

# SPCA® Kids Kind Matters



## News

Term 2 2026

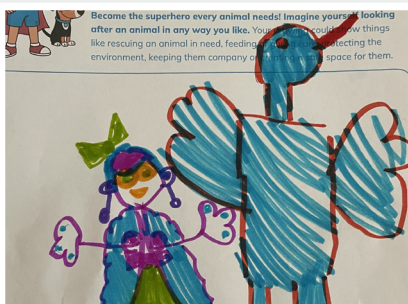
### Welcome to Kind Matters!

Before we gallop into this issue, we're excited to announce the winners of our **Superhero Drawing Competition!**

We were amazed by the 300+ entries - you showed superpowers like rescuing animals, protecting them from danger and even building awesome homes! Check out the winning entries below.

Tino pai to everyone who took part, and big congratulations to all our winners!

#### Under 5 Years Winner



Maeve, age 4

#### 5-7 Years Winner



Jake, age 7

#### 8-10 Years Winner



Sophie, age 10

#### 11-13 Years Winner



Lucas, age 11

#### 14-16 Years Winner



Cara, age 15

Congratulations to our pawesome highly commended prize winners. A huge thank you to our sponsors, Vetlife and EUGY by Dodoland. Check out the [Kids' Portal](#) to see the winning entries and why they won!



### What's Inside



#### A Closer Look at: Horses - Hōhoi

Strong, fast and full of personality!



**Kind Conservation:** Learn about the Kaimanawa horses and uncover the conservation challenges surrounding their wild landscape.



**Activity: Triangle Tangle** - Colour in the triangles to reveal the hidden animal. Can you guess what it is?!

and much more...



Visit [www.sPCA.nz/kids](http://www.sPCA.nz/kids) for more animal information!

## A Closer Look at: Horses - Hōiho

Horses are incredible animals - strong, fast and full of personality. But did you know that they also have some very specific needs and natural behaviours that help keep them happy and healthy? Whether you dream of caring for a horse one day or just love learning about animals, here's a look into what life is like for these gentle giants.

### Grazing: A horse's favourite job

One of the most important things horses do every day is graze. Horses can spend up to 9 hours a day eating! Their bodies are built for nibbling small amounts of food throughout the day, not big meals all at once. That's why pasture - things like grass, clover and other plants - is the main part of their diet.



### Horses are social creatures

In the wild, horses live in herds (groups) because being with others helps them feel safe. They rely on each other for comfort, protection and even fun. If a horse lives alone they can feel isolated, stressed or even depressed. That's why every horse should have at least one or

two other horses they can see and interact with every day.

### Space to move and play

Horses are large animals, and they need plenty of space to move around and to get daily exercise. They don't just stand in a field - horse behaviour includes walking, running, exploring, playing, resting and rolling around on the ground.



A horse's sleeping and resting area also needs to be big enough for them to:

- turn around comfortably
- lie down
- stand and stretch

Tethering (tying a horse in one spot for a long time) is not safe or kind. Horses need freedom to move to stay healthy and happy.

### Shelter from New Zealand's wild weather

New Zealand weather can change in a heartbeat - blazing sun one minute, rain or even snow the next! Horses feel these changes too, so they need shelter that protects them from all types of weather.



A good shelter helps horses:

- stay cool in the hot sun
- stay dry in the rain
- stay warm in cold winds or snow

Sometimes trees can help provide shade and shelter, but many horses also need a proper, safe structure to stand in when the weather gets rough.

Horses may be big, but their needs are surprisingly delicate. Understanding how they eat, socialise and live helps us appreciate just how special they are - and why caring for them properly is so important.

Find out more about these amazing animals on the [Kids' Portal!](#)



## Fun Facts: Horses

1. The fastest horse ever recorded ran at 88km/h! That's faster than a car driving on most city streets.
2. Horses can't vomit! Their bodies are built in a way that makes throwing up impossible - so they have to be extra careful with what they eat.
3. A baby horse is called a foal. Foals can stand and walk within hours of being born!
4. Horses can sleep standing up! They lie down sometimes too, but their bodies are clever enough to snooze while still on their feet.
5. Horses have the biggest eyes of any land mammal. Their huge eyes help them spot danger from far away.



