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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 25, 2016



****NEWS ADVISORY****

East Bay SPCA Teaching Love & Compassion Commencement Ceremony
to be held Thursday, March 31 in Oakland

- WHO:** East Bay SPCA canine trainee dogs in Humane Education Program with 13 seventh and eighth-grade students from the Lighthouse Community Charter School in Oakland.
- WHAT:** The Teaching Love and Compassion Program (TLC) 2016 commencement ceremony. TLC is a seven-week long violence prevention program for at-risk youth designed to teach empathy and compassion. TLC engages middle school students who live in high-crime and gang areas. Students learn to care for and train homeless shelter dogs using positive reinforcement. They also participate in interactive lessons that include public speaking, anger management, conflict resolution, animal cruelty issues, and team development exercises. At the ceremony, students demonstrate their dog-training skills for family, teachers and peers and meet their dog's new adoptive family to give advice about what their dog knows and needs.
- WHEN:** Thursday, March 31, 2016 from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm
- WHERE:** East Bay SPCA, Education and Training Center, 8323 Baldwin Street, Oakland, CA 94621
- HOW:** Media is invited to attend. Please contact Jessica Perrin, jperrin@eastbayspca.org 510-563-4605.
- WHY:** Studies show that cruelty toward animals by children may be a symptom of existing domestic violence and stress, as well as a predictor of future violence toward people. If compassion and respect for animals can be taught at a young age, the violence toward animals is reduced and in turn lessens the violence toward people. TLC students learn to accept animals as living beings with feelings and needs. Participants are better able to recognize and express their own emotions, give increased consideration to the thoughts and feelings of others, cope with stress, and to begin thinking in less negative or self-serving ways.

“TLC is one of our key strategic initiatives to serve our immediate community by expanding the role of traditional animal welfare. The program focuses on our fundamental mission: to eliminate animal cruelty, neglect and overpopulation by providing programs and education that support people and companion animals,” said Allison Lindquist, East Bay SPCA President and CEO.

Students learn basic life coping skills such as anger management, conflict resolution and teamwork. Each student is teamed with a partner and an untrained shelter dog. The student teams work together with their shelter dog every day after school for four weeks. Students build a bond with the animal and the shelter dog learns basic obedience training.

“What’s fascinating is watching the kids develop relationships with the dogs. In return, the dogs bond with the kids,” said Marti Zuckrow, TLC’s assistant trainer. “It’s simple and life-affirming for kids who may have struggled all their lives to form bonds. I’ve noticed how they grow more patient and tolerant with every interaction.”

TLC dogs are available for adoption during the program but wait until graduation to go home with their adoptive families. If you’d like more information about Humane Education programs at the East Bay SPCA or adoptable animals, please visit www.eastbayspca.org

About the [East Bay SPCA](http://www.eastbayspca.org)

The East Bay SPCA is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit committed to the welfare of cats and dogs in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Our mission is to eliminate animal cruelty, neglect and overpopulation by providing programs and education that support people and companion animals. We operate [adoption centers](#) in Oakland and Dublin; offer [training classes](#), [humane education programs](#) and [spay/neuter centers](#) in both locations; and a full-service [veterinary clinic](#) in Oakland. Founded in 1874, The East Bay SPCA is one of the nation’s oldest humane organizations and receives no funding from any national organizations. www.eastbayspca.org

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