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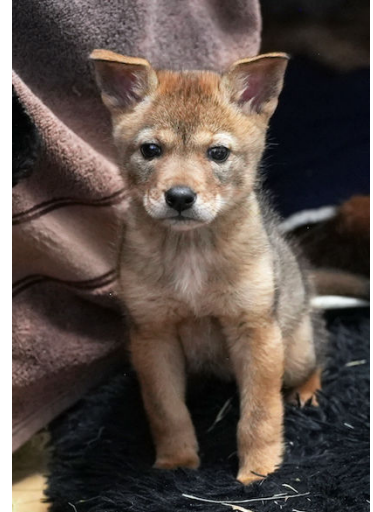
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Orphaned Coyote Pup from San Diego Finds New Home on East Coast *Young pup flown cross-country for specialized care and future as wildlife ambassador*

RAMONA, CA — An orphaned coyote pup rescued in San Diego County is settling into her new home at Maymont in Richmond, VA, where she will grow up with a friend in a natural habitat and help educate visitors about native wildlife.

The pup, affectionately known as the “Valentine’s Day coyote,” or “Val,” was the first coyote patient of the season admitted to San Diego Humane Society’s Project Wildlife program. She arrived unusually early in the year, on Feb. 14, 2026, after being found along a creek in Valley Center. A compassionate community member initially left her overnight in hopes her mother would return, but when she did not, the pup was brought to San Diego Humane Society for care.

Wildlife experts believe the pup was born in late December, well outside the typical coyote breeding season of January through March, making her case especially rare. During her time at the Ramona Wildlife Center, staff initially provided hands-off care to prevent habituation. Caregivers wore coyote disguises and introduced natural scents to help maintain her wild instincts, while she progressed from formula to eating solid food.



“We did everything we could to give this pup a chance to remain wild,” said Autumn Welch, Wildlife Operations Manager at San Diego Humane Society. “We even revisited the site where she came from with the finder to look for evidence of a den or siblings, but found nothing.”

After about a week, and in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, it was determined the pup would not be able to survive on her own in the wild. A decision was made to transfer the pup to a licensed wildlife facility, where she would serve as an ambassador for her species.

On April 8, Welch flew with her across country to her new home at Maymont’s [Robins Nature Center](#). They have already started the process of introducing Val to their other coyote, Bernie, so the two can eventually live together in their newly renovated [Virginia Wildlife Trail](#). “Val will play an important role in helping people better understand coyotes and how to peacefully coexist with wildlife,” said Welch. “While we always strive to return animals to the wild, in cases like this, providing a high-quality permanent home is the best possible outcome.”

As a nonprofit, San Diego Humane Society relies entirely on donations for its work to care for more than 10,000 wild animals each year. To support this vital work or learn more, please visit: sdhumane.org/wildlife.

Photos/b-roll and cell phone clips of the coyote pup’s care and transfer to Virginia for media use here:

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/ZtcpEQTG9j>

Photo/video credit: San Diego Humane Society

About San Diego Humane Society

San Diego Humane Society’s scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. We offer programs that strengthen the human-animal bond, prevent cruelty and neglect, provide medical care, educate the community and serve as a safety net for all pet families. Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society has campuses in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego. For more information, please visit sdhumane.org.