



2015 Annual Report: Special empathy issue

“How empathy keeps me going” • One dog’s incredible journey home • What is empathy, and why is it important? • Kids share how empathy makes a difference



Happy spring!

THIS ISSUE of *Companion*, in addition to containing our Annual Report to our members, could also be called the *Empathy Issue*!

Everything that RedRover does — from the way we run our programs to the way we answer our phones — is done with empathy and caring in mind. We do this because empathy is part of our brand, it's who we are, but also because we believe in a future where empathy is more widespread, leading to better relationships between people and animals. This may sound idealistic or naive, but in fact, scientific research

supports empathy as a powerful antidote to violence and abuse.

This is why empathy is at the foundation of our RedRover Readers program, and why we are launching an interactive, bilingual digital book and game to make our RedRover Readers curriculum more accessible. Empathy is also at the core of our RedRover Responders program. We “listen” closely to the needs of animals, as well as to our volunteers, staff, partner organizations or agencies and communities, to make our emergency sheltering operations run smoothly. And our RedRover Relief Case Managers use their empathy constantly to help people who are desperate to save the lives of their companion animals. Many times, their emergency could have been prevented, but we use empathy to listen without judgment so we can support the animal and the client.

Lastly, we use empathy to share in the emotional state of gratitude that clients and others express to us.



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Gratitude fuels us all, and I hope it fuels you as well, for we are ever so grateful for your support and all that it helps us accomplish towards our mission of helping animals in crisis and strengthening human-animal relationships.

Warmly,

NICOLE FORSYTH
President and CEO

P.S. Enjoy this 2015 Annual Report edition of *Companion*, and know that your help makes all of this possible!

In Your Words

MY PARSONS TERRIER, Lewis B Gates, patiently waits for me to read him the *Companion* magazine, as it makes him feel good to know we do such great work! Lewis knows the feeling of being a rescue, as he was found in the middle of the highway. What a great companion he's turned out to be for me. Thank you for all you do!

♥ **JACQUI C.** | Monthly donor and legacy member



P.O. Box 188890 Sacramento, CA 95818

TEL 916.429.2457

FAX 916.378.5098

WEB RedRover.org

EMAIL info@RedRover.org

TAX ID # 68-0124097

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How empathy keeps me going

By Beth Gammie,
Director of Field Services

I KNOW IT CAN BE FRUSTRATING

to see other people's lack of concern for animals. It's easy to have reactions like, "Don't they get it!?" or "Why can't they see that an animal has feelings?" In essence, *Why doesn't that person have empathy for animals?*

Empathy helps identify and understand another's situation, thoughts and feelings. It is linked to good health, lower stress and positive relationships. For those of us who feel empathy for animals, the fact that animals feel, suffer pain, experience love and enjoyment — well, this seems obvious, because we feel their emotions with them. But this is not obvious for everyone. A lack of empathy is often what leads to the mistreatment of animals.

When RedRover Responders help shelter animals rescued from cruelty situations, such as puppy mills or



A lack of empathy — not understanding another's situation, thoughts, feelings — is often what leads to the mistreatment of animals.

hoarding cases, we often feel anger at the person or persons responsible for keeping animals in horrible conditions.

Although it may be difficult to fully understand why someone hoards cats, for example, I try to understand the perspective of a hoarder suffering from mental illness, and my empathy helps me move past the anger I might otherwise feel and focus on the solution. Having empathy doesn't mean I condone the abuse, but it does help me understand what in their life might explain why they did what they did.

For example, in one hoarding situation we assisted with, the dogs were kept in filthy conditions, not spayed or neutered, and suffered untreated medical conditions. We knew these animals were suffering. In fact, the owner of the dogs went without her own needed medicine so she could buy dog food. As a child, she suffered physical and emotional abuse, and she was literally

thrown out of the house and into the yard to sleep at night. The family dog was the only comfort she had. Her emotional wounds led her to do anything for the stray dogs in her county, to the point of keeping more animals than she could care for. The dogs clearly needed rescuing, and we did that. But understanding the owner's situation — feeling empathy — helped us stay calm and effectively help the animals.

It is normal to feel anger towards those who mistreat animals. In emergency animal response, we see a lot of horrific conditions. However, at RedRover we strive to take care of the animals and try to find whatever empathy we can for the people involved. And doing this pays off — both for emergency responders and the animals. ♥

For more strategies related to compassion resilience, visit RedRover.org/compassion.



