PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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April 1, 2020

LOCAL ANIMAL SHELTERS URGING PET OWNERS TO BE PREPARED

Friends of Upland Animal Shelter and Upland Animal Services along with the San Bernardino County Coalition of Animal Shelters (Animal Shelters) in Southern California have joined together to ask for community support in keeping household pets safe if pet owners become ill. We are requesting that all pet owners prepare an emergency plan for their pets amid this COVID-19 crisis. With the rapid increase of COVID-19 cases in Southern California, the demand for hospital stays and medical assistance from hospitals and medical providers is escalating. Animal Shelters are preparing for a surge in lost and temporarily homeless animals as a result. The COVID-19 virus has proven most fatal for the elderly and immunocompromised community members, but because no age group is immune, many residents may experience the need for hospital stays. This could leave countless beloved pets in need of care.

Animal Shelters are urging pet-owners to have a plan:

- **Find a temporary caregiver for your pet(s) if you or someone in your household becomes ill or hospitalized.** This could be a neighbor, family member, friend, pet-sitter, or boarding facility. The goal is to keep animals out of public animal shelters, which are there for emergencies and may not have the capacity/space to help all animals in need long-term.
- **Put together extra food, 2-weeks of medication, a kennel, and any other necessary supplies for your pet(s).**
- **Make sure all pets have proper identification with your NAME and CONTACT INFORMATION.** Create an emergency plan for each of your pets with your information (name and cell phone number), any medical conditions and treatment instructions and your pet’s feeding schedule. Document whether your pet(s) are up-to-date on vaccinations, write your veterinarian’s contact information, and provide the information of some family or friends who will be able to update your pet’s caregiver on your medical status.

Your preparedness plan not only ensures your animal companions will be cared for, it also allows Animal Shelters to maintain space for stray pets, animal welfare emergencies and the upcoming kitten season.

Animal Shelters are extremely grateful for the outpouring of offers from the community to foster or assist in any way they can during this unprecedented time. If you are unable to find a caregiver for your pet, consider utilizing “Neighbor-to-Neighbor”, a partnership developed between Governor Newsom and NextDoor where you can find community members who are willing to care for your animals while you recover from an illness.

_The San Bernardino County Coalition of Animal Shelters is a group that collaborates on events and information and consists of the Inland Valley Humane Society, Barstow Humane Society, City of Hesperia, City of San Bernardino, County of San Bernardino, Friends of Upland Animal Shelter, Redlands Animal Shelter, and Yucca Valley Animal Shelter. Animal Shelters continue to serve our communities during this difficult time with a mission to care for all pets in need._

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