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The Magazine for Animal Care Professionals and Volunteers

May/June 2011

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ANIMAL Sheltering

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ALSO:
Shelters are often the victims of crime. Technology's a good way to create a secure environment, but so is training staff to follow SOPs—and keep their eyes open to potential threats.
—The "101" Department, p. 43



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Walking All the Way to the Bank

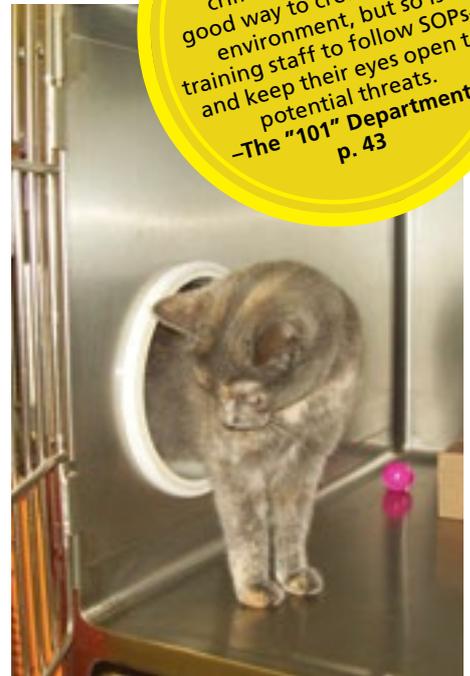
Poches and people alike love a good dog walk fundraiser, and why not? They're fun, and they often raise lots of money for shelter programs. But these lively events don't just happen by themselves—a dedicated team has to lay the groundwork months in advance. Here's how to walk this way.



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The Long Haul

Donkeys truly are beasts of burden in many developing countries, where economic conditions—and local attitudes—make animal welfare a low priority. But a new cooperative program in Tanzania aims to improve the lot of donkeys by teaching people better standards of care and compassion.



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Getting Real

This story of changes to cat housing at a shelter in New York is the first of a series that will explore how new standards developed by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians can be applied to real-life situations in the sheltering and rescue field to create more humane outcomes for animals.

Off Leash, p. 60.



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Shelters reap the benefits of selling pet supplies at the point of adoption; teams of rescuers work together to remove thousands of rats from a hoarder's home; a Louisiana shelter goes green; an animal control director succeeds by keeping animals—not egos—his top priority; and much more.

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Long treated as easy targets by criminals, these days shelters around the country are fighting back. They're rethinking security protocols, installing high-tech alarm systems, and training staff to make the protection of animals and property a top priority.

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Recruiting new volunteers should wait until you've built a strong foundation, and your program can handle the increase in numbers. Here's how to find the right people.

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Thanks to the dedicated efforts of an AT&T manager with a heart for homeless animals, dogs awaiting adoption are resting easier.

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The Small Print

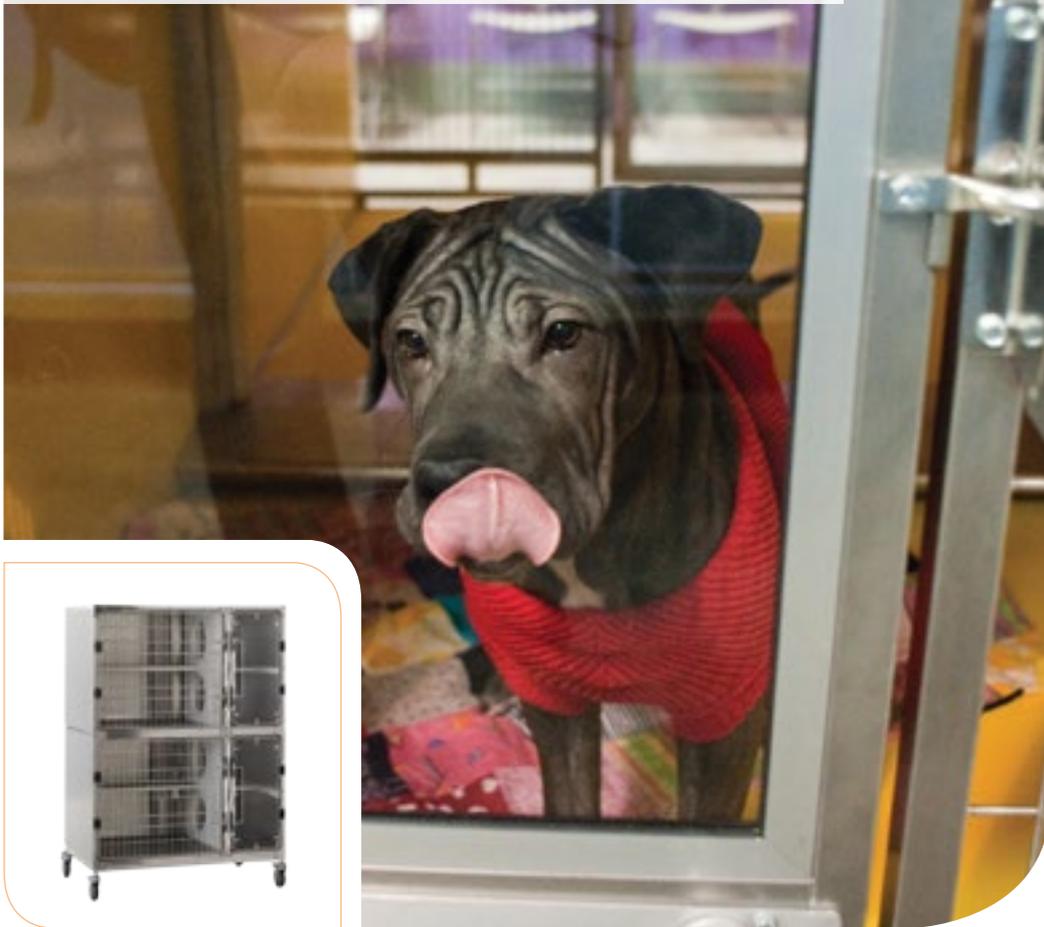
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A Note From Your Fans at *Animal Sheltering*

What's one precious resource that shelters around the country find themselves perpetually short of (aside from enough people to do the job)?

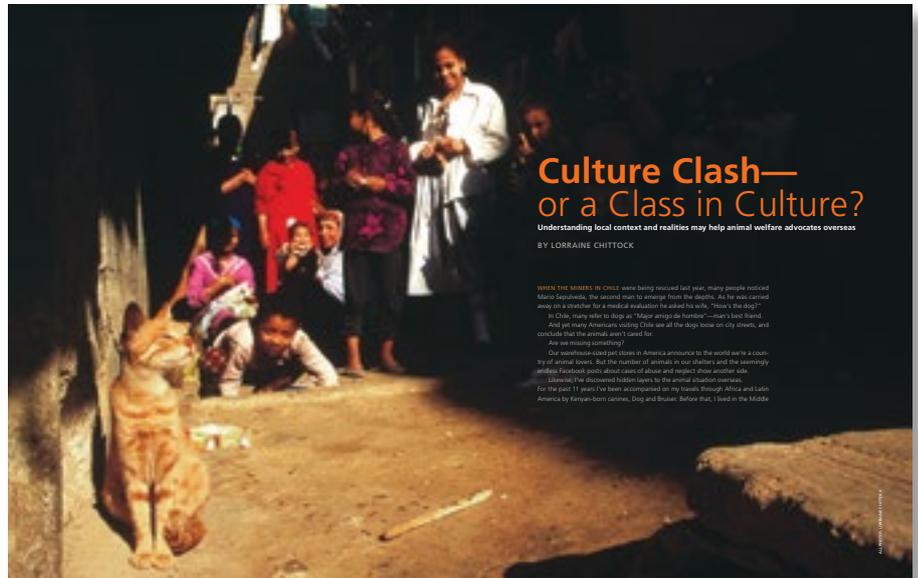
Money, of course. That's why dog walk fundraisers have long been a staple of shelter work. Shelters and rescue groups have come to rely on these community events as a proven source of income that can keep crucial programs running. But, as one of this issue's features reveals, pulling one off—and getting the return on your investment of funds and effort—requires a remarkable level of planning and foresight.

Once you've raised some cash, remember what Ben Franklin said about prevention. Getting funds is one thing—keeping them safe is equally important. Our “101” Department deals with shelter security issues, taking a look at what shelters can do to better protect themselves from criminal elements.

Animal Sheltering isn't the only resource for those in our field who want to keep current with emerging trends and issues. Animal Care Expo 2011 is slated for May 4-7 at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, Fla. This year marks the 20th anniversary of an event that's grown to become the world's largest training conference and trade show for animal welfare workers. There will be 11 tracks of workshops to choose among—more than ever before. Wayne Pacelle, CEO of The Humane Society of the United States, will sign copies of his new book, *The Bond: Our Kinship with Animals, Our Call to Defend Them*. And, as always, you'll be able to network with colleagues from around country (and the world) who face the same challenges, and share the same goals, as you do.

You won't want to miss it. For information, go to animalsheltering.org/expo or call 800-248-EXPO.

—Carrie, James, Jim, and Shevaun
Animal Sheltering magazine staff



Culture Clash— or a Class in Culture?

Understanding local context and realities may help animal welfare advocates overseas
BY LORRAINE CHITTOCK

WERE THE SHIVERS IN CHILE were being rescued last year, many people noticed Mario Sepulveda, the second man to emerge from the debris. As he was carried away on a stretcher for a medical evaluation he asked his wife, “Where’s the dog?” In Chile, many refer to dogs as “*Mapa*” (mapa de hombre)—man’s best friend. And yet many veterinarians visiting Chile see all the dogs loose on city streets, and conclude that the animals aren’t cared for. Are we missing something?

Our newspaper-based readers in America announce to the world we’re a country of animal lovers. But the number of animals in our shelters and the seemingly endless thousands of stray cats of felines and puppers is another side.

Likewise, I’ve discovered hidden layers to the animal situation overseas.

For the past 11 years I’ve been documented on my travels through Africa and Latin America by *Nature*, *Time*, *Dog and Biscuit*, *Before Mail*, *I Feed the Media*.

Spread the Word

Last year I contacted you to get electronic copies of *Animal Sheltering* articles to pass on to our local city council, county supervisors, and others to educate them about animal issues. You were kind enough to do that, and I have gotten a wonderful response. I live in Santa Cruz, Calif., and with our budget pressures it is hard to convince local government to allocate the money for a healthy shelter and animal control program. It is through citizen involvement that we have worked to create relationships with the government officials that make the decisions. Most of the time, these decisions are made without much knowledge of the many issues that come up. I am so thankful for The Humane Society of the United States and the important information it shares in *Animal Sheltering* and *All Animals* magazines.

—Joan E. DeNeffe

*Santa Cruz County Animal Welfare Coalition
Santa Cruz, Calif.*

Editor's note: Thanks for reminding readers that *Animal Sheltering* articles can be requested in PDF format. For more information, write to us at asm@humanesociety.org

Globally Grateful

Thank you very much for “Culture Clash—or a Class in Culture?” (March-April 2011, p. 28). As the director of Animal-Kind International (AKI), a nonprofit that supports existing animal welfare organizations in poor countries (Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Armenia, Bosnia, Honduras, and Jamaica), the question I get most often is: “How can you worry about animals when people are so poor?” My typical answer is: “Poor people often take better care of their animals than wealthy people, and they are grateful for any help they can get to improve the lives of their animals.” And another oft-asked question: “How can you impose our Western standards of animal care on other cultures?” My answer to this one: “The organizations that AKI supports were started and are operated by local people—not Americans, not Westerners—local people who care about animals.” But now, with Lorraine Chittock’s article, I have so much more fodder—I’m looking forward to the next time I’m asked these questions. Thank you, Lorraine!

