

SPCA® Kids

Kind Matters

News

Issue 36 / May 2025

Welcome to Kind Matters!

Before we hop into this issue, we're thrilled to reveal the winners of our **Protect Animals Colouring Competition!**

We were absolutely amazed by the 700+ entries we received! After carefully admiring the vibrant colours and creative techniques, we're thrilled to share the winning entries below. Tino pai to everyone who took part, and a big congratulations to all our winners!

Under 5 Years Winner



Sota, age 4

5-7 Years Winner



Holly, age 7

8-10 Years Winner



Kaylee, age 9

11-13 Years Winner



Kaiya, age 11

14-16 Years Winner



Sorhaya, age 15

Congratulations to our pawesome Highly Commended prize winners. Another huge thank you to our competition sponsors, Elastic Island Adventures, Plantation Island, OfficeMax, Honeywrap and EUGY by Dodoland. We hope you enjoy this new issue of Kind Matters!



OfficeMax®



What's Inside



A Closer Look: Rabbits and guinea pigs - Learn how to care for our smaller animal friends.



SPCA Kids NEWS

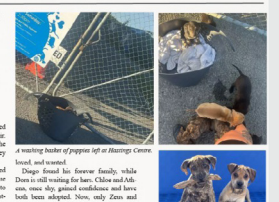
The latest animal updates from around Aotearoa
Monday 26th May 2025, Issue 5

Seven Puppies Left in a Basket Find Hope at SPCA

Earlier this year, Centre Team Lead Christina arrived at SPCA's Hastings Centre expecting a normal day. But as she pulled up, she noticed a washing basket sitting by the Centre gate. Curious and concerned, she went to investigate.

To her surprise, seven tiny puppies peeped their heads out, shivering in the chilly air. Christina quickly called for help, and the team brought the puppies inside, where they would be warm and safe.

After health checks, the puppies started their journey to finding loving homes. Due to space limitations, three were moved to SPCA Napier, while the rest stayed in Hastings.



SPCA Kids News: Check out the latest animal news from around NZ.



Craft Time: Autumn Leaf Rabbit - a creative way to turn leaves into a bunny masterpiece!



Visit www.sPCA.nz/kids for more animal information!

and much more...



Fun Facts: Rabbits

1. When a rabbit is really happy, they jump and twist in the air - it's called a 'binky'!
2. A group of rabbits is called a herd, and they often live in underground tunnels called a warren.
3. Rabbits have 28 teeth, and they never stop growing - that's why they love and need to chew!
4. A male rabbit is called a buck and the female is a doe; a young rabbit is called a kitten or kit.
5. A well cared for house rabbit that has been spayed or neutered has a life expectancy of 8-12 years.



A Closer Look at: Rabbits/Rāpeti

Hopping into Autumn: Keeping Your Rabbits Warm and Happy!

As the weather cools down, it's important to make sure your rabbits stay warm, healthy, and happy. Rabbits are clever, playful, and full of energy. In the wild, they spend their days running, jumping, and foraging for food. If you have domesticated* rabbits at home, they need plenty of space to explore and play too!



All rabbits should live in a suitable environment. A rabbit's home affects how they feel, think and behave. Rabbits in the wild can cover an area the size of 30 tennis courts every day! By keeping domesticated rabbits in an enclosure, or in your home, some of their natural instincts and pleasures are taken away. To make up for this, you need to ensure their living and exercise area is as large as possible.

If your rabbits live outside, make sure their enclosure is:

Warm and Dry: Line their hutch with extra hay and straw to keep them snug.

Predator-Proof: Check for any gaps where dogs, cats, or other animals could get in.

Protected from the Weather: Place their hutch in a sheltered area to avoid strong winds and rain.

Safe Indoors When Needed: On extra cold nights, bring your rabbits inside or into a shed or garage (as long as there are no car fumes!).

Healthy and Happy Rabbits

Food & Water: Always provide fresh hay, vegetables, and clean water to keep them healthy.



