



# 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.



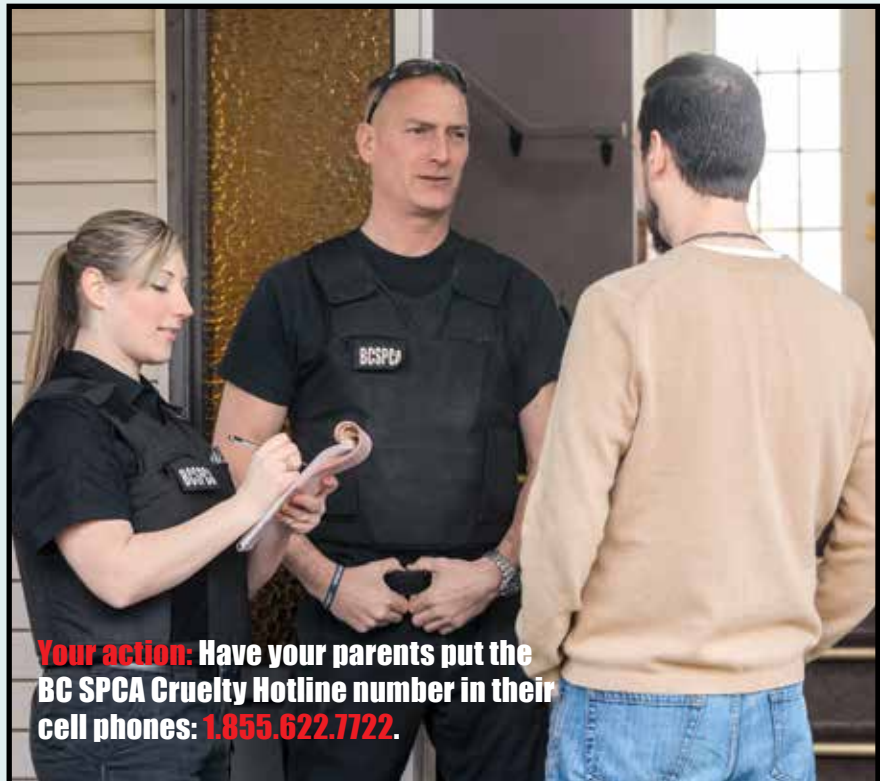
Is there one case that sticks out in your mind?

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







Emma, a former sled dog



This puppy, House, fell out of a truck and needed surgery.

# Want to run an animal shelter when you grow up?

We chatted with **Wendy Davies**, manager of the BC SPCA South Peace Branch in Dawson Creek. She told us all about the rewards and challenges of running an animal shelter.

What made you want to work for the BC SPCA?

I started my journey with the BC SPCA as a volunteer almost nine years ago. Working for the BC SPCA allows me to help animals by working toward changes that make the world better for them. At the BC SPCA, we are always looking for ways to improve the lives of animals – both in our communities and in our shelters.



Wendy and Emma

What do you do at the BC SPCA?

I have been managing the South Peace Branch for eight-and-a-half years. As a branch manager, I wear many hats! Some of my duties include:

- Finding new families for thousands of homeless animals
- Helping hundreds of injured, abused and neglected animals recover and learn to trust people again
- Teaching people in our community about cool animal facts and how to be safe around and care for animals
- Enforcing and improving animal bylaws
- Working with local government and RCMP as a team to protect animals in our region from cruelty

If you had pets growing up, can you tell us about one memory that sticks out for you?

I grew up with cats, dogs and horses. As a child, my cat, Misty, always snuggled in with me when I went to sleep at night. She always made me feel safe and warm.

Can you tell us a little bit about your professional background?

I used to work with preschool children, helping to improve their speech development using play and positive interactions. I find that the patience and positive energy required to work with young children is also a valuable skill when working with animals.

What's your favourite part of your job?

Watching dogs and kittens play. Snuggling cute pets. Helping scared animals feel safe again.



Miss Shivers had Frostbite.



Wendy and her staff rescued this baby beaver when her family's dam washed out during a flood.



Above: Winter is one of the biggest challenges of running a shelter in the northern part of B.C. Wendy and her staff have to work extra hard to make sure the animals outside are safe when it's very cold.

Below: The BC SPCA is building a new shelter in Dawson Creek! Wendy is most looking forward to having more space for volunteers and for the community to get involved — through youth reading programs and other activities for kids.

Is there one case that sticks out in your mind?

On New Year's Eve four years ago, we rescued 19 extremely neglected sled dogs. Volunteers flooded in and we were able to help the dogs recover and learn how to become wonderful pets.