—Karen Menczer, Executive Director
*Animal-Kind International
animal-kind.org
Jemez Springs, New Mexico*

That Gnawing Feeling

A rescue effort at a California home removes 2,000 rats

BY JIM BAKER



Rats are adorable, highly social creatures—but you definitely don't want them living in your walls. Two fuzzy rodent faces peek from their perch at a hoarder's home.

It started with one rat. One *pregnant* rat.

A young girl—the daughter of a man in Llano, Calif.—brought the pet rodent home from her classroom, not knowing the little creature was expecting. She and her father soon found themselves caring for a mama rat and her pups, but didn't act quickly to separate the rats by gender, thus ushering in a period of free love, and, given the fertile nature of rats, babies. Lots and lots of babies.

Some got loose, and, within two years, the lone mama rat and her offspring had become an extended family numbering in the thousands. Rats got into every crack and crevice of the house—gnawing, burrowing, pooping—and before long, the house was nearly destroyed.

When rats escaped the confines of the house and started overrunning the property, the man's neighbors got involved. Rather than contacting animal control, though, they reached out to the company that pro-

duces *Hoarders*, an A&E reality show about people overwhelmed by the things they collect—some by inanimate possessions, others by pets.

That call set in motion a major rescue effort in November involving staff and dozens of volunteers from The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), United Animal Nations, Bay Area-based North Star Rescue, and Andy's Pet Shop in San Jose.

In two days, teams of rescuers removed an estimated 2,000 rats from the house. The man and his daughter had long since abandoned it to the rodents, though he continued to return each day to care for them. Ultimately, he was allowed to keep one rat—a male.

While large-scale rescues can take unexpected turns, the team wasn't distracted by the presence of a TV crew, or overly worried about how their efforts would be depicted. "We've done several cases now that have



Sara Varsa, director of operations for The HSUS Animal Cruelty, Rescue, and Response Team, surveys just a fraction of the nearly 2,000 rats eventually removed from a hoarder's home.

been filmed for TV, so we're fairly used to it," says Adam Parascandola, director of animal cruelty issues for The HSUS. "There are always instances, such as the euthanasia scene [in which a badly injured rat has to be put to sleep], where we're concerned about how they'll be portrayed. But A&E was very good about working with us to make sure everything was shown in appropriate context."

After they were removed from the property, the rescued rats were sorted into small groups, placed in large plastic bins, and transported five hours from Llano to San Jose in an 18-wheel, climate-controlled truck provided by The HSUS. They were met at Andy's Pet Shop—a store that sells pet supplies and showcases adoptable animals from local rescue groups and shelters—by staff and volunteers from Sacramento-based United Animal Nations and North

Star Rescue, which specializes in companion rodents and rabbits.

The store's owners, Lissa Shoun and her husband, Eric Bong, had agreed to allow the rescue teams to transform 6,000 square feet of their property into a temporary shelter for the rats. But the concrete floor would need to be refinished and sealed first. Screaming Flea Productions, which produces *Hoarders*, paid \$10,500 to get it done. PetSmart Charities donated food, bedding, cages, and other supplies.

Teams from United Animal Nations and North Star Rescue worked together to unload the rats, conduct a meticulous intake process, provide medical care, and get the rodents settled into their temporary home.

It was hard to determine exactly how many rats arrived at the shelter, and just as difficult to maintain an accurate census. "The numbers kept changing, because every day, there'd be 25-30 rats being born," says Alexis Raymond, director of communications for United Animal Nations. Onsite preparations included setting up a "maternity ward" for pregnant rats and nursing mothers.

None of the rescue teams had ever dealt with an operation quite like this before, involving so many animals (all of them small and from one species), requiring so much effort to extract them from a property, set up an appropriate temporary shelter, and coordinate so many volunteers. "We tend to place between 300-400 animals every year with our foster system, so this is three to four years of capacity all at once," says Lauren Paul, North Star Rescue's founder and president. "We had a lot of really great volunteers come to sign on when they saw the magnitude of this project."

More than 500 of the rats have been adopted, and others have been taken in by rescue groups and shelters. No intact males and females are adopted out to one home, to prevent future breeding. Some of the rats will find permanent homes with HSUS staff, and their cross-county transportation was being worked out at press time. Four or five people at the organization's office in Gaithersburg, Md.—including chief of staff Laura Maloney—plan to adopt a number of them. "I'm adopting [a male-female pair

Animal Sheltering Online

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- For more information on Humane Society International's work around the world, visit humanesocietyinternational.org.
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named] Dagwood and Blondie. I'm keeping them at the office during the week and at home on weekends. They have cute little hammocks and everything," Maloney says.

Meanwhile, Andy's Pet Shop has been busy selling food, bedding, and cages to new adopters. The rodents have created quite a sensation at the store, attracting many visitors. "We've got some of the cages set up in the windows, so people can see them even after we're closed, which actually is when they're most active and interesting," Shoun says. "I love hearing the comments from people as they walk by ... 'Oh, I saw those rats on TV—this is where they came.'"

It's been an unusual episode for the store, its owners, and three staff members—perhaps more than they bargained for. "It's been crazy, it's been hectic, but also rewarding. So many people are so thankful that we're doing it, and it's been quite an adventure, and I'm never gonna do it again," Shoun says, laughing. **AS**



A hoarder allowed his pet rats to take over his entire house, which they nearly destroyed. Furniture and 2,000 rodents aren't a good mix.

Saving Animals, Saving the Planet

A Louisiana parish upgrades to a green shelter

Change has come to Plaquemines Parish in a big, green way.

The jurisdiction at the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico in Louisiana recently built a \$3.8 million animal shelter in Belle Chasse that aims to save not only animals, but energy. The shelter features many environmentally friendly amenities, from a permeable parking lot that allows rainwater to seep into the ground (thus reducing runoff) to a geothermal HVAC system that saves electricity by pulling heat from the Earth via underground pipes.

Officials plan to seek certification from the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program, a federal initiative that recognizes buildings for incorporating environmentally beneficial design and construction features. The facility could become not only the first LEED-certified animal shelter in the region, but also one of only a handful in the country, and the first LEED-certified building in the parish, says Raymund Ferrer, superintendent of the parish's animal control department.

Plaquemines Parish has never before had a true animal shelter, Ferrer says. It's had a cinderblock "animal pound"—a six-kennel dog facility with a small area for cats, built more than 30 years ago next to a solid-waste dump and a sewage treatment plant.

Shortly after animal lover Billy Nungesser was elected parish president in 2006, Ferrer approached him about constructing a better facility. Nungesser liked the idea, Ferrer says, and also gave his blessing to the proposal to go green.

But it's not just a greener facility: The new shelter is an improvement in every way imaginable, Ferrer says. The old building was a couple of hundred square feet; the new shelter is 13,728 square feet. The new facility contains more of the design features that should be part of a modern shelter, such as sealed flooring and controlled-air environments to reduce the chance of a disease outbreak. The old cinderblock structure had no sealed flooring and no air conditioning, much less the zoned HVAC



Sue Sampey of the Plaquemines Animal Welfare Society in Louisiana plays with dog on a "pop it"-style water sprinkler system at the parish's new animal shelter.

systems found in newer shelters. The new shelter will have a healthy holding room, isolation room, and quarantine room—divided holding areas the old structure lacked.

And the new shelter is located next to a recreational parks-and-trails system and an elementary school—which Ferrer says will attract more potential adopters and help boost employee morale. "You're not surrounded by odor," he notes. "You're not in a dark and dingy place any longer."

LEED certification "kind of makes you one of the elite," says Bruce Hoffman, president of Gulf GeoExchange and Consulting Services Inc. in Slidell, La., which developed the shelter's mechanical, electrical, and plumbing specifications. "Everybody wants to be associated with it." LEED-certified buildings get a plaque listing their environmental features, he explains, and also become eligible for grants and tax breaks.

"That little plaque on the wall might get us a few more people coming through now and again," says Jacob Stroman, shelter director for the Plaquemines Animal Welfare

Society (PAWS), which will share the new, parish-owned shelter with the parish animal control department.

Hoffman, a LEED-accredited professional and a consultant for the shelter, expects the shelter's LEED application to be approved by the end of the year. Among the building's many green features, the walls and roof are made out of aerated concrete, an energy-efficient material that provides superior insulation, he explains. The paint, floor coatings, and wood finishes have low amounts of volatile organic compounds, which will increase indoor air quality. Much of the shelter is made of recycled material. The roof has systems to capture rainwater, which can be used to water the lawn. The lighting is sensor-controlled to shut off automatically when a room is not occupied.

The environmental features increased the upfront costs, but the added expense will largely be recaptured in energy savings over the building's lifetime, Ferrer says. The geothermal heat pump system, for example, requires no fossil fuels and is expected to last

longer and require less maintenance than other systems.

Ferrer says the new shelter sends a message that Plaquemines Parish is conscientious about green energy, and that the era of poorly lit “pounds” located near the dump is over.

When animal control department employees and some animals moved into the new facility in mid-February, Ferrer says his officers reported an immediate difference in the working environment. The office is more spacious, the windows are positioned in a way that allows more natural light to enter, and the kennels are much easier to clean, he says.

“You walk into it, and you don’t even think you’re in a kennel,” adds Hoffman. The building is divided into 14 separate zones with their own HVAC systems, which means the areas housing animals get plenty of fresh air, negating the shelter’s inherent smells.

The concrete mixed with air is light but sturdy, making the shelter more durable than

a stick-built structure, Hoffman says. “This is basically a concrete bunker,” he notes—and it can survive even a storm similar in strength to Hurricane Katrina.

Having the parish animal control department under the same roof as the private, nonprofit PAWS is unusual but not unique, Ferrer says. Founded in 2003, PAWS has helped find new homes for parish shelter animals, while also rescuing strays and taking in surrenders. Stroman acknowledges that there will be “some interesting dynamics” because PAWS is a no-kill, limited-admission organization and hopes to stay that way, while the parish shelter is open admission. But neither Stroman nor Ferrer expects a problem. Noting that the organizations have worked together for several years, Ferrer says, “PAWS is fully aware of animal control’s unfortunate job.”

PAWS spent years headquartered in an old office building with an attached warehouse—which Stroman describes as dank, dilapidated, poorly ventilated, and lacking the durable surfaces required for effective clean-

ing. “It’s really not a functional shelter,” says PAWS executive director Sue Sampey.

Naturally, PAWS officials are ecstatic to be moving to the new parish shelter. Cats will have indoor/outdoor play areas and be able to move at will, and PAWS is consulting with the Tulane University architecture school to develop interactive toys for cats. “I keep describing the new cat play area as ‘as close to Disneyland as you can get for a cat,’” Stroman says.

The giant play yard for dogs will be inviting for volunteers, Stroman says. He envisions a big “hamster wheel” for dogs that could possibly produce electricity, and a program where volunteers exercise the dogs on the nearby trails. The new shelter is loaded with potential.