Book Nook

Title: The Problem with Sione's Spaghetti

Author: John Carr

Illustrator: Mike Wilkin

Sione loves his rabbit, Spaghetti, but something isn't right - her ears are droopy, and she doesn't hop like she used to. With the help of Aunty Masina, his rugby team, and SPCA, Sione discovers the problem: Spaghetti is lonely! Now, he must find a way to make her happy again.



Find this awesome story at school or your local library!

Hay might look boring to humans, but for rabbits it's their main dish of the day, with 80-90% of their diet needing to be hay!

Bunny Buddies: Rabbits are very social animals, so they should always have another rabbit friend to keep them company.

Toys & Play: Rabbits love to chew, dig, and explore! Give them tunnels, cardboard boxes, and safe wooden toys to keep them entertained.

With a little extra care, your rabbits will be warm, safe, and ready to enjoy autumn! Find out more about rabbit care on the [Kids' Portal](#).



***Domesticated** - an animal that has been tamed by humans over a long time so it can live safely with people.

A Closer Look at: Guinea Pigs

Small but Mighty: Caring for Guinea Pigs during the colder months.

Guinea pigs may be small, but they have big personalities! These gentle and chatty pets love company and should always have at least one guinea pig buddy. As the weather gets colder, it's important to keep them warm and comfortable.

All guinea pigs should live in a suitable environment. A guinea pig's home affects how they feel, think and behave. The more space you can provide, the happier and healthier your guinea pigs will be. An outside guinea pig home must be strong, draught-proof, damp-proof, escape-proof and predator-proof. It must contain shady areas and be well ventilated (allow free flowing air).

If your guinea pigs live outside, their enclosure should be:

Big Enough to Run Around: A spacious hutch and run help keep them active and happy.

Safe & Secure: Their home should

be strong, dry, and protected from wind, rain, and predators. Watch out for uneven lawns - guinea pigs are experts at getting out of their cage to go exploring!

Well-Insulated: Add extra bedding like hay and shredded paper to keep them warm.

Indoor Options: Just like rabbits, guinea pigs may need to come inside on very cold nights to stay warm and safe.

Keeping Guinea Pigs Healthy

Fresh Food & Water: Guinea pigs are herbivores - this means they only feed on plant material. Provide plenty of hay, fresh veggies, and clean water daily.

Did you know? Guinea pigs have a super cool way of making their own vitamin-packed snacks - straight from their bums! These special poos, called caecotrophes, are full of important nutrients. If you see your guinea pig "cleaning" themselves and then munching on something, don't



worry - they're just having a healthy snack!

Daily Interaction: Talk to them gently and spend time with them so they feel safe and loved.

Fun & Games: Give them tunnels, chew toys, and boxes to explore. Guinea pigs love to hide and climb too!

With the right care, your guinea pigs will stay happy and comfortable all autumn long! Learn more about guinea pig care on the [Kids' Portal](#).



Fun Facts: Guinea Pigs/Kinikini

1. Guinea pigs have a special name - they're also called cavies (kay-vees)!
2. Guinea pigs have amazing hearing - they can pick up sounds that humans can't!
3. Guinea pigs have been around since the Miocene period - over 18 million years ago! Wow!
4. The world record for the longest ever living guinea pig is 15 years!
5. Guinea pigs are not actually 'pigs' - they are rodents.
6. The name for a male guinea pig is a 'boar', a female is a 'sow' and a baby is a 'pup'.



Book Nook

Title: Silverbeet, Saturday and Sunday

Author: John Carr

Illustrator: Patrizia Manfroi

Saturday and Sunday were two happy guinea pig brothers who lived with Bailey and her mum. At first, they had everything they needed - fun toys, yummy food, fresh water, and a cosy hutch. Bailey played with them, brushed their fur, and kept them safe. But as Bailey and her mum got busier, the guinea pigs weren't getting as much care. What would happen to them now?



Kind Conservation: How to Grow Your Own Animal-Friendly Garden!

Did you know you can grow yummy, fresh food for your rabbits and guinea pigs right at home or school? Here's how you can create a mini autumn garden that your furry friends will love!



Growing your own garden can be a fun way to help your companion animals stay healthy and enjoy fresh food. Plus, it's a great way to take care of the environment, too!

