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Off 68 is a publication created specifically for residents of the Highway 68 and River Road corridors, including Spreckels, Las Palmas Ranch, Toro Park Estates, Corral de Tierra, Hidden Hills, Bay Ridge, Pasadera, Laguna Seca, Fisherman's Flats, Montsalas, and surrounding areas.

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**ON THE COVER:**  
Education pioneer Virginia Rocco Barton died in May at age 99. JUAN VILLA/SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

The Californian

## News

# Max's Helping Paws provides hope

## Group helps get treatment for ailing support animals

"Your News" Contributor Marci Bracco Cain

To Heather, her dog Trigger is more than a companion. He is her "gift from God" and a certified Emotional Support Animal (ESA). But even more than that, he's a member of her family along with her husband and three kids.

Heather is a U.S. Navy veteran, a former mineman used to dealing with high explosives, and suffers from PTSD. Trigger helps her deal with everyday life as a PTSD sufferer. So when Trigger fell ill, with blood and vomiting, he was diagnosed with a multitude of conditions that needed to be addressed right away, Heather's heart sank.

Heather and her family were faced with a very difficult decision. The family was not able to afford the necessary medical treatment for Trigger. Without treatment and surgery, he would surely die.

"It's hard to imagine that you could lose a member of your family over not being able to afford a simple test that we as humans take for granted," said Heather. "I couldn't imagine what my life would be like if I didn't have him in my life."

Luckily, Pet Specialists of Monterey, one of 20 partners, graciously arranged to have Trigger receive assistance from Max's Helping Paws Foundation (MHPPF). Max's Helping Paws Foundation is a Monterey County-based animal welfare organization that has actively given back to the community by helping more than 100 senior, low-income, veteran, disabled, disadvantaged and in-need responsible pet owners in the past 18 months.

Since its inception in mid-2017 it has awarded \$75,000 in financial assistance to those needing it. Max's Helping Paws is a financial lifeline for those desperate to save their dogs and cats from unexpected circumstance.

"We cannot express how much we appreciate all those that chipped in and came together to help him and us," said Heather about Trigger's last-minute reprieve. "I am so grateful for all the help we received. There was a point where I really felt we may have to say goodbye to Trigger. When I count my



"Trigger" suffered from severe abdominal blockage but was helped through the Max's Helping Paws Foundation. PROVIDED/DYANA KLEIN

blessings at night, Max's is at the top of the list."

Today, Trigger is continuing a smooth and steady recovery. His gastrointestinal complications have almost completely resolved and his skin improved just in a few days of medication. Trigger is also back to climbing up on his owners bed to snuggle with his best friend, the family's 8-month-old son Wesley and even getting back into the habit of begging for a ride in the car when he hears anyone grab the car keys."

But other dogs and cats may not be so lucky, their owners are constantly faced with decisions that no pet owner wants to face.

"These are my babies, I don't have kids. I think about their own happiness before my own. I'd go homeless before I'd get rid of her," said one, Sarah.

"We wouldn't amputate his arm — he's so young. I considered putting him up for adoption," said another.

"To see pets suffer, or to see pet owners consider euthanasia or surrender because of financial circumstance is heartbreaking," said Dyana Klein, executive director and co-founder of Max's Helping Paws Foundation with her husband, a veterinary internist. "With your help, we can keep families together and keep giving deserving Monterey

County pets an incredible gift."

Maximillian was co-founder Dyana Klein's 14-year old Miniature Pinscher, who passed away on May 27, 2016, from a rare kidney cancer.

While grieving the loss, she and her husband found comfort in knowing they did everything medically possible to try to save Max's life, though ultimately the war was lost. What they realized was just how important it was to know that no stone was left unturned, and they imagined the guilt and heartbreak for those who might have to allow their pets to suffer, or may need to euthanize or surrender them because of financial circumstances. Wanting to do something meaningful, and honor Max's memory in a way that would help them heal while helping others, Max's Helping Paws was born.

Max's Helping Paws provides a financial lifeline for responsible Monterey County pet owners with a pet in a health crisis.

Visit [www.maxshelpingpaws.org](http://www.maxshelpingpaws.org), email [info@maxshelpingpaws.org](mailto:info@maxshelpingpaws.org), or call 831-704-6473 for more information.

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