One of the dogs was so scared that she wouldn't even eat while at the shelter. I fostered and then adopted sweet Emma. Today, she is nearly 14 years old and spends all of her days warm and cuddled on the couch. Emma is the sweetest, most sensitive dog I have ever met. She reminds me every day that the work we are doing is important and does change the world for many animals.

What is the most unusual animal you've helped?

A baby beaver! Her family's dam was washed out during a flood and she is now recovering at Wild ARC (the BC SPCA's wildlife rehabilitation centre on Vancouver Island). From what I understand, she will be returned to Dawson Creek and released where she was found sometime over the coming year.

What keeps you excited to do your job every day?

Seeing the happiness of the animals when I come in each day. Adoption days. Watching animals heal and get both emotionally and physically better when they have been

through tough times. The mornings here are full of puppy smiles and purring kitties. It's a check-in I do each day that tells me that we are doing a good job.

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

Choose to do something to make the world a better place. Don't just talk or complain about problems you see! Take action. Volunteer. Fight for something you believe in. When you see a problem, think about ways to make it better and work on it! It's amazing how often you are able to change things when you put your mind and heart into it.

## Your career path... to becoming an animal shelter manager

- ✓ Graduate high school
- ✓ Post-secondary school (preferred)
- ✓ B.C. driver's license
- ✓ Management experience
- ✓ Leadership, communication and organizational skills
- ✓ Knowledge of the Five Freedoms and animal welfare
- ✓ Experience in an animal shelter, managing volunteers or fundraising



Buzz, a rescued stray





# Want to rescue farm animals when you grow up?



Horses are Leiki's favourite farm animal.

**We talked to Leiki Salumets, who runs the BC SPCA Good Shepherd Barn in Surrey. She shared with us what it's like caring for farm animals saved from abuse and neglect.**

**What made you want to work for the BC SPCA?**

As far back as I can remember, I've felt a calling to help animals. Growing up, I went to BC SPCA summer camp, where I learned that there were so many jobs out there that would allow me to improve the lives of animals. The BC SPCA is a great place to do that in many different ways.

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

When I was 16, I adopted my

first horse. She was very anxious and had some back issues. She taught me to be patient and understanding. She also showed me that the happiness and well-being of a horse were more important to me than riding would ever be. I did still ride her for a bit, but now she's retired. She just enjoys being a horse. It makes me happy to be able to provide her a forever home where she never has to feel anxious again. I want to help more animals like her find caring forever homes.

**Can you tell us a little about your professional background?**

As a teenager, I worked at a stable, feeding and cleaning up after the horses. In the summers, I worked at horse camps as a counsellor. I also volunteered at a vet clinic, which led to a part-time job later on in high school and university. While getting my degree in English literature, I worked as a BC SPCA summer camp counsellor. This led to a full-time job with the BC SPCA, running camps and workshops for kids. Horses are still my biggest passion, so I continue to learn as much as I can about horse welfare and care through online university courses and reading.

**What's your favourite part of your job?**

Seeing animals come into our care after being neglected is very difficult, but seeing them recover and adopted out into loving homes is very rewarding. One of the best things is when an animal feels energetic and happy enough to play again!



Sheep and goats and pigs... oh my! Leiki cares for all sorts of farm animals at the BC SPCA Good Shepherd Barn in Surrey.

**Is there one case that sticks out in your mind?**

The best cases are ones where we don't have to seize any animals! We can make a difference just by providing guardians with the information and tools they need to improve the lives of the animals in their care. Those are the greatest successes in my mind.

**What's the most unusual animal you've helped?**

We've had all sorts of animals come into our care: everything from chickens and ducks to goats, sheep, donkeys, horses and even pigeons! But the most unusual animal I've helped would have to be a llama. They're such interesting creatures. They just have something majestic about



them. Seeing them canter about is quite something!

**What keeps you excited to do your job every day?**

The animals and the wonderful volunteers and staff I work with who share my love for animals. Knowing we're making a difference. The fact that compassion for animals is growing and spreading every day I do my job keeps me motivated. I also love learning about animals, and I definitely learn something new every day, which keeps things very interesting!

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

Role model! Even if you don't have pets of your own, or can't work hands-on with animals, you can make a huge difference just by being kind and compassionate to all living things – animals, plants and people. If you're kind to animals and their habitats and to the people who look after them, you're helping build an animal-friendly community. Keep learning, sharing and listening to others and follow your passions!

## Your career path... to becoming a BC SPCA farm animal care supervisor

- ✓ Graduate high school
- ✓ Post-secondary school (preferred)
- ✓ B.C. driver's license
- ✓ Animal care skills
- ✓ Knowledge of farm animals
- ✓ Volunteer/work experience with farm animals
- ✓ Communication and organizational skills
- ✓ Good physical fitness







Dr. Gordon volunteers her veterinary services at Charlie's Food Bank in Vancouver.

