

# Going above and beyond

Councilman and former police officer works for people — and pets BY NICOLE HAMILTON



Keith Blackburn with Red

policy with dogs seized from fight busts). In an effort to keep the dogs healthy and better socialized, Keith received permission from the district attorney to walk the dogs, a decision that was made because he was, in fact, a member of law enforcement.

For 10 months, he walked 10 dogs — one at a time — every single day. And when the case was finally over, one of the dogs, Red,

Keith takes on the responsibility of nurturing some of the shelter's most difficult-to-place dogs.

found a forever home with Keith's daughter. Keith remembers that when Red first came to the shelter, he was in rough shape. He had been beaten up badly and was so full of steroids that he had, Keith says, "muscles growing out of muscles." Today, Red is a laid-back, sweet old dog who has lived happily with both cats and toddlers, including Keith's grandson.

Keith understands the issues affecting homeless pets not only through his work at the shelter, but also in his capacity as a legislator on the city council. Recently, he helped pass an ordinance to ban the retail sale of milled pets in Carlsbad's pet stores.

He also goes the extra mile to help pets in other ways: He donates his city council income to animal welfare causes and funds animals' medical expenses whenever he can. Plus, he still visits the shelter every day, where in true Keith fashion, he focuses on walking as many dogs as possible. 🐾

**SOME PEOPLE INDISPUTABLY** go above and beyond when it comes to serving their communities. People like Keith Blackburn, for example. Keith was a police officer for 36 years, is currently a member of the city council in Carlsbad, California, and was even mayor pro tem of the city in 2015. But his work extends further than looking out for the people of Carlsbad. He's committed to helping its animals as well.

Keith can trace his interest in animal welfare back to his time with the Carlsbad police department, where he was a K9 officer. "I really got attached to them," Keith says about his canine co-workers. "Of course, working

as a full-time police officer didn't give me a lot of extra time to volunteer. Once I retired, I could start working with dogs at the shelter and do much more to make an impact."

In shelters, it's often the dogs with behavior issues who need the most care and attention. Keith understands this, so he takes on the responsibility of nurturing some of the shelter's most difficult-to-place dogs.

Several years ago, for example, 10 pit bull terriers came into the shelter from a dog-fighting situation. Because the dogs were being held as evidence in the legal case, they were living in the back of the shelter and were not allowed to be walked (standard

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