# Kind Conservation: The Story of the Kaimanawa Horses



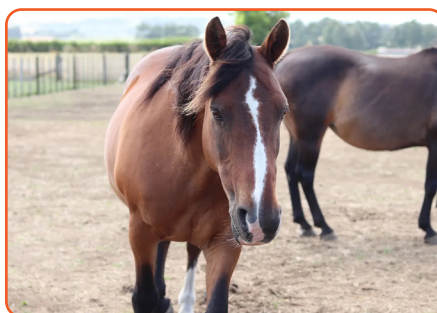
Image source: Department of Conservation - Sian Moffit

**In the central North Island, a special group of wild horses called the Kaimanawa horses roam across a protected landscape of hills, wetlands and tussock. These horses are descended from domestic horses that arrived in the 1870s - but after more than 100 years of living wild, they have become an important part of the area's history.**

For a long time, no one kept track of how many horses lived there. By 1980, only about 174 were left, and people worried they might disappear. In 1981 the land became a protected area for the horses. But once protected, their numbers grew very quickly. By 1997 there were around 1,700 horses, and this created a big problem: the environment couldn't cope.

The Kaimanawa ranges are home to rare plants found nowhere else in the world. Too many horses

meant too much grazing and trampling, which damaged fragile wetlands and threatened at least 16 special plant species. Keeping horse numbers at a safe level is important not only for the land, but also for the horses themselves. When there are too many, food can become scarce, and horses can suffer poor health.



To keep both the horses and the environment safe, a management plan was created. Today, the Department of Conservation, the New Zealand Army and welfare groups work together to keep the herd at a healthy size of around

300. This means the land can recover, and the horses are more likely to stay strong and well.

Each year, a small number of horses are carefully mustered (gathered together) from the ranges and given the chance of a new life through adoption programmes such as Kaimanawa Heritage Horses. Many are rehomed with calm, older horses who help teach them that fences, water troughs and tractors are nothing to fear. This patient approach helps wild horses feel safe and learn to trust. Despite there being many generous people willing to provide a home to Kaimanawa horses, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find new homes each year.

New, kinder tools are also helping – including fertility control, which aims to gently reduce the number of foals born each year. This helps keep the herd at a healthy level and supports long term welfare without the need for an annual muster.

Being a kind conservationist means learning, caring and making thoughtful choices that help both animals and nature. The story of the Kaimanawa horses shows how compassion, teamwork and prevention can create a kinder future for everyone.



## New Zealand Sign Language Week

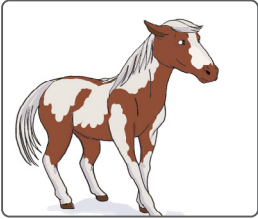
This year, New Zealand Sign Language Week is taking place from 4th - 10th May.

Join us in celebrating this official language by learning some animals signs [here!](#)



# Horse Body Language Detective

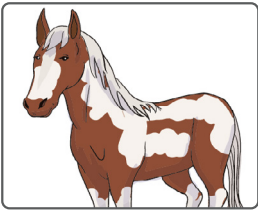
Body language is one way an animal can give us signals about how they are feeling. What does each picture tell us about how this horse is feeling? *'Happy/relaxed'* *'Worried/anxious'* or *'Angry/unhappy'*? Read the clues and then write your answer next to the picture.



1. \_\_\_\_\_



2. \_\_\_\_\_



3. \_\_\_\_\_

## HAPPY/RELAXED

- Standing upright with a relaxed posture.
- Ears facing up and forward.

## WORRIED/ANXIOUS

- Leaning back posture, ready to run.
- Whites of the eyes showing.
- Raised head with ears back.

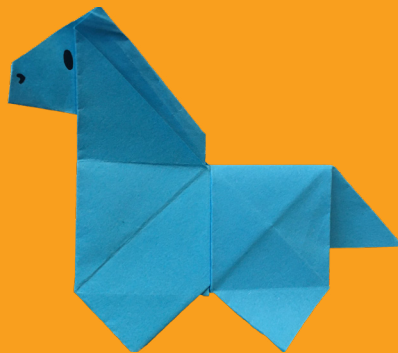
## ANGRY/UNHAPPY

- Long, wrinkled nostrils.
- Ears held slightly back.

Answers on page 10

## Origami Horse

Origami is the Japanese art of making shapes and figures out of pieces of paper. Why not grab some paper, download the instructions from the [Kids' Portal](#) and have fun making your very own origami horse!



