partnership, One Health undergraduate and graduate students conduct learning projects, help analyze shelter data, research animal sheltering best practices, and even serve as interns for ongoing PACC initiatives.

Medical Services. On any given day, PACC will receive anywhere between 50 and 100 animals. Every animal is vaccinated, sterilized and given any care it needs prior to going to its new home. More than 25% of the animals who enter PACC will need urgent or emergency medical care and some of the things PACC sees almost daily are cruelty and neglect cases, animals who have been hit by cars or attacked by other animals, animals suffering from untreated illnesses, tiny, orphaned puppies and kittens, animals with severe skin conditions and geriatric cats and dogs with age-related conditions. With four PACC veterinarians and a team of veterinary technicians, PACC treats virtually every medical condition and makes lifesaving efforts for every animal. Just a few, short years ago, PACC had only one veterinarian and was unable to treat even simple upper respiratory infections and ringworm. Today, PACC cares for everything from diabetic, senior cats to puppies with Parvovirus, and is able to save almost every animal. Because PACC is a taxpayer-funded operation, the funds to support these lifesaving efforts are provided by donors to the Friends of PACC and grant funds from national groups. The medical clinic could not accomplish all of this alone. In addition to the hundreds of medical support volunteers and foster caregivers who help save lives, PACC partners with local veterinary technician programs to bring students in to assist and learn.

Getting Lost Pets Home. Returning lost pets to their owners remains one of the biggest challenges for PACC. Because of the size of our community and the fact that many pets are still not microchipped, only about 18% of lost pets are returned to their owners. In 2019, PACC created the first-ever lost and found specialist position to help get more pets home. This person serves as a 'pet detective,' helping track down microchip information, sharing found pet information on social media, and counseling owners who have lost their pets on the most effective ways to get them home safe. Today, PACC utilizes a combination of licensing, microchipping and providing collars and personalized tags to help ensure pets are reliably identified if lost. Last year, 94,000 dogs were licensed and PACC provided collars and tags to all adopted dogs as well as microchipping every adopted animal. In the community, PACC provided free microchips to thousands of cats and dogs through microchip clinics held at PACC and at outreach clinics.

Enrichment and Behavioral Support. PACC pets receive daily enrichment and exercise, thanks to the volunteers and staff who work to combat the effects of the stress of shelter confinement, which can lead to illness and behavioral challenges. Shelter dogs have a variety of enrichment in their kennels, from food rewards to puzzle toys to chew toys. This enrichment isn't just fun – it also gives dogs an outlet for their energy and helps reduce bite incidents in the shelter. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, dogs are walked two times daily, which helps them decompress and maintain a fairly normal routine. Dogs also attend playgroups with other shelter dogs, where staff can evaluate their behavior while dogs have fun and make new friends. From these play groups, dogs are co-housed with the new friends, further reducing stress and helping the dogs get adopted more quickly. Dogs that are fearful or experiencing high stress levels or who have longer lengths of stay receive additional support from volunteer-led groups like the Decompression program, the Top Dogs program, and the Purple Dot Crew. Cats also receive a daily enrichment in the form of toys, cardboard boxes, 'cat grass,' and puzzle toys. PACC is a participating shelter in the Jackson Galaxy 'Cat Pawsitive' program which teaches volunteers

and staff to train cats to perform basic tricks like sit and high five. This is especially valuable for shy and under-socialized cats and helps increase their adoptability. Most cats are also housed in one of PACC's nine group rooms, where they can meet other cats and have more space to spread out. Our youth volunteers can often be found in these group rooms, reading aloud to the cats who stay there. This overall commitment to the emotional and physical wellbeing of PACC animals has an often-overlooked result. In previous times, children saw PACC as a place of sadness and hopelessness. Today, children growing up in our community see well-cared-for shelter animals with beds and toys and treats. They see PACC as a happy place where animals go to get the help they need. This care also serves as a model for children and families about how animals should be cared for once they go home.