# Want to be a veterinarian when you grow up?

**We caught up with the BC SPCA's senior manager of animal health, Dr. Emilia Gordon, to ask her about being a vet, volunteering at Charlie's Food Bank and the time she helped a kitten named Braveheart.**



**When did you decide you wanted to be a veterinarian?**  
When I was eight years old, I realized there was such a thing as a “doctor for animals.” I had always loved animals and science, so this intrigued me. As I learned more, I fell in love with veterinary medicine and never looked back.

**What do you do at the BC SPCA?**  
As Senior Manager, Animal Health at the BC SPCA, my main

job is to help our 36 animal shelters with their animal health needs. This includes making protocols for vaccinations and medications to help keep animals healthy, as well as training staff and doing community work.

**If you had pets growing up, can you tell us about one memory that sticks out for you?**

My first pet was a neighbourhood cat who “adopted” my family. My sister and I used to make friends

with all of the cats. We would often wake up to a cat meowing outside the window, asking us to come out and play.

**Can you tell us a little bit about your professional background?**

I went to vet school at the University of California, Davis. While I was there, I volunteered at shelters and with a free clinic for pets with homeless guardians. I knew I wanted to learn more about nonprofit work



and use my training to support the most vulnerable families in the community.

## You volunteer at Charlie's Food Bank. What is that all about?

Charlie's provides free pet food and basic veterinary care to pets whose guardians are homeless or struggling in other ways and can't go to a regular vet clinic. These pets are well cared-for and have an amazing bond with their guardians. It's so important to help them stay healthy.

## What's your favourite part of your job?

I love getting to visit our different shelters and communities and meet both people and animals. My favourite thing is when an animal with special needs finds a wonderful home. British Columbia is an amazing place to live, full of caring people!

## Is there one case that sticks out in your mind?

There are so many interesting cases in shelter medicine! One I remember really clearly is a little orange kitten named Braveheart. He came in orphaned and with ringworm, a contagious skin condition. Despite his challenges, he purred all throughout his vet

exam. Once he was treated, he found a wonderful home.

## What is the most unusual animal you've helped?

When I worked in a shelter in California, I got to help treat a sick snake who had been abandoned at the shelter. Shelter vets get to help take care of all different kinds of animals!

## What keeps you excited to do your job every day?

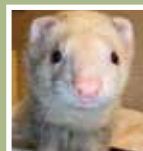
There are so many exciting and challenging things about my job. I love knowing I am helping animals in our shelters stay healthy and find homes. The most exciting thing is the idea that, moving into the future, we can do community work to help animals stay out of shelters!

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

There are so many ways to start! Companion, farm and wild animals need us to speak for them. Whether you start with kids camp, volunteering or writing letters to the newspaper or elected officials, please start somewhere. The animals need you!



As a veterinarian, Dr. Gordon helps keep animals healthy with regular check-ups.



Veterinarians like Dr. Gordon help many different types of animals.



Dr. Gordon loves to spend time with her dog, Jake! Here they are snowshoeing last winter.



## Your career path... to becoming a veterinarian

- ✓ Graduate high school
- ✓ Up to four years of university science studies with excellent grades
- ✓ Volunteer experience with a variety of animals in a veterinary clinic and other animal settings (e.g. animal shelter, farm, wildlife rehabilitation centre)
- ✓ Good communication and organizational skills
- ✓ Four-year Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree (DVM)
- ✓ Pass North American Veterinary Licensing Exam (NAVLE)







Pelican



Raccoon kit



Deer fawn



Owllet



Gull chick



Merganser duckling

# Want to rescue wildlife when you grow up?

**We asked Christina Carrières, senior wildlife rehabilitator at the BC SPCA Wild Animal Rehabilitation Centre (Wild ARC) on Vancouver Island, what it takes to care for orphaned and injured wildlife.**

What made you want to work for the BC SPCA?

Wildlife rehabilitation was intriguing to me. I was also inspired by the BC SPCA's high standards of care and animal welfare, and the dedication of the staff and volunteers. There are so many people with a passion for animals. It's a positive environment with like-minded people.

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

There have always been animals in my life. Growing up, I had cats, mice, hamsters and even turtles. But it was the wildlife in my backyard – the red-winged blackbirds singing to signal the arrival of spring, and the antics of the young raccoons – who really caught my interest. Now I treat about 130 different species at work every year!



Christina examines a northern flicker.

Can you tell us a little about your professional background?