## Horse Jokes



1. What do you call a horse that lives next door? *Your neigh-bour!*
2. Where do horses go when they're sick? *The HORSEpital!*
3. What did the horse say when it fell? *"I've fallen and I can't giddyup!"*

## Competition Time!

To celebrate our horse issue of Kind Matters, we've created a fun quiz to see how much you know about these beautiful animals.

Take the quiz and enter to win:



- 1 Have a good read through this issue.
- 2 Next, head to: [https://bit.ly/SPCA\\_horsequiz\\_2026](https://bit.ly/SPCA_horsequiz_2026)
- 3 Answer some simple questions to be in with a chance to win.

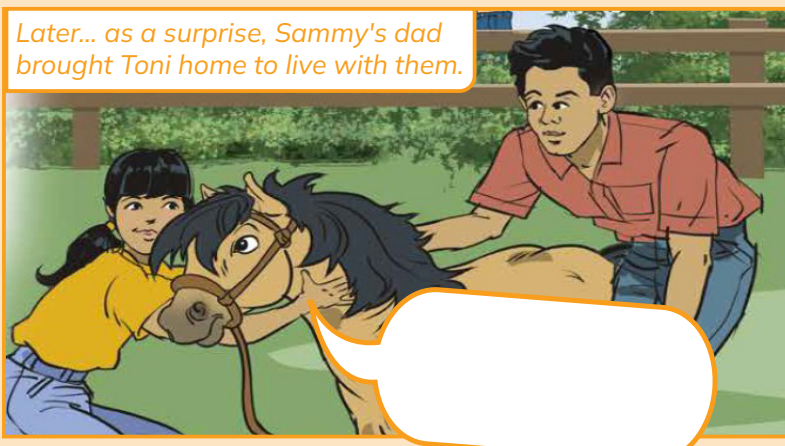
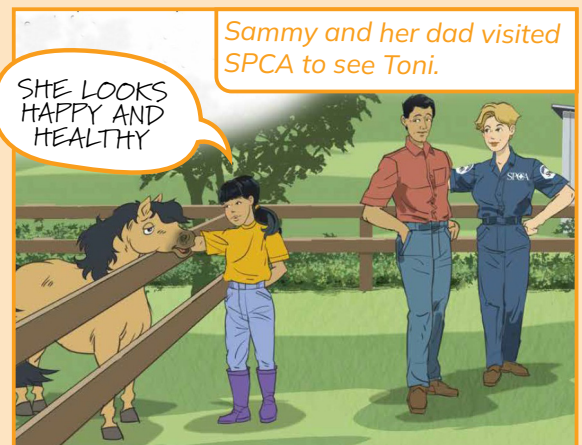
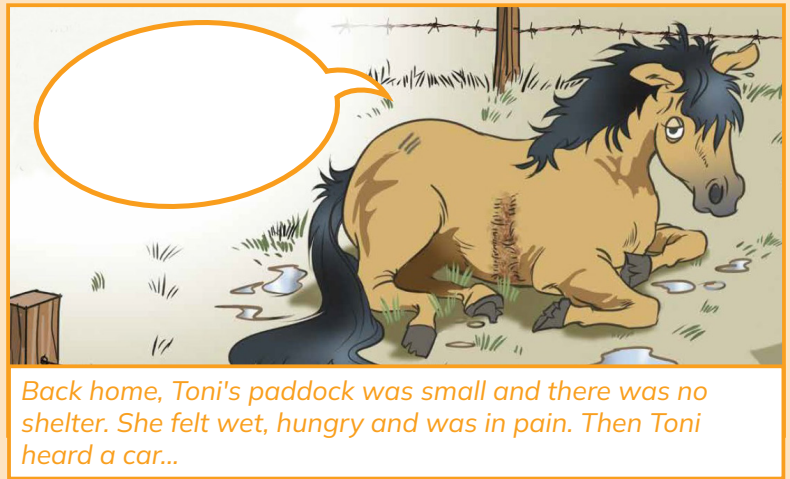
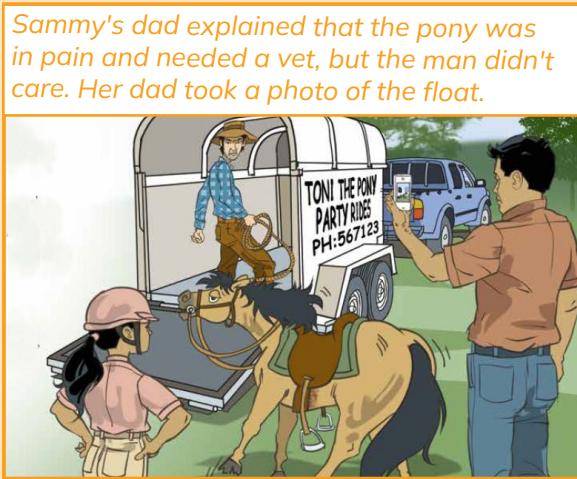
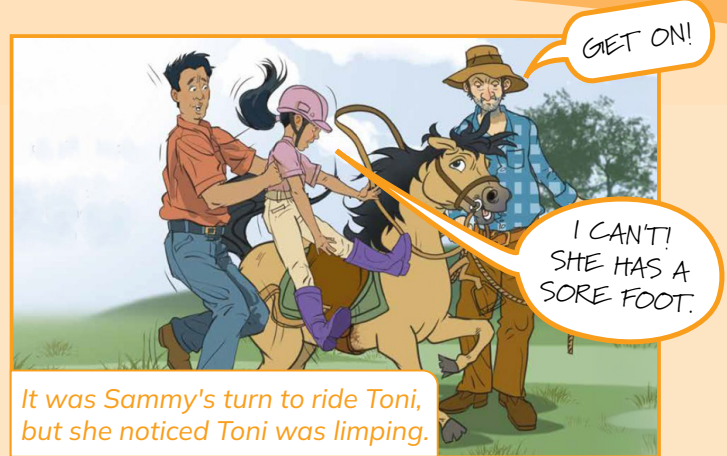
**HINT:**  
Answers to the quiz can be found in this issue of Kind Matters.  
Good luck!



