

Speaking of Animals

Radio host Duncan Strauss has interviewed hundreds of animal advocates—from Hollywood A-listers to politicians—on his weekly show *Talking Animals*. Here's what he's learned. BY KAREN ASP



Find *Talking Animals* at talkinganimals.net or in the iTunes podcast store.



SHELTER DOGS MAKE GREAT SERVICE ANIMALS

In 2011, Shari Duval founded K9s for Warriors after her son, Brett Simon, returned from tours in Iraq as a bomb dog handler with post-traumatic stress disorder. The Ponte Vedra, FL, organization pairs veterans who suffer from PTSD, traumatic brain injuries and other disorders with rescue dogs who are trained as service animals. "I like that Duval's organization helps in multiple directions by rescuing veterans and shelter dogs," Strauss says.

➤ **HOW YOU CAN HELP:** Contact an organization that trains service dogs, like petpartners.org, to find volunteer opportunities.

YES, PET DETECTIVES DO EXIST

Jamie Katz is a licensed private investigator in Florida. She travels the country reuniting lost animals and their families with the help of her scent-tracking dog, Fletcher. "Jamie has a calm demeanor in her approach to finding missing pets," Strauss says. "And her skills and strategies make her savvier than even the most well-meaning neighbor."

➤ **HOW YOU CAN HELP:** Encourage friends and family to microchip their pets. These chips create a permanent ID for the animal and help workers at clinics and shelters contact you if your pet's collar is missing.

A CAT LADY'S LOVE HAS NO LIMITS

Comedian and author Paula Poundstone is a fervent cat enthusiast—she now has 14 living in her home. "Paula started talking about cats in her act and books long ago and is aware of the absurdity of having so many of them," Strauss says. Still, the Alabama native always considers taking on more feline friends when she has the space and ability to properly care for them.

➤ **HOW YOU CAN HELP:** Start a donation drive in your community (through a Facebook or GoFundMe page) to raise money for a local animal shelter or clinic that spays and neuters feral cats.

THERE'S NO 911 FOR ANIMALS, BUT THIS COMES CLOSE

In 2010, Cheryl Brady launched Vet Care Express Animal Ambulance, an ambulance service in Florida that provides emergency and nonemergency transport for sick or injured animals in the area. "An ambulance for animals may seem nutty, but the outcomes for pets who need emergency care are significantly improved when transported by qualified individuals instead of family," Strauss says.

➤ **HOW YOU CAN HELP:** Call a local shelter or animal rescue organization and ask if they have volunteer opportunities that would allow you to work with sick or injured animals.