I transferred from pre-veterinary studies at college to a veterinary technician program. I hoped to eventually become a veterinarian. But, after graduating as a registered veterinary technician (RVT), I decided to go into biology and environmental studies at university instead. When I moved to British Columbia from Québec, I worked as an RVT in a few veterinary clinics

before applying for a position as a wildlife rehabilitator at Wild ARC.

What's your favourite part of your job?

Having the opportunity to learn something new every single day. Whether it's a better way to help the wildlife in my care, a fact about their natural history or a technique that increases their chances of survival, there's always more to learn!

Is there one case that sticks out in your mind?

Last summer, a young cedar waxwing arrived at the centre with a broken beak. Birds with beak injuries are difficult to treat because they're constantly using their beaks. So we had to get creative! I designed a splint made out of plastic x-ray film. I cut it to fit his beak and attached it with sutures. The bird was anaesthetized for this



Caring for wildlife is very different from caring for pets. Christina says it's important to limit human contact with wild animals so they can be released back into the wild. They need to be able to survive on their own without help from people.



Hummingbird fledgling

Swallows are Christina's favourite wild animal. She says they're especially challenging to care for because they need to be able to catch insects while flying to survive in the wild.



Little brown bat

River otter

PHOTO: BARRY HETSCHKO

procedure, so he didn't feel a thing. With the splint, he could still open his beak normally. Fortunately, birds heal much more quickly than mammals, and in a few weeks we removed the splint and his beak was solid enough for him to eat on his own. This case stands out for me because



Cedar waxwing

we really had to think outside the box to come up with a solution to help the bird recover. Our ingenuity saved the bird's life, and gave us another tool to help future patients.

**What is the most unusual animal you've helped?**

I helped rescue a stranded harbour porpoise in Esquimalt. We had to transfer him to Marine Mammal Rescue in Vancouver. We kept him hydrated on the long, cold overnight trip by regularly pouring fresh seawater on his back. I felt like I played porpoise paramedic!

**What keeps you excited to do your job every day?**

The fact that I can never predict what situations are going to arise. New patients arrive, and there are new situations to deal with and new challenges to overcome. Every chance I get to return injured or orphaned animals to their wild home feels like I'm able to make up for some of the negative impacts of human activity.

**What is one piece of advice you would give to kids who**

**want to make a difference for animals?**

Start with being aware of the impact of your actions and minimizing your own footprint in the world. We're all part of the larger web of life, and there's so much we can do to improve the well-being of our fellow wild creatures. Whether it's protecting their environment or bringing injured animals to a wildlife rehabilitation centre, these actions matter. Become an ambassador for wildlife!

## Your career path... to becoming a BC SPCA wildlife rehabilitator

- ✓ Graduate high school
- ✓ Post-secondary school (preferred)
- ✓ Communication and organizational skills
- ✓ Wildlife rehabilitation courses and workshops
- ✓ Knowledge of wildlife and the environment
- ✓ Volunteer experience with wildlife
- ✓ Good physical fitness
- ✓ B.C. driver's license
- ✓ Animal care skills

Mallard duckling





# Want to be a veterinary technician

## when you grow up?

**We spoke to Nicole McClelland, a veterinary technician and BC SPCA volunteer, all about her career helping sick and injured animals.**

When did you decide you wanted to be a veterinary technician?

I had always wanted to work with animals. But it wasn't until a local veterinary technician program opened up at Douglas College that I decided it was what I wanted to do. Before that, there was no such program in the Lower Mainland – just in Kamloops.



Can you tell us about one memory that sticks out for you of the pets you had growing up?

My first dog, George, was as unique as they come. She taught me so much about dog behaviour and made me truly realize the value of senior animals.

Can you share with us a little bit about your professional background?

I'd been a volunteer at SAINTS, a sanctuary for senior and special needs animals, for two years before starting the veterinary technician program

at Douglas. I also spent some time volunteering in a veterinary clinic once a week.

I've been a registered veterinary technician for over nine years now. I've been lucky enough to work in a 24-hour emergency clinic and a general practice clinic that sees a wide variety of animals like cats, dogs, turtles, rats, rabbits, guinea pigs and birds.

You volunteer for the BC SPCA. How do you help out?

I volunteer with Charlie's Pet Food Bank. We provide basic veterinary care to pets whose guardians are homeless or need extra help caring for them. I help the vets with exams, nail trims and vaccines.

As a veterinary technician, Nicole monitors animals during surgery.



Veterinary technicians like Nicole work with a variety of animals.

Nicole's career has taken her all over North America! Here she is at a spay/neuter clinic in Washington.



What's your favourite part of your job?

