



Vegan News

San Diego



July, 2026

Vegan-News.org



Interviews: Amit Dhuleshia of Strategic Action for Animals,
Jaime Schwartz of Starry Lane Bakery
Local News • Ice Cream Month • Watermelon Poke Recipe

Vegan News San Diego

www.Vegan-News.org

Editor: Stephen White
Copy Editor: Eve White-
Chapero

Contributors: Amit Dhuleshia
(interview), Jaime Schwartz
(interview), Liz Murphy (recipe)

Vegan News San Diego is
published monthly. Volume 1,
issue 7, July, 2026

Mission Statement: Vegan News
San Diego seeks to support and
grow the local vegan community
by highlighting the work of local
restaurants, activist groups,
animal sanctuaries, diet and
nutrition classes, and vegan/
cruelty free businesses.

Correspondence:
16496 Bernardo Center Drive,
Suite 208, San Diego, CA 92128
info@Vegan-News.org

Photographs and recipes are
copyrighted by their respective
contributors.

Vegan News San Diego
© Stephen White, 2026



From the Editor

In the heat of July, the San Diego vegan community remains as dynamic as ever. We're honored to feature an interview with Amit Dhuleshia, co-founder and Executive Director of Strategic Action for Animals, co-founder of the Restaurants for Rescues program, and creator of the Action for Animals app.

We also have the good fortune to bring you an interview with Jaime Schwartz, founder of the Starry Lane Bakery, who has some big news to share with the community.

July holidays and celebrations include Independence Day (hopefully your order is in for Scratch House BBQ), San Diego's Pride Parade (with a vegan contingent, thanks to Kind Heart Coalition), and National Ice Cream Month.

Chef Liz Murphy, the creative force behind Santosha Nutrition, offers a delicious watermelon poke recipe, perfect for summer. Be sure to check out her cookbook, [Kitchen Contentment: A Seasonal Guide to Cooking With Plants](#).

The "Movies and TV" page (AKA "Free Vegan Movie of the Month") features the 2016 documentary Vegan: Everyday Stories. Though it's not as well known as some vegan docs, it's understated approach may be a good fit for those who need a gentler approach.

Highlights of the July Community Calendar include the annual Oceanside Sustainable Food Festival, PlantDiego pot lucks, the Sale Ranch Summer Seasonal Supper, the Plant Baes picnic, and the Pride Parade with Kind Heart Coalition. They're all worth checking out, we'll see you out there!

Toward a vegan world,
Stephen White

Contents

Local News.....	3	Movies & TV.....	22
National/World News.....	5	Vegan & Cruelty Free.....	23
Starry Lane Bakery.....	6	Local Resources.....	24
Recipe: Watermelon Poke.....	10	National/World Resources.....	25
Ice Cream Month.....	11	Community Calendar.....	26
Interview: Amit Dhuleshia.....	12	Deals & Discounts.....	27
Vegan Food in the Wild.....	21	Entertainment.....	28

LOCAL NEWS

- Plant Diego is holding a [Fruitluck & Fresh Food Advantage](#) meetup on Thursday, July 2, at Kit Carson Park in Escondido (1333 Bear Valley Pkwy) from 10 am to 12 pm. A morning fruit-focused potluck and The Fresh Food Advantage talk with [Loren Lockman](#) of the Tanglewood Wellness Center will be followed by a visit to see the mosaic statues in Queen Califia's Magical Circle Garden.
- Additional PlantDiego events include the [Vegan Spirituality Potluck Gathering & Music Jam!](#) in Escondido, on Saturday, July 11, 6-9 pm, and the [Raw Vegan Treats & Sides Potluck](#) at the Pacific Highlands Ranch library, on Saturday, July 18, 12-1:30 pm.
- [Loving Hut in Mira Mesa](#) made the unexpected announcement that it would be closing on July 3, after 16 years in service. This closure follows the closure of the North Park Loving Hut location on May 15.
- The second local [Mr. Charlie's](#) vegan fast food franchise has soft-opened in Hillcrest (3896 Fifth Ave, San Diego, CA 92103), with a Grand Opening scheduled for July 11. The new restaurant joins the Pacific Beach location (1560 Garnet Ave, San Diego, CA 92109), which opened in February.
- [The Shore Sanctuary](#) is having their Summer Fundraiser in Eucalyptus Hills, on July 11, featuring Filipino BBQ provided by Scratch House.
- The [San Diego Humane Society](#) is encouraging the San Diego City Council to approve the Residential Rental Price Gouging, Fee Exploitation, and Cost Transparency Ordinance, which they indicated will be “a productive first step toward removing significant financial barriers to having pets in rental housing”.
- After a hiatus, Plant Baes is back with the [Plant Baes Picnic](#), a gathering for “plant-based singles, friends, and community-minded people”, seeking “friendship, romance, community, or simply a fun way to spend a summer evening.” The 21+ event takes place in Old Town on Thursday, July 16, from 5-8 pm.
- Amit Dhuleshia, co-founder of [Strategic Action for Animals](#) (SXFA), was featured on the [Better Life for Animals](#) podcast, giving an extended interview on his work to effect political change for improved animal welfare. Look for his *Vegan News San Diego* interview later in this issue.
- Popular Temecula vegan restaurant [Gentle Grill](#), owned by chef Amarleono Burnett, has come to San Diego. The former site of Altered State coffee house will be home to Gentle Grill's downtown pop-up location, at 641 B Street, San Diego, CA 92101. Stay tuned for further [updates](#).

- [Sale Ranch](#) Animal Sanctuary is holding a 21+ Summer Seasonal Supper on Saturday, July 18, from 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm. The event offers a “go at your own pace” tour, with four food stations, signature pours, garden seating, and animal resident stories. Tickets are \$90, limited to 60 guests.
- [Scratch House](#) is following up their 4th of July BBQ offerings with their Nostalgia 3.0 Pop-Up at the San Diego Vegan Market on July 19, featuring a Taco Bell dupe menu (pre-orders will open 7/5).
- A June 20 article from SanDiegoVille reported that [Modern Times' Far West Lounge](#) in Encinitas had suddenly closed. The craft beer establishment had an all-vegan menu at one time, but in March, 2025, added meat and cheese dishes to their menu. The exact reasons for the closure are not known. In the past, struggling vegan establishments have added meat and dairy to their menu in an effort to bring in more business, but have ended up caught in the middle, too vegan for some omni customers, while also losing the business of some disappointed vegans.
- The [Oceanside Sustainable Food Festival](#) will be taking place on Saturday, July 25, from 11 am to 6 pm at 505 Pier View Way in Oceanside. The free festival will feature a wide selection of vegan food vendors, live DJs, and vegan-related merchandise.
- A new vegan diner is coming to University Heights. The [Golden Point Luncheonette](#) will be opening next door to Chance's Coffee, at 2313 El Cajon Blvd. The eatery will serve lunch and dinner, with “sandwiches, shakes, sodas, ice cream & more” promised. An opening date has not yet been announced.
- After 15 years, on August 16, [Starry Lane Bakery](#) is closing their storefront, transitioning to shipping vegan, allergen-free baked good mixes, as well as a cookbook. See our interview with Starry Lane founder Jaime Schwartz later in this issue.
- Kind Heart Coalition has opened registration for their 2026 [Kind Hearted Campout](#). The campout runs from October 15-18 on Palomar Mountain, and will include all meals, a custom T-shirt, and events throughout the long weekend, including workshops, lectures, a dance party, yoga, games, and art projects. Ticket prices gradually increase over time, so early purchase is recommended.
- Kind Heart Coalition is also making sure vegans and animal activists have a presence at San Diego's annual Pride Parade on July 18. [Get in touch](#) if you'd like to march with them or help prepare the parade float.

