

**South L.A. Animal Shelter, 3612 11th Ave. Los Angeles 90018**  
 • *First in a series*

# After Adopting, Tanya Goes Behind the Scenes

Club Counselor adopts a pet from Animal Services' South Shelter and meets the shelter's employees.



Animal Services' South Central Animal Shelter.



When you first walk in, you immediately notice the warmth and calmness reflected in the turquoise-colored walls, polished concrete floors and beautiful accents of floral arrangements and animal statues. You get more of a beautiful loft feel than of a typical animal shelter. In the lobby area is the information and payment window, where you can obtain information about adoptable animals and pay the adoption fees.



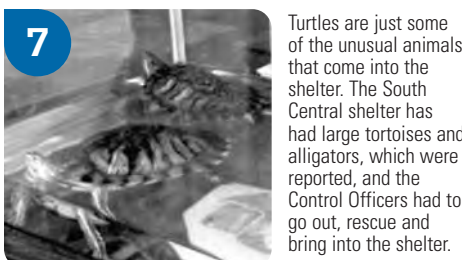
Behind the counter of the information and payment area is the Administrative staff, from left: Soptai Davila, 12 years of City service; Christine Marino, Administration Supervisor, 12 years; Cassandra Woodard, 4 years; and Erika Vela, 10 years.



The Animal Care Technicians team is lead by Supervisor Gerald Hill, 15 years of City service.



Making sure the animals are in perfect health and ready for adoption are the Registered Vet Techs, from left: Alex Cortez, 6 years of City services; Yesenea Espinoza, 10 years; and Hilcara Mano, 10 years. They are responsible for administering medications, vaccinating them and providing medical care under the direct supervision of the staff Vet.



Turtles are just some of the unusual animals that come into the shelter. The South Central shelter has had large tortoises and alligators, which were reported, and the Control Officers had to go out, rescue and bring into the shelter.



Story and photos by Tanya R. Edwards, Club Counselor

When we think of animal shelters, most people think synonymously of "the pound," but being given the opportunity to become the Club Counselor for Animal Services, and, after having visited the various shelters all around the City, I was surprised by not only the beauty of the facility but the genuine love for animals exhibited by the staff.

There was so much that I did not know about the shelters, their role and the animals that they take in, I felt the need to share this information with the public. So for the next few months, I will be doing a feature story on each of the Animal Shelters, which will include pictures of the staff, the facility and an interview with the Captain.

I loved the shelters so much that I adopted my own pet, CoCo! I encourage you to do the same.

*Special thanks to Capt. Jorge Figueroa for his assistance and welcome as I toured the South Shelter.*



At the helm is Capt. Jorge Figueroa, who began his career in Animal Services more than 27 years ago. He's pictured here with his "Dog Pound." Captain Figueroa began as a field officer, and being an animal lover, he "immediately fell in love with the job. Seeing animals out the front door gives me the most satisfaction," he says. With more than 165 dogs and 60 cats in the shelter at any given time, Capt. Figueroa sees the results of the animal over population issue first hand and wants to impress on everyone "that first and foremost, love your animals by spaying and neutering them, and secondly, if you are considering adding an animal to your family, consider paying a visit to your local shelter first."



If you find a stray animal or need to put an animal up for adoption, you get to meet the smiling faces of the Animal Care Technicians (ACT), who are appropriately titled because, from personal experience, they truly do care. After adopting my little Coco Chanel, she had a little cough from a depressed immune system following spaying. Rodney Bingley, ACT, was always available by phone to answer questions and to offer suggestions about what to do to help her regain her health, and it worked. CoCo is in perfect health. Thank you, Rodney from CoCo and I. Pictured: Roman Racon, 5 years of City services; Rodney Bingley, 6 years; Deric Lee, 4 years; Julio Gonzales, 6 years; Tomika Johnson, 5 years; and Ansinee Townsend, 5 years.



Small animals including Chihuahuas are housed inside separately from the larger dogs in the outside kennels.



Medium to large dogs are housed in the outdoor kennels.



In line with being committed to the health of the animals, the Shelters feed the animals only high-quality food known for its nutritional value such as Candida for dogs and Cat Tails for Cats.



Part of the duties of the Registered Vet Techs is dispensing daily medications as pictured here, by Florencio Pabellon, Registered Vet Tech, 10 years of City service.



Tanya Edwards, Club Counselor, and CoCo Chanel, a two-year-old chocolate Chihuahua. The minimal cost of just \$122 for dogs gets a loving addition to your family that includes sterilization, microchipping, vaccinations and licensing, which is well worth it.



CoCo Chanel, the official Animal Services Club Mascot, sports her City Club Dress. On my first visit to South Central Animal Shelter, I met, fell in love with and took home CoCo and have never regretted it, not one day. She is the most perfect dog I have ever owned. She was totally housebroken, is loving and very obedient. I could not have asked for a more perfect companion. Thank you City of Los Angeles Animals Services!



Shatana Bacon, Animal Control Officer, 6 years of City service.

Animal Control Officers are an essential part of the services offered. They go out into the field to investigate animal cruelty charges, and to rescue sick, injured, or aggressive animals. They also are responsible for enforcing licensing.



Byron Criddle, Animal Control Officer, 7 years of City service.



Miguel Gonzalez, Animal Control Officer, 23 years of City service.



Susan Botts, Field Officer Supervisor, 11 years of City service.



Part of the services that are offered by the Shelters is information on how to care for your animals. Posters such as this "Hot Oven, Hot Car... It's the Same Thing" line the walls of the Shelter, which offer stunning reminders of how important it is to take care when leaving your animals in the car.