I love that my skills as a veterinary technician can be used in all sorts of settings. I volunteer with the Canadian Animal Assistance Team and Rural Area Veterinary Services. These organizations help provide spay and neuter services to guardians and their animals in low-income or underserved areas of the world. I've traveled around British Columbia, the United States and even the Dominican Republic!

Is there one case that sticks out in your mind?

There are so many, it's hard to choose! I've assisted with surgery on a mouse, cared for diabetic cats, helped remove ribbon from a kitten's stomach,

treated a baby raccoon who fell out of a tree and looked after dogs hit by cars. Being a veterinary technician means getting to work with lots of different animals.

What's the most unusual animal you've helped?

We have a regular chicken patient – not the most unusual animal but rare for a veterinary clinic! She's a valued member of her family and I love seeing how devoted they are to her.

What keeps you excited to do your job every day?

I love that there is always

something new to learn in veterinary medicine. We are constantly improving our standards of care and how we interact with animals.

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

You're never too young! You might not be old enough to volunteer yet, but you can start small – walking your neighbour's dog or just caring for your own pets the best you can. It all makes a difference and helps you build the skills and confidence you'll need to work with animals someday.



## Your career path... to becoming a veterinary technician

- ✓ Graduate high school
- ✓ Volunteer experience with a variety of animals in different settings (for example, veterinary clinic, animal shelter, farm, wildlife rehabilitation centre)
- ✓ Good communication and organizational skills
- ✓ Two-year veterinary technician (also called animal health technologist) diploma
- ✓ Pass Veterinary Technician National Exam (VTNE)



A woman wearing a dark jacket and a cap stands in a forest, surrounded by several dogs of different breeds, including a white speckled dog, a black dog, a yellow Labrador, and two Golden Retrievers. She is gesturing with her hands as if training them.

# Want to be a dog trainer when you grow up?

**We spoke to Christina Young, certified dog trainer and owner of Positive Dog. She told us all about her career helping people teach and communicate with their dogs.**

**When did you decide you wanted to be a dog trainer?**

I've always loved training all sorts of animals, and I love teaching people. But I didn't realize I could combine the two into a career until I was an adult. Once I found out I could have such a fun job, I wanted to do it!

**Did you have pets growing up? If so, can you tell us about one memory that sticks out for you?**

I had cats, rabbits, hamsters and horses growing up, and adopted my first dog when I was 17. One memory that sticks out for me is when I was 14 and was taking my rabbit Snowflake out for a walk on leash. I trained him to jump into my arms for bits of apple. A man walking by told me that my rabbit was better behaved than his dog!

**Can you share with us a little bit about your professional background?**

When I was 14, I started volunteering at my school's learning centre. I taught all throughout high school and university. I later got a job teaching adults with special needs. At the same time, I fostered and trained special needs dogs from the SPCA and other organizations. This led me to combine my passion for training with my love of teaching. I then became a professional dog trainer in 2014.

Trainers like Christina know that ► dogs learn best when they're motivated by treats or praise, not when they're scared of being yelled at or hurt.

▲ Christina is an AnimalKind dog trainer. This means she trains dogs using kind methods approved by the BC SPCA! To learn more, visit [animalkind.ca](http://animalkind.ca).



**What's your favourite part of your job?**

I love watching the bond between a dog and person grow as the pair learns to communicate. Many people call me for serious behaviour problems that cause a lot of stress. So after training, it's wonderful to see dog and human start to have fun and enjoy their time together.







Christina helps people understand their dog's body language better.



Christina lives on Vancouver Island with her husband and pets. If your family needs help with training, find her at [positive.dog!](#)

**Is there one dog you trained who was particularly memorable or challenging?**

I once trained a very funny dog named Charlie. I was helping him with barking and lunging behaviour. At first I tried giving Charlie a piece of ham as a high value reward. But he spat it out and just rolled on it. I guess he thought the ham was very stinky! I figured out that he had a dish at home that was always full, so training for food wasn't a good enough reward for him. We made some changes at home and worked on a new training program. In only a few months, Charlie was able to walk past other dogs politely. He was even able to make some new doggy friends!

**What's your best tip for someone who wants to begin training their own dog?**

Have fun! Training should be enjoyable for both you and your dog. If you find that you or your dog is feeling bored or frustrated,

ask yourself how you can change things so it's fun again. Also, always keep your sessions short and sweet!

**What keeps you excited to do your job every day?**

I get to play with dogs and puppies every day! It's a dream job! I love seeing how people and dogs progress in their training while having fun together. It's also great to receive emails from past students. They give updates

of all the fun things they've been doing with their dogs since our time together. That is very cool.