The Chronicles of Riddick: A cross-country Relief story

FOR RACHAEL, MARTY, and their beloved pit bull Riddick, what started as a cross-country trip turned into an amazing journey of survival and reconnection — thanks to your support and the kindness of some empathetic strangers.

Rachael and her fiancé Marty were driving with Riddick from Kentucky to Oregon to visit Rachael's mom, Tracy, when the unthinkable happened: Their car was rear-ended, and Rachael and Marty were ejected from the car. Riddick was thrown from the back seat and crushed against the front seats.



Rachael and Marty were life-flighted to a hospital in Colorado, and they had to leave Riddick behind.

A local animal rescue person in Kansas picked up Riddick and took him to a veterinarian. His hip was dislocated, and he needed surgery to remove the head of his femur. Rachael and Marty were dealing with serious injuries of their own. Marty had to return home to Kentucky to recover from his injuries, and Rachael was now alone in a county in Colorado that banned pit bulls. She called her mother, Tracy, in a panic, pleading with her to find Riddick.

"This dog is my daughter and her fiancé's baby," Tracy later told RedRover. "She has had him since he was seven weeks old."

After locating Riddick, Rachael and Tracy still had a formidable roadblock: they didn't have the money to pay for the medical care he needed. Fortunately, Tracy found the RedRover Relief program and submitted an application.

Their story took even more twists and turns, as Rachael and Riddick received unexpected support —

a caring veterinarian reduced the fee for Riddick's surgery so that a RedRover Relief grant could cover the full cost of the care he needed, and an anonymous donor in Kansas paid for Riddick's boarding while he recovered. But more obstacles lay ahead. Rachael had to get Riddick to Oregon without a car and with limited funds.

After trying unsuccessfully to travel by train, Rachael and Riddick were stranded in Grand Junction, Colorado, where a kind shop-owner provided them a place to stay. Tracy found RUFF Sanctuary, hoping Riddick could stay there until Rachael found a way to get him to Oregon. RUFF listened to Riddick's story and decided it needed a happier ending. They offered to drive both Rachael and Riddick to Oregon, and RedRover was able to help with the travel costs.

Finally, after 45 days and 2,500 miles, Rachael and Riddick made it home to Tracy!

The day they arrived, Tracy contacted RedRover with an overjoyed, "Yippee!!!" As for Riddick, Tracy soon reported, "His leg has healed great and he can run full

...Rachael was now alone in a county in Colorado that banned pit bulls. She called her mother, Tracy, in a panic, pleading with her to find Riddick.





He is an amazing, sweet, gentle boy, and now is safe thanks to RedRover! Thank you so much, more than words can say!

speed now! He bounces when it's time to eat. He is an amazing, sweet, gentle boy, and now is safe thanks to RedRover! Thank you so much, more than words can say!"

Riddick and his family went through huge trials and tribulations, but thanks to the kindness of individuals who stepped up to help — and the support of RedRover members like you — Rachael and Riddick were finally able to make their way home, together. Thank you to our wonderful donors for working with us to help bring Riddick from crisis and to care. ♥

KENTUCKY

Learn more about RedRover Relief at RedRover.org/Relief.



The gift that keeps giving

REDROVER'S UNIQUE MAJOR DONOR GIVING PROGRAM, the On-Call Angel program, continues to grow...both in numbers and in the creative ways people are donating to help animals in need.



Andy Bass, a long-time RedRover Responders volunteer, decided to create a special tribute with the donations that were given to RedRover in honor of his partner Bobbie Williams' passing, to celebrate her life in the most fitting way possible: by helping an animal in need through the On-Call Angel program. Bobbie was also a RedRover Responders volunteer, and she had dedicated her life to promoting the bond between humans and animals. Andy continued Bobbie's legacy by using the donations to help a cat named Mulder get urgent surgery to remove an intestinal blockage — and keep Mulder and his family together in their time of crisis. ♥

Find out how to become an On-Call Angel at RedRover.org/angel.

Empathy and the evolution of the RedRover Readers program

By Nicole Forsyth, RedRover President and CEO

Why did RedRover develop the RedRover Readers program?