Have a news tip? Get in touch! info@vegan-news.org

NATIONAL / WORLD NEWS

- Following [Direct Action Everywhere](#)'s exposure of abuse at the Ridgland Farms Beagle breeding facility in Wisconsin, and well-publicized attempts to rescue the dogs, a deal is finally in place to close Ridgland and free all the captive dogs there! The last 475 Beagles were purchased by Big Dog Ranch Rescue, based in Blue Mounds, WI. Big Dog announced that 325 dogs would be transferred to their rescue in June, and the remaining 150 would follow in August. Big Dog's CEO Lauree Simmons reported that the 150 dogs who are staying until August will be unharmed, only having their temperatures monitored to complete Ridgland's last research contract. Learn more at [Wisconsin Public Radio](#) and [ABC](#).
- Many authorities hold that a healthy, varied vegan diet provides sufficient protein for most people. For those who have special protein needs, an article in the science journal [Nature](#), "Development of the Vegan Protein Quality (VPQ) tool to derive smarter vegan meals with high protein quality", describes use of the [Vegan Protein Quality \(VPQ\)](#) tool, which is available online.
- PETA filed a [Federal lawsuit](#) against Washington DC's Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, after the agency refused to run non-graphic PETA donation ads in the public transportation system, for no clear reason. PETA reported they were told that the ads were rejected because they were "intended to influence members of the public regarding an issue on which there are varying opinions." PETA countered that the ads were simply asking for support, and that other nonprofits were allowed to run similar ads. They are claiming that the ban is a violation for their First Amendment rights.
- Though he's not fully vegan, actor Kevin Bacon (*Footloose*, *Mystic River*, *Apollo 13*) partnered with Humane World for Animals on a campaign encouraging plant-based eating on Wednesdays, also known as "BeansDay." Adopting the name "Kevin Bean," Bacon adorns a bean-studded suit and touts the health benefits — and compassion — of switching to plant-based meals. Watch the promo [here](#).
- Male chicks face a tragic fate in the egg industry, "culled" just after being hatched, since they can't produce eggs. Strategic Action for Animals (SAXA) recently [reported](#) that the national egg brand NestFresh has developed "in-ovo sexing", identifying eggs that will produce male chicks before they ever hatch, so culling is not needed. While there are certainly other animal welfare issues in the egg industry, this is a welcome step toward eliminating one ghastly part of it.
- A [partnership](#) between Europe's Famous Hostels and the non-profit Scope 3 Action, covering 80 European hostels, is making plant-based foods more available for travelers, including breakfasts, snacks, and dinners.
- ARTICLE: "[Vegan Menus May Be Hurting the Vegan Movement](#)" (VegNews)

Ben & Esther's Vegan Deli • Choice Superfood • Donna Jean • El Veganito • Eris Vegan Food Company
Evolution Fast Food • Evolution Coffee • Gorilla Eats Sushi • Kindred • Mr. Charlie's • MOTHERSHIP
OB People's Deli • One WorldBeat Cafe • Peace Pies • Plant Power • The Plot • The Purple Mint
Vegan Bistro • Roots UCSD • Sabor a Vida Cafe & Deli • Saigon Vegan Bistro • Tacotarian • Thanh Tinh
Chay Restaurant • Trilogy Sanctuary • Uumbal • Val's Vegan Kitchen • Veggie Grill • Veganic Thai Cafe

San Diego Vegan Restaurants



Starry Lane Bakery

Starry Lane Bakery, on 4th Avenue in Hillcrest, offers many baked goods which are vegan, gluten free, and free of top 10 allergens, but they may be best known for their mouthwatering cupcakes. Founder Jaime Schwartz shares the story of the bakery's founding, their current operation, and a huge transition for the bakery that's right on the horizon.

When did you found Starry Lane, and what inspired you to create it?

Starry Lane Bakery opened in 2011 with a simple but meaningful mission: to create a place where everyone could enjoy baked goods together, regardless of food allergies or dietary restrictions.

I saw firsthand how isolating food allergies can be, especially for children and families. So many celebrations revolve around food, and no one should have to feel left out because they can't safely eat what's being served. I wanted to create more than just a bakery, I wanted to create a place where people could walk in with confidence, knowing everything was made with their safety in mind. From the very beginning, our goal has been to make delicious treats that everyone could share and enjoy together.

Starry Lane is different from most bakeries, in that just about anyone can eat your products.

That's exactly what makes Starry Lane so special. Everything we make is free from the Top 10 allergens, and we also offer products that meet a variety of dietary needs, including vegan options.

Our focus has never been on what people have to give up—it's been about showing that inclusive baking can be every bit as delicious and beautiful as traditional baking. Whether someone has food allergies, dietary restrictions, or they're simply coming in with friends or family who do, everyone can enjoy the same treats together.

That's the experience we've always wanted to create.

You started out in Santee, and moved to Hillcrest. What was behind the move, and how has your business changed with the new neighborhood?

When we first opened in Santee, we were introducing a concept that was still relatively new. As awareness of food allergies continued to grow, we realized we wanted to be in a location that would help us reach more people.

Moving to Hillcrest gave us that opportunity. It's a vibrant, diverse community that really embraces local businesses and welcomes people from all walks of life. We've met so many wonderful customers who became regulars and, over time, friends. The neighborhood has been incredibly supportive, and we're so grateful for the community that's grown around the bakery.

Everything you make looks so good, but are there some items that are especially popular with customers?

Our pretzel rolls have definitely developed a loyal following. They're one of those items people come back for again and again.

Our cupcakes are also incredibly popular, especially because so many families can finally enjoy a birthday cupcake without worrying about allergic reactions.

It's always fun to see someone take that first bite and realize that "allergen-free" doesn't mean giving up flavor or texture.

Do you offer any seasonal items?

Yes! We love celebrating the seasons.

Throughout the year we offer seasonal cupcakes, cookies, cakes, and other specialty treats inspired by holidays and fresh flavors. Whether it's pumpkin in the fall, peppermint during the holidays, or bright fruit flavors in the summer, we've enjoyed creating something new while still making sure everything meets our Top 10 allergen-free standards.

Those seasonal offerings have become something many of our regular customers look forward to every year.

In 2024, your longtime employee Bobbyjo Rodriguez became a co-owner of Starry Lane.

That was a really exciting milestone for us.

Bobbyjo has been an important part of Starry Lane since the very beginning. She shares the same passion for our mission and has helped shape the bakery into what it is today. Making her a co-owner felt like a natural next step because she's deeply invested not only in the business, but in the people we serve.

Having someone who truly believes in our mission alongside me has made us even stronger as we've planned for the future.

You offer several packaged mixes that can be baked at home. Why did you decide to create these mixes?

The baking mixes grew out of conversations with our customers. People would visit the bakery and ask if they could recreate our recipes at home for birthdays, holidays, school events, or just everyday baking. We realized there were families everywhere who wanted safe, reliable baking options but didn't have access to a dedicated allergen-free bakery.

Our Top 9 Allergen Free baking mixes allow people to create those special moments wherever they live. They make it easier for families to bake together with confidence and enjoy treats that everyone around the table can share.