Public Safety. The PACC team holds safety as a top priority, and chose to include *creating and maintaining a culture of safety* as one of five cultural expectations. PACC has implemented a number of policies and procedures over the last several years that are geared towards ensuring the safety of the public, as well as shelter staff, volunteers and foster caregivers. In the past four years, PACC has maintained a high standard of public safety, while reducing euthanasia of sheltered animals. PACC safety measures include a rigorous euthanasia decision-making process for dogs with behavioral histories, safety training for staff, volunteers and foster caregivers, emergency safety kits in all areas of the shelter, and handling aggressive dogs in the community as top priority emergency calls for service. Because of these changes, PACC has seen a reduction or no increase in the number of bites in the shelter, of adopted animals, and in the community as a whole. PACC's complete 10-year safety report can be found here:

https://webcms.pima.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/Government/Administration/CHHmemosFor%20Web/2020/May/2019%20Pima%20Animal%20Care%20Center%20-%20Safety%20Report.pdf?fbclid=IwAR09F6he0WH0dbNtupEqBi71iPFIPH1PD06MBEWVQqqL68hIkRQAFd0TESE.

Rescue and Transport Partnerships. PACC works with more than 150 rescue groups, who help save 2,500 pets annually. These partners travel to PACC from around the State of Arizona to save many of PACC's more vulnerable animals. In 2019, PACC formed a partnership through GreaterGood.org with Wings of Rescue, an organization that flies adoptable animals from high volume shelters like ours to less populated shelters in the north. This partnership, like all of our rescue relationships, allows PACC to create much-needed space during times when we are near capacity and provides exceptional homes to the pets who are flown to our colleagues in Utah, Washington and Oregon. Just like with everything at PACC, volunteers and foster caregivers play a key role in this partnership, helping with transport of animals and their care prior to travel.

Technology and Innovation. PACC staff and volunteers are continuously striving to provide the best possible service to pets and people in Pima County. Towards this effort, PACC routinely pilots new programs, utilizing the latest available technologies and helping pets and people in entirely new ways. In the past year alone, PACC has software to streamline customer service for foster caregivers and adopters, as well as utilized technology to create real-time lists of available foster pets. Currently, PACC is piloting texting software, which will allow people who find stray animals or who need to rehome their pet to quickly text PACC and receive a live response. Also, PACC is managing non-emergency services by appointment, which has improved customer service by reducing long wait times and confusion over the adoption and intake processes. Finally, PACC is offering remote, telehealth services for foster caregivers. This reduces the number of times fosters have to bring their pets to PACC and makes the entire foster

experience easier and more fun. Over the next several months, PACC will be piloting telehealth in other areas of operations as we look to provide better, faster service to the public.

A National Model. PACC has received national recognition for its lifesaving efforts, community-based animal protection services, model foster programs, workplace culture, adoption policies, facility design and use and its medical services. This recognition has brought millions of dollars of investment to PACC from virtually every major animal welfare grant funding organization in the U.S., including Maddie's Fund, Petco Foundation, PetSmart Charities, Greater Good, Best Friends, Banfield Foundation, Pedigree Foundation, the ASPCA, Spring Point Foundation, and many others. These grants fund the large majority of PACC's pet support center, foster programs, community cat programs, play groups, and community outreach efforts. Beginning in 2017, PACC received funding to host 60 students each year from around the United States to travel to PACC to learn how to replicate its programs. In 2019, PACC was awarded a grant to host three executive fellows, young professionals in training to be directors at other shelters. PACC receives national media attention nearly every month and is regularly featured in the two industry trade publications, *Animal Sheltering* and *Best Friends Magazine*. Because of this, PACC receives visitors at least once a month from around the nation and the world, who come to learn more about how PACC achieves its dual missions of lifesaving and public safety.