What to Grow:

- Parsley
- Kale
- Coriander
- Dandelion
- Mint



These herbs and veggies are not only tasty for your rabbits and guinea pigs, but they're also super healthy! Make sure to wash them before feeding them to your pets to keep them safe and clean.

Simple steps to grow your garden:

1



Pick a spot: Choose a sunny spot in your yard, school garden, or even a small container.

2



Plant your seeds: Plant your herbs or veggies in soil, following the instructions on the packets.

3



Water regularly: Give your garden a little water every day, but not too much!



4



Harvest with care: When the plants are ready, cut the leaves or herbs with clean scissors.

Why avoid harmful plants?

Some plants are harmful to animals and can make them sick. It's important to avoid things like onions, garlic, and potatoes. Always double-check before feeding anything new to your animals!

- Don't ever feed your rabbit or guinea pigs lawnmower clippings - this can upset their digestive system and make them ill.
- For more information about nutrition for your [rabbits](#) and [guinea pigs](#), check out the Klds' Portal.

IMPORTANT: Always check with an adult before feeding your rabbit or guinea pig a plant you have picked. If they don't know for sure what it is or if it is safe - don't feed it to them!



A Day in the Life of a Happy Guinea Pig



Have fun creating your own happy guinea pig adventure!

How to do the fill-in-the-gaps story:

1. Read the story carefully and think of a name for the guinea pig.
2. When you see a blank space (____), think about what word fits best.
3. Choose a word from the hints in the box below.
4. Write your chosen word in the blank space.
5. Read your story to a friend or family member.



Hello! My name is _____, and I am a very happy guinea pig!

Every morning, I wake up and munch on fresh _____. It's so tasty and keeps me healthy! My favourite snack is _____ - yum!

I love spending time with my _____ because guinea pigs like me are very social. When I feel excited, I make a _____ sound to show how happy I am!

During the day, I love to explore my enclosure, especially when I find _____ to play with. My human keeps my home clean and give me fresh _____ every day.

At night, I snuggle up in my cosy _____ and get ready for another fun day ahead!

Being a guinea pig is the best when I have everything I need to be happy and healthy!

- hay
- bedding
- a chew toy
- hideout/blanket
- companion/friend
- wheel
- parsley



Answers on page 12

Competition Time!

To celebrate our rabbit and guinea pig issue of Kind Matters, we've created a fun quiz to see how much you know about these lovable little animals.

Take the quiz and enter to win:

- 1 Have a good read through this issue.
- 2 Next, head to: https://bit.ly/SPCA_rabbitquiz
- 3 Answer some simple questions to be in with a chance to win.

HINT:
Answers to the quiz
can be found in this
issue of Kind Matters.
Good luck!

Pawesome prize pack to be won!





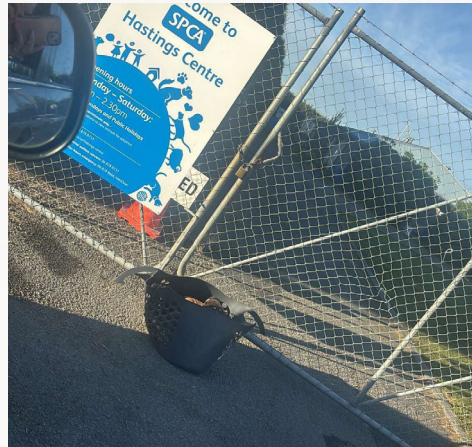
Seven Puppies Left in a Basket Find Hope at SPCA

Earlier this year, Canine Team Lead Christina arrived at SPCA's Hastings Centre expecting a normal day. But as she pulled up, she noticed a washing basket sitting by the Centre gate. Curious and concerned, she went to investigate.

To her surprise, seven tiny puppies popped their heads out, shivering in the chilly air. Christina quickly called for help, and the team brought the puppies inside, where they would be warm and safe.

After health checks, the puppies started their journey to finding loving homes. Due to space limitations, three were moved to SPCA Napier, while the rest stayed in Hastings. Sadly, one puppy didn't survive, but the others grew stronger with the care of SPCA staff.