RedRover has been helping animal victims of cruelty and neglect for 29 years. We shelter animal victims of criminal cruelty cases involving dog fighting and puppy mills. We care for animals rescued from hoarding situations and natural disasters. We help domestic violence victims escape their abusers with their pets.

In the 10 years I've been with RedRover, I have heard hundreds of stories of cruelty. It didn't take many of these stories for me to realize the

Learning should change your brain, and with it your behavior — and that's what RedRover Readers can do.

need to actively prevent cruelty instead of just put a Band-Aid on it.

This is why I pushed for RedRover to develop, test and expand the RedRover Readers program as a way to prevent animal cruelty and neglect by nurturing empathy early in kids.

The RedRover Readers program harnesses the power of stories and



cognitive neuroscience to nurture a child's ability to imagine how a person or animal feels. Teachers who take the RedRover Readers training tell us it is the best training they have ever attended, the kind that "changes you from the inside." Teachers who use the program tell us their students' attitudes towards animals change, and students treat each other better.

RedRover Readers Timeline



2006

April 2006

Nicole Forsyth joins RedRover as President and CEO and brings with her the vision of preventing animal abuse before it starts by fostering empathy and compassion in children toward animals

May 2007

Alexa Mergen hired as Volunteer and Education Coordinator to develop a program based on research and Nicole's vision, named the Humane Education Ambassador Readers (HEAR) program

November 2007

Official launch of the Humane Education Ambassador Readers (HEAR) program in Sacramento, California



2007

March 2008

HEAR program reaches 23 groups of children at 10 different sites, delivering the program to more than 250 children in the first six months



2008

September 2008

Inverness Research conducts a qualitative, pilot study of the HEAR program to investigate the benefits of the HEAR program on children



2009

February 2009

Karly Noel hired as new Education Manager

June 2009

Inverness Research study complete; findings are positive, and feedback helps revise the program to make it even more effective

January 2010

The HEAR program moves from primarily volunteer-implemented to primarily teacher-implemented, to expand the reach of the program and increase sustainability



2010



What is empathy, and why is it important?

Feeling empathy is understanding and to some degree feeling or sharing another's emotional state. Empathy can be felt for both people and animals.

Often people talk about kindness, compassion or sympathy as driving forces behind all that is good and just in the world, but empathy is the emotional state critical for connection. Feeling bad for someone (sympathy) might motivate you to help, but it puts you apart from someone. Empathy means you are right there with someone, and when you listen with empathy, others can tell. Empathy is a necessary 21st century skill, critical for positive relationships and teamwork, as well as design and innovation. For RedRover, empathy is critical to strengthening relationships between people and pets.

How is RedRover Readers unique?

Our focus on empathy and our student-centered, nonjudgmental approach truly make RedRover Readers unique.

In our training for educators, we present powerful methods of teaching that facilitate kids figuring out for themselves how they want to treat animals, and we demonstrate how the power of stories and genuine listening can make learning stick. Learning should change your brain, and with it your behavior — and that's what RedRover Readers can do.

RedRover will continue to bring as many animals from crisis to care as we can. But sadly, not all animals can be saved. What if every child across the country had the opportunity to learn how they can build a positive relationship with a dog or cat? What if all children understood that animals can feel scared and lonely like they do?



What if they all understood that animals can “talk” to us, and when we listen, we can feel better about ourselves and more connected? How many children would choose to view and treat animals differently — to not dogfight, to not throw rocks at, to not abandon, to not leave chained outside? How many animals could be spared from suffering? ♥

Learn more about the RedRover Readers program and how RedRover is using our new e-book app to help make the future a more compassionate place for all at RedRover.org/e-book.

2011

June 2011

United Animal Nations changes its name to RedRover, and the HEAR program becomes the RedRover Readers program

October 2011

RedRover Readers offers an online training course, hosted by Humane Society University, greatly expanding our training reach



2012

June 2013

Estimates based on teacher-reports indicate the RedRover Readers program has reached 37,000 children since program's inception

2013

March 2014

RedRover partners with The New School for Social Research to conduct a more rigorous, controlled quantitative study to measure the impact of the RedRover Readers program

May 2014

RedRover Readers envisions expanding its educational resources to be more easily accessible to teachers, parents and kids; initiates concept of interactive, bilingual digital books and games

October 2014

A successful Kickstarter campaign raises over \$19,000 to kick-off RedRover's E-Books for Empathy project

2014

2015

July–October 2015

RedRover Readers moves its online training course in-house, using our own platform to train more teachers using an interactive, online course



May 2016

RedRover's first e-book app, *The Restricted Adventures of Raja*, is released

2016

2015 Annual Report

YOU DID IT!

