



MIKE CANNONE

CARE CENTER VOLUNTEER

// BY MICHAEL SHARP

FIVE LITTLE FUR BALLS: Mike Cannone figures this all started with a litter of five kittens. He and his wife agreed to take them in “temporarily,” and within days, he was smitten.

“When five little fur balls climb up on your leg and go to sleep in your lap all together,” he says, “it’s kind of hard to say, ‘Go somewhere else and find a home.’ So I think that kind of opened my eyes to animal care in general.”

That newfound passion led the retired communications professional to volun-

teer at The Fund for Animals Wildlife Center, an HSUS affiliate in Ramona, California, where newcomers often start by helping care for a colony of cats rescued from San Nicolas Island. He’s since volunteered more than 1,000 hours there over the past two-plus years. “He’s always willing to do anything,” says Christine Barton, wildlife care manager. “He’s just a really good sport.”

JACK OF ALL TRADES: Cannone’s climbed 25 feet to repair holes in the flight cage for rehabbing raptors. He’s cleaned enclosures and prepped them for new arrivals. He’s helped release hawks and bears back into the wild—“That is the best,” he says—and he’s provided food and enrichment for the mountain lions and other sanctuary animals, falling particularly fond of a grumpy bobcat named Harley.

Unlike the other resident bobcats, Harley will flatten his ears, crouch and growl when Cannone tends to his enclosure. “I talk to him, like, ‘Harley, I know you’re a good guy. I know you’re programmed, and you’ve got all this baggage from your long life that makes you feel like you need to do this, but you don’t have to. It’s OK.’ ... I guess it comes from trying to understand that all animals are innocent, and they all deserve our respect and compassion.”

ROADSIDE SERVICE: On a long bike ride, Cannone came across a disoriented coyote who appeared to have been hit by a car. Another passerby stopped, too, and the pair used crackers to try to coax the coyote away from the road. Eventually, Cannone corraled the injured animal with a horse lead; he then waited with him until animal control officers arrived.

A few people stopped to thank him for helping. “Of course, I got some very strange reactions from people,” he says, adding with a laugh: “Here’s this guy in the cycling clothing—you know, the tights and the jersey and everything—with his bike leaning against a tree, and he’s holding a coyote.” The coyote was eventually taken to the wildlife center, where Cannone continues to give his time to the animals. As for what he gets in return? “Knowing that I contribute to their long-term health and well-being,” he says, “is reward enough.”

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— MIKE CANNONE

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CHELSEA DAVIS

MISSOURI AG COUNCIL

// BY EMILY SMITH

ON HER WAY TO SCHOOL every morning, Chelsea Davis passed gigantic barns crammed full of turkeys. Her eyes burned with the stink.

“As a kid, it just didn’t seem right to coop the turkeys up in that smell and never give them the opportunity to see sunshine,” Davis says. “I remember thinking frequently, ‘I will never do that to my animals.’”

So when many of her University of Missouri classmates followed the worn path to major industrial agriculture companies, she went her own way.

“I was very disenchanted by that,” says Davis, who grew up on a small southwest Missouri farm where her family raises sheep and pigs on pasture. “If you’ve ever been in a confinement feeding operation, it’s not a pretty picture. It really puts a bad taste in your mouth.”

Davis and her husband, Jake, own a 10-acre farm in Millersburg, where they grow wildflowers and vegetables—with sweet potatoes and garlic as their specialties—and raise ducks and pigs on pasture.

To help connect sustainable farms like theirs with the community, Davis and her husband bought a local foods store called Root Cellar in 2011 and opened a second location this spring.

Through the store and her work on the HSUS Ag Council, which she joined last year, Davis encourages consumers to consider where their food comes from and to support farmers who follow higher welfare practices, such as raising animals on pasture.

“[The pigs] like to root; they like to roam,” Davis says. “Why would you keep an animal cooped up?”



Davis

FROM LEFT: DEBBIE CANNONE, MIKE CANNONE, JAKE DAVIS