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

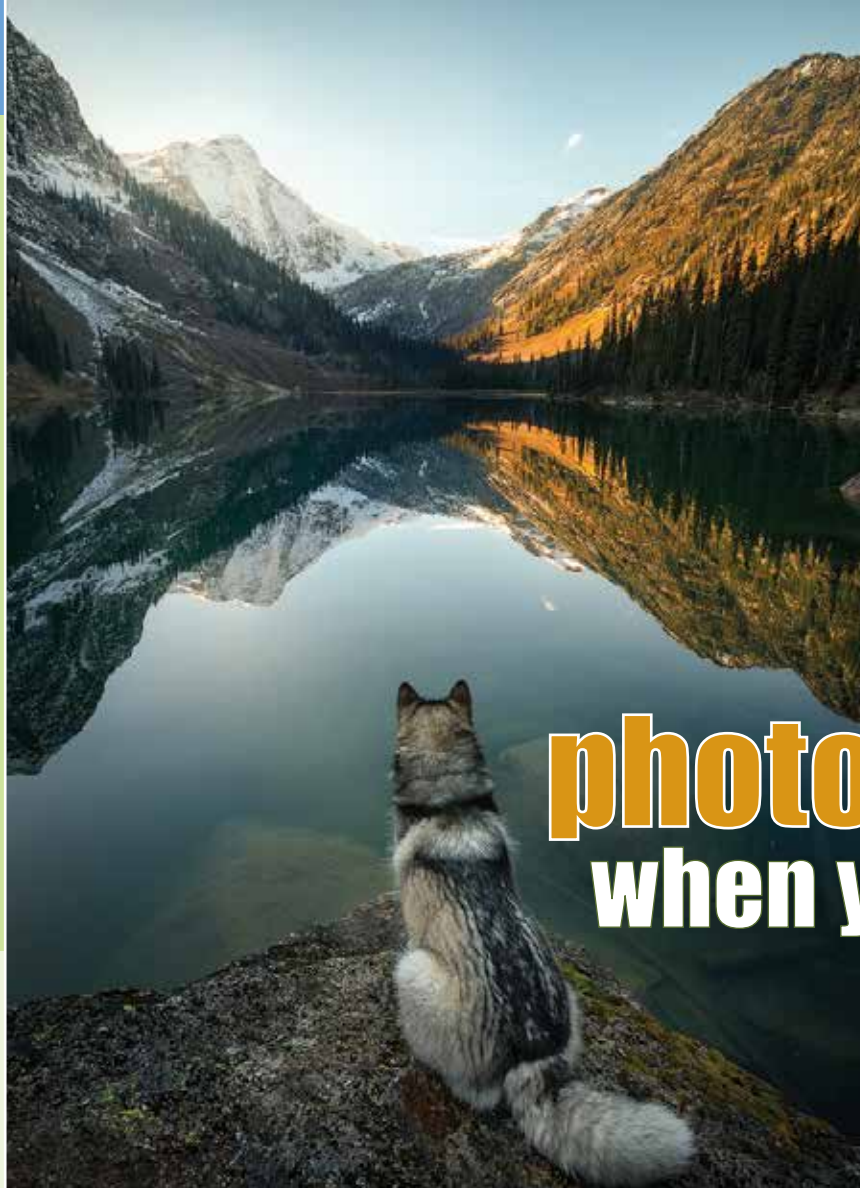
Be kind and patient to all animals and people. Often, they don't know any other way to behave. If animals are acting up or not behaving the way we would like, take the time to figure out what they are trying to tell us.

## Your career path... to becoming a dog trainer

- ✓ Graduate high school
- ✓ Volunteer experience training dogs (at a dog training school, animal shelter, etc.)
- ✓ Volunteer experience teaching people (tutoring, etc.)
- ✓ Complete a well-recognized dog training certification program (usually online)
- ✓ Good communication and organizational skills
- ✓ Lots of patience!







Jack and Viktoria on one of their many adventures together.

# Want to be an animal photographer when you grow up?

Can you share a little bit about your professional background?

I studied art before doing a degree in art history/ anthropology (the study of human society). I worked for a nature conservation organization before moving to Canada 12 years ago. I then began taking photos professionally and at the same time I worked for the BC SPCA as an animal care attendant.

You volunteer time taking pictures for the BC SPCA. Why did you want to do this and what do you enjoy about it?

I started taking photos for the BC SPCA when I worked as an animal care attendant. I realized how important it was to capture images that would tell an animal's story and show their personality so that they had a better chance of capturing the hearts of people

**Viktoria Haack is a professional photographer whose work includes pet portraits and nature landscapes. We talked to her about her career, her volunteer work with the BC SPCA and what it takes to get great pictures of our furry friends.**

What made you decide you wanted to be a photographer?