That fits perfectly with our mission of making food more inclusive.

The Walkbout app did a nice [YouTube video](#) showing a quick tour of Starry Lane.

We're always grateful when people take the time to share our story.

Videos like that give people a chance to see not only the bakery itself, but also the heart behind what we do. For many people with food allergies, walking into a bakery can be stressful. Seeing our space and learning about our mission helps them feel comfortable before they even visit.

We appreciate everyone who has helped spread the word over the years.

Are there any changes on the horizon for the bakery?

Yes, and it's definitely bittersweet.

After many wonderful years serving our community, we've made the difficult decision to close our physical bakery. Our last day of business will be **Sunday, August 16**.

This wasn't an easy decision because we know what Starry Lane has meant to so many families. We've celebrated birthdays, weddings, graduations, and countless milestones together. The relationships we've built over the years are something we'll always treasure, and saying goodbye to the storefront is emotional for all of us.

At the same time, we're excited about what's next. This new chapter allows us to focus on growing our Top 9 Allergen Free baking mixes through our website, creating new recipes and cookbooks, and connecting with our community in new ways.

While our storefront is closing, our mission isn't changing. In fact, we believe this transition will allow us to reach even more people than we ever could through a single bakery. Our goal has always been to foster food inclusivity so everyone can experience the joy of sharing dessert together, and we're excited to continue that mission with families not just here in San Diego, but across the country and around the world.

We're very sad to learn of the closure of Starry Lane's storefront, but excited that Jaime and Bobbyjo will be able to reach new customers who would otherwise never get to try their baked goods. If you've never been to the bakery, be sure to stop by before August 16 to see what you've been missing. If you already know and love Starry Lane, you won't need any other encouragement to visit again.

*Thanks to Jaime and Bobbyjo for all that you've done for our community,
and best of luck in your new venture!*

Starry Lane Bakery
Open Thursday - Sunday, 9 am - 3 pm
3925 4th Ave, San Diego, CA 92103 (Hillcrest)
Phone: (619) 328-0500
starrylanebakery.com

Vegan Recipes

Watermelon Poke

by Chef Liz Murphy,
[Santosha Nutrition](#)

Yields 1.5 cups

Ingredients

2 cups seedless
watermelon, cubed
3 tablespoons tamari (or
coconut aminos)
2 tablespoons sesame oil
½ teaspoon rice vinegar
¼ teaspoon agave nectar

Optional garnish

Sesame seeds
Scallions, finely chopped
Sliced radish
Pickled carrots



Instructions

Mix the marinade ingredients together in a small bowl until combined and pour over the cubed watermelon. Gently stir until all of the cubes have been coated. Marinate for at least 2 hours in the fridge before serving. Strain the excess liquid, top with garnishes and enjoy!

This recipe is a refreshing summer dish that is so easy to prep for a picnic or potluck. It also makes a wonderful meal if you add a simple grain like quinoa, edamame, and pickled carrots.

Find this and more recipes on Chef Liz's cookbook, [Kitchen Contentment](#).

You can also book a cooking class or farm-to-table experience.

Learn more at www.santoshanutrition.com



National Ice Cream Month



Whether you're enjoying ice cream from a shop or restaurant, or having a treat at home, there are plenty of ways for vegans to celebrate National Ice Cream Month in San Diego.

ICE CREAM SHOPS & EATERIES

Soft Serve - Vegan eateries: Evolution Fast Food, Maya's Cookies, Mr. Charlie's, Plant Power Fast Food, Val's Vegan Kitchen

Ice Cream at Vegan/Vegetarian Restaurants - Plumeria (vegetarian)

Ice Cream Shops - Vegan Options: Cali Cream Ice Cream, Handel's Homemade, JoJo's Creamery, North Park Creamery, Pacific Beach Ice Cream, Salt & Straw, Scoops La Jolla, Stella Jean's Ice Cream, Thaicy Rolls Creamery, Wynston's Ice Cream

Gelato - Vegan Options: An's Dry Cleaning, An's Hatmakers, Bobboi Natural Gelato, EscoGelato, Figaro Dessert Café, Milkissimo Gelato

ICE CREAM in STORES

Pints and Quarts: Cosmic Bliss (Lazy Acres, Sprouts), Dole Whip (Albertson's, Vons), ★Oatly (Albertson's, CVS, Vons), Simple Truth (Ralphs), So Delicious (Albertson's, Lazy Acres, Ralphs, Sprouts, Vons), Sprouts

Ice Cream Bars: Goodpop (Sprouts), So Delicious (Albertson's, Lazy Acres, Ralphs, Sprouts, Vons), Van Leeuwen (Lazy Acres)

Ice Cream Sandwiches: Alden's (Sprouts), ★Cuties (Barons, Lazy Acres), Jolly Llama (Lazy Acres), So Delicious (Albertson's, Lazy Acres, Ralphs, Sprouts, Vons), Trader Joe's

Ice Cream in Cones: Jolly Llama (Lazy Acres, Sprouts), Trader Joe's

Gelato Pints and Quarts: Gelato Boy (Sprouts)

Sorbet: Alden's bar (Sprouts), Private Selection (Ralphs)

Fruit Pops: Trader Joe's

Frozen Pops/Bars: Goodpop (Sprouts), Jonny Pops (Sprouts)

Note: Ben & Jerry's and vegan gelato brand Talenti are both owned by Unilever, which is "working for regulatory change" but still sells in countries which require animal testing. Outshine fruit pops owned by Nestlé, which also conducts animal testing.



Interview: Amit Dhuleshia, Strategic Action for Animals

Amit Dhuleshia is the co-founder and Executive Director of the activist group [Strategic Action for Animals](#) (SXFA), co-founder of the animal sanctuary philanthropy group [Restaurants for Rescues](#), and creator of the Action for Animals app.

You're probably best known in the community for your work with Strategic Action for Animals (SXFA). Before we get to that, could you tell us a little about your life before forming SXFA?

I had moved to San Diego in 2012, and I was working at a software company called Service Now. I was in the engineering side of that company and I had been there for 9 years. Around 2020, I was thinking about doing something more meaningful with my life. It was a perfect time because COVID happened. I always had this feeling, even when I was younger, to do something more meaningful rather than having a corporate job and just making money from it.

At that time, I was lacto-vegetarian, I'd been born lacto-vegetarian, my parents are lacto-vegetarian culturally, so I kind of always understood ethically and morally why it's wrong to eat animals, but I hadn't been educated about the dairy industry at that point.

I was planning my escape from the corporate rat race, around 2022 I was going to quit. Between 2020 and 2022, I was figuring out what should that look like. My thought process was, how do I help somebody or do something more meaningful rather than try to make more money? I have a dog, so I was around him working from home around that time and, that's when my kind of journey to veganism started, finding more information about how exploited animals are. I had never looked into the research about how bad the animal agriculture industry is, how many animals are suffering. I found out about the dairy industry and felt hypocritical being lacto-vegetarian.

I was vegan by 2022 when I quit my job. That's how I got into the veganism space, attending a lot of meetups to see what vegans do, what the space looks like, who the people are, to understand the community around veganism, animal rights. So that's how I came into the San Diego animal rights movement.



How did you come to create Strategic Action for Animals (SXFA)?