Friends of PACC. The Friends of PACC are the non-profit partner to PACC, and the critical role they play in the success of PACC cannot be overstated. Over the past four years, funds raised by the friends of PACC have provided lifesaving surgeries and emergency medical care for thousands of animals. Because PACC is a taxpayer-funded facility, we do not have the financial resources to provide non-routine medical care. Given that 25% of the animals who enter PACC have urgent and emergency medical needs, support from the Friends is crucial to being able to save these more challenging cases. In addition to supporting medical care, the Friends provide nearly all the funding for the Keeping Families Together program that aims to help struggling pet owners with their animals, when those owners face barriers like housing loss and life crises. They also manage Lovely's Fund, a special fund dedicated to helping PACC save victims of cruelty, neglect, hoarding and other abuses. The Friends also support many of PACC's volunteer-led specialty groups, including Mature Mutts (helping senior and geriatric dogs), Mission PAWsible (for older and medical needs cats), and TOP Dogs (dogs who need training and extra attention). Finally, the Friends support the Pup in Boots program, which provides food and basic supplies to pet owners experiencing homelessness. Finally, the Friends of PACC fund numerous PACC staff positions, including the Play Group Specialist, the Critical Cat Care Specialist, the Veterinarian, two Veterinary Technicians, the Dog Case Manager, and the Keeping Families Together Specialist. The efforts of the friends are only possible thanks to the hundreds of donors and grantors who support PACC programs, including donors like Neill and Nita Freeman, whose gift to PACC has funded a veterinarian and two veterinary technicians, among other things, for the past several years. The donors who give to PACC repeatedly share that they choose back because it is the open-admission facility for Pima County, accepting every animal in need and focusing on our local pets. Donors also give to support the proactive community programs which help keep animals in their homes, neighborhoods and communities. Visit www.friendsofpacc.org to learn more about how the Friends help pets and people.

COVID. The COVID-19 pandemic brought a series of new challenges to our animal services. In late March, the community responded to PACC's plea for foster care and PACC send nearly 90% of the animals in the shelter to foster homes, helping to reduce the overall number of animals housed at PACC in order to minimize the number of people at the facility in an effort to keep our community safe. Since then, PACC has maintained all essential services, while pivoting to an appointment-based system for

non-emergency visits. PACC has maintained its lifesaving rate and animal protection standards throughout the pandemic, with an emphasis on human health, public safety and continuing intakes and adoptions. Additionally, utilizing grant and donation support, PACC has begun providing emergency boarding for pets whose owners have been impacted by COVID as well as food support and limited medical care for owned pets. The full 2020 six-month report can be found here:

https://webcms.pima.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/Government/Animal%20Care%20Center/PACC%20Advisory/PACC%20January%20through%20June%202020%20Six%20Month%20Report%20FINAL.pdf

Leadership and Culture. The seven members of PACC’s leadership team have a combined 70 years of animal welfare experience. This expert group of animal welfare leaders includes the Chief Veterinarian, Deputy Director, Operations Manager, Human Animal Support Services Director, Animal Protection and Field Services Manager, Community Outreach and Pet Support Manager, and Administrative Manager. Each of these individuals are nationally respected animal welfare leaders in their own right, and are some of the top professionals working in animal welfare today. In addition, PACC services are led by the Communications Specialist, Shelter Veterinarians, the Adoption and Foster Coordinators, the Procurement Specialist, the Safety and Facilities Manager, the Information and Technology Manager and others. The management of PACC includes long time shelter employees who have been selected for promotional opportunities based on their outstanding performance as well as industry leaders who have relocated to Tucson to be part of the work happening at PACC. This team is well-rounded, adaptive and able to pivot quickly to serve the rapidly evolving needs of pets and people in our community. Over the past several years, this team has helped make PACC a leader in promoting healthy workplace culture and PACC’s workplace culture agreement was recently featured in an issue of the industry magazine as the standard shelters should strive for. <https://www.animalsheltering.org/magazine/articles/hard-work-building-soft-skills>. PACC’s workplace culture agreement and customer service commitments have the same, basic tenets – treat every person and animal with kindness and respect. PACC management and leadership set this, and the other principles of the workplace culture agreement, as the expectation for all staff, volunteers and foster caregivers.

The Future. I am also writing today to share that I am resigning as the Director of Animal Services of PACC, effective October 31, 2020. I will be leaving my position to serve as the Director for American Pets Alive, leading the national Human Animal Support Services project and other national lifesaving initiatives. Over the past three-and-a-half years, I have been honored to be part of the unmatched collective effort of the people of Pima County to save lives, keep animals with their families, and create one of the safest, most humane communities in the nation. To the leadership of Pima County and our jurisdictional partners, to our committed staff, and the thousands of people who give selflessly every day to help save lives in our community, I want to say thank you for letting me be a small part of this incredible journey. It is with great care and confidence I am departing from PACC, knowing that the amazing people who have brought PACC to its meaningful, important place in our community will continue to build upon this foundation we have created together.