“We’re thrilled about the new place,” Stroman says, “because we’ll be able to do so much more.” **AS**

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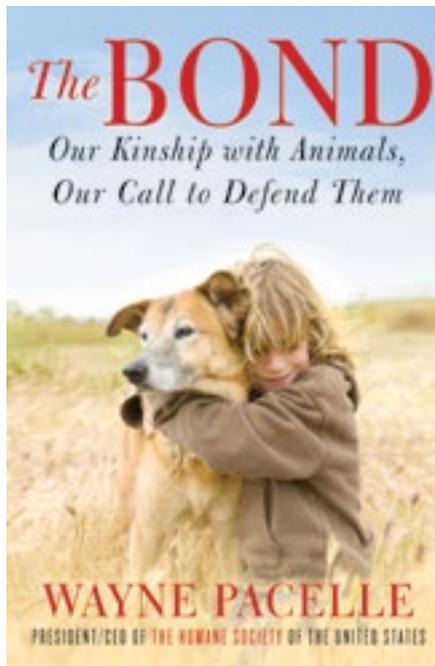
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Dreaming the Possible Dream

A new book takes aim at a wide range of cruelties to animals—and provides a roadmap for moving beyond them



*In his new book, *The Bond: Our Kinship With Animals, Our Call to Defend Them*, Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States, takes a broad look at the origins of the human-animal bond and the severing of that bond in the industrial era, and goes on to present a vision for a new humane economy. *The Bond* tackles issues ranging from factory farming to the ongoing cruelties of the Canadian seal hunt to the challenge of ending pet homelessness and euthanasia.*

In the sections excerpt below, Pacelle writes about one of the ongoing difficulties facing both pets and the animal shelters that care for them: the inherent cruelties and misleading marketing of pets born in puppy mills. "If another 20 percent of pet owners acquired their next dog from a shelter—or a total of 45 percent of all people with dogs—we would solve the problem, and every healthy dog would in time find a home. With a decent marketing campaign and some money behind it, along with a lot of hard work, there is no reason we cannot get there by 2020," Pacelle writes. But one of the challenges in getting there, he notes, is taking on the industries that are more concerned about profits than animals' lives.

From *The Bond: Our Kinship with Animals, Our Call to Defend Them*

The major national organizations, including The HSUS, the World Society for the Protection of Animals, Maddie's Fund, and others, have set a great goal: to end the euthanasia of healthy dogs and cats in America by the year 2020. A lot of people on the ground believe we can get there, and I am one of them. One statistic in particular supports this conviction. Right now, slightly less than 25 percent of all dogs in American households come from shelters or rescue groups. That means that roughly three out of every four dogs come from other sources—from pet stores, puppy mills, small-scale breeders, or friends adopting out a litter.

There's still a stigma associated with shelters, the vague, sometimes snobbish, and always uninformed view that something is wrong with shelter animals. In America, of all places—the country of the second chance—you wouldn't expect to find that attitude, but somehow it survives. And the result is that millions of loyal, loving, and perfectly healthy animals—dogs and cats down on their luck after their owners moved, got divorced, or lost their jobs or homes—wind up at shelters through no fault of their own.

As disappointing as that 25 percent statistic might be, it also shows us the way out of the problem. It's a simple matter of arithmetic for shelters—all that's needed is a modest increase in adoption to end euthanasia of healthy pets altogether. If another 20 percent of pet owners acquired their next dog from a shelter—or a total of 45 percent of all people with dogs—we would solve the problem, and every healthy dog would in time find a home. With a decent marketing campaign and some money behind it, along with a lot of hard work, there is no reason we cannot get there by 2020, or even sooner.

Factory Farms for Dogs: The Tragedy of Puppy Mills

Not only are there many misconceptions about shelter animals and their fitness for adoption—there are all sorts of illusions and articles of faith about dogs from pet stores and puppy mills. And sometimes even the best-intentioned people, with a great and sincere love for animals, have no idea where the animals they buy have really come from.

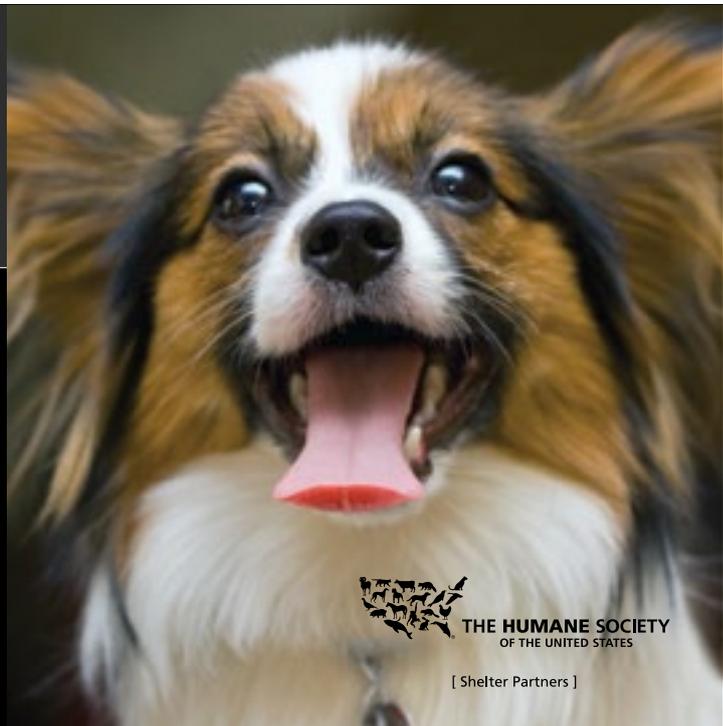
When I was a teenager, my uncle Stan, my mother's brother and a man with a wonderful heart for animals, bought a West Highland terrier for our family from a local pet store. He thought West Highlands were adorable, which they are, and he purchased other Westies for several of my aunts and uncles. We named our little dog Randi and pointed with pride to the papers from the American Kennel Club (AKC) vouching for her purebred

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Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States, has written a new book exploring the human-animal bond, and addressing the widespread exploitation of animals in our industrial era.

status and Heartland lineage. Somehow it only made it seem more exciting that she had come to us all the way from Kansas. Only later in life did I realize that Randi was almost certainly from a puppy mill and that her AKC papers provided no assurances of proper care whatsoever. If Dorothy's Toto had been in Kansas in more recent times, he would have almost certainly started life in a small, overcrowded cage, exposed to the elements, like lots of other toy and terrier breeds at puppy mills.

When Uncle Stan first dropped her off at our home, Randi would dash into a bathroom and hide behind the toilet, with her ears down and her eyes wide. She was shy and fearful, undoubtedly the consequence of little or no socialization as a puppy. Early on, bolting out of some protective corner, she would often engage in manic behavior, running around the house until exhausted. Eventually, we worked through these initial problems, and she was a fabulous companion. She greeted me every day when I came home from school, and I was always so excited to see her.

Even so, there were still physical problems that proved more difficult to overcome. Randi had skin problems and other allergies, and she was plagued with them throughout her life.

She constantly chewed on her skin and had severe hot spots that we tried to medicate. She looked both funny and ridiculous wearing an Elizabethan collar, but that was the only way to inhibit her self-destructive behavior. We managed that problem, too, and she had a very good life with us, until she passed away at about fourteen years old.

Today as I look back upon it, I wonder about the choices we made as a family. Here we were—a family that loved animals—yet we had no idea we had supported a puppy-mill operation by patronizing a pet store. We had obtained a dog bred and born fifteen hundred miles away, but there was a city animal shelter less than a quarter mile from our home—you could actually see it from our front door. There, we could have also gotten a great dog. Randi was a dear companion and we loved her with all of our hearts. But another friend, whom we never met, was waiting for us right around the corner.

I have learned, during my time at HSUS, that for those who want purebreds, shelters have them too—about a quarter of the animals they take in are “pedigree” dogs. And now, on Petfinder.com, you can search for just about any dog you want. Local shelters and rescue groups post available animals, and

Puppy millers have applied an agricultural model to companion animal production, and the results are similar scenes of squalor, privation, and cruelty.

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Despite a general disdain for puppy mills, the public has unwittingly allowed this industry to grow and expand, especially in the last two decades. With the rise in pet keeping, puppy-mill operators have capitalized on that interest—supplying pet stores with adorable puppies and, now quite commonly, marketing directly to the public through deceptive websites. When you fall for these marketing efforts, you consign

the parent dogs to a lifetime of breeding in confinement, and you enrich the mill owner, who will just churn out another maltreated dog for the pet trade. It is the cruelty my uncle Stan supported with the purchase of Randi without even knowing it.

Cracking Down on Cruelty

The HSUS assists police and local humane authorities throughout the country in their efforts to enforce the law. One puppy mill we raided in 2008 in Tennessee—Pine Bluff Kennels—was an Internet seller with a beautiful website with pastoral images. “We have a small farm . . . about 90 acres,” read the site. “We love the setting and so do our animals as they have plenty of room to run and play without being a bother to our neighbors.” In reality, the owner never let anybody come to the “small farm” and instead shipped dogs by air to customers or sold puppies in parking lots or at flea markets.

After working with an informant and raiding the location with sheriff’s deputies, we found something quite different than the website described. We found 450 dogs, almost all the smaller breeds, in raised, crowded, squalid hutches and makeshift kennels in an overgrown field and hidden back in the woods. Another 250 dogs, mothers and puppies, were in the filthiest trailer you could imagine. None of them was being properly fed, and 90 percent had no access to water.

Puppy mills attach nice-sounding names to their facilities to give the appearance of quality care, like a hellhole we raided in Pennsylvania called “Almost Heaven.” These operations are factory farms for dogs, and the dogs produced are a cash crop—the business model being to produce the most dogs at the lowest cost. But factory farms for food animals are standardized operations, with the same confinement systems used from one location to another. At puppy mills, the arrangements are improvised, with many variations on the confinement theme.

At one particularly sickening mill in Quebec that we shut down, the couple operating the mill occupied a perfectly respectable living space, with two or three pet dogs living on the ground floor and the second floor in great shape. But in the basement, they had 110 dogs living in an ammonia-filled room that required our

workers to conduct their operation with gas masks. These dogs were living in that environment day after day. We even found two puppies inside a closet, in a large Tupperware tote with holes in the top, which meant those dogs were living in total darkness most if not all of the time.

The dogs who have it worst in the puppy-mill industry are the breeding females. The mother dogs are conscripted to serve as breeding machines, producing litter after litter. The puppies are sold at eight weeks, but a mother may stay for eight years or more, sometimes even being sold at auction once a mill decides she's no longer valuable. Puppy millers have applied an agricultural model to companion animal production, and the results are similar scenes of squalor, privation, and cruelty. We estimate that there are more than ten thousand puppy mills in the nation, with Missouri, Oklahoma, Iowa, Kansas, and Arkansas being the top producers and worst offenders. In Virginia, the U.S. Department of Agriculture listed seventeen licensed commercial breeders, but we found nearly a thousand—exposing the enormous gaps in the current federal inspections program. Most puppy mills today are not inspected at all, either by state or federal regulators. In all, two to four million puppies are churned out by mills each year.

Gentle Ben's New Life

In 2009, on the morning of one raid in Arkansas, our animal rescue team followed sheriff's deputies down the long dirt road leading to a man they intended to arrest. They knew they were close when the unmistakable stench of animal filth filled the country air. What they saw was a familiar scene at puppy mills: hundreds of dogs confined to rusty wire cages, wallowing in their own waste, in various states of mental and physical disrepair. Many of them had matted fur, urine burns on their paws, and any number of other ailments. The house itself had all the telltale signs of an improperly kept breeding facility, complete with stacks of American Kennel Club registration papers—and an owner who suffered from compulsive hoarding, a common psychological disorder among

irresponsible animal keepers. Hoarding is an odd rupture of the human-animal bond, in which people who purport to care about animals actually neglect them and inflict terrible harm.

Inside that house in Arkansas were another hundred dogs confined to more wire cages. Their cages were stacked on top of a urine-soaked carpet and surrounded by waist-high piles of sales records and books. Rescuers, wearing breathing masks to walk through this swamp of filth, found a litter of day-old pups, all barely moving except the runt, who lay seemingly lifeless on fouled newspapers. It was hard to believe that anyone would want to buy these dogs to begin with, but once these little ones were cleaned up, an unsuspecting buyer would have no idea of the hell the poor creatures had gone through in the weeks and months before.

Housed in the center aisle in two rows of kennels was the most pitiable sight: a massive, 130-pound, aging Akita who seemed to be blind and deaf. The ten-year-old dog had lived out his entire existence in this small "alley" with a concrete floor. At many places, he would have been killed or auctioned off. But this puppy-mill operator had the collector's mind-set, and that spared him from death but not misery.