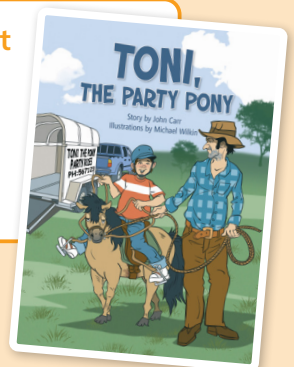
Pawesome prize pack to be won!

# Toni, the Party Pony

Week after week, Toni travelled from party to party and fair to fair, plodding in circles while excited children bounced up and down on her back. Read the comic below, then fill in the empty speech bubbles with what you think Toni the pony might be saying and feeling.



Learn more about Toni the Party Pony and where you can read the full book on the last page.





## The Dog Who Survived a Waterfall

**On the West Coast of the South Island, near a place called Campbell Biv, a brave border collie named Molly had an incredible journey.**

Molly, a four-year-old border collie, and her owner were tramping together when they slipped and fell down a huge 55-metre waterfall. While Molly's owner was rescued that same day, Molly was missing for an entire week. Then, against all odds, she was found alive and well.

After the accident, no one knew where she was or if she had survived the fall. The area was steep, rocky and very hard to reach. Even helicopters struggled to search safely.

Molly's owner landed in a pool of water at the bottom of the waterfall. She was badly shaken and bruised but managed to use a personal locator beacon, which helped rescuers find her. She was flown to Greymouth Hospital, but Molly was nowhere to be seen. Searchers looked around but couldn't find any sign of the dog.

That's when something special happened. People from the local community came together to help. Helicopter pilot Lily Newton from Precision Helicopters stepped in after hearing about Molly. "I just had this



*Molly after being rescued. Photo: Precision Helicopters*

feeling," Lily said. "I reckon that dog's still alive."

After days of searching with no luck, hope arrived in a new way. A thermal imaging expert named Georgina Du Val volunteered to help. Her special camera can detect body heat - even from far away. Using this equipment, a small team including Matt Newton, Wayne Holmes, Dawson Bliss and Du Val searched the rugged land below the waterfall. Then, at last, they saw something. A tiny warm dot showed up on the screen. It was Molly.