You gave lifesaving care to animals. You brought RedRover's mission to communities where animals needed care. You built the foundation for future animal-protectors to carry on our work. On behalf of every animal we brought out of crisis and into care in 2015, **we thank you for your dedication to RedRover and the animals.**



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of RedRover is to bring animals out of crisis and strengthen the bond between people and animals through emergency sheltering, disaster relief services, financial assistance and education. RedRover accomplishes its mission by engaging volunteers and supporters, collaborating with others and maximizing the use of online technology.

RedRover Financials

BECAUSE OF YOU, WE ARE ABLE TO BRING ANIMALS OUT OF CRISIS AND STRENGTHEN THE BOND BETWEEN PEOPLE AND ANIMALS. Through your awe-inspiring generosity for the animals,

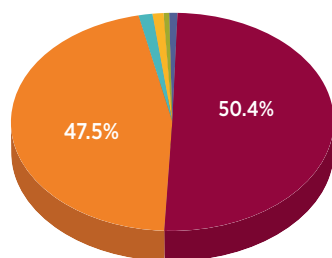
you gave a total of \$3,248,656 in 2015. We are pleased to report that 79 cents out of every dollar was spent on programs serving animals, and 21 cents was spent on supporting services. RedRover closed 2015 with \$6,399,752 in ending net assets. ♥

THREE CHEERS FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Our caring volunteers generously gave over 5,000 hours of their time providing emergency sheltering and care for rescued animals and helping children develop empathy for animals in 2015.

Fair market value of volunteer hours in 2015:
\$118,764

2015 Income Breakdown*



Bequests	\$ 1,668,614
Contributions	1,573,433
Interest and investment income	22,461
Program services	20,550
In-kind donations	6,609
Other income	\$ 18,980

TOTAL INCOME

\$ 3,310,647

*For complete audited financial statements, visit RedRover.org/financial.

RedRover Responders

SHELTERS AND CARES for animals displaced by natural disasters and other crises, such as criminal seizures and hoarding cases in the United States and Canada.



- **1,387** animals in crisis were helped through emergency sheltering and care services
- **1,536** more animals were helped through advice and other services from RedRover staff
- **4,614** hours of volunteer work providing direct sheltering and animal care services

2015 Emergency Responses

- JAN** ■ Dog rescue — Pike County, Ohio
- JAN** ■ Mass Cat Trapping, Spay/Neuter, Release — St. George Island, Florida
- MAY** ■ Animal Shelter Expansion Project — Hancock County, Mississippi
- JUNE** ■ Flood Relief — San Marcos, Texas
- JUNE** ■ Dog Hoarding — Posey County, Indiana
- JUNE** ■ Mass Cat Trapping, Spay/Neuter, Release — Maui, Hawaii
- JUL** ■ Cat and Dog Hoarding — Chatham County, North Carolina
- JUL** ■ Dog Hoarding — Washington County, Ohio
- OCT** ■ Flood Relief — Georgetown, South Carolina
- DEC** ■ Dog and Cat Rescue — Adams County, Ohio



Two islands, 800 community cats

IN 2015, our RedRover Responders team helped trap, spay/neuter, vaccinate and release more than 800 community cats.

In January, 10 incredibly dedicated RedRover Responders volunteers deployed to St. George Island, Florida. In just four days, amidst long hours and harsh winter storms, they were able to trap, spay/neuter, vaccinate, deworm and release 102 feral community cats.

Five months later, our RedRover Responders team deployed to the island of Maui to assist with the first large-scale targeted, humane population reduction program for free-roaming cats. With your support, across thousands of miles, we came together with a common goal: to bring these animals from crisis to care.

Thank you! ♥



RedRover Readers

A **UNIQUE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM** that helps children develop empathy and explore the bond between people and animals through stories and discussion.