Many dogs left to endure such an existence would be aggressive, so he was approached with extra caution. But this big guy was as gentle as a lamb. When finally coaxed from the rear of his pen, he walked as far as the door, and then stopped abruptly, too scared to leave the prison that had been the only thing he had ever known. Our staff then took him to be examined and fed a proper meal, and for the first time in his life, he was given a name: Gentle Ben.

Although veterinarians eventually had to remove Ben's sightless eyes, due to extreme pain, he's doing very well in his new life. He was taken in by Akita Rescue of Western New York and has now found a permanent, loving home where he's spoiled every day. In his time, Ben has experienced the worst instincts of humanity, and the best. Ben's a happy old guy, and he sure deserves it. **AS**

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Getting an Edge in Retail

Some shelters are learning that it's smart to provide supplies along with pets

When someone adopts a pet, their first stop on the way home from the shelter is often the pet supply store, where they can pick up all the accessories to make their new family member feel right at home. Bowls. Leashes. Toys. A crate. A cute collar. Personalized ID tags. Sweaters. Coupons for therapy, to help the animals get over the shame of wearing sweaters.

It's all available, and new adopters often have a blast picking out the items that, in their minds, make their new pets feel more like their own. Buying these supplies can help cement the newly formed bond, and many of the supplies—such as a good collar, ID tags, and healthy food—are crucial components of being a responsible pet owner.

Some shelters are realizing that, by allowing new adopters to wander off to find their supplies elsewhere, they've been missing several golden opportunities: The chance to ensure their clients are going home well-equipped; to ensure they have the right kind of supplies (and to steer them away from shock collars and other troubling items); and to make a little money that they can use for their programs and animal care expenses.

Many shelters have maintained a small retail space for years, selling a mishmash of pet supplies, T-shirts, and other odds and ends, with mixed success. But some have really invested in the concept of selling pet supplies at the point of adoption, and have seen the financial benefits roll in. And through collaboration with the P.S. (Profits for Shelters) program run by the dealer services division of PetEdge, a pet supply company, some animal welfare organizations have found ways to build a small retail space into something attractive and appealing to clients—and into major moneymakers for their programs.

The Greater Birmingham Humane Society's new facility opened in 2004, and has kept space for retail since the beginning, according to director of operations Jerett New. At first, the space was managed by an auxiliary group that supports the shelter, and offered picture frames and other knickknacks to visitors. Gradually, though, shelter staff



The Greater Birmingham Humane Society's new shelter opened in 2004, and it's had a retail space from the beginning. Adopters can buy their pets the basic supplies they need for responsible pet ownership, such as a variety of toys, leashes, and collars.

have taken over and have been offering the basics for responsible pet care.

"We don't provide a lot of the little frilly this, that, and the other," says New. "We try to provide exactly what we use here"—maintaining that consistency helps the animals feel a little more familiar in their new homes, he notes—"so we have rope toys, hard-rubber toys, and things like that. ... Leashes, collars, all the necessities we'd like for the animals to leave with."

At the Animal Humane Association New Mexico (AHNM), thrift store and retail space contribute to the shelter's coffers. All told, the organization has four outlets that brought in around \$440,000 in sales last year; the shelter's profits boil down to about 15 percent of that figure.

"Our sales have grown 10 to 20 percent every year," says Gary Weddle, director of retail operations. According to Weddle, AHNM offers only premium food to custom-

ers, thereby modeling the kind of supplies it wants animals to get in their new homes.

Both AHNM and Greater Birmingham have their retail areas placed where adopters and visitors can't help but see them as they enter the shelter. And New says that managing the store doesn't add a lot of work for staff. A volunteer puts in 20 to 30 hours a week helping keep the store clean and price items, but most of the sales are done by adoption counselors.

"At the time of the adoption with the customer doing the payment, they actually do that payment inside of our retail store," says New. "We pull them in there where they can not only pay for the adoption, but see all of the supplies as well."

The shelter mandates that every animal leaving be confined, so if an adopter didn't bring a collar and leash for their new adult dog, or didn't bring a carrier for a new cat or puppy, adoption counselors at the shelter ask

them to purchase the items on-site. It might be something clients would protest, but New says that the shelter keeps its prices highly competitive, undercutting local retailers substantially and offering basics like leashes, collars, and crates as close to cost as possible.

Both shelters have found their relationships with PetEdge, whose Profits for Shelters program uses a tiered system of services for its clients, highly beneficial. Larger shelters that can move more product to clients will likely realize the most benefits—essentially, the more an organization purchases from PetEdge, the more it gets back in the form of product discounts, free shipping, and merchandizing advice from retail experts.

That's a large part of how Lucy Bernardin, account executive and shelter specialist at PetEdge, spends her time. "The account managers don't only do sales—we work closely with customers," says Bernardin, noting that "with shelters, there's a lot of handholding. ... A lot of volunteers [who help run some shelters' retail areas] have no retail experience. They love animals but don't understand merchandizing. And the paid staff wear about 10 hats."

Bernardin helps PetEdge's shelter clients figure out ways to maximize their space and move more product; she even does on-site consults for larger clients, helping them to figure out the best place to put retail displays and make the areas appealing to customers.

For shelters, says Bernardin, including retail space is a no-brainer and should be part of the considerations for any organization thinking of building a new facility. And with the economy in its current state, she notes, nonprofit shelters should look at their operations and acknowledge that while they'll always rely on donations, there are other ways they can bring in money to support their programs and save more animals' lives. 

To learn more about the PetEdge Profits for Shelters program, go to PetEdgeDS.com/ps, email shelters@PetEdge.com, or call 888-230-1555.



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Common Tools for a Common Mission

BY JUDY CALHOUN, CFRE, CAWA

During the Society of Animal Welfare

Administrators' conference in November, we focused on a mission that all shelter staff have in common: the drive to find permanent loving homes for our furry, hairy, feathery, or scaly companions. Although the animal welfare field is made up of agencies and organizations of diverse sizes and strategies, shelters share similar needs and therefore benefit from many of the same tools. We invited members from around the country who partner with us on a variety of initiatives to share information we could all find beneficial in a popular session called "Saving More Lives ... A Toolkit for Local Shelters."

Our presenters included Bert Troughton, MSW, vice president of ProLearning at the ASPCA; Susana Della Maddalena, vice president and executive director of PetSmart Charities; and Rich Avanzino, president of Maddie's Fund. Their session focused on useful tools that shelters sometimes overlook, including grant opportunities, current research studies and recent research findings, ways to increase spay/neuter and adoption, and transfer programs. Below are some of the highlights from the session.

Obtaining grants requires gathering and reporting data, but the exercise is worthwhile. Not only can shelters gain an infusion of funds, the data collected is valuable in capturing geographic, demographic, and animal-specific data for analysis and future trend forecasting.

PetSmart Charities is offering several cycles of grants in 2011, including one for free-roaming cats, another for targeted spay/neuter efforts, and emergency relief grants to provide resources for animal welfare agencies responding to recent disasters.

Maddie's Fund currently has funds including starter grants, which focus on assisting with strategic plan development and tools to track pet evaluations; medical equipment grants to fund a full-time veterinarian for those organizations that guarantee adoption; lifesaving award grants for adoption-guarantee communities; and community collaborative grants that reward agencies working

together to save treatable shelter pets communitywide.

Participating in research has benefits to your shelter and the field as a whole. Tracking and publicly reporting the outcome for every pet in your care can help define organizational goals and priorities, create organizational efficiencies, enhance the organization's image, build public support, foster competition, and increase the number of lives saved.

Research projects shared during the conference included PetSmart Charities' research to identify motivators and barriers to both adoption and spay/neuter. ASPCA is gathering data to determine a valid, reliable method to determine which shelter cats are frightened and which are truly unsocialized. Another ASPCA research project, in which you can get involved, will capture address data of dogs and cats entering your shelter, and those who receive spay or neuter surgery to better target spay/neuter efforts in the future.

Adoption tools were also discussed. For example, the ASPCA conducted research with the Oklahoma City Humane Society and Oklahoma Humane Place (a spay/neuter clinic). The study collected baseline information from pet guardians who brought their pet to either a spay/neuter clinic or one of four participating veterinarian clinics. Those folks got an ID ME brochure, while their pets received a tag (and collar if needed). Follow-up phone calls six weeks post-intervention showed that the majority of people kept the collars and tags on their pets.

Some "free" cat marketing campaigns have been successful in getting cats placed during slow adoption months. But animal shelters have an ongoing concern about the possibility of "devaluing" cats by having such promotions. Researching the issue, the ASPCA found that fee-waived adoption programs had no negative impact on the bond between cat and adopters; the organization has developed a list of ways to implement such a program effectively.

Other highlights included mentoring on spay/neuter clinic operations through the Humane Alliance's National Spay/Neuter



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SAWA 2011 Conference Schedule

- Management Conference, Charlotte, N.C., June 8-10
- Annual Conference, San Francisco, Calif., Nov. 13-15

Response Team; the ASPCA's Meet Your Match-Felinality protocol to get more cats adopted; and a review of lifesaving transfer programs to relocate adoptable dogs and puppies from overcrowded shelters to destinations where they are in demand.

Check out links to the ideas here—and many more—under the Resources page at sawanetwork.org. If you have questions, please email SAWA staff at admin@SAWANetwork.org. 

Judy Calhoun, CFRE, CAWA, is executive director of Larimer Humane Society and conference committee chair and board member of SAWA.





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Don't slip with your chip.

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Staying Centered in San Jose

Jon Cicirelli keeps on course by focusing on animals, not egos

For Jon Cicirelli, deputy director of the City of San Jose Animal Care & Services department, dealing with the thousands of animals his agency takes in is the easy part of the job.

The hard part—or maybe it would be more politically savvy to say the *most challenging* part—of his duties is working with the two-legged creatures who cross his path.

“[It’s] managing personalities and people—everybody’s different,” says Cicirelli, whose days bring a constant stream of dealings with employees, animal advocates, animal rescuers, elected officials, and the public. “Our business is a very emotional business, and there tends to be a lot of excitement around our issues. ... Staying calm and not getting personal about it is tough.”

Cicirelli isn’t just keeping his cool. He’s been busy reaching out—forming partnerships with animal rescue groups; building

a coalition of public and private shelters in Santa Clara County to reduce euthanasia; serving on the legislative committee of the California Animal Control Directors Association; working on companion animal issues with the State Humane Association of California, the California Veterinary Medical Association, The Humane Society of the United States, and the ASPCA; and keeping tabs on bills at the state level that could affect animal control.

Cicirelli took the lead to revise the licensing laws for dogs and cats in San Jose, and in 2008, it became a requirement for veterinarians to provide records of rabies vaccinations to animal control, so the agency could efficiently follow up with individual pet owners, and collect license fees. “The result has been a *doubling* of our license revenue over the past two years,” Cicirelli says. “We were tak-



Jon Cicirelli, deputy director of the City of San Jose Animal Care & Services division, definitely has his hands full on the job.

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ing in about \$700,000 a year [before the new ordinance]. This year, we're gonna hit more than \$1.4 million."

In fact, in 2010, his agency was able to cover nearly 50 percent of its total operating costs with revenue drawn from licensing, adoption and spay/neuter programs, and animal control contracts with four other cities. "That's pretty good for a government service," Cicirelli says. Especially during a recession, when city revenue from sales tax, property tax, and fees for various permits is falling—even the local airport is struggling, he notes.

Seeking a way to reduce the euthanasia rate for cats at his agency's shelter, Cicirelli approved a program called Feral Freedom, modeled after the pioneering effort launched in Jacksonville, Fla. Feral cats coming into Cicirelli's shelter are identified, have spay/neuter surgery, receive rabies shots and other vaccinations, and then, with the help of local cat rescue groups, are returned to their original location. Door hangers alert area residents to the program, and a website and cat rescue center educate the public about Feral Freedom.