She had been stuck at the bottom of the waterfall for seven days, hardly moving. Carefully, Holmes was lowered down by a winch, along with his small Jack Russell dog to help calm her. Molly was shy at first,



*Where Molly was found. Photo: Precision Helicopters*



*Molly's rescue team. Photo credit: Georgina du Val*

but soon she was safe and lifted into the helicopter.

Amazingly, Molly was in good condition. She was tired and hungry, but her spirit was strong.

Molly was soon reunited with her very relieved owner. They hadn't given up on each other - and neither did the community that helped bring Molly home.

## A big win for greyhounds

**New Zealand has taken a huge step to protect greyhounds. A new law has been passed that will end greyhound racing, helping keep these gentle dogs safe and happy.**

For many years, SPCA worked hard with the greyhound racing industry to try to make racing safer for greyhounds. Sadly, dogs were still getting badly hurt, and some even died from racing injuries. SPCA believed this wasn't fair and kept speaking up for the dogs. Now, thanks to lots of caring people and leaders listening, the law has changed!

From 1 August 2026, greyhounds will no longer be raced for money in New Zealand. That means no more dogs being put in danger just to race.

New Zealanders showed strong support for this change too. In fact, 75% of people across the country said they wanted greyhound racing to end. That shows how much Kiwis care about animals and want them treated kindly.



"This outcome is the result of years of advocacy, evidence, and public support. It shows that sustained focus on animal welfare leads to meaningful change," Dr Dale from SPCA says.

SPCA's work isn't finished yet. Our next mission is to continue working with government and rehoming organisations to ensure every greyhound has the opportunity to transition into a loving forever home.

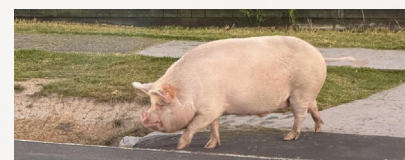
## Pig's big adventure

**A large pig surprised people in West Auckland after wandering onto the street. The pig was spotted walking along a road and a local resident shared photos online to help find their owner.**

People in the neighbourhood were worried about the pig's safety and wanted to help. Before long, staff from Te Rori a Mua Trust, a nearby organisation with animals on its land, arrived to help.

Staff explained that the pig had broken through a fence and travelled about 800 metres down the road. A trailer was brought to take the pig home, but the pig didn't want to get inside.

In the end, food helped guide the pig safely back home. The fence is now being fixed to make sure the pig stays safe and doesn't wander off again.