I have always loved art and anything visual. When I moved to a small island in the UK

there wasn't too much else to do so I picked up my camera and started photographing the red squirrels on the island, the nature around me and my daughter and dog. I was hooked!

Calling all dog guardians!  
Can you get down low  
and try a shot like this?





Viktoria photographs animals at their eye level. A human touch also makes for the perfect photo!



who may become their adoptive parents. It is the animal-human connection that I love capturing the best.

**Can you tell us about a special animal in your life, now or when you were growing up?**

I have been lucky enough to have had a few animal companions but I will tell you about my most recent family member. His name is Jack and he's a three-year-old Alaskan malamute (@jack\_thewolfskin on Instagram). As a puppy and teenager, he was very rambunctious and difficult. He has been worth all the work and love we have put into him. He is becoming better behaved by the day. He makes a fantastic friend for adventures out with my camera and into the mountains; I can't imagine not having him beside me every day!

**What is your favourite part of photographing animals?**

I love how unpredictable they are! You never know what they will do and you have to be ready for anything.

**What is the most challenging thing about photographing pets compared to other subjects?**

You have to work with animals, you can't tell them where to stand and how to pose like a human. It's about finding out what motivates them and working with them to get the images.

**Can you share some tips for kids who want to take great pictures of their pets?**

The most important thing is to know what motivates your pet: Is it treats? Toys? Praise?

Use these to help you get your pet's attention and get them into a good position. Choose a location that is safe for you and your pet with no distractions (even though a dog park can be safe, there may be too many distractions for your dog to be able to get their attention properly). Try to get down to your pet's eye level. Make the shoot short and fun for your pet so they don't get bored.

**Viktoria also shared her pet photography tips in a special video! Find it on the BC SPCA's Official YouTube Channel.**

## PET PHOTO CONTEST

Think you can capture the **pawfect** picture of a pet? Get that camera clicking and send us your best shot! Our favourite photo that demonstrates one or more of Viktoria Haack's tips will be featured in the next issue of *Bark!* magazine.

Email your entries using the subject line **Pet Photo Contest** to [kids@spca.bc.ca](mailto:kids@spca.bc.ca). Please include your name, age and city.



**This contest is open to *Bark!* readers ages 13 and under and closes August 31, 2020.**

The adorable kitten on the cover of *Bark!* was taken by Viktoria!





Every hive has a queen bee, and this hive is "ruled" by Queen Connie.



# Want to be a beekeeper when you grow up?

We spoke to **Sarah Currie**, a beekeeper in Castlegar, B.C., about hives, honey and helping make the world a kinder place.



**You're a beekeeper. Why do you keep bees?**

I keep honey bees because taking good care of such a special creature makes me feel very happy and close to nature.

**What does a beekeeper do?**

A beekeeper cares for honey bees by providing them with a safe place to live, adequate food and water, and everything they need to stay healthy. A beekeeper knows enough about the needs of bees to anticipate special needs ahead of time. For example, in the early spring, I have learned and observed that there is a gap between the time that the bees start to fly and when the first plants bloom. This means the bees have no natural source of food at that time. So, I provide the honey bees with sugar syrup during that time.

**What skills do you need to have to be a beekeeper?**

- Kindness, gentleness, patience
- Curiosity and knowledge
- Physical strength
- Good communication skills
- Detail oriented/organized
- Resilience

**What is best thing about taking care of bees?**

The best thing about taking care of honey bees is the time I spend in the hives observing the life of each colony. I get to be outside and then, enter into another world. The inside of the hive smells of sweet beeswax, nectar and pollen. The sound of the energetic hummms of the bees is both exciting and soothing. I have to slow down when I am in the hive and accomplish my tasks with great focus.

**What is the most challenging thing about beekeeping?**

The most challenging thing about beekeeping for me is keeping the bees healthy. Bees are susceptible to many viruses, diseases, and are prey to a parasite that lives in all North American hives: the varroa mite. If you keep honey bees, you also keep varroa mites. The trick is to keep the number of varroa mites in the hive low, so the life of the hive is not jeopardized.

Below, left: the varroa mite on a bee. Right: mite treatment to one of Sarah's hives.







A swarm begins to enter the swarm box before Sarah shakes the branch.



Sarah adding honey bees to one of her hives.

The swarm made it safely into their box!



Is there a funny or surprising story you can share about your work?

All of my swarm catching adventures have been funny and surprising: ladders, pulleys, shaking branches, brushing, night swarm catching, watching bees crawl single file into the swarm box after the queen as if in a parade.

Have you had any other special animals in your life, now or when you were growing up? I have been very blessed to have had a special animal or animals keeping me through each stage of my life. When I was little, I was visiting a neighbour's goats when I noticed my neighbour in a white suit with smoke moving in slow motion. He was tending his bee hives. He noticed me there with the goats and brought me a piece of honey in the comb to eat. It was delicious. I think that was when I decided that one day, I would have honey bees of my own.