So I was volunteering, I was going out to all these meetups, all these potlucks, and my goal was really to see how, besides being vegan, I can do something to help animals. So I ended up meeting people, the same people that you see who are still doing a lot of animal rights, outreach groups like Vegan Justice, Direct Action Everywhere, Kind Heart Coalition, all these groups were around at that time, so I started volunteering for everything that I could just to understand what does it mean to do outreach, what does it mean to do direct action?

I did that for a while and then me and a friend started Strategic Action For Animals. She's now moved on to being an organizer for Direct Action Everywhere. I felt like there wasn't anything that spoke to me in terms of what I was interested in doing in terms of my expertise, my interest in terms of how I can help the movement. I am not a good "outreacher," unfortunately, I'm not a good direct action protest-type person. My skill set is more like bringing people together and being cordial and like building relationships with people, and I felt like that may be missing in the current animal rights movement in San Diego.

So I felt like, okay, maybe start something new and see how it would complement the other kind of groups that were already there in San Diego. So that's how Strategic Action For Animals started. Since I had more time to work on it, I could plan out long campaigns that could maybe take years, but persistently keep doing it over and over and over again. So it seemed to make sense to start my own and figure out where to take it from there.

One of the major issues SXFA has been highlighting recently is the Farm Bill.

The Farm Bill is super important. For those people that don't know, the current Farm Bill has a provision called the Save Our Bacon Act, which would basically kill a lot of animal agriculture welfare laws, including Prop 12.

Prop 12 is a law that California passed through a ballot initiative measure in 2018. Any pork, egg laying hens, and calves require a minimum amount of space. Anybody who wants to sell into California has to abide by these rules, not only the animal agriculture in California, but even people who are supplying to California. Obviously the pork industry didn't like this because, the pork industry keeps pigs in "gestation crates," these metal crates where the mothers can't even move around.

The pig industry has been fighting this since it got passed, or even before that. They've tried at multiple levels. They tried at the Supreme Court and failed, the Supreme Court voted in favor of Prop 12 and other state laws. And now this is another attempt. What they're trying to do is pass laws at the federal level, which would kill these state laws. So it's really important because the Save Our Bacon Act would kill all these laws across all these states, and would make animal agriculture even crueler than it already is.

A lot of these companies are already Prop 12 compliant. Around 27% of the pork industry is already Prop 12 compliant and it's slowly increasing. So this legislation is probably the most important legislation that is happening today. Not only are animal rights groups fighting this, but there are farmers on the other side who are fighting it, you can imagine farmers that have already converted to being prop 12 compliant. There's people who are concerned about state rights who are up in arms about this.

So it's a really important battle, but I think the upside here is that we can educate people about what's going on in the animal agriculture industry, as well as win this battle. The House has passed the Save Our Bacon Act in the initial text, so now it's in the Senate. It's part of a committee right now, and they haven't included the Save Our Bacon Act. The next couple months are going to be really critical for us to call our Senators and do whatever we can to publicize this issue and make sure it doesn't get passed as part of the Farm Bill.

We've also been trying to work with our Senators. We've sent email to our Senators and their aides and are making sure that the California Senators, Adam Schiff and Alex Padilla, are supportive of our position.

We've sent Senator Schiff's agricultural person emails with a bunch of animal rights groups, vegan restaurants, a bunch of our supporters, saying, "Here's our group of 20-30 organizations that are against the Save Our Bacon Act in the Farm Bill.

So our focus has been local, which is San Diego, but using our local power to try to make a push to try to kill this. It's the first campaign on the Action for Animals app because it's the most important.

You've spoken of the need to develop relationships with political officeholders over the long term, so that when an important issue develops (e.g., the rodeo in San Diego), politicians are more likely to pay attention.

The first legislative thing that we worked on was the rodeo ban. At that time I was kind of new to the legislative space, didn't know anything.



People were like, "okay, we should make public comments," so we did public comments at the city council. I ended up trying to schedule a meeting with all 8 city council members (one was vacant). I met with all their staff, I even met with one city council member just to say we need to do rodeo legislation. But at that point, I felt like it was a little bit too late, because I had not built up any credibility with our politicians. If I had a relationship with them or if our group had a relationship with them, and if they knew that behind us were like hundreds, maybe thousands of supporters that cared about animals, then they would be more willing to listen.

And that made me realize, we should be doing our work up front, we should be trying to create relationships up front. We should be trying to support candidates who are pro-animal so that we don't have to fight every single time something bad happens to animals. We don't have to start from all over and try to go to the public comment or try to get these people on our side when, if we had already had relationships, if we had the right people in there, then the process would be a lot easier, whether it's rodeo or some other animal cruelty.

So I think that was a learning lesson for me. We did get Kent Lee's chief of staff to propose legislation, but it got killed in the subcommittee because we just didn't have support. What we're doing for 2026 is trying to meet with the candidates that are running for city council, and making sure that we're endorsing the right candidates. We can flip some of these seats, and we would have a majority, and then maybe we can do a rodeo ban ordinance, along with other animal related protections.

I understand that SXFA is working to develop methods of political change that can be replicated in other cities.

We're not trying to be a big organization like PETA or something like that, the idea for us is to try to create models that can be replicated in other cities. And part of the model could be tooling, it could be the script, the methodology, so if we can package it up and say, "okay, if you do this, this, this, this, then you could have a positive outcome." Now, if you take the same model and apply it to another city, and somebody else can run it, and we can document that whole process and the tooling around it, then maybe it could make changes across the nation, maybe outside of the nation.

That's where I've landed on how we can be the most effective that we can effectuate change for animals on a global or at least a national scale.

So that's our idea: let's try this, see if it works. If it does work, let's capture what we did. And then package that up and talk to other organizations, "you have the same problem that we had, and this is how we solved it, would you be interested in taking what we've done and running with it?"

That could apply to political stuff like ballot initiatives, it could also apply to corporate strategic campaigns as well. For example, we've been working on trying to eliminate plant-based milk surcharges at coffee shops here in San Diego. So for example, Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, this month, they removed their surcharge.

Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, which is an LA-based company, were charging 75¢ for plant-based milks. They just removed it in June. We were able to meet with them, we were able to talk to the CEO of Coffee Bean, I was able to meet with the CMO of Coffee Bean. They were already thinking around doing it, but we were able to at least meet with them, and say "Hey, if you do this, we'll definitely support you guys, whatever marketing that we have from our side, and all the groups that we have will definitely say good things about it if you go through with it." So it could be a corporate change as well. It doesn't have to be particularly political.

The whole thought process is around not being adversarial to the people that we want to make change. We need to think about how to build relationships with them, and figure out ways where we're overlapping, and figure out campaigns where this is an easy win for them, especially with this surcharge. Starbucks has changed. Dunkin' Donuts has changed. So their competitors are changing. So they're going to have a business problem if they don't change, and they admitted that to us in the meeting. She said, well, we're losing customers. Now there's a couple more companies that are still out there that are still charging the plant-based milk surcharge, so we're trying to put a little bit more diplomatic pressure to try to convince them.

And, if they can get rid of the plant-based surcharge, you know, coffee shops have a lot of bakery items. it's not like you would lose taste if you replaced eggs. There are good bakeries that are vegan that don't have animal products. So maybe that's the next thing, and it attracts more people to their shops. So why not? For milk, lactose, there's a lot of people who are lactose intolerant. So why not make the change, make it easier for your customers?

In Lemon Grove you've been working to get an initiative on the ballot to ban the commercial breeding and sale of birds. How has that gone?

