

SNEAKPREVIEW

Ashland's News and Review

NAMES & FACES

Local Experts to Discuss Animal Welfare Crisis

These can be challenging times for many in the Rogue Valley, especially those with four paws. “**Oh, for Pets Sake! Our Animal Welfare Crisis**” is a free public program on Tues., October 7, 4:00-5:30 pm, in the Gresham Room at Ashland Library. Part of the “Big Ideas” program series, it is presented by the **American Association of University Women (AAUW) Ashland Branch** and **Jackson County Library Services**.

The speakers are **Estrella Cervantes**, Operations Manager, Southern Oregon Humane Society (SoHumane); **Laurie Cuddy**, Board President, Rogue Valley Street Dogs; and **Megan Ayars**, Operations Manager, Friends of the Animals (FOTAS). They will address the rise in pet abandonment, curbing unplanned pregnancies, disease prevention, ensuring access to affordable veterinary care, encouraging shelter adoptions, keeping pets with their people and much more.

With 10+ years of experience at SoHumane, Cervantes has dedicated her career to improving the lives of shelter animals through compassionate care, community engagement, and progressive lifesaving strategies. In 2019, she earned a Maddie’s Fund Certification in the Feline Lifesaving Master Class, deepening her expertise in feline care and shelter programming.

A lifelong animal lover, Cuddy also serves as Co-Lead of the Rogue Valley Team of The Street Dog Coalition. She is deeply passionate about the intersection of animal welfare and human justice, and believes that looking beyond traditional rescue models is key to making meaningful progress in addressing pet overpopulation and reducing suffering.

Ayars started in the animal welfare industry at the Greenhill Humane Society and she worked at several Eugene-area veterinarian practices as a vet tech before moving to Portland. There she was a Field Representative for IDEXX Laboratories, Inside



Estrella Cervantes of the Humane Society

Sales Representative for VetSource, and Technology Sales Specialist for Patterson Companies.