What would you share with kids who want to make a difference for animals or the natural world in general?

Begin by treating yourself and everyone – even the tough ones – with kindness and gentleness. Then, spend time observing the world and read/watch everything that will expand your knowledge about what interests you.

Find ways to spend time with people who work with animals and are out in the natural world.

Do your very best to provide animals in your care with love, respect, a healthy environment, food and water, and everything that they need to thrive and live a good life. Take time to quiet yourself and just look and listen to all of the life around you.

We are very much a part of nature with the weather, the land and water, and the animals. We are interconnected. The more connected you feel to these things, the richer your life will be.

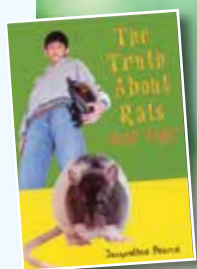
## Want to know more?

Find our full interview with Sarah at [spca.bc.ca/beekeeper-interview](https://spca.bc.ca/beekeeper-interview).

Visit the BC SPCA's official YouTube channel and watch the **A Buzz About Bees** video to see Sarah in action and answering kids' questions.







# Want to write about animals when you grow up?

**Jacqueline Pearce is a writer whose work includes both fiction and nonfiction focused on animals. We talked to her about her new book, the pets that have inspired her and the advice she has for aspiring writers.**

Tell us about your new book, *What Animals Want: The Five Freedoms in Action*.

*What Animals Want* uses the Five Freedoms and examples from the latest animal science to help kids think about what animals need to have a healthy and happy life – from the right food and home, to healthcare, comfort and doing things animals like to do.

What inspired you to write the book?

I've always loved nature and animals. I have a degree in environmental studies and have worked in environmental and humane education. My family and I have adopted and fostered many animals over the years – including guinea pigs, rabbits, gerbils, rats, dogs and cats. When the BC SPCA asked me to

work with them on a book about how to improve the lives of pets and other animals, I thought it was a great idea.

What other books have you written about animals?

My novel *Dog House Blues* is about a girl who lives in a house full of dogs. *The Truth About Rats (and Dogs)* is about a boy who wants to get a dog, but ends



up secretly looking after a rat. Pets, farm animals and wild animals are also important in many of my other novels, too. I've also written some articles about animals for kids' magazines, and I once wrote a story about a cat for Smuckers Jam, which was given to people who bought jars of jam at grocery stores.

### Can you tell us about a special animal in your life?

When I was about ten or so, I had a fluffy black and white cat named Spooky. She used to come when I whistled – just like a dog. Right now I have a fluffy orange cat called Curious who is over ten years old, but she still looks like a kitten. Sometimes she walks across my computer keyboard when I'm trying to write. Other times, she likes to curl up under a blanket. She also has a special meow when she's thirsty and wants me to turn the bathroom tap on for her.

### Did you always want to be a writer? How did you get started?

I loved to read books (especially fantasies and adventures), and I started wanting to write stories of my own in about grade 5. When I was twelve, my local newspaper published a poem I'd written, but it took many more years before my first novel was published.



Opposite page: Jacquie and Curious. Above, from left: a typical day at the dog park!; along with her cat, Spooky, Jacquie also remembers her beloved childhood dog, Corky; Oscar the rat rubbing noses with Jacquie.

### What is your favourite thing about being a writer?

One of my favourite things is doing research (which I do whether I'm writing fiction or nonfiction). I've learned about all kinds of strange and interesting things for story research, including how to ride a horse, how to teach a rat to jump through a hoop and how to fire an antique musket. When I was researching *What Animals Want*, I learned a few things that surprised me. Did you know that pigs like to build nests, or that whales can get sunburned?

### What advice do you have for kids who want to be writers?

There are lots of different types of writing you can do – from writing fiction and nonfiction books, to news reports, magazine articles, blogs posts, TV and film scripts and more. Write about what interests you (whether it's animals or any other topic), and try to tell your story or give your information in a way that will make it come alive for your readers.

## What Animals Want Contest

How do you (or *would* you, if don't have a pet) provide the Five Freedoms to your own animals at home?

Tell us, and you will be entered to win one of 50 signed copies of *What Animals Want: The Five Freedoms in Action*.

Send your entry to BC SPCA Kids Club, 1245 East 7th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5T 1R1 or email [kids@spca.bc.ca](mailto:kids@spca.bc.ca) with the subject line "What Animals Want Contest."

This contest is open to *Bark!* readers ages 13 and under and closes November 30, 2021.

