

STEPHANIE AMATO

Yolo County Sherriff's Office

Director of Animal Services

Originally from Monterey County, CA, Stephanie has resided in Yolo County for the past 20 years after attending UC Davis as an undergraduate in Animal Science and Management. She continued her journey in animal husbandry as a Milker at the UC Davis Dairy. Her passion for teaching continued when she changed careers to become an Assistant Director and Toddler Teacher at an Early Child Development Center. Firmly believing in the saying "Everything Happens for a Reason," Stephanie applied to a position for an Animal Services Officer I (ASO) with the Yolo County Sheriff's Office. Aspiring to utilize her passion for animals, community service and outreach this was the perfect career path for her.

Since starting in 2013, Stephanie was promoted to ASO II and achieved certification as a specialized Animal Cruelty Investigator, which contributed to her recognition by the courts as an expert witness in Animal Sport Fighting, particularly fighting dogs and roosters. She has investigated multiple complex animal cruelty cases resulting in large scale impounds, which once included 80 animals (rabbits, guinea pigs, dogs) found in the back of a U-HAUL in the hot July heat. Stephanie has responded to natural disasters and is specifically trained to respond for animal evacuations during wildland fire incidents. Continuing on her leadership path, Stephanie was promoted to a Field Training Officer and then Supervising ASO assigned to the shelter. Throughout her 8 years with Yolo County Animal Services, Stephanie has been tasked with a variety of "duties as assigned." Many of these have been community outreach opportunities which Stephanie holds as her primary goal in her role as an Animal Services Officer and now Shelter Director.

Stephanie believes by providing the communities she serves with opportunities focused on the human-animal bond and positive law enforcement interactions; the impact on the numbers of animals will grow. Areas specifically in Yolo County needing additional resources, such as low cost spay/neuter, vaccinations, basic veterinary care are a high priority for Stephanie as a career goal. Stephanie envisions the Yolo County Shelter as the "Resource Hub" for all things related to the animals in our county. Her goal is to expand her partnership to not only the current UC Davis Shelter Medicine Program but with specialists, local veterinarians and trainers.

When the opportunity arises, Stephanie will take the time to share how much she and her team are so much more than "DOG CATCHERS" who work at "THE POUND." Advocacy and education are her prime passions; and she has been a huge source of weekly #PAWSITE MOMENTS on ABC 10 Morning Blend. This existing partnership has grown exponentially during the COVID pandemic, resulting in more animals finding their forever homes, and helping to support local small businesses. Her weekly segments featured cuddly puppies, buckets of kittens, special medical cases, donations, the importance of microchips and hot weather safety tips and frontline footage from local California wildfires. As part of their global Helping Small Business media campaign, GOOGLE included her phrase she would close with "If you're ready to open your heart and your home, check us out (on social media)."

When Stephanie isn't at the shelter she can be found at the baseball field cheering on her 2 sons, ages 15 and 10. She is also ALWAYS taking pictures; dogs, cats, kids, food, but her favorite is photographing her garden especially the sunflowers and iris she grows. Stephanie strives to give 100% to those areas in her life that mean the most which is her FAMILY; at home, the shelter and the community of Yolo County.