"In just one year, our euthanasia rate for cats went down 40 percent. That's almost exclusively due to the Feral Freedom program," Cicirelli says, noting that it was Staycee Dains, his shelter operations supervisor, who researched the Jacksonville program and suggested that it might work for San Jose.

Beth Ward, chief operating officer of the Humane Society of Silicon Valley in Milpitas, has worked with Cicirelli since he arrived in San Jose; his agency was created in 2001, when Ward's shelter decided to drop all its animal control contracts in the area. In 2008, Ward and Cicirelli formed WeCARE (Community Alliance to Reduce Euthanasia), a coalition of regional shelters and rescues to reduce euthanasia in Santa Clara County.

"One of his greatest strengths is his ability to remain calm in challenging situations, and his ability to look at the big picture," Ward says. "He has a huge responsibility in overseeing the San Jose facility, because it's the highest-volume shelter in our community.

... He uses it to rise to the top and recognize that it's not all about just the work that he can do; it's about how he and his agency can work together with other groups to really make a difference."

Ken White, president of the Peninsula Humane Society/SPCA in San Mateo, a community located north of San Jose, has gotten to know Cicirelli through regular, informal meetings of colleagues in animal control and sheltering in the San Francisco Bay Area. "In Jon, I see a bright, energetic, committed, and smart next generation of leaders," White says. "He and I have not always agreed on legislative agendas [at the state level]—in fact, we have out and out disagreed on a couple of things. I have always, even in those situations, thought that his views were well-considered, and that his agenda was for the animals and the community he serves."

Cicirelli, meanwhile, feels rewarded by seeing the progress his agency has made during his tenure. "I feel like we're at the point where the city management and the elected officials support what we do, they like the success we're having, and they care about doing something good for animals. ... I feel like we've got a good situation going on here in San Jose."

He has a lot on his plate, and to stay focused, he keeps a quotation from Socrates on a memo board in his office: "Know thyself."

He reflects on that maxim when people make hurtful accusations, such as, *All you want to do is kill animals*. Cicirelli heard comments like that during educational town hall meetings he hosted soon after he took the job in 2003.

He keeps his balance on rough days by remembering who he is and what his values are; that way, it's harder for difficult interactions with people to get under his skin.

But sometimes a dart thrown in his direction will find its mark. "And that's why it's so hard, because even the best of us have hard days, and people get to you, and you get a little upset. But you go home, you recharge, you come back, and you keep going." 



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Biggest loser. What's tops on everyone's New Year's resolution list? Losing weight, of course. This past January, the Oshkosh Area Humane Society in Wisconsin, feeling a little overstuffed, decided to shed several hundred pounds—of kitty. The shelter went on a 31-day Catkins Fitness Program, a plan that espouses cat adoption as a quick and painless



way to get rid of excess weight. Oshkosh teamed up with local gym Anytime Fitness to offer T-shirts, eco-friendly canteens, and seven-day fitness club passes to everyone who adopted purr-sonal trainers during the month; three lucky adopters were chosen at random to receive extended memberships to the gym. The program was light on the wallet as well: Each cat's weight was subtracted from his or her adoption fee. The bigger the cat, the better the discount! The heaviest cat adopted was 7-year-old Jasper, an orange-and-white longhair who tipped the scales at 15 pounds, though he insists he's not fat, he's just big-boned. In all, 70 felines found permanent homes during the campaign for a total weight loss of 400 furry pounds. Note: No kitties or staff members were starved during this extreme weight-loss effort.

Sealed with a hiss. For three years, Harley risked whisker and limb for the sake of his employer, the Animal Humane Association (AHA) in Albuquerque, N.M. The 12-year-old gray tuxedo cat, who came to AHA as a stray, earned his kibble as the shelter's "catitude" tester, going nose-to-nose with dogs being considered for adoption by feline-



owning families. A dog earned the Good Housecat Seal of Approval if he didn't try to eat Harley (rest assured, Harley's safety was never compromised). Though the test results were not 100 percent guaranteed, they were usually a good indicator of whether the dog would get along with the adopter's cat, says Lindsay Lancaster, the shelter's marketing director. Harley performed other essential duties as well: He helped interview potential volunteers, presided over staff meetings, and provided stress relief by draping himself in laps. In honor of his service, the staff voted him Employee of the Month in November 2010. In January, the AHA announced that Harley was retiring from life on the edge and would himself be available for a fur-ever home. "He'd been working hard for us for three years," says Lancaster. "It was time to say thank you." Harley was quickly adopted by a retired couple who has all the time in the world to shower him with the love and pampering to which he is accustomed.

Shelter finds head. Nancy McKenney, former head of the Humane Society for Seattle/King County, has flown south to take up the post of chief executive officer



at Marin Humane Society in Novato, Calif. McKenney was the CEO of the Seattle shelter for 19 years, during which she helped transform it from a shoestring operation to a major community asset with numerous outreach and assistance programs, nearly 50 staff members, and a \$3 million budget. In 2006, McKenney became the first executive director of the Petfinder.com Foundation, established in the wake of Hurricane Katrina to help animal welfare agencies fund operations, training, and education. She has also served as the interim manager for King County (Washington) Animal Control and headed up her own consulting firm. Marin's progressive reputation and diversity of programs and services enticed her to leave her native Seattle, says McKenney. "It is an organization with dedicated staff, a board interested in doing the 'right' things, and a great record of advocacy."

Treasure, not trash. Brick, steel, and concrete are the usual subjects of professional photographer Emil Lansky,



who specializes in architectural projects. In December 2009, he turned his camera on softer material—cats and dogs awaiting adoption at Pets Alive West-Elmsford Animal Shelter in Westchester County, New York. Lansky volunteered to shoot portraits of animals for the shelter to use in a fundraising ad. The facility is excellent and the animals



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well-cared for, he says, but the sight of hundreds of them waiting for homes left him with the feeling that pets are too often considered as disposable as paper plates or plastic bags. Though the ad campaign never materialized, Lansky has put the images to work in another way: He created a series of diptychs (two-part photographs) in which he pairs a homeless pet with a ubiquitous throwaway item—paper cup, plastic cutlery, bubble wrap, newspaper—and assembled them into an exhibit entitled “Disposable.” Aside from an introduction that explains the genesis of the show and encourages viewers to get involved, the stark black-and-white photos have no text. Nor is any needed. The juxtaposition of cats and dogs with items used and discarded with little thought sends the message loud and clear. Lansky showed the photos last summer at the Morris County Library in Whippany, N.J., and the Riker Hill Arts Park in Livingston, N.J., and hopes to see them used in some way to spread awareness of pet overpopulation and boost shelter adoptions. To view a selection of images, visit emillanskyphoto.com/disposable.

Kit-mitment ceremony. If you haven't heard by now about Solomon and Bruno's wedding, you've been living under a rock. No, they're not the groom and groom whose lavish nuptials are featured in *Sex*

and the City 2. They're two roly-poly tabbies who met and bonded five years ago at Ollie's Place, a small, private, nonprofit cat shelter in New York City. The former strays are like night and day: Orange-and-white Solomon is outgoing and confident, while Bruno, a brown tabby, is shy and timid. He rarely left his cage in the communal-living shelter until Solomon took the shrinking violet under his wing, er, paw to become his best friend and protector. Solomon would have been adopted years ago, says Michael DiCerto, a longtime volunteer at Ollie's Place, "but we felt bad separating them because they seem so close, and it seemed to be helping Bruno." DiCerto, who is also a filmmaker and author, wanted to get the cats some public attention that he hoped would lead to the pair being adopted together. He hit upon the idea of a wedding ceremony. So on Jan. 20, Solomon and Bruno exchanged vows at the shelter, in a service presided over by fellow feline Mario, Justice of the Puss, who also serenaded the couple with a reggae version of "Get Me to the Church on Time." The reception featured a cake designed and baked by DiCerto's own cat Cosmo, an Ollie's Place alumnus and baker of choice for all the local goodfellas. News of the wedding spread like wildfire in the same-sex marriage advocacy blogosphere, where the bold move was applauded. DiCerto hadn't intended to make a statement on the subject, though he did check with a few gay friends beforehand to make sure the idea wouldn't offend anyone. "It was about devotion," he says. To watch DiCerto's video of the wedding, visit vimeo.com/19419057. **AS**



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Can you tell us about a time when the public came through for your organization in a big way?

That's the question we asked for this issue's Coffee Break, and you responded with stories of how your communities stepped up in times of need.



In October 2008, we had a fire at our shelter. We were very lucky that with the help of many of our neighbors, we were able to get all of the animals out safely. Many people in our community came forward to provide foster care for our animals—and many of them wound up adopting their fosters! The financial support, as well as donated items to help us get back on our feet, was amazing!

—Susan Frisch, manager
Dessin Animal Shelter
Honesdale, Pennsylvania

Due to budget cuts, our community discontinued its recycling program. Our league collected aluminum beverage cans, which is a large portion of our yearly budget. We were given the names of local salvage companies who would take the cans if they were paid a fee for the Dumpster and freight. The league did a publicity blitz and used word-of-mouth to let villagers know we were still collecting cans. After only three weeks, the collection bin was full to the top, and we were back in the recycling business. “It takes a village,” and ours pulled through for the animals.

—Mary McCullough, vice president
Hot Springs Village Animal Welfare League
Hot Springs Village, Arkansas

Our small mountain town truly cares about the stray and abandoned pets who are brought into our nonprofit humane society, and the proof is in the food—dog and cat food, that is! The local family-operated newspaper does a tremendous service for our shelter at Christmastime. This service not only benefits the animals but also the community. The advertising department runs a special for ads from businesses or any person who needs to advertise. A discount on your ad placed during the holiday season will be applied when you bring the newspaper an item from the humane society's wish list. It's a win-win situation for all—the animals get food, treats, toys, and even blankets to help at Christmas. Plus all of our friends, family, and neighbors reap the financial savings while helping feed all of our temporary residents at the shelter! *Macon News* lays it on the line for our shelter and our community.

—Sharon Archer, vice president
Macon County Humane Society Inc.
Franklin, North Carolina

A 10-year-old girl and her mom came to visit the shelter. The city shelter “housed” five cats and four dog runs. They couldn’t believe the cats were in with the dogs in such close quarters that the doors to the cat cages could not be opened fully. They wanted to help because the shelter was so small and overcrowded. The 10-year-old was so motivated by the situation that she rode her bike to a city council meeting, and before all the council people and residents she got up to talk about how bad the shelter conditions were. (Her parents could not attend the meeting, so this gal went on her own.) The girl’s mom canvassed to find a larger building. A local church heard of our plight and offered a building, but it needed to be cleaned. A group of folks from another church offered to help clean it. Everyone pulled together, and there is now a wonderful new cat shelter. We had a contest for the residents of the city to name it, which not only brought in a great donation, but we now have the New Beginning Feline Shelter.

—*Judy Burrier, animal control officer
Independence Animal Control/Shelter
Independence, Ohio*

In the early hours of May 20, 2010, a major fire destroyed a large section of our shelter. We lost 15 beautiful cats. However, all of our dogs, as well as a handful of cats, survived. We had a huge outpouring of support from our community, starting with our local city shelter, Berkeley Animal Care Services, which allowed us to house the surviving animals in their facility. Also, several hospitals provided services and care for the dogs and cats suffering from smoke inhalation. By the end of the day, our community had stepped up to foster our surviving dogs and cats, with more foster homes to spare. The support continued, including donations from kids who had sold lemonade to raise money for us. We’re still a long way from rebuilding our shelter, but we would not be where we are today without the support of our community.