So for those people who don't know about ballot initiatives, it's a way for ordinary citizens to create their own laws. You would draft up your law, and then if you get a certain amount of signatures, it's usually 10% of the registered voters in California, or for a particular city, you can get it on the ballot in November, and pass that law, if the citizens vote for it. It's a way to bypass politicians, because sometimes politicians don't care about animals or they have other things to do.

Two years ago, we did a ballot initiative in Del Mar because I wanted to see what the process was like. For that, we ended up getting all the signatures. Del Mar is the easiest one because it required 330 signatures, which was not many. I put myself as the petitioner, and you need to be a registered voter in Del Mar, or in the city that you live, so then at the end of it, they killed it on that technicality. But that taught me what not to do and what the process looks like.

So this time we tried to lobby the city council to pass an ordinance that would ban the sale of pet birds in pet stores, the same law that we have for dogs, cats and rabbits in California, we want to just expand that to birds in Lemon Grove. So we tried the regular route of going to city council, talking to city council members, we just didn't have a majority. I think 2 out of 5 were supportive. There's already bird stores in Lemon Grove, so the businesses would be affected, including a bird store that just moved in.

Our backup process was always going to be a ballot initiative measure if we couldn't get the city council. So starting in January, we wrote up the ordinance, and we started collecting signatures in January, and in April, we finished collecting, we needed to collect about 2,100 signatures. We ended up spending 3 or 4 months collecting signatures, weekends, weekdays. I ended up getting funding from World Animal Protection and Lady Freethinker to pay people to collect signatures. In May, they certified it, and now we're gonna be on the ballot in November.

One cool thing about the ballot initiative is you get to talk to people while you're collecting signatures and teach them about how the retail pet sales industry is really horrific, and then once it goes on the ballot, people will learn about why this thing is really bad.

Even though we didn't pass it in Del Mar, we're still in contact with the city council members. We're hoping they will do something before November to pass a full retail sales ban of animals. And we're in talks with one city council member in San Diego City Council, we are hoping that they do something to extend the retail sales ban. The idea is to pass it in multiple cities. And then there's other groups doing stuff in San Francisco, West Hollywood passed a retail sales ban, and then if we had all these cities pass something, then maybe the state can pass. Legislation as well.

We will be going out again in September, October, before the November 4th elections, telling people to vote on this in Lemon Grove.



Politicians have a lot of power over animal welfare, for better or worse. What are some of the best ways for readers to help effect political change?

If you follow us on Instagram and if you're on our mailing list, we are endorsing candidates who are pro-animal. So one easy thing people can do is support candidates who are pro-animal. We're hoping to expose that much more in the November election. You can also donate to your pro-animal candidates. If you donate to them, they have a better chance of winning. So those are two easy things that you can do.

Now, if you're in a city that is kind of small, and if you have time, you can get involved with the political process because in smaller cities, it's easier to get the city council member's ear, because they're doing it part-time.

And the other thing you can do is, whenever there's an animal issue, you can call your representatives. There's laws that you can call your Assembly member, or state Senate member and say, "Look, I want to support this." And that does two things. One, it hopefully passes protections for animals. Then two, it lets the politicians know that there are people who care about animals. This is an issue that should be a bipartisan issue. I think we need to push more of us to use our voices to say, "Look, you should be caring about it and this is something that should be a priority for you as a legislator."

It's often hard to get people engaged politically. This must be frustrating at times, but there may be rewards as well.

I think the onus is on the organizations to make it easy for people to get involved politically, and that's why we created the Action for Animals app, because we want to make it super easy. I think people will be engaged politically if they know two things: One, that it's very easy to do, you don't have to do a lot of research. And two, if they see that the work that they're doing is actually making some change for animals.

Sometimes it's not clear, but sometimes it is clear, like, for example, the Farm Bill. There's organizations working on it, and you can actually see the effect that it's having on the politicians, and you can see a lot more people who are not vegan, are speaking on behalf of this, against the Save Our Bacon Act, and it's becoming more mainstream.



You developed an app, Action for Animals (free on the [Apple App Store](#) and [Google Play](#)), to make it easy for people to take action to help animals.

The idea of the Action for Animals app is based on this app called 5 Calls, which is a left-leaning app that makes it easy for people to call their politicians. The idea is you put it in your zip code or your address and it pulls up a bunch of animal related issues, whether it's legislation or corporate campaigns, and you click on it, read a little summary about it, and based on your location, it finds who your representatives are, and there's a script, and you can click on one of the links, their phone number, and you can call them and talk to

somebody and say, "Look, I support this issue" or "I'm against this issue."

The idea, again, is to make it easier for people and make advocacy accessible to regular people. You don't have to be a vegan to just care about animals. So it has both email and calling, and it keeps track of who you've called. We released it at the end of last year, and we've been slowly kind of getting more and more users. We'll keep updating it, and hopefully we can get thousands of people using it.

For those who haven't used the app yet, could you walk us through how it works?

So you can download the app on Google Play store or Apple Store, search for Action for Animals and it should pop up. When you open it up, you can put your location. The reason for the location is because we need to pull your political representatives, including your state Assembly and state Senators, and also your federal representatives.

So once you put your location out, it'll pull up a bunch of local, state and federal issues that are relevant based on your location. You can click on them, and it's usually prioritized by which ones are the most important. We both have both calling and emailing functionality.

So you can click on a particular issue or campaign, you'll have basically information about that campaign. It will usually have either a script, if you're calling somebody, like your political representatives. Or sometimes it'll have a pre-filled email; when you click on it, it'll pull up your email client and you can send an email to the person that's the decision maker for that particular issue or campaign.

There's a little gamification feature where for every action that you do, you get animal points for animals helped, and you can keep track week over week, and try to keep a streak going to try to take easy actions every day or every couple days. Those kinds of things add up. If we're all doing this, if we all individually do these little actions, it could definitely make an impact overall for animals.



You've also co-founded the Restaurants for Rescues organization?

Yeah, co-founded with Patte Hughes, it was her idea. She went to London, and she ate at Earthling Ed's restaurant, and they have this cool concept of an add-in tip for a farm animal sanctuary. So if you eat a meal, he was adding, I think, 25p to each meal, so it was adding up and then the benefits would be going to these sanctuaries.

So I think Patte brought it over here and she was like, we should do this here in San Diego. So I started it. The idea is to one, hopefully bring in some additional income for these sanctuaries, which are always struggling to get funding, because they do so much work for these animals. And two, sometimes the patrons of these restaurants are not vegan, so they don't know about the sanctuaries, or even sometimes vegans don't know about these sanctuaries, so to also give some publicity to these sanctuaries.

For the people that are vegan, maybe they go to these sanctuaries and become volunteers, maybe they donate more money supporting the sanctuaries. And for the people who are not vegan, maybe they get

connected with the animals this way, maybe go see a cow, maybe see a pig, and kind of change their views about animals.

So we thought it was a cool idea. We only have two restaurants right now, we have a partnership between Loving Hut Mira Mesa and Franklin Farm Sanctuary, and we have a partnership between Eris Food in Oceanside with Libby Lou's Safe Haven, which used to be Dulzura, but she's recently moved up north. But they still have the partnership.

We're hoping to get more restaurants. So if you're a restaurant and want to participate, we have plenty of sanctuaries here that would love to partner. For participating restaurants, there's a little tabletop donation display on each table that has information about the sanctuary, and you can scan something to send a donation to the sanctuary. The only requirement is that the restaurant has to be vegan, so if you're a vegan restaurant and would want to support, we would definitely like to set you up. We'll provide all the placards and the tabletop donation displays and all that stuff.