"They came to us to have a second chance in life," says Christina, "to be protected,

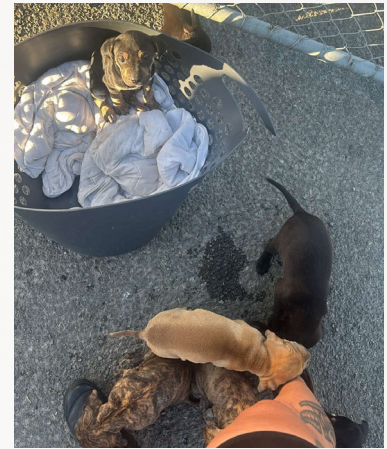


A washing basket of puppies left at Hastings Centre.

loved, and wanted."

Diego found his forever family, while Dora is still waiting for hers. Chloe and Athena, once shy, gained confidence and have both been adopted. Now, only Zeus and Hestia remain at the Hastings Centre, hoping to find their new families soon.

Christina and the team are crossing their fingers that Zeus and Hestia won't have to wait much longer.



Hestia and Zeus at SPCA's Hastings Centre

The sock-stealing cat



Jasper the cat (photo credit 1News)

In Christchurch, a cat named Jasper has made a name for himself - as a sock thief. Jasper loves to steal socks from his neighbours in Sumner, so much that his family had to create a Facebook page to help return the missing socks.

Jasper started his life of crime at just six months old, and now, at six years old, he brings home up to eight socks a day.

Neighbour Rhian Robers was one of his regular victims. "We all know the mystery of the missing sock," she said, "but at our house, it was happening so often it felt like something else was going on!"

Jasper's human siblings, Edward and Harriet, think he's quite proud of his collection. "I don't think he should be proud," said Edward. But Harriet disagrees, saying, "Jasper is very proud

of being a famous cat - I can tell by his little grin!"

Jasper's sock-snatching adventures have even inspired a children's book, written by a family member. Meanwhile, his owners have placed a box outside their home filled with over 150 unclaimed socks, hoping their neighbours will reclaim them.



Jasper's haul of socks (photo credit 1News)

Kiwi Caught Fighting

Two kiwi were caught having a surprise daytime brawl in a Northland garden.

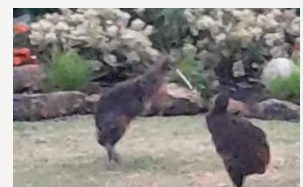
The rare moment happened in the backyard of Karin Matthews, who lives west of Kerikeri. Kiwi are usually nocturnal, which means they sleep during the day and are active at night, so spotting two of them wrestling in the sunshine was quite a shock.

Karin filmed the birds running, kicking, and bashing into each other. "It was fantastic and actually quite comical," she told reporters.

Experts say kiwi fighting is normal behaviour - they're territorial and don't like others invading their space, especially during breeding season. The Department of Conservation (DoC) explained that daytime sightings might happen more during dry weather, when kiwi have to search harder for food.

Todd Hamilton from Backyard Kiwi said, "They might be fighting each other, but if there's a dog in the garden, that might be a danger for them." While the tussle may have looked funny, he said it's a positive sign the kiwi population is healthy. As kiwi roam more, though, they're more likely to encounter dogs - so it's crucial for dog owners to keep their pets under control.