—*Marta Edmonds, adoption associate
Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society
Berkeley, California*

In 2004, our nonprofit wild animal sanctuary was directly hit by three hurricanes in six weeks. Hurricane Charley was the first one and did almost \$200,000 in damage. Fortunately, we had no animal injuries or escapes, but the sanctuary was devastated. Within weeks after the storm, over 125 new volunteers from all over the country came to help. They left air-conditioned jobs to come to Florida in sweltering summer heat to clean up after the disaster—working long hours in the 95-plus-degree heat with no air conditioning and little shade. Eighty percent of the trees were on the ground. The volunteers were so dedicated—they took time off work, incurred travel expenses and worked harder than many have worked in their lives ... all to help us get back on our feet after the devastating storms to ensure the lifetime care of the animals. We can never thank them enough! (To learn more, visit peacriverrefuge.org/hit_by_the_hurricanes.htm.)

—*Lisa Stoner, vice president/treasurer
Peace River Refuge & Ranch
Zolfo Springs, Florida*

Last June, we put out a plea for food donations. With our shrinking budget and nonstop influx of animals, our food budget was gone. We never expected the response we got! People came from all over to bring us food! From completely full truck beds to individual bags, we received several thousand pounds of food within a week’s time. It continued to come in weeks later, since local media joined and helped keep the plea going. Many people made comments that they didn’t have much to give but couldn’t stand to think that the animals were hungry. I remember one day where the cars didn’t stop coming all day long! Such a response from our community actually brought tears to our eyes. We always feel we’re forgotten out here, and it really gave us a sense that people do care about what we do for the animals in our community. It was really an amazing feeling.

—*Cindy Burnham, manager
Salinas Animal Service
Salinas, California*

Congratulations to Sharon Archer, whose submission was selected in a random drawing from those published in this issue. Her organization, the Macon County Humane Society in Franklin, N.C., will receive a free coffee break: a \$50 gift certificate to a local coffee shop. “Bone” appétit!

Check out the latest Coffee Break question and submit your responses (150 words or less) at animalsheltering.org/coffeebreak or send them to Editor, *Animal Sheltering*/HSUS, 2100 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20037. **Your answer may be printed in a future issue of *Animal Sheltering*.** If your response is chosen for publication, you will be entered into a drawing to win **a free coffee break (valued at \$50)** for your organization. Responses may be edited for length or clarity; no donation or purchase is necessary to win. See animalsheltering.org for contest rules, or send an email or letter to the above addresses to request a printed copy.

WALKING ALL THE WAY TO THE BANK

Getting good mileage out of dog walk fundraisers

BY JAMES HETTINGER





IN MARYLAND, they March for the Animals. In Massachusetts, they Strut for Strays. Denver used to do the Doggy Dash; now it's got the Furry Scurry.

Dog walk fundraisers (and their clever names) are a staple in the animal sheltering and rescue community—a fun way for organizations to generate money by bringing together animal lovers and their pooches to exercise, socialize, sample local vendors' goods, enter contests, play games, enjoy entertainment, and maybe meet a local celebrity. Their appeal is universal: A walk through the park with your dog and your animal-loving neighbors on a sunny spring or crisp fall day—what's not to like?

"Everybody loves a dog walk, and if the weather's good, it's perfect," says Aileen Gabbey, executive director of the Maryland SPCA. For the organizers, of course, it's a whirlwind, says Gabbey, who used to run her group's signature fundraising event, the March for the Animals. "It's like your wedding day," she recalls.

dog walk fundraisers

As with weddings, the big event is often worth the whirlwind of preparation that precedes it. Shelters can draw big crowds and raise substantial sums of money to benefit animals. In Denver, the Dumb Friends League's Furry Scurry—billed as the nation's largest dog walk—last year attracted about 10,000 people and 5,000 dogs, and raised more than \$1 million.

But also like weddings, dog walks don't just come together on their own. "There's a lot of work that goes into a dog walk, and you don't really know that until you actually do one," says Debbie Kiggans, a volunteer and board member at the Humane Society of York County in South Carolina, which held its first walk last year.

Organizers need to ask lots of questions beforehand, and develop a seemingly endless list of tasks, leaving no detail overlooked. What's the best date? Where's the most convenient and attractive location? Is there enough parking? Do we need a parade permit? How should we raise funds? How will we publicize it? Have we got enough volunteers for setup and cleanup? Are everyone's assignments clear? All of those questions need to have clear answers before you say "I do" to an event that can take a tremendous amount of resources—but can reap tremendous rewards.

First Things First

Start with a vision of what you want your walk to be, says Lara Provance, a former conferences and events manager

for The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), which has co-hosted an annual walk in Washington, D.C., and is now in its second year of hosting one in Montauk, N.Y. Do you want it to be just a walk? Or more of a daylong festival, with games for the human and animal attendees, booths for vendors, maybe a "fun run" for people?

Ideally, you want to begin planning nine to 12 months before the event—and if you're hosting your first walk, it's often best to keep it simple, Provance says, then add more activities in subsequent years. "Know what you want to do, and then execute it the best that you can. And then if you want to add on to it next year, you can," she explains. "... But having a very clear focus, having a very clear vision from the beginning is really important."

Once you've got a vision, you can start thinking about a date and venue, says Krista Rakovan, The HSUS's conferences and events director. Dog walks tend to be held in the spring or fall, since the chances for good weather are higher. Provance advises organizers to pick a window—September-October, for example—then investigate what else is happening in the community on specific weekends. Make sure your dog walk isn't competing with, say, a popular marathon or a local college football game. Choose a date and a time of day that works best for your community.

No matter what time of year you select, weather is always a potential issue, notes Stacy LeBaron, president of the Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society (MRFERS) in Massachusetts, which for 16 years has held its Strut for Strays—a dog walk/festival that raises money for the cat rescue group. When it held its Strut in June, the group sometimes encountered temperatures in the 90s, so the event has been moved to May. Now, instead, they have to worry about rain, LeBaron says. "I think you just have to just take a leap of faith and decide, 'I like this date!' and just go with it." And once you've established a season for your event, she adds, stick with it year after year, because your participants will grow accustomed to it.

Considering potential locations, remember your vision: Can the space accommodate the event that you're picturing? Is it aesthetically pleasing? Does the venue even permit dogs?

Given the common rules barring animals from public transport systems, people will more than likely be driving to your event, so you'll need a flat, accessible space for parking, with enough room for your anticipated crowd.

You'll need to map out your walk route beforehand. If your walkers will be going through a town or neighborhood, make sure the route is safe—does it have sidewalks?—and free of roadblocks or construction areas.

You also want to stay on the right side of the law by obtaining the necessary permits or approvals from the local governing bodies. "And that can take a long time. We had to jump through several hoops to get everything in line as far as the permits go" for the Montauk walk, Provance says.



Organizers can spruce up their dog walk fundraisers with contests celebrating the best-costumed pets.



With proper planning, your walk can grow into a festival of activities for dog lovers and their pets. The Furry Scurry in Denver features demonstrations, contests, vendors' booths, and entertainment in addition to the two-mile walk.

"But in most cases the towns are really receptive. They like dogs. They like people coming together."

Developing a budget is an important early step when you're planning a dog walk fundraiser, Provance says. Consider the cost of permits, tents, transportation, food, and other budget items, then estimate likely revenue versus expenses. Provance likes to devote less than 20 percent of revenue to expenses, but acknowledges that that can be a difficult goal; special events are expensive. Spending 20 to 25 percent of funds raised on expenses is standard, LeBaron adds.

To Market, to Market

The better you spread the word, the greater chance you'll hit your revenue goals.

Your plan should detail what you're going to do in the months before the event, which could include getting the word out through brochures, social media, press releases, emails to your supporters, and mentions on sponsors' websites. You'll need to decide whether to buy ads or rely on donated advertising and free notices in, say, local newspapers' community calendars.

Marketing and design can't be rushed, so make sure you budget adequate time to design logos, fliers, and T-shirts, Kiggans says. "That's one phase that you just can't pull together at the last minute." Ideally, you can find someone skilled who'll do the work pro bono; the York County walk

was lucky enough to snag a marketing professional as a volunteer.

The walkers themselves are another means of marketing the event—one that's sometimes overlooked, according to Provance. "Your participants are there because they want to help. Use them. Use them as a means of communicating to other people out there," she says.

Make it easy for them to print or email a flier, or to share it on Facebook. "Word-of-mouth is one of the biggest ways that people find out about these events."

Tapping Your Resources

Any organization thinking of starting a dog walk should take a hard look at its resources, including its volunteers, as well as the community's capacity for giving, says Rick Gabrielson, vice president of development and communications at the Dumb Friends League.

The Furry Scurry, which succeeded a fundraiser called the Doggy Dash in 1994, has grown into such an enormous event because of the reciprocal benefits for the DFL and its community of pet lovers, Gabrielson says.

The DFL, which provides care for about 25,000 animals a year, enjoys a great relationship with people in the Denver metropolitan area, he says. A two-mile walk that also features pet contests, vendors, and entertainment, the Scurry is much-anticipated by Denver pet owners. Many participants adopted their pets from the DFL, and the



Baltimore-area residents and their dogs get together in February at a kickoff event for the Maryland SPCA's March for the Animals, which takes place in April.

Scurry gives them an opportunity to give back, he explains. At the same time, the Scurry serves as a way for the DFL to thank people for going into the community, raising money through pledges, and serving as ambassadors for the organization.

Beyond that, Colorado is a very cat- and dog-friendly state, Gabrielson says. People love going for walks with their dogs and care deeply about charitable organizations, and the Scurry allows them to indulge those passions. "There's an energy at this event that is hard to describe. ... you put a bunch of these people together in a park on a sunny Colorado morning, you can feel it. It's a wonderful experience."

The DFL runs the event with the help of 600 volunteers, in addition to staff members who plan the event throughout the year. Smaller shelters initiating a walk should start with a small, solid event and a five-year plan, he advises. To grow your walk, look at every aspect of it—from the volunteers at setup to your signage, fundraising methods, and interactions with the public. Goal-setting and keeping your

volunteer team involved will help keep the event moving forward, he adds.

Provance advises event organizers to be realistic about both their available resources and the amount of work involved in planning and running a dog walk. "Don't underestimate the amount of work that it's going to take," she says. " ... It's an undertaking, but it's not impossible if you can mobilize a core of very dedicated, trustworthy people ... a few people that you know will get the job done."

Planners tend to want to do everything themselves, she adds, but they need to delegate tasks to trusted volunteers. Otherwise, "you'll drown in all the details."

Events are typically organized by a committee of staff and volunteers, but a larger group will be needed on the day of the walk to handle registration, setup, breakdown, and a host of other on-site tasks. The MRFERS's Strut, which typically attracts about 60 dogs and 200 to 250 people, is organized by a team of 12 to 15 and run with the help of 30 to 40 volunteers on the day of the event—with a volunteer

coordinator who's responsible for just those volunteers on that day.

Lining up any celebrity attendees early helps to energize the volunteer group, according to LeBaron. In her community, she says, when people know that the Strut for Strays will include local TV anchorman Randy Price and local band Soul Robot, they rally around the idea of making it a great event.

Make the volunteers' assigned jobs crystal clear, LeBaron advises. "And make sure that they know why we're asking them to work so hard," she adds. This year, for example, the MRFRS is trying to raise money to renovate a bathroom, and also coping with veterinary bills that are \$25,000 higher than they've been in the past—issues that a successful fundraiser can help address.

The volunteers working the registration table need to be particularly well-informed about the scheduled events and their locations, Kiggans adds, since they're the main point of contact for people arriving at the event.

And don't forget to keep your volunteers well fed and replenished with beverages. "You have to take care of them," Rakovan says.

Following the Money ... Electronically

Registration fees typically don't come close to covering an event's expenses, Provance notes, so you'll want your participants to collect donations.

