

San Francisco SPCA Opens \$29 Million Vet Hospital

New 44,000-square-foot medical center features surgery suites, intensive-care wards.

By Marissa Heflin

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An exam room at the Leanne Roberts Animal Care Center has an elevating table for the ease of staff and pets. The San Francisco SPCA will celebrate the opening of its new Leanne B. Roberts Animal Care Center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony Friday, Jan. 30. An open house will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, complete with tours, activities for children and a cat claw-clipping clinic. Dogs and cats will be available for adoption.

The \$29 million, 44,000-square-foot center is the new home of the SF/SPCA's nonprofit veterinary hospital, spay/neuter clinic and shelter-medicine program. The previous 10,000-square-foot medical facility, built in 1932, was too small and inadequate for the levels of care that the organization was prepared to provide, officials said.

The new center has significantly more space for examination rooms, surgery suites, laboratories, quarantine and intensive-care wards. It also has a dedicated dentistry suite; a tranquility room (a room dedicated for euthanasia, situated close to the facility exit); a large lounge for staff; a kibble kitchen containing dry food for dogs and cats, courtesy of Purina; separate areas for feral cats and shelter animals to create a more stress-free environment; and a small pet store.

In addition, the facility has upgraded much of its equipment. For example, the SF/SPCA has transitioned to digital radiography and digital record keeping, incorporated better and brighter light fixtures and installed several elevating exam tables.

John Aldridge, DVM, director of veterinary services, who has been with the SF/SPCA since 1976, said the new facility will have a positive impact in helping staff treat animals with the highest possible care.

"It is really a dream come true, allowing us veterinarians to practice medicine as we want," said Aldridge, who is also the vice president of the San Francisco Veterinary Medical Association. "We have top-notch surgical lighting ... things that we thought were going to be good are even better. But the real benefit is to see how we can further help animals."

The hospital will offer competitive rates for routine check-ups, vaccinations and prescriptions, spay/neuter procedures, common surgeries and emergency care during normal working hours (8 a.m.-6 p.m. daily). It will also continue to provide free care to homeless and shelter animals, and will work with qualified, low-income guardians to ensure that their cats and dogs receive necessary care.