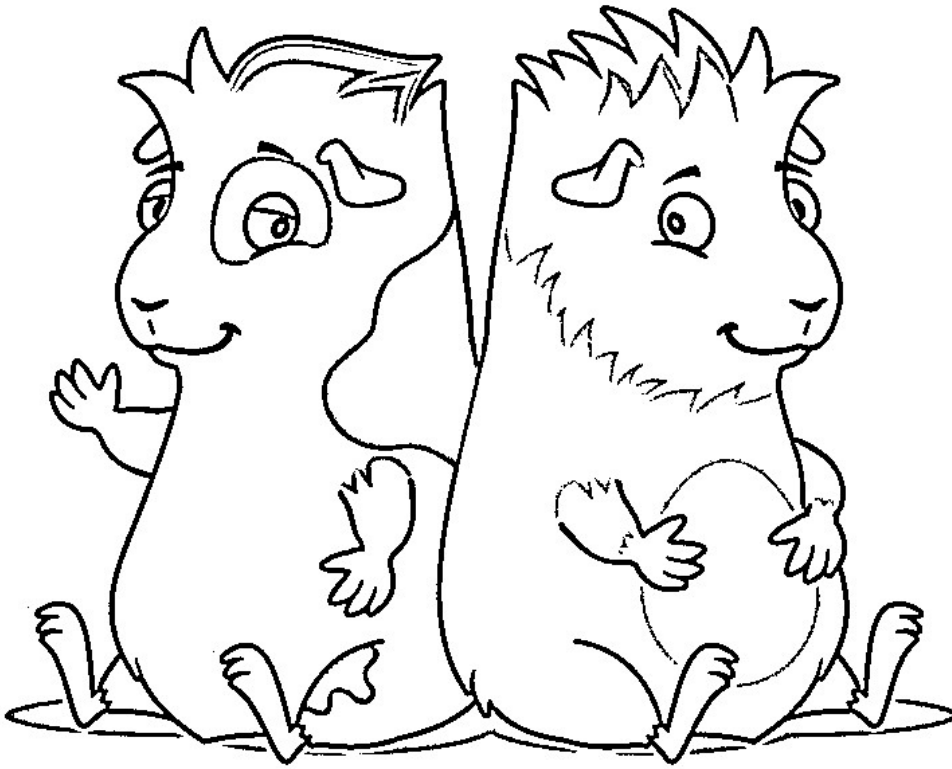
Check out the video here: https://bit.ly/kiwi_fight



Two kiwi fighting in a Northland garden

Colouring

Get creative and colour in Puma the guinea pig and his friend. Draw some enrichment toys to play with or healthy food for them to eat.



True or False?



Are you an expert on rabbits and guinea pigs? Find out by taking the quiz! Colour or circle the correct answer.

1. The world record for the longest ever living guinea pig was 12 years.

☐ T

☐ F

2. In the story about Sione, his rabbit is called Spaghetti.

☐ T

☐ F

3. Rabbits have 18 teeth.

☐ T

☐ F

4. Guinea pigs have very poor hearing.

☐ T

☐ F

5. Guinea pigs love to eat parsley.

☐ T

☐ F



Answers on page 12

Who Knows Whose Nose - Guinea Pig or Rabbit?

Can you match each nose to the right animal? Take a guess!



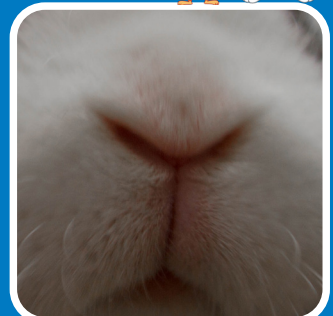
a



b



c



d

Answers on page 12

Meet a Pawesome Foster Family

SPCA is grateful for the amazing support we receive from tamariki across Aotearoa throughout the year. This month, we're excited to shine the spotlight on a fantastic family who have been incredible foster parents. Jade (3), Rikki (8), Jack (11), Gabe (14), and mum Caity have all played a big part in providing a loving and caring home for animals in need. A heartfelt thank you from everyone at SPCA!

Caity and her family's deep love for animals and dedication to fostering animals in need for SPCA has made a wonderful impact, both on the animals they've cared for and their own family. Most recently, they've opened their hearts to Flex, a playful puppy they've fostered and helped on his journey to finding a forever home. Keep reading to learn more about the positive difference they've made through fostering. Here's what Rikki had to say!

Can you tell us a little about Flex? What were some of his favourite things to do?

Flex was the best boy! He loved playing tag with us on the lawn. In the morning he would run into my room and jump on my bed to wake me up (best alarm clock ever!) and at night he would sneak onto my bed and fall asleep, mum would find him because he was snoring so loud!

Why did you and your family decide to foster a puppy like Flex?

When we got Flex he had a sore leg and needed time to rest up. We wanted to help him get better and stay in a nice house with a family while he got better.

What other animals have you and your family fostered? Can you share a little about them as well?