Traditionally, walkers collected cash from their supporters, put it in an envelope, and turned it in on event day. That option is still available, but many events have supplemented it with online fundraising. Walkers go to one of the websites devoted to charitable fundraising, create a personal Web page highlighting their event, then email the page with a weblink to their friends and colleagues.

"Fundraising online has helped take many events across the country to the next level," Gabrielson says.

LeBaron can testify to that: MRFRS added online donations in 2010 and nearly doubled its donations.

The Maryland SPCA's March for the Animals has no registration fee, but like many other events it offers incentives for participants to raise money—\$30 will get you a goodie bag, for example, and for \$40 or more you also get a T-shirt. The top fundraiser gets a trip to the Bahamas.

You can use a similar approach to attract sponsors to your event. Create different sponsorship levels, with those who donate more money getting more prominent mentions in publicity and signage.

Setting up its first dog walk, the Humane Society of York County got solid support from local businesses, which helped defray costs. Sponsors rented the facility and donated food, drinks, and goodie bag items. The humane society also raised money from the fees vendors paid to set up their booths, and through a raffle.

The event "really kind of took on a life of its own," Kiggans adds, as people added creative activities. As word spread, a local petting zoo offered to bring its animals. One sponsor brought a llama for small children to ride. Another held games for owners to play with their dogs, such as musical chairs using hula hoops. A local Sports Clips barbershop ran a raffle where the winning numbers were determined by shelter dogs retrieving numbered tennis balls.

The end result? A fun event that did better than expected. Humane society officials had hoped to raise \$5,000 but ended up netting \$6,300, and Kiggans says they'll hold another walk/festival this year.

Your vendors need not be restricted to animal-oriented businesses, adds LeBaron. The MRFRS's Strut has hosted booths by a cat-food caterer and a business selling cat-shaped soaps and candles, but also a landscaper, an organic gardener, and food vendors. The event is essentially open to any business that wants to support the group's work, she explains, and event organizers ask vendors to encourage their customers to attend the walk.

Showtime

The day of the walk is finally here. People and their pooches are arriving to enter the "cutest pet" contest, watch flyball demonstrations, check out the vendors' booths, or take a look at your adoptable dogs parading around in their "adopt me" vests.



Two dogs tussle near a doggie pool at the Downtown Dog Resort & Spa in Baltimore during a kickoff event for the Maryland SPCA's March for the Animals. More fun was set for the event itself, which has evolved into a festival featuring an agility course, a "smart pet tricks" contest, and other activities.

dog walk fundraisers

How do you make sure the activities happen as planned, and a good time is had by all?

LeBaron says the most important factor is a good flow plan—one that keeps everyone organized and ensures that the announcements of various activities are timed correctly. You don't necessarily need a band—you can probably get by with a deejay or an iPod to provide some good high-energy tunes—but you definitely need a good sound system for making announcements. "If people can't hear you, they're not gonna have a good time," she says.

LeBaron likens walk participants to "a group of kindergarteners" in need of some direction. If you don't let them know what's going on, they might congregate in the middle of the site and not really engage with anything. "You have to tell them about the booths," she says. "You have to make sure that they know that something unique is going on over in that booth there—somebody's doing massages, or whatever."

That approach has brought more structure to the MRFRS's Strut, LeBaron says. One or two people are designated as emcees and given scripts and a schedule. The event is almost like a performance, with scripts and cues, ensuring that attendees know when to walk and when to mingle, and the band knows when it's supposed to play.

What's Next?

The crowds have gone home. What do you do now?

Well, it's no time to relax. Immediate follow-up with the participants is important, Provance says. The day after the Montauk walk, organizers communicated with the walkers, letting them know how much money the event raised, and who the top fundraisers were. "They raised money for you, they just came out and spent the day with you, so don't leave them hanging," she says.

Surveying staff, volunteers, attendees, and vendors—formally or informally—is a good way to gather suggestions for improving the event.

Dog walk organizers agree that events need to evolve in order to stay fresh and keep people coming back. Ideally, you'll even grow your event. "They're either gonna go to the next level, or we're not gonna have them," LeBaron says of the MRFRS's events. "Stagnant is no longer acceptable for us."

And how do you get to that elusive next level?

Try to add something different each year, Gabbey says. People seem to like the activities that have made the Maryland SPCA's March more of an all-day festival featuring an agility course, pet training tips, a pet communicator, and the organization's adoption van. The walk kicks off at 10 a.m., but people can complete the route at their leisure throughout the day, and some walk the 1.5-mile loop several times if they've got a particularly active dog, adds Tami Gosheff, the Maryland SPCA's special events and outreach coordinator. Other people just hang out and watch the contests all day.

Simply changing the logo on the T-shirts helps keep some fans coming back to the 16-year-old event. "We have



Dog walks are a fundraising staple for animal welfare organizations, and when the weather cooperates—as it did during the 2010 Furry Scurry sponsored by the Dumb Friends League in Denver—they can provide a little slice of heaven for pet lovers and their pooches.

people that have done the March every single year," Gosheff says, "and have the T-shirt from every single year."

LeBaron believes that the Strut drew some younger people last year because of its increased use of social media, and the performance by Soul Robot, which has a youthful following. This year, she hopes to connect with more local dog rescue groups by making sure they're aware of the Strut and feel fully invited.

Dog walk planners trying to maintain or grow their participant base have the advantage of a near-foolproof event—one that taps into people's generosity and compassion for animals.

"I don't think people are ever tired of doing walks," Provance says. "... People love to participate in these things, but you have to make it a good experience for them to make them want to come back. And making it a good experience starts with proper planning."

After each MRFRS fundraiser, LeBaron analyzes the volunteer hours and the dollars raised to figure out if the event is worth the effort. You need to think about how you're spending your time. Would you be better off soliciting donations through the mail? If you spend six months organizing a walk and net \$9,000, should you instead pursue a \$10,000 grant?

Perhaps you're still debating whether you want to take the first step, so to speak. Is a dog walk fundraiser a good idea for your shelter or animal welfare organization?

"I would certainly give it a try," Gabrielson says. "... It's not only about fundraising for the animals in your care, it's also about a community presence. It's a chance for you to showcase your programs and services to the participants at the event, and really tell the story of where the money goes." 



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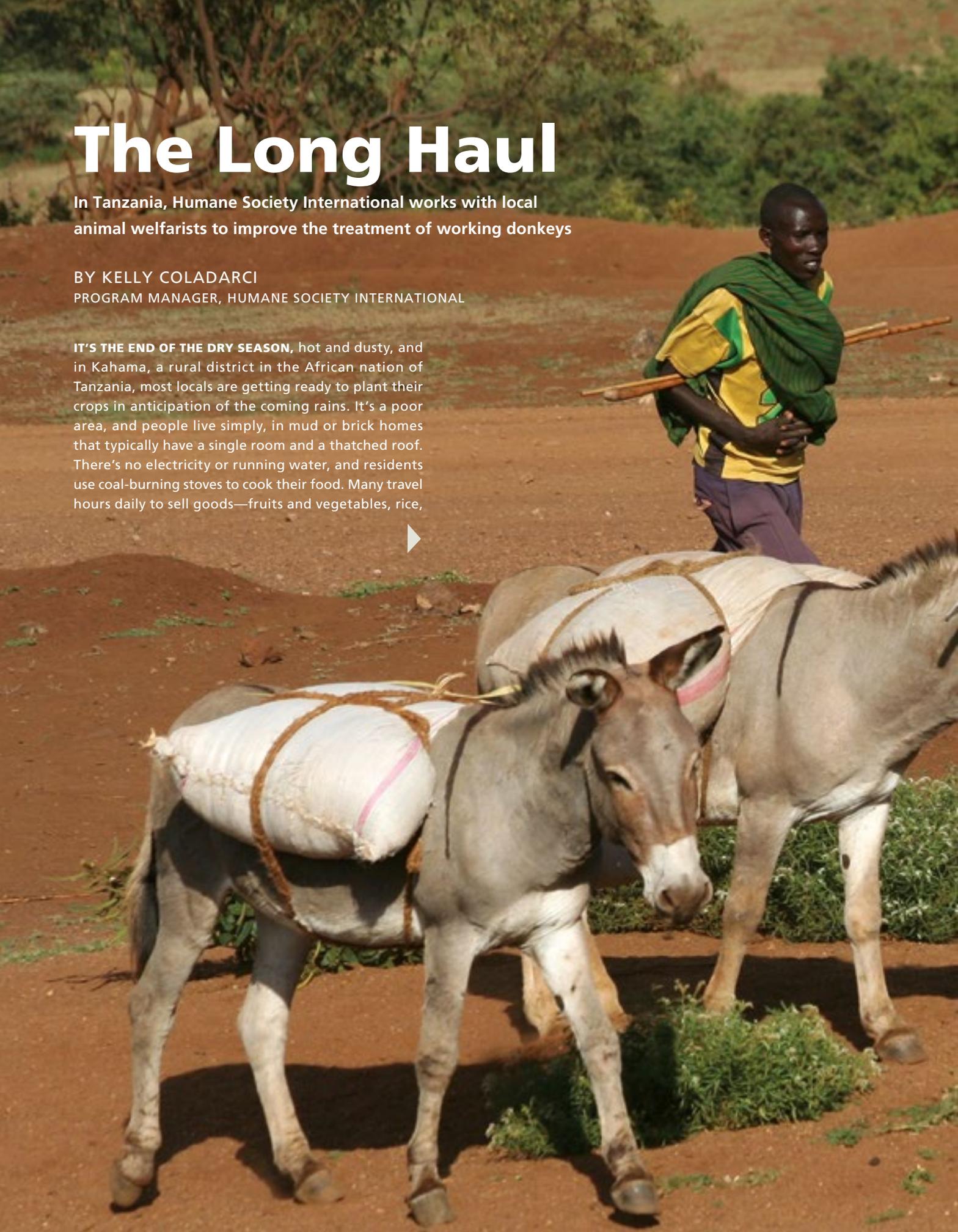
**ANIMAL
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The Long Haul

In Tanzania, Humane Society International works with local animal welfarists to improve the treatment of working donkeys

BY KELLY COLADARCI
PROGRAM MANAGER, HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

IT'S THE END OF THE DRY SEASON, hot and dusty, and in Kahama, a rural district in the African nation of Tanzania, most locals are getting ready to plant their crops in anticipation of the coming rains. It's a poor area, and people live simply, in mud or brick homes that typically have a single room and a thatched roof. There's no electricity or running water, and residents use coal-burning stoves to cook their food. Many travel hours daily to sell goods—fruits and vegetables, rice,



In Tanzania, working donkeys who carry goods often have their packs strapped on with ropes that abrade their skin, creating wounds that go untreated. Others are harnessed using yokes designed for oxen, which put pressure on their thin necks.





While vital to the survival of many people in the developing world, donkeys are often not treated very well. Many go unfed and are left to forage what they can, like these animals at a dump in Djenne, Mali.



A major component of TAPO's work involves classroom instruction for donkey owners, during which they learn about donkey care and the provisions of the groundbreaking animal welfare law passed in Tanzania 2008—including the stipulation that working animals must get a certain amount of rest.

Michael George of the Tanzanian Animal Protection Organization demonstrates the new harness system, which puts the primary pressure on the donkey's strong chest rather than his thin neck.

OPPOSITE PAGE: KIRSZ MARCINI/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM LEFT: KELLY COLADARCI/HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL RIGHT: TANZANIAN ANIMAL PROTECTION ORGANIZATION

handicrafts—at distant markets. Few have enough money to easily afford shoes, clothes, or medicine; at the local rice plant, piles of dirt and discarded grains are often sifted through by women hoping to find a few leftover pieces of kernel to feed themselves.

Most locals survive by farming, and for farmers—who not only need to till their fields, but also to transport their crops to markets in order to sell them—there are few more important possessions than a good donkey.

