

Dear Mayor and City Commissioners,

I am forwarding an email I sent yesterday to Animal Control. I thought I had cc'd you but that was not the case. I just really want it known that the way the Animal Adoption Center on Savannah Rd is being run is exceptional. Thank you!

Respectfully,

Davida Margolin

Dear Ms. Arraiz,

After being a resident of this area for about seven years, I never thought I would be writing such an email regarding the Animal Adoption Center on Savannah Road. I have been going there for years as an animal advocate and rescuer, specifically shepherds and have chronically been met with overall dismal results from unhappy people who appear to really dislike their jobs. I have also met with people that one might consider cruel, ones who take joy in the suffering of animals and the people who care for them. It has been just an exasperating and desperate process overall trying to save dogs from this facility. Yet we have, luckily so, but the work involved and the rules we were made to follow (different each time, made up on a whim it seemed) were often outrageous. I have paid for a trainer/behaviorist out of my own pocket to come out and evaluate shepherds in need, as you might know, shepherds quite often behave horrendously in shelters. Why, just last year, fall of 2021, there was a young pup who was terrified. Worked with the trainer and in moments she was out of the kennel run and learning commands...she is a PTSD dog for a veteran now, on the West Coast of FL. Yet, moments after we finished working with her, a sign was placed on her kennel that she was aggressive and slated for euthanasia. That sign went up apparently pretty much as we were leaving the parking lot. Thank goodness we had more chances though and were able to get that dog out. However every single time thereafter there were more hoops to jump through. It has been a nightmare, a heartbreaking experience. I have talked to a few other rescuers in the community and some have just flat out refused to work with that facility any more. Such a shame as it is the dogs who pay the price. These rescues are well known, much respected and make good choices. It is so disheartening to know that they no longer want to help out here, where it is so needed.

HOWEVER, like I said, I never expected to be writing a letter like this but here I go... I cannot sing the praises enough of the new management there, especially Summer Rupalaugh. It's like not only did the awful smell leave the building, so did the bad attitudes. I go in there now and everyone is smiling and helping people (last year I saw someone turn away a couple who came to adopt a cat because they were too busy....., it was shocking). The younger staff members are all people who really want to work with dogs and learn about them and make them more adoptable. Lately when the trainer comes by, they take time out for a few lessons. They are all encouraged by Summer to do this. Summer is that breath of fresh air so badly needed at this place. I am astounded by the difference. The despair is gone. When I am headed out to Savannah road, no longer is there a feeling of dread in the pit of my stomach. If I message Summer about a dog, I know I will get a reply. I love the fact that she wants to use good judgement to save the ones she can. Yes, I know sometimes there are hard decisions that need to be made, but I know that Summer grapples with them and this is not like before where a sneeze or an eye infection or rapid lip licking ended up at the end of a needle. Needlessly. Summer and the rest have breathed new life into these buildings. I hope that the public learns about this and starts going there for adoptions etc. I think that it can be a beacon for change and turnaround. I wanted you to know how grateful I am that you have facilitated this change for that center and I wanted to say thank you. And I also think it is absolutely imperative that you know just what a gem Summer is, I hope you realize that. Thank you!

Warm Regards,

Davida Margolin

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