

Napa Valley *Register*

WineaPAWlooza raises \$1M pledge
for Jameson Animal Rescue Ranch

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Monica and David Stevens, owners of 750 Wines in St. Helena, founded Jameson Animal Rescue Ranch just five years ago. Since then, the organization has helped 12,000 people in the bay area, either financially or with animal rescues and behavior issues.

The nonprofit also has purchased four acres and a ranch in south Napa where they house and adopt out rescue horses, dogs, cats, and pigs.

The operation is largely funded by its annual WineaPAWlooza event, with donated auction lots, food, wine, and a pet parade, this year held Saturday, July 20. At least \$1 million towards JARR's capital campaign has been pledged from the event so far.

Each year the stakes have been raised with larger and more rare donations from some of Napa Valley's most famed wineries and vintners, and rare wine experiences.

This year's unique auction lots included a double magnum of 1998 Screaming Eagle, which Robert Parker called "the ultimate collector's Cabernet Sauvignon," a three-pack of 100-point 2007 Scarecrow, and 30 magnums of Beckstoffer-bred wine from the vineyards of To Kalon, Dr. Crane, Las Piedras, George III, and Missouri Hopper.

The event was hosted by One Hope Winery. Located in Rutherford, the winery is scheduled to open early in 2020. The One Hope Foundation partners with wineries to donate portions of sales to nonprofits like OLE Health, said Mari Coyle, vice-president of winemaking at One Hope.

JARR redefines 'animal shelter'

In the last five years, as JARR has grown, it has also honed its mission, redefining what it means to be an animal rescue operation.

For starters, it is taking "a moonshot," as Monica Stevens says, to raise \$10 million towards building a sustainable, bio-diverse working ranch and hub for animal advocacy nationwide.

The ranch would serve as a blueprint for other communities to use—kind of like a franchise model—that could be replicated across the country. It will have an education component reaching out to experts and giving TED talks, and will cut across regular spay/neuter programs.

"The idea is not to just take in every animal. It's about preventing animals from having to be taken in in the first place," said Brad Schomburg, JARR director of communications. "Ideally we want to prevent the reality of euthanasia. We're looking at things with a larger scope, seeing where we can get down to the root of the issue, and fix things systemically."

Napa Valley's underserved animals

No one really knows what the current state of animal welfare is, Schomburg said. Data does show that 2.7 million cats and dogs are euthanized each year. There's no current data on horses being euthanized, but 200,000 horses are abandoned each year, he said.

"The idea of the ranch evolved from trying to meet those needs into how do we turn this on its head? And look at the entire animal rescue welfare approach, and create a model."

Since the beginning, JARR has been inundated with requests. Initially, Stevenson started with a traditional, one-on-one rescue operation. But she began and then assessing the needs of the entire community. She began to realize, and it became apparent, that there is no overarching oversight, no standards or applications that other Napa Valley shelters can look to in this affluent community.

“We realized that most of the rescues across the country are so underfunded, and they can’t afford staff, and they certainly can’t afford to give (help) financially, so that became a focus,” said Elisa Turner, JARR’s CFO and professed money manager. “We wanted to do whatever it takes to help our community and their animals.”

Throughout the Valley, there are sustainable, nonprofit, no-kill organizations like Wine Country Animal Lovers, (WCAL) based in Calistoga. WCAL has no facility, but operates with animal foster families, and partners with other such organizations across several Nor Cal counties, including aiding wildfire rescues.

There is also We Care in St. Helena, a no-kill shelter that houses and cares for cats, typically about 200 at time.

Stevens’ enthusiasm is infectious. It’s one thing to have a vision, but to be able to enunciate it, to have the energy and tenacity to sustain that vision, and attract like-minded bodies that form a cohesive mission to change the world for the better is something else.

“Monica is kind of a rock star. She’s a great example of putting your mind to something and doing it,” said Melissa Dobar, executive director of We Care. “We like to think we’re developing a coalition in Napa and beyond. You throw your resumes together, go upstream and fix it.”

JARR also has a relationship with Meals on Wheels. Once there, the organization found that seniors were giving their meals to their animals, because they couldn’t afford pet food. JARR subsequently started a senior and pets wellness program assisting with food and veterinary care, and volunteers that provide water and walk dogs.

“We realized if this is happening in Napa, it’s got to be happening everywhere. And it’s true,” Turner said. “Most of the rescues across the country are all underfunded. So there’s an opportunity to come along and offer a different way to help people, so that’s what we’re going to do. And all on a sustainable ranch. Like Uber, we’re going to be a different way to help people.”