You were recently featured on the [Better Life for Animals](#) podcast.

Yeah, they reached out to me and wanted to talk. They're this cool group of people that are doing podcasts with people that are trying to make a difference for animals. They've had some pretty heavy hitters on that podcast, I'm surprised they reached out to me.

The interview was about Strategic Action for Animals, talking about the Action for Animals app, and about the idea of what we can do to make it easier for people to advocate for animals besides just being vegan. Go check it out and support them, they're doing tremendous work. They also just came out with a campaign for farm animal sanctuaries, they're donating \$500 to sanctuaries, so please listen and support them if you can.

We're so grateful to Amit for his many efforts on behalf of the vegan/animal welfare community, and for making time in his busy schedule for this interview. Please check out his many activities via the links below, and look for his Community Ask request on the last page of the newsletter.

Strategic Action for Animals (SXFA)
www.instagram.com/sxfaorg / SXFA.org

Restaurants for Rescues
www.instagram.com/restaurantsforrescues

Action for Animals app
Free app at [Apple App Store](#) and [Google Play](#)

Vegan Food *in the Wild*



*Ben & Esther's Vegan
Delicatessen, Rolando
Bagel Sandwich*

*Val's Vegan Kitchen,
North Park*

*Strawberry Shake
& Soft Serve*



MOVIES & TV

Vegan: Everyday Stories

Free Viewing Link: [YouTube](#)

Writer/Director: Glenn Scott Lacey

Release date: June 4, 2016

Length: 91 minutes

Production Co: Americonic, Northwest VEG

Focus: Human Health/Animal Welfare

Rating: Not Rated

Content Warning: No visually graphic scenes, slaughterhouse description from 45:49-51:55.

Vegan: Everyday Stories is a low-key and quietly engaging documentary, spotlighting the stories of four vegans from different walks of life, intercut with short clips of interviews with experts and celebrities.

Curiously, the experts or celebrities are not credited when they appear onscreen, so viewers are encouraged to use the following list to identify the who's-who of guest appearances: [Friends For Life](#) animal shelter co-founder Salise Shuttlesworth (6:14), [Mercy for Animals](#) founder Nathan Runkle (10:50), Australian philanthropist/animal rights activist Philip Wollen (11:14), vegan musician Moby (15:00), Victor Sjodin of [Vegan Outreach](#), (18:30), [Farm Sanctuary](#) co-founder David Baur (21:48), Dr. Neal Barnard of the [PCRM](#) (34:37), bariatric surgeon Dr. Garth Davis (42:45), Dr. Sofia Pineda Ochoa of [Meat Your Future](#) (45:49), ultramarathoner Scott Jurek (57:09), Def Jam label co-founder Russell Simmons (1:00:35), David Walega of [Art for Animals Sake](#) (1:01:55), NFL football player David Carter (1:04:43), musician and author Will Tuttle (1:10:40), TV personality/kickboxing teacher Daniel Kucan (1:10:55), and actor Ed Begley, Jr. (1:15:06).

The four vegans followed in the film include Renee King-Sonnen (0:00:01), who aspired to be a famous Country & Western singer, but ended up farming in Texas, after she married 4th generation cattle rancher Tommy Sonnen. Her interactions with the animals caused increasing discomfort with the idea of eating meat and sending their animals to slaughter. Tommy was skeptical of her radical plan to transform their farm into a sanctuary, but was amazed to see the vegan community support their work.

Eight year old Genesis Butler (0:11:15) is a spirited vegan and activist, hoping to get the whole world to go vegan. At a young age she asked her mother where the meat they ate came from, and her mother was honest with her, leading Genesis to become vegetarian. Not too long after, she asked where milk came from, and went vegan. She went on to participate in Vegan Outreach.

Yassine Diboun (22:30) struggled with trauma in his family of origin, and began self-medicating with drugs and alcohol to cope with this. He overdosed more than once, and turned to crime, in what he now believes was a cry for help. After a family intervention, he entered rehab, went vegan, and became a successful ultrarunner, befriending the famous vegan ultramarathoner Scott Jurek.

Jerri Hastey (29:05) created the Seed on the Go vegan food truck, based in Santa Rosa, CA, making it her mission to shatter stereotypes of vegan food held by many omni customers by making food so good "their knees buckle."

VEGAN & CRUELTY FREE:

Summer First Aid

Summer offers so many opportunities for fun, but it can also be a time of allergies, sunburns, swimmer's ear, and other seasonal maladies. If you happen to run into any snags, the vegan and cruelty remedies below may help alleviate your symptoms. ★ indicates vegan and cruelty free company.

Allergy Relief: ★Forces of Nature, Genexa, ★Hilma, MediNatura, ★Plantiva, ★Secrets of the Tribe, Similasan/
Nasal Allergy Relief

Allergy Relief, Liquid: Bactimicina (De La Cruz)

Aloe Vera Gel: ★All Terrain, Allurials, ★Alma Nativa, ★Amara Beauty, ★Ayda, Deep Steep, Earth Therapeutics,
Earth's Daughter, ★Elysium, ★JÄSÖN, New York Biology,

Ear Infection Prevention: ★EarPro (LiquidPro)

Healing Ointment/Healing Balm/Healing Salve: Bio-First, Boiron, CannaSmack, cocokind, ★Doctor Rogers,
★Hello Bello, The Honest Company, ★Keys Avo Jel, Kiss Kiss Goodnight, ★Pipette, ★Typology, ★Vanicream

Hydrogen Peroxide: ★Lab Alley, 365/Whole Foods

Insect Repellent/Bug Repellent: ★Absolute Green, ★All Terrain, ★Alva Naturkosmetik, Badger, ★BALM! Baby,
Betula's Botanica, ★Brittanie's Thyme, ★BugMace, ★Bullenbees Skin Care, ★Buzzie, Eco Roots, ★Hello Bello,
★Natrappel, ★Woodstock Herbal Products

Itch Relief: ★All Terrain, ★Brittanie's Thyme, De La Cruz, ★Forces of Nature, ★Hello Bello, ★NeilMed,
NutriBiotic, Oillogic/Bug Bites & Itch, ★Vanicream

Nausea Relief: ★Ascents, ★Basic Vigor Nutraceuticals, ★Wonderbelly/Multi-Symptom

Perspiration Management: ★Carpe

Poison Ivy/Poison Oak Treatment: ★All Terrain

Swimmer's Ear: ★EarPro (LiquidPro), ★BigWave Drops, Similasan

Sinus Relief: ★Forces of Nature, Similasan

Skin Balm: ★Bubbles & Balms

Local Resources

VeganDiego, San Diego County's Vegan Directory www.vegandiego.com

A comprehensive listing of vegan restaurants, markets, food services, businesses, and organizations.

San Diego Vegans Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/sdvegans

With 14,000 members, this is one of the best sources of information on the local vegan community.

San Diego Vegans Meetup group www.meetup.com/sandiegovegans

An inclusive group that meets regularly to connect local vegans.

PlantDiego www.plantdiego.com

A San Diego nonprofit vegan social support and education group, which offers monthly gatherings focused on whole food plant based eating and health.

San Diego Vegan Activists www.facebook.com/sandiegoveganactivists

A source for local protest and advocacy opportunities.

Vegan in San Diego veganinsandiego.com

Website featuring a listing of vegan restaurants, pop ups, and businesses.

