



Want to be an animal rescuer when you grow up?

We talked to a BC SPCA animal protection officer, **Special Provincial Constable John Meneray**, to learn how he got started and what it's like working on the frontlines rescuing animals.

What made you want to work for the BC SPCA?

I heard about the position from a friend already working for the SPCA cruelty department. I love animals and the thought of being the last line of defense in animal protection seemed like a perfect fit.

Are there any animals who have made a special impression on you?

I've been around all kinds of animals my whole life. I grew up in a small town working on a dairy farm, and I currently have a four-year-old German shepherd. I've always felt the need to care for animals. They brought me joy growing up and now I get to protect them as my career.



Can you tell us a little about your professional background?

I've been in the public service since I graduated high school. I joined the military and coast guard at a young age. I later became a fisheries officer, and then a police officer.

What's your favourite part of your job?

Rescuing animals who otherwise would be suffering. Watching them be adopted into their forever homes is so gratifying.



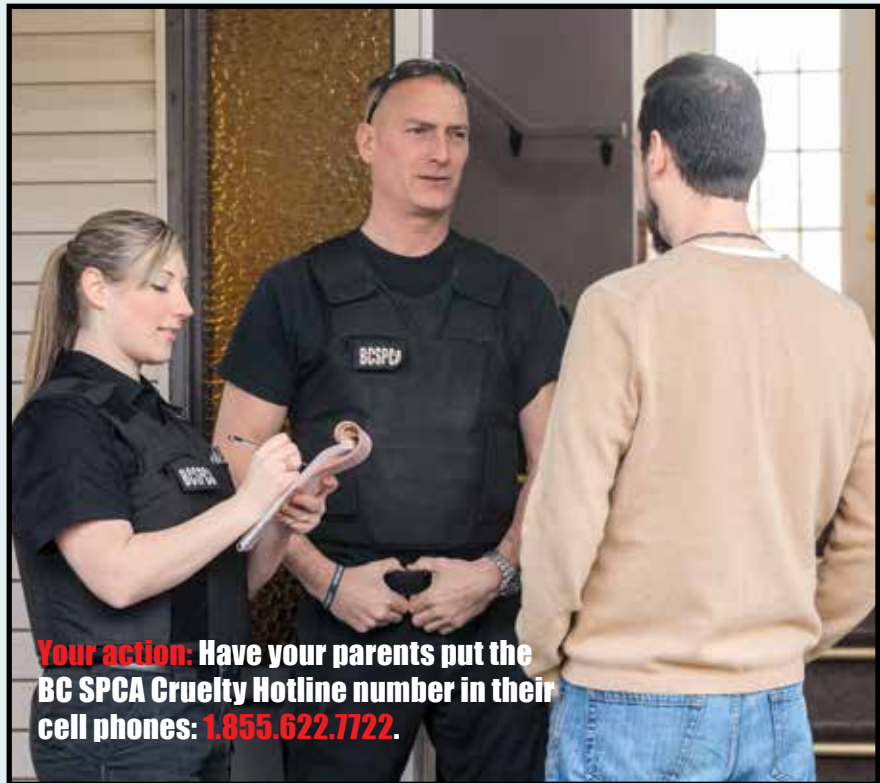
Is there one case that sticks out in your mind?

We got a call from a veterinarian about a young Rottweiler with a major internal infection due to lack of treatment. The doctor told the owner the dog needed surgery or would most definitely die, and soon. The owner said he wouldn't pay for the operation and would just let his dog die. We immediately phoned the owner and informed him that he was required by law to get his dog medical attention. He angrily refused and hung up, so we got a search warrant to legally take and help the dog. I had to carry the dog as he was too weak to walk. He licked my face, which in his state must have been hard. My eyes welled up with tears – I felt like he was saying “thank you.”

At the vet, the dog went into surgery. We weren't sure he would make it, but thankfully the operation was a success. After several weeks of care by shelter staff and volunteers, he bounced back to health and was adopted into a loving family. The owner was charged with animal cruelty and found guilty.

What is the most unusual animal you've helped?

Ever heard of a caiman? They're from South America, but we got a call from landscapers working in a townhouse complex. They reported a “crocodile” in a kiddie pool. I've seen many crazy things in my career but this is definitely in the top 10.



Your action: Have your parents put the BC SPCA Cruelty Hotline number in their cell phones: **1.855.622.7722.**

What keeps you excited to do your job every day?

Our constables are the first contact in dealing with animals in distress. But we're part of a much greater team. Once we rescue an animal, there is important work to follow by volunteers, veterinarians, shelter and office staff, and the unsung heroes, our donors. Without any one of these, it would be very hard to do what we do.

What is one piece of advice you would give to kids who want to make a difference for animals?

Speak for the animals. Go to shelters with your parents. See the animals, hear their stories and share those stories in your classroom. Encourage people to report suspected animal cruelty when they see it. When you can, become a volunteer! It is very rewarding and honourable work.

Your career path... to becoming a BC SPCA animal protection officer

- ✓ Graduate high school
- ✓ Post-secondary school (preferred)
- ✓ B.C. driver's license
- ✓ Knowledge of animals and animal welfare laws
- ✓ Communication and organizational skills
- ✓ Justice Institute courses and special exams
- ✓ Appointment as a Special Provincial Constable under the Police Act

