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Public Statement

April 6, 2023

From: Ventura County Animal Services (VCAS)

TOPIC: Clarification Regarding Recent Social Media Posts Related to the Euthanasia of a Dog Named Boston

We would like to address some misinformation and rumors that have been spreading on social media regarding a recent euthanasia decision at Ventura County Animal Services (VCAS). We want to take this opportunity to clarify the issue and assure the community that we remain fully committed to our mission of being a lifesaving organization dedicated to public safety and the welfare of the animals in our care.

On March 21, 2023, a shelter volunteer was involved in a dog bite incident at our facility in Camarillo. Following protocol, a bite/incident report was completed, and statements were recorded by all parties present. After a lengthy meeting where all information and evidence were reviewed (including well-documented behavioral concerns and extensive behavioral interventions), it was determined that Boston posed a significant risk to the public and was deemed not placeable in the community. This included placement with a potential adopter, foster family or rescue group. As such, the difficult decision was made to humanely euthanize Boston.

Unfortunately, misinformation was posted on social media by local rescue partners who received incorrect information about the incident. They posted this information without confirming the facts or accuracy, resulting in significant public criticism of our department. Individual VCAS staff members were targeted by outraged members of the public, and our department's reputation was severely impacted. Please know that the information posted on their Facebook pages was false and misleading, including, but not limited to, the reported severity of the bite, specific circumstances of the incident, and numerous previous inappropriate behaviors exhibited by Boston that were under review prior to this incident. Additionally, for those concerned for the welfare of the volunteer, we are happy to report that she is recovering and has returned to volunteering for us.

**BACKGROUND:** Humane euthanasia decisions for behavior are rare, are not made lightly, affect us deeply, and are made on a case-by-case basis with significant input from numerous sources. VCAS remains fully dedicated to our mission of being a lifesaving organization as evidenced by us maintaining a canine Live Release Rate (LRR) of 96% or higher since 2014. Further, while we remain committed to the "No-Kill" status of 90% or higher LRR, we have moved away from the language associated with the No-Kill Movement as the language itself is often perceived as being judgmental and/or divisive. As such, in 2020, we adopted a new framework called Socially Conscious Sheltering (SCS) which we believe better describes who we are as an inclusive and collaborative organization. The adoption of the SCS model did not change our day-to-day lifesaving efforts whatsoever. To be 100% clear, this was a change of language only. We remain as committed to all lifesaving activities as we were in 2014, and we continue to work tirelessly to find the most appropriate placement for all animals in our care.

For more information regarding our LRR and the SCS shelter philosophy, please visit [www.vcas.us/about-us](http://www.vcas.us/about-us).

Sincerely,  
Ventura County Animal Services (VCAS)