

## Seniors learn benefits of adopting older pets



ALAN DEP — MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

Elsa Castellani pets ambassador dog Ollie during a “Senior Pet Adoption and Education Event” at Whistlestop in San Rafael on Tuesday.

**By Adrian Rodriguez**  
[arodriguez@marinij.com](mailto:arodriguez@marinij.com)  
[@adrianrrodri](https://twitter.com/adrianrrodri) on Twitter

Marin seniors gathered at Whistlestop in San Rafael on Tuesday to learn about adopting an older pet as a companion to ward off loneliness and isolation.

The free event was sponsored by Marin Humane, whose staff presented senior pet adoption information to the group of older adults as part of National Adopt-a-Senior-Pet month. Marin Humane is waiving adoption fees for senior pets through Dec. 6.

“Oftentimes, when people consider adopting a pet, they over-

look the older ones yet senior pets make great companions,” said Nancy McKenney, CEO of Marin Humane.

“With an older pet, what you see is what you get: a middle-aged or senior cat or dog’s personality is fully developed, they’re usually already trained, and they require less exercise than younger ones,” she said.

Joe O’Hehir, CEO of Whistlestop, said this is the first time the organization invited Marin Humane to bring some furry friends, called pet ambassadors, onto the site to spread awareness.

Founded in 1954 as the Marin Senior Coordinating Council, Whistlestop is a nonprofit provides ser-

VICES for older adults and those living with disabilities. O’Hehir said thousands of seniors in Marin live on their own, and companionship is key.

“Everybody wins,” he said of the adopt-a-senior pet initiative. “The pet wins, the older adult wins and the community wins.

“The fact is that they end up with a companion that can offer unconditional love, that is always there for you,” he said. “Plus, there is the added benefit of routine: whether it’s taking your dog out for a walk, or grooming your cat, it’s a significant benefit.”

More information about its pet adoption programs is available at [marinhumane.org](http://marinhumane.org).