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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **15 Kittens Abandoned in a Sealed Tub Outside of Animal Samaritans**

**Thousand Palms, CA – September 24:** Rhona Linsell, a Pet Adoptions counselor for Animal Samaritans since 2001, arrived for work early Thursday morning to find a blue, medium-sized tub sealed shut with packing tape. At first she heard nothing. Once she pried open the top she knew it had animals; inside the tub were 15 kittens. According to Linsell, the smallest ones weren't moving.

"There were no air holes for these little guys," explained Linsell. "Thankfully the weather was cool this morning. Had it been your typical summer morning in the desert, they might not have made it." The animals are all currently under the care of Animal Samaritans. Each is recovering and is said to be in good health.

The "Tub Club" kittens have been de-wormed, weighed and examined for general health. They appear to be born from three different cats, and range in age from 4 to 7 weeks. There are orange and white tabbies, grey tabbies, calico mixes, and several combinations of all three. The five youngest kittens will be fostered by Animal Samaritans' staff and volunteers until they can live on their own at the Animal Samaritans shelter. Once each kitten has received her primary vaccinations, pet microchip, and has been spayed or neutered, Animal Samaritans will offer them for adoption.

Because the organization has a reputation for being an affordable vet clinic with a no-kill animal shelter, Animal Samaritans is no stranger to unwanted animals. Since January of this year, 22 animals have been abandoned outside their doorstep—that's not counting the Tub Club kittens. Occasionally they find a puppy or dog, but Linsell says people generally abandon kittens.

"This latest instance is particularly disheartening," notes Animal Samaritans' Director Fred Saunders. "In fact, it's downright criminal."

According to California's penal code 597s, "Every person who willfully abandons any animal is guilty of a misdemeanor." If caught, the perpetrator of this animal abandonment could be fined up to 6 months in jail and \$1,000 cash—for each animal. Additionally, because the kittens were sealed in a tub with no air holes, the suspect or suspects could be charged with animal cruelty, a felony which carries a maximum penalty of \$20,000 per offense and several years in prison.

Given their ability to survive imminent suffocation and dehydration, Animal Samaritans has named the Tub Club kittens after tribes from the popular TV show *Survivor*. The six girls and nine boys are named: Casaya, Chapera, Jaburu, Kucha, Maraamu, Mogo Mogo, Nakum, Pagong, Pooka Pooka, Saboga, Samburu, Tagi, Tambaqui, Vivero, and Yasur. People interested in adopting one of the Tub Club kittens can reach Animal Samaritans animal shelter at 760-343-3477 x104.

Animal Samaritans SPCA, a 501 (c) non-profit organization founded in 1978, is committed to improving the lives of animals and people. As the Coachella Valley's most comprehensive animal welfare organization, they strive to one day eliminate the needless suffering and abuse

of homeless and unwanted animals. Programs and services in place to save the lives of healthy and treatable animals include prevention through humane education, low-cost and no-cost spay and neuter, low-cost vaccinations, animal sheltering and pet adoptions. In addition, more than one hundred volunteers from their Animal Assisted Therapy programs visit disabled children in special needs classrooms, nursing homes, and hospitals, while their Animal Assisted Activities teams see residents at Juvenile Hall. More information is available by calling 760-343-4908 and by visiting [www.animalsamaritans.org](http://www.animalsamaritans.org)

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