Sustainable Market/Night Market events www.viridianproductions.com

Vegan and sustainable festivals and pop-up markets, including the San Diego Sustainable Night Market, North Park Sustainable Market, Vista Sustainable Night Market, and annual San Diego EarthFest and Oceanside Vegan Food Festival. See website for dates and locations.

San Diego Vegan Market, Grantville www.veganrestaurantsd.com

Groceries, snacks, drinks, personal care, cleaning supplies, freshly made deli sandwiches.

Thousand Petal Lotus vegan market, Vista www.thousandpetallotusvista.com

Groceries, snacks, drinks, vitamins, personal care, gifts.

Natural Foods Stores: • Chains: [Baron's Market](#), [Jimbo's](#), [Manolo Farmers Market](#), [Mother's Nutritional Center](#), [Sprouts Farmer's Market](#), [Trader Joe's](#), [Whole Foods Market](#) (owned by Amazon)

• Independent Markets: [Cardiff Seaside Market](#) (Cardiff), [Frazier Farms](#) (La Mesa, Oceanside, Vista), [Jensen's Foods](#) (Point Loma), [Keil's](#) (San Carlos), [Lazy Acres Market](#) (Encinitas, Mission Hills), [Ramona Family Naturals](#), [San Diego Farmers Outlet](#) (Grantville), [Stehly Farms Market](#) (Kensington, Valley Center), [Windmill Farms](#) (Del Cerro)

Local Activism Opportunities

[Action for Animals \(XFA\)](#) group, [Action for Animals](#) app, [BAAL \(Bold Activists for Animal Liberation\)](#) group, [Direct Action Everywhere \(DxE\)](#) group, [Kind Heart Coalition](#) group, [Strategic Action for Animals \(SXFA\)](#) group, [Vegan Justice](#) group + San Diego Vegan Activists ([Instagram](#) [Facebook](#)) pages

National/International Resources

VEGAN FOOD FINDERS

Happy Cow vegan/vegetarian restaurant finder www.happycow.net

VeggL vegan food options at restaurant chains veggl.com

VEGAN ALCOHOL

Barnivore: www.barnivore.com

VEGAN PRODUCT FINDERS/CHECKERS

Vegan Product Checkers: [Double Check Vegan](#) app, [Is It Vegan?](#) barcode app, [Vegan Verify](#) barcode app, [WhatsVegan](#) ingredient label scan app, [Conscious Bunny](#) free website, [Is It Vegan?](#) free website, [Logical Harmony Animal Ingredient List](#)

CRUELTY FREE PRODUCT CHECKERS

Cruelty Cutter app: cruelty-cutter.org

CRUELTY FREE PRODUCTS

Leaping Bunny cruelty free certification: www.leapingbunny.org

PETA cruelty free certification: crueltyfree.peta.org/product-type

Cruelty-Free Kitty: www.crueltyfreekitty.com

Ethical Elephant: ethicalelephant.com

VEGAN ORGANIZATIONS

The Vegan Society: Birmingham, England | www.vegansociety.com

The American Vegan Society, Malaga NJ: americanvegan.org

Vegan Outreach: Sacramento, CA | veganoutreach.org

Viva! The Vegan Charity: Bristol, England | viva.org.uk

Vkind (products, companies and services): www.vkind.com

VEGAN and CRUELTY FREE ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Reddit/Vegan: www.reddit.com/r/vegan

Reddit/Cruelty Free: www.reddit.com/r/crueltyfree

VEGAN CERTIFICATIONS

Vegan Society, Vegan Action/Vegan Awareness Foundation, American Vegetarian Association, BeVeg, V-Label International, VegeCert vegecert.com

VEGAN HOUSING

VegVisits: vegvisits.com

CRUELTY FREE INVESTING

Cruelty Free Investing: crueltyfreeinvesting.org

ACTIVISM OPPORTUNITIES

PCRM Actions: www.pcrm.org/take-action

PETA Action Center: www.peta.org/actioncenter

VegMediaWatch: vegmediawatch.org

Factory Farm Watch: FactoryFarmWatch.org

JULY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Coming in August: • Vegan Justice volunteering opportunity at Hillcrest Cityfest, Sunday, August 9 • Farm Animal Refuge Waterfront Social, Friday, August 21 • Sustainable Markets by Viridian Productions			1 Donna Jean special: Entree, Dessert + Drink for \$35 Wed-Thu 5-9 pm Tacotarian special: Dorado tacos \$1.99	2 PlantDiego: Fruitluck & Fresh Food Advantage , Kit Carson Park, Escondido 10 am - 12 pm El Veganito: \$2 off all burritos	3	4
5 Scratch House SD begins taking orders for Nostalgia 3.0: Taco Bell dupes menu (pick up at SD Vegan Market 7/19, 5-6:45 pm)	6 Eris special: All-In Lunch (sandwich + a drink for \$12) , 12-2 pm Mon-Fri →	7 Tacotarian special: Taco Tuesday, tacos \$1 off Maya's Cookies \$2 chocolate chip cookies Tue-Wed 4-5 pm	8 Donna Jean special: Entree, Dessert + Drink for \$35 Wed-Thu 5-9 pm Tacotarian special: Dorado tacos \$1.99	9 El Veganito: Burrito Thursday \$2 off all burritos Donna Jean date night special: 1 pizza, 1 pasta, 1 salad, 1 bottle of wine for \$85 Wed-Thu 5-9 pm	10	11 PlantDiego: Vegan Spirituality Potluck Gathering & Music Jam! Escondido, 6-9 pm Shore Sanctuary: Summer Fundraiser , Eucalyptus Hills, 12 pm
12	13 Eris special: All-In Lunch (sandwich + a drink for \$12) , 12-2 pm Mon-Fri →	14 Tacotarian special: Taco Tuesday, tacos \$1 off Maya's Cookies \$2 chocolate chip cookies Tue-Wed 4-5 pm	15 Donna Jean special: Entree, Dessert + Drink for \$35 Wed-Thu 5-9 pm Tacotarian special: Dorado tacos \$1.99	16 El Veganito: \$2 off all burritos Donna Jean date night special Wed-Thu 5-9 pm Plant Baes Picnic singles & friends Old Town, 5-8 pm	17	18 Kind Heart Coalition: Pride Parade , Hillcrest PlantDiego: Raw Potluck , 12-1:30 Sale Ranch: Summer Seasonal Supper , Temecula, 6-8:30 pm
19 SNAP's Caribbean Garden Soirée fundraiser , Encinitas, 1 pm Scratch House SD Nostalgia 3.0: Taco Bell menu order pick up, SD Vegan Market, 5-6:45 pm	20 Eris special: All-In Lunch (sandwich + a drink for \$12) , 12-2 pm Mon-Fri → Vegan Meditation 6-6:30 pm (online)	21 Tacotarian special: Taco Tuesday, tacos \$1 off Maya's Cookies \$2 chocolate chip cookies Tue-Wed 4-5 pm	22 Donna Jean special: Entree, Dessert + Drink for \$35 Wed-Thu 5-9 pm Tacotarian special: Dorado tacos \$1.99	23 El Veganito: Burrito Thursday \$2 off all burritos Donna Jean date night special: 1 pizza, 1 pasta, 1 salad, 1 bottle of wine for \$85 Wed-Thu 5-9 pm	24	25 Oceanside Sustainable Food Festival , Oceanside, 11 am-6 pm
26	27 Eris special: All-In Lunch (sandwich + a drink for \$12) , 12-2 pm Mon-Fri →	28 Tacotarian special: Taco Tuesday, tacos \$1 off Maya's Cookies \$2 chocolate chip cookies Tue-Wed 4-5 pm	29	30 El Veganito: Burrito Thursday \$2 off all burritos Donna Jean date night special: 1 pizza, 1 pasta, 1 salad, 1 bottle of wine for \$85 Wed-Thu 5-9 pm	31	