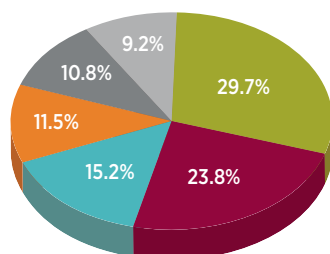
- **1,171** new children were reached to develop empathy for animals
- **67** classroom visits were conducted
- **187** new volunteers, teachers and educators were trained
- **44,336** total estimated children reached through the RedRover Readers program to date



ONE OF OUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS in the RedRover Readers program in 2015 was the development of our bilingual, interactive digital game and book, *The Restricted Adventures of Raja*, which is the first installment in an innovative project called E-Books for Empathy. This e-book series is now part of our RedRover Readers program, enabling more kids to develop and practice empathy for animals and people, both at home and in schools. Get the app on iTunes or Google Play.



2015 Expense Breakdown*



RedRover Relief	\$ 640,565
RedRover Responders	506,771
RedRover Readers	328,911
Advocacy, Public Education and Outreach	248,488
Total program services	\$ 1,724,734
Management and General	233,580
Fundraising	199,413
Total supporting services	\$ 432,993
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 2,157,727

*For complete audited financial statements, visit RedRover.org/financial.

RedRover Relief

PROVIDES FINANCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT to Good Samaritans, animal rescuers and pet owners to help them care for animals in life-threatening situations and resources to help victims of domestic violence escape abusive environments with their pets.

- **3,600+** animals in life-threatening situations were served
- **531** pets got urgent veterinary treatment through **\$125,771** in financial assistance
- **192** pets escaped domestic violence through RedRover's Safe Escape program
- **4,810** nights safe from abuse were given to domestic violence victims' pets through **\$64,337** in grants
- **17** domestic violence shelters received **\$82,644** from RedRover's Safe Housing program to build on-site housing for pets
- **96** animal-friendly domestic violence shelters joined RedRover's SafePlaceforPets.org directory
- **15,290** website visits to SafePlaceforPets.org
- **632** programs listed on SafePlaceforPets.org to help people and pets escape domestic violence at the end of 2015



TINY BRINGS SMILES TO SAFE HOUSING

Haven Hills, a domestic violence shelter and Safe Housing grant recipient in Canoga Park, CA, recently enjoyed a visit from Tiny. "Tiny accompanied a crisis shelter client to our program and brought smiles to many faces during his stay," Katharine, the Clinical Director, told us. "He is a cutie pie, and we so enjoyed having him at the shelter!" ♥



YOU saved Tiny

Your support helps pets escape domestic violence

"Thank you for everything that RedRover was able to do for our client. It made a world of difference in their level of happiness and comfort while they were staying with us. As you know, often victims of domestic violence and sexual assault are traumatized, and having their animal companions close by can offer a source of comfort when coming into a shelter where they are adjusting to finally having safety in their lives. It can all be a bit overwhelming, so your program is a boon to survivors. Having their pet close by can provide them

with an anchor point, someone familiar whom they care about and trust and who cares about them. I hope the RedRover program continues for a very long time."

— Sonja P., **Voices Against Violence**,
Plymouth, NH
2015 Safe Escape grant recipient

INTERACT ONLINE

Visit SafePlaceforPets.org to see if there are any domestic violence shelters in your area with pet housing or resources for victims who also have pets.



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Share our stories! Leave *Companion* at your doctor's office, vet clinic, gym, lunch room or coffee shop.
To protect your privacy, please clip out or blacken your name and address above.

See how empathy makes a difference

YOUR SUPPORT brings the RedRover Readers program and our new interactive, digital book to kids and classrooms across the country. Read what this young generation has to say about learning how to take others' perspectives, thanks to you:

After I read the RedRover books, I changed, and I started liking dogs a lot. I really know their feelings now. Like when I didn't read animal empathy books yet, I sounded pretty mean, and I think [the dogs] were beginning to get pretty sad.

— JACOB

I liked how I got to hear my classmates' point of view about the book.

— ALEX

I learned the animals' perspectives. I learned how they feel...

— NUMAAN

REDROVER READERS is a unique social and emotional learning program designed to foster empathy for people and animals. Teachers and other educators trained to implement the RedRover Readers curriculum read humane-themed children's picture books and facilitate critical thinking discussions to help children explore the human-animal bond.
For more information, visit RedRover.org/Readers.