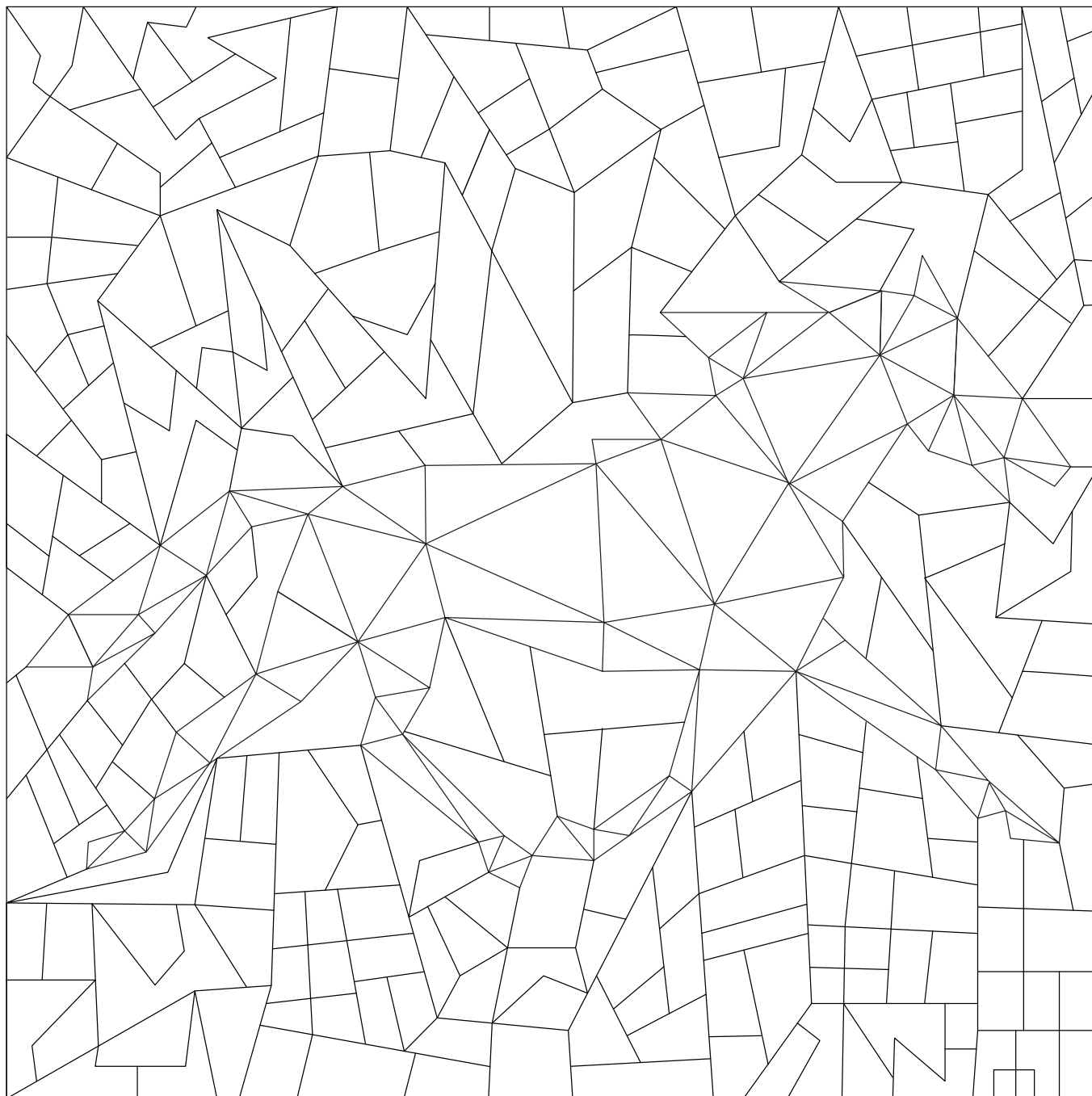


*The runaway pig. Photo credit: Shefali Patel*

# Triangle - Tangle



Colour in all the triangles, the shapes with only three sides, to reveal a hidden animal.



You have revealed a \_\_\_\_\_! Write a few sentences about the animal you have uncovered and what they need to be happy, healthy and to live a good life.

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# Meet an SPCA Community Support Officer



Did you know SPCA has many different careers that you can choose to enter into after you leave school that allow you to help animals in need?

The role of an SPCA Community Support Officer (CSO) is extremely varied. They work to help animals and the people who care for them.

Eric Odell is one of SPCA's dedicated CSOs that are making a difference by promoting kindness to animals and building connections within their community. We had a chat with Eric and he shed some light on what it's like to be an SPCA CSO - check it out below!

## Why did you want to become an SPCA Community Support Officer?

Advocating for animals in our communities has always been a passion of mine. In the past, I've focused on wildlife conservation and education, but the CSO role is a great opportunity to advocate for animals a bit closer to home.

## What's a typical day at work?

Every day is different! I might start by answering calls about animals that are sick, injured or in danger, then head out to help them. I often take animals to the SPCA Centre, a vet, or back to their homes. Some days I'm out at local events, talking to people, fundraising and

sharing tips about how to care for animals. I also visit schools and community groups to give talks and answer questions. There's never a boring day!

## What skills do you think you need to be an SPCA CSO?

A great CSO needs a mix of skills. Clear communication is important, along with the ability to manage many jobs at once. You also need emotional and physical resilience.

*"As the 'face of SPCA', some days you'll listen to people's worries; other days you might be running down the road trying to catch a stray goat!"*

## What advice would you give to someone who wants to become an SPCA CSO?

Work on your people skills and public speaking. A lot of the role involves explaining what SPCA does and why it's important. Strong communication skills help you share messages clearly to educate, recruit, fundraise and connect with the community.

## What's the funniest/cutest thing an animal has done while you were at work?



I had one of our shelter dogs in my office for the day, and she decided she really wanted to snuggle. She refused to do anything else but sit on my lap, which wouldn't have been a problem except she weighed 20 kgs!

## What's one small thing kids can do at home to help animals or be kind to pets?

Play with them! Even if it's just for 5 minutes each day – spending quality time with your pet is great for their emotional and physical health, and will help the pet bond with you!