Deals & Discounts

RESTAURANTS

[Ben & Esther's Vegan Delicatessen](#) (Rolando): Rewards program offers points with purchase

[Chani's Donuts](#) (Kearny Mesa): Free sample donut

[Donna Jean](#) (North Park): Weeknight Dinner Special: Entree, Dessert + Drink for \$35 Wed-Thu, 10% off, valid Wednesday and Thursday, coupon in [VeganDiego](#)

[El Veganito](#) (La Mesa): \$1 off, coupon in [VeganDiego](#), \$2 off all burritos on Thursdays

[Eris Vegan Food Co.](#) (Oceanside): The All-In Lunch (sandwich + a drink for \$12), Monday-Friday, 12-2 pm "Buy one, get ones" on Tuesday nights for loyalty program members

[Evolution Fast Food](#) (North Park): Free soft serve with purchase of a sandwich or burger, coupon in [VeganDiego](#)

[Gorilla Eats Sushi](#) (College Area, in SDSU at Aztec Food Hub): 10% off cash "call in for pickup" orders

[Ike's Love and Sandwiches](#) (Hillcrest, Midway, Poway, Sorrento Valley): Omni shop with many vegan options With app, free sandwich on birthday month, periodic specials and offers

[Maya's Cookies](#) (Grantville, San Marcos): \$2 chocolate chip cookies Tuesdays & Wednesdays 4-5 pm

[Nibble Chocolate](#) (Old Town's Fiesta de Reyes): 10% off coupon in [VeganDiego](#)

[Phattie's Bake Shop](#) (Point Loma): Rewards program, 1 point for every \$2 spent

[Plant-Power Fast Food](#) (Encinitas, Escondido, Ocean Beach, UCSD): Rewards program offers points with purchase to redeem for products + birthday surprise

[The Purple Mint Vegan Restaurant](#) (City Heights): Free birthday surprise at www.purplemintbirthdayclub.com VIP program offers secret menus, special offers/discounts, loyalty rewards

[Rayluca Chocolate](#) (Mira Mesa): For online orders, use code "LOVE15" for 15% off.

[Tacotarian](#) (North Park): Tuesdays: \$1 off tacos, Wednesdays: Dorado tacos \$1.99

[Veggie Grill](#) (Carlsbad): Rewards Program offers points with purchase, periodic offers, free birthday entree

FREE / DISCOUNTED EVENTS

[PlantDiego: Fruitluck & Fresh Food Advantage](#), Kit Carson Park, Escondido, Jul 2, 10 am - 12 pm

[PlantDiego: Vegan Spirituality Potluck Gathering & Music Jam!](#) Escondido, Jul 11, 6-9 pm

[Plant Baes Picnic](#) for singles & friends, Old Town, Jul 16, 5-8 pm

[Pride Parade with Kind Heart Coalition](#), July 18, Hillcrest

[PlantDiego: Raw Potluck](#), Pacific Highlands Ranch library, Jul 18, 12-1:30

[Oceanside Sustainable Food Festival](#), Oceanside, Jul 25, 11 am-6 pm

STOREFRONT MARKETS

[Sprouts Farmers Market](#): Frequent Buyer program - purchases earn cash rewards, digital coupons

[Thousand Petal Lotus](#) (Vista): Low priced Rebel Cheese, buy one, get \$1 off second cheese

ENTERTAINMENT

Vegan T-Shirt of the Month

“No Vegan
Diet
No Vegan
Powers”

Local Vegan History

In 1971 Makeda Cheatom founded the first vegetarian restaurant in San Diego, Prophet International Vegetarian Restaurant, which was open until 1985. Cheatom now runs the One World Beat Café in Balboa Park.

The longest running vegetarian/vegan option restaurant currently operating in San Diego is Jyoti-Bihanga, which opened in 1986.

The first all-vegan restaurant in San Diego is believed to be Kung Food, which opened in Hillcrest in 2004. It later became Nature's Express (2008), then Evolution Fast Food (2012).

Vegan/Vegetarian Character:

Linus van Pelt,

Peanuts comic strip (1950-2000)

Linus van Pelt, younger brother of Lucy van Pelt and best friend of Charlie Brown, is known for his wisdom and spirituality. In the November 24, 1994 *Peanuts* strip, Lucy tells Linus they're going over to their grandmother's for turkey. Linus responds, "I don't eat turkey anymore..I'm a vegetarian.." This story isn't developed further, but Linus is a major pop culture figure whose vegetarianism is largely unknown.

“Vegan food is soul food in its truest form. Soul food means to feed the soul. And, to me, your soul is your intent. If your intent is pure, you are pure.”

- Erykah Badu, VegNews,
October 6, 2008

Vegans in the News

San Antonio vegan [blogger Dora Ramírez](#) won the James Beard Media Award in the Vegetable-Focused Cooking category for her 2025 cookbook, *Comida Casera: More Than 100 Vegan Recipes, from Traditional to Modern Mexican Dishes*. Scottish vegan soccer player [Cameron Burgess](#) is playing on Australia's 2026 World Cup team. Tennis superstar **Serena Williams** is playing her first first singles match in almost four years, competing against 20-year-old Maya Joint in in the first round at Wimbledon. Vegan musicians taking part in Daisy Chain Fields music festival in Irvine on August 29 include indie singer/musician **Mitski** (mostly vegan, occasionally eats eggs) and rapper/singer **Doechii**.

The Last Word: Community Ask

There are many groups and organizations which could benefit from community support to further their vision. Community Ask is an opportunity for these groups to request whatever assistance would be most helpful. Below are some ways to help Strategic Action for Animals (SXFA) further its mission.

Is there a way that readers could help you further the aims of Strategic Action for Animals/ Restaurants for Rescues?

- If you're interested in the work that we're doing, you can follow us on [Instagram](#), and you can go to our website, [SXFA.org](#), and join the email list. Sometimes I do send emails when something is important, like the Farm Bill. Those are two ways to keep in touch, and you can always reach out to me, I'm pretty accessible.
- If you have ideas on how we can do more to help animals, and if you want to volunteer for collecting signatures and some of the other stuff that we're doing, just reach out.
- Donate to sanctuaries, donate to politicians that we support that are pro-animal, donate your time if you have time, but definitely do these little things that I mentioned throughout the interview: call your politicians, email your politicians, email corporations, use the Action for Animals app.
- If there's anything that we can do from our side to help you, we're more than happy to support vegan businesses, vegan sanctuaries, our whole point is to give back to vegans and keep the money flowing in the community, what Mike Weinberg talks about in the [VeganDiego](#) directory: we have to support our community.

Next Month

In August we're proud to bring you an interview with Barbara Gates of [Healthy Kids Happy Planet!](#) Upcoming events in the vegan community include: [Vegan Justice](#) volunteering at Hillcrest Cityfest on Sunday, August 9, and the [Farm Animal Refuge](#) Waterfront Social on Friday, August 21.

Vegan News
San Diego