We have had lots of cats and kittens and puppies! We have even looked after birds. We have had bottle babies that need special feeding, and a cat with a busted jaw. Sometimes they stay a long time and sometimes only

a short time. I love it when we get home and mum has brought home a new foster, it's like Christmas!



What were some of the best parts of fostering Flex?

My favourite part of fostering is showing them new things and teaching them tricks. I love going on afternoon walks with the foster dogs too.

"Fostering is the best thing in the world and the best way to share your love!"

What were some of the responsibilities you had while fostering Flex?

My job was to take Flex out to the toilet A LOT, and I had to pick up poop! We had to feed Flex 3x a day and make up special puzzles and things for him to do so he didn't get bored.

Did you find any challenges while taking care of any of the animals you fostered? If so, how did you work through them?

Our foster Maggie loved to chew EVERYTHING – including us! We had to teach her how to be gentle and that only toys were for chewing on!



How did you and your family help prepare Flex for finding his forever home? What did you think he needed to be happy in his new family?

To get Flex ready for his forever home we had to teach him manners, like sitting and walking on a lead. We had to teach him not to jump and how to go toilet outside. We taught him how to be part of the family and how to be good around little kids like my little brother.

If you could give other kids one piece of advice about fostering a puppy or any other animal, what would it be?

To give them lots of love and to treat them like they are family.

Check out this cute video of Flex having a ball with his foster siblings.

Is your family interested in fostering? Find out more information on the [Kids' Portal](#).

Word Search

Find all of the words to do with caring for rabbits and guinea pigs.



b	e	d	d	i	n	g	c	c	c	h	o	e	h
a	l	u	r	b	e	a	o	y	e	c	a	e	e
r	i	m	b	g	p	m	l	e	y	c	t	g	e
r	w	v	i	a	p	i	k	k	n	g	t	m	e
h	r	d	r	a	c	a	l	i	u	r	o	v	d
d	y	e	n	n	c	o	w	n	a	o	b	e	i
e	a	i	t	i	e	e	r	n	r	e	u	g	a
r	o	n	h	l	a	r	n	m	h	a	r	e	h
n	r	s	l	c	e	a	r	r	a	y	r	t	r
o	r	t	e	a	h	h	g	a	y	k	o	a	p
n	n	h	e	s	e	e	s	o	w	n	w	b	b
a	s	y	a	o	r	m	w	a	t	i	a	l	e
c	l	e	a	n	w	a	t	e	r	b	r	e	r
l	k	w	r	r	e	b	h	c	t	u	h	s	n

clean water
companion
burrow

chew
binky
dig

warren
vegetables
shelter

hutch
hay
bedding



Craft: Autumn Leaf Rabbit

Get creative this autumn by making a cute rabbit out of colourful leaves! Follow these simple steps to bring your leaf bunny to life.

Materials needed:

- A bunch of autumn leaves (different sizes and colours)
- A piece of paper or cardboard
- Black marker or pen
- Scissors
- Eco-friendly glue (or just arrange the leaves without the glue)



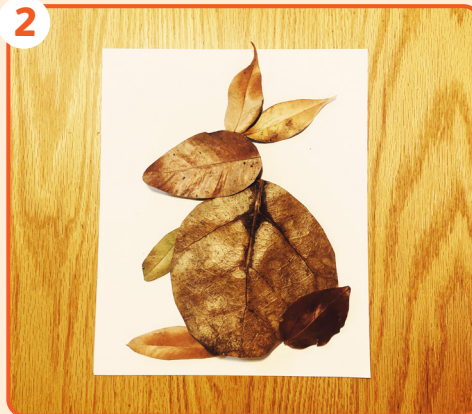
Instructions

1



Collect Leaves – Find different shapes and sizes for the body, head, ears, paws, and tail.

2



Arrange Your Rabbit – Place a large leaf for the body, a smaller one for the head, and long ones for ears. Add tiny leaves for paws and a fluffy tail.

3



Cut, Glue & Draw – Cut the leaves to shape and stick them down (or just arrange them).