## Horse Scramble

Unscramble these jumbled-up words - they're all to do with horses! Use the hints to help you and you can find the answers in this issue as well! Example: WHEC = CHEW



1. GERZA \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hint: Nibbling small amounts of food throughout the day.*

2. DREH \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hint: A group living together.*

3. INGHERTET \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hint: Tying a horse in one spot for long periods.*

4. FLOA \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hint: A baby horse is called a....*

5. ERCISEEX \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hint: Horses need daily...*

6. LAISOC \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hint: They like being with other horses. They are very...*



This horse is having a check-up with a vet to make sure they're healthy. What do you think the vet is checking in this picture?

Tick the correct box:  Teeth  Skin  Hooves (feet)  Heartbeat  Temperature  Weight

 **Fun Fact...**

Just like you go to the doctor, your horse will need their own doctor too - a vet (veterinarian) is an animal doctor.

**SPCA** Kids

[www.sPCA.nz/kids](http://www.sPCA.nz/kids)

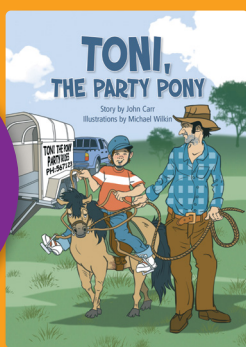
## Book Nook



**Title:** Toni, the Party Pony  
**Author:** John Carr  
**Illustrator:** Michael Wilkin

Toni the Pony was worn out. Her hooves were sore, her legs heavy and a tight saddle strap had rubbed a painful raw spot that stung with every step. Week after week, she trudged from fairground to fairground, giving rides as cheerful children bounced on her aching back.

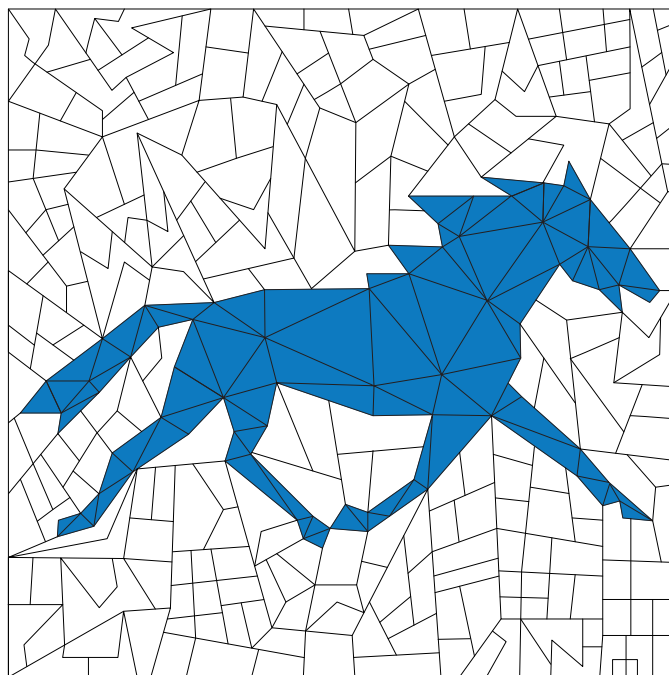
Everything changed when Sammy and her dad met Toni. They could see she was hurting and not properly cared for - and knew they had to help.



Check out this awesome story at your school, local library, or online through our [Kids' Portal!](#)

## Activity Answer Key:

**Triangle - Tangle: You have revealed a horse!**



### Horse Scramble

1. GERZA = GRAZE
2. DREH = HERD
3. INGHERTET = TETHERING
4. FLOA = FOAL
5. ERCISEEX = EXERCISE
6. LAISOC = SOCIAL



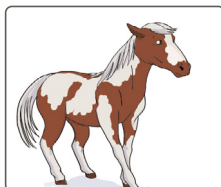
### SPCA Education Webinars

Have you heard of our SPCA Education Webinars?

During these fun, exciting and educational 30-minute webinars, you will learn about a variety of topics about 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](http://www.sPCA.nz/schools) to register you to a world of animal welfare!

### Horse Body Language Detective



1. Worried/  
anxious



2. Angry/  
unhappy



3. Happy/  
relaxed



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](mailto:education@sPCA.nz) with you ideas!

Share your ideas!