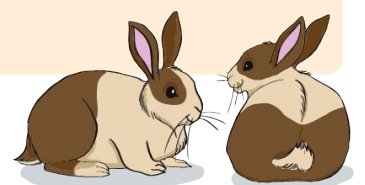
4



Add details - Use a marker to add eyes, a nose, and whiskers.



Take a photo of your leaf rabbit and send it to us at: education@spca.nz



Split Pin Rabbit

Print this page onto card paper, cut out the shapes, line up the dots, and use split pins to connect them to make Snowy, the SPCA rabbit!



SPCA Storybook Jigsaw Puzzle

Have a go at solving this awesome puzzle featuring [The Problem with Sione's Spaghetti](#).

There are loads of other puzzles from SPCA's Storybook Series, so make sure you check them out on the Kids' Portal.

Remember that you can adjust the difficulty level of the jigsaws so that you can work toward becoming a puzzle master!

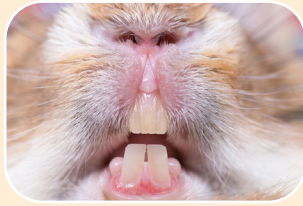


Activity Answer Key:

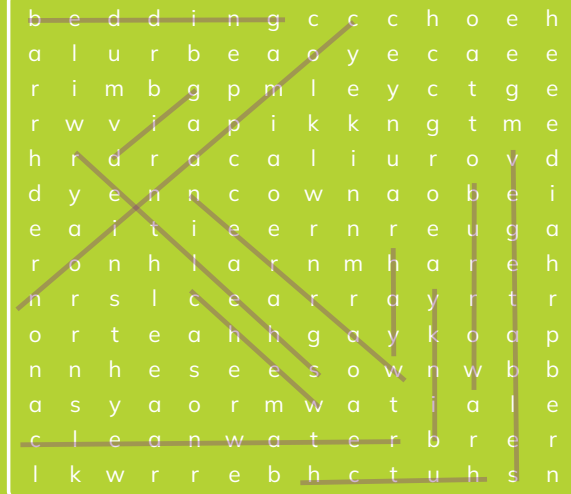
True or False? (page 7):



1. F
2. T
3. F
4. F
5. T



Word Search (page 9):



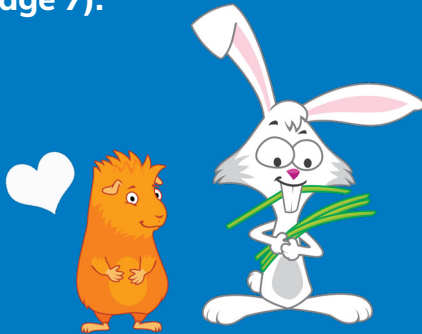
clean water
companion
burrow
chew
binky
dig

warren
vegetables
shelter
hutch
hay
bedding



Who Knows Whose Nose - Rabbit or Guinea Pig? (page 7):

- a. guinea pig
- b. guinea pig
- c. rabbit
- d. rabbit



A Day in the Life of a Happy Guinea Pig (page 5):

Hello! My name is _____, and I am a very happy guinea pig!

Every morning, I wake up and munch on fresh **hay**. It's so tasty and keeps me healthy! My favourite snack is **parsley** - yum!

I love spending time with my **companion/friend** because guinea pigs like me are very social. When I feel excited, I make a **wheek** sound to show how happy I am!

During the day, I love to explore my enclosure, especially when I find a **chew toy** to play with. My human keeps my home clean by giving me fresh **bedding** every day.

At night, I snuggle up in my cosy **hideout/blanket** and get ready for another fun day ahead!

Being a guinea pig is the best when I have everything I need to be happy and healthy!



SPCA Education Webinars - Term 2

Have you heard of SPCA Education Webinars?

During these fun, interesting, and educational 30-minute webinars you will learn about a variety of topics, including animal welfare, responsible animal guardianship, and the role SPCA plays in the community!

Ask your teacher or parent/guardian to visit www.sPCA.nz/schools and register for a world of animal welfare!



Is there something you'd like to see in the next issue of Kind Matters?

We'd love to hear from you!

Email education@sPCA.nz with your ideas!

Share your ideas!