“The donkey is the only source of animal power that the poorest can possess and is the only source of income to communities,” says Ntanwa Kilagwile, district veterinarian for the Department of Agriculture & Livestock in the Kahama district, which includes more than 200 villages.

In these isolated areas of Tanzania, “rural transport is a vital ingredient for economic growth,” says Yohana Kashililah, founder of the Tanzanian Animal Protection Organization (TAPO). “People and goods have to be moved from place to place, and this arduous task is often provided for by donkeys.”

But while many rely on donkeys to eke out a living, the animals usually aren't treated very well. In Kahama and many other parts of Africa, it's common to see working donkeys wearing yokes that were made for oxen and were designed with an ox's unique neck muscles in mind. Donkeys' bodies are shaped differently, and without adjustments to the harnessing system, these yokes put the weight of the load on their long, thin necks, inflicting severe strain, injury, and sores.

Kashililah says that the use of oxen carts and single-shaft carts without harnessing systems—along with beatings by uneducated or cruel owners—are the main contributors to the

donkeys' suffering. In addition, the packs strapped to donkeys' backs are tied in such a way that they often interfere with breathing, and they're made of materials—such as rope and discarded rice satchels—that are rough and chafe against the donkeys' skin, creating wounds on their backs, rears, and necks. Because of the lack of accessible veterinary care, the results are sometimes fatal and generally inhumane.

Signs of Hope

But there are signs of hope for donkeys in Tanzania. In 2008, the country passed the Tanzania Animal Welfare Act—a landmark step in Africa, where there are few laws protecting animals. Among other elements, the law contains provisions for the keeping of livestock and rules for the care of working animals. Enforcement will fall under district veterinarians, who are tasked with overseeing scores and sometimes hundreds of villages—a fact that makes community buy-in crucial.

In Kahama, TAPO has sought to engage the community directly, taking on the mistreatment of donkeys through humane education and by involving local artisans in the creation of a harness better suited to equine anatomy. It's an approach that will benefit the animals, donkey owners, and local craftsmen, says Kashililah. “The goal,” he says, “is to change the image of the donkey in peoples' minds as an object and become an investment for poverty reduction through availability of proper harnessing materials within the district.”

As part of our donkey welfare initiative, Humane Society International (HSI)—the global affiliate of The Humane Society of the United States—has been providing funding for TAPO's fieldwork and educational programs. In my role



Kelly Coladarci of Humane Society International assists Michael George (front) and Ntanwa Kilagwile in treating a severe wound caused by the rough rope of a donkey pack.

as program manager for HSI, in December 2010, I traveled to Tanzania to help out on the ground with animal care and field surgery and to see TAPO's work firsthand.

At the first village we went to, Mwenda Kulima (which translates to "people that farm"), I met the TAPO team, including Kashililah, TAPO's founder, and Kilagwile, a recent graduate of the only veterinary school in Tanzania, who now serves as the lead and only vet for the district department of agriculture and livestock. I also met TAPO's three passionate educators, all of whom live in Kahama. Michael K. George—or Master Michael, as he is known—is a paravet who works very closely with Kilagwile on the direct care component of the program. And Juma Mwesigwa and Jonas Charles are teachers at a nearby school who are also involved with other community programs focusing on children's nutrition and education.

A committed animal advocate, Kashililah began TAPO's efforts in the Tanzanian capital of Dar es Salaam, but has since expanded. When I asked him why he started the Kahama program, he said it was because the district has so many donkeys in such bad shape, and that neither the government nor other animal welfare groups were taking action to help.

It's not usually a matter of deliberate cruelty, according to Kashililah. Many locals, he says, "have no time or resources to cope with the needs of their animals after they have cared for their families as best as their resources allow." But the reality of widespread poverty, in combination with

the widely held belief that donkeys are inherently stubborn and must be beaten in order to work, can make for a terrible situation for the animals. A donkey who's well cared for has a life expectancy of 40 years, but according to Kilagwile, in the Kahama district they typically live only 12 to 14.

Such a brief lifespan is common in many developing countries, where donkeys are often crucial to human survival, performing vital hauling and farming tasks—and yet, paradoxically, their usefulness is no guarantee they'll be treated kindly.

Used to transport goods and in agricultural roles such as plowing, donkeys often haul handmade, overloaded packs and sport ill-fitting harnesses, and their health and welfare is largely disregarded. But because they don't produce meat or milk, people view them as having little worth, and thus provide only minimal care. The animals have little access to water, and may only feed on whatever grass or garbage they can find. In Kahama, those lucky enough to own donkeys often rent them to others in the "off hours," which can mean that the animals work almost ceaselessly.

Acting Locally

TAPO is working to change that with its public outreach and educational programs. To be effective, the group works within the framework of local customs, first sending an official government letter explaining the program to the village executive officer (VEO) in each town, who will be the project ambassador for the lifetime of the project there.

The VEO then encourages residents to attend the upcoming workshop. The VEO's other responsibilities include program follow-up and enforcement of the orders set forth in the new legislation, such as working hours for donkeys.

This approach is necessary due to local cultural norms, Kilagwile explains. In Tanzania, there is a chain of information flow from district level to village level, so any information from the district to the community must pass to the local leaders. This is encouraging as it provides close follow-up of the program by village leaders as well as enforcement of the new animal welfare legislation. Community pressure to enforce the new law is essential, because a single district veterinarian cannot patrol the 200-plus villages in the region.

Part of what makes the TAPO approach effective is that the group does not tell locals to cease using the oxen yoke—at least, not yet. Instead, as an interim measure, the group has enlisted local artisans, who have designed a donkey harness that can be used in conjunction with the yokes. This harness is attached to an oxen yoke, thus maintaining the yoke's hauling benefits but eliminating the stress created when the yokes are placed directly onto donkeys' necks.

The harness features a breast band that allows the animals to pull from their chests, which are much stronger than their necks. The breast band is broad enough to ensure a large surface area of contact, and the inside surface—the part that touches the animal's skin—is made of softer, smoother nylon. The harness also includes a back strap, head collar, girth, and breech strap which cover the sensitive areas, eliminating the rope-burn factor the animals have often endured. As funding becomes available, TAPO plans to help locals modify their carts, gradually eliminating the need to use an oxen yoke at all.

Getting people to adopt a new technology always takes education, and Kahama is no exception. TAPO is educating donkey owners, but also trying to teach educators themselves: Along with the workshops for villagers, the district's educational department recently selected 48 primary school teachers from various regions to take part in the workshops. All materials are presented in the participants' native language, Swahili.

Animal welfare is not typically included in the curriculum in Tanzania, so TAPO has identified these teachers as leaders within their schools and communities, in the hope that they'll help introduce animal welfare in the schools. The teachers learn, and are then encouraged to share their knowledge and apply these materials to their school syllabi upon returning home, and to form school clubs to disseminate information. Because children are frequently involved in caring for the family's animals, it's imperative that education be started in primary school so that they'll learn compassionate, effective ownership at an early age, and can go on to spread those values as they grow up.

Show and Tell

The workshops typically begin with classroom instruction covering basic donkey care, including essential husbandry, basic

medical care, shelter requirements, harnessing, and humane training. At the sessions I attended, Kilagwile talked about the Tanzania Animal Welfare Act, including its stipulation that it is illegal to work a donkey outside of allotted timeframes; the new legislation requires rest periods for the animals. He talked about the role and responsibility of animal owners and the care necessities of all living beings. Michael and Juma provided training on basic donkey behavior.

Once village participants had gone through the classroom session, the organizers performed a hands-on demonstration of the principles they had discussed, using the attendees' own donkeys to show facets of care and handling. Kilagwile and Michael also administered deworming medication, vitamins, and antibiotics as needed.

In the sessions I attended, almost all the owners had donkeys in need of wound care for painful pressure sores, and every donkey had lesions along the ridges of their backs from the use of overloaded and improper packs.

The hands-on session of the workshop involves the animals themselves, and while I was there, it drew curious onlookers. During our session, the local children stayed close enough to watch, but far enough away not to be in the way. They stared at every procedure, whether it was an injection, wound cleaning, or localized surgery. They were with their friends, wide-eyed and giggling through all of the interaction.

In the brief time I was in Kahama, I saw signs of hope at the workshops, where a donkey owner said he had learned a lot and appreciated the materials he'd been given on care and appropriate rest. I noticed, too, that workshop attendees touched and talked to their donkeys more often after seeing TAPO's leaders demonstrate these behaviors. And on the street, we saw two children using the new harness-and-cart system with their own donkey. They had attended a previous workshop and, while nervous about the attention, seemed shyly proud about the praise we gave them.

Kilagwile thinks that the workshops and the involvement of local artisans is an approach that makes sense. "I see this program having long-term effects because of the current importance of donkeys to the community," he says.

Indeed, while a utilitarian attitude toward animals often creates welfare issues, in those places where the interests of the owners and the animals overlap, there's great potential for change. Through the efforts of groups like TAPO, we can make a lasting impact on the care of a group of animals who, although they can be found in most every country around the world, tend to be commonly overlooked in animal welfare efforts. 

Kelly Coladarsi is a certified veterinary technician with a degree in wildlife biology and management.



Getting Real Making the ASV Standards Work for You

The Cats at Chemung County
Humane Society & SPCA

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BRENDA GRIFFIN, D.V.M.

In 2010, the Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) released a document several years in the making: Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters. Developed by a roster of veterinary experts, the standards are designed to “balance animal welfare science with practical and realistic recommendations for shelters,” and to provide a vision based on the needs of animals, which, the authors noted, remain the same regardless of how individual organizations’ missions and resources may differ. Here, we feature the first in a series using real-life shelter examples to demonstrate how the ASV standards can be applied within the sheltering and rescue field to create better and more humane outcomes for the animals shelters care for.

Cat Housing Standards

Poor cat housing, the ASV guidelines note, “is one of the greatest shortcomings observed in shelters and has a substantially negative impact on both health and well-being.” Indeed, many shelters were originally designed to house animals for short-term holding periods, and the resulting housing is often poorly suited to meet the needs of the animals.

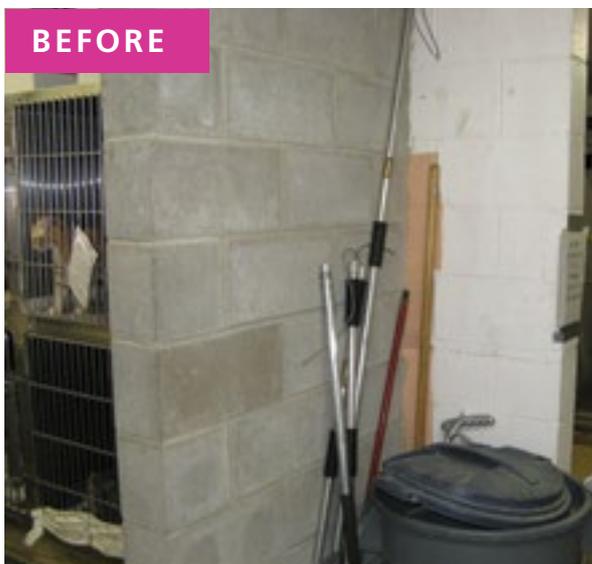
Like many shelters that were built a number of years ago, the facility at the Chemung County Humane Society & SPCA was inadequately equipped for the humane housing of cats. The staff was keenly aware of this issue, and concerned about its impact on the health and well-being of cats in their care—so in 2009 they sought to make some changes.

Located in Elmira, N.Y. (human population 87,000), this shelter admits approximately 1,500 cats annually. The highly dedicated staff is small, and their operating budget is low (sound familiar?). Nonetheless, they were determined to improve the care of cats entrusted to them.

Their first concern was the location of intake housing for cats: a narrow hallway immediately adjacent to the dog kennel. In the cramped hallway, cats were subjected to the sounds and smells of barking dogs beginning at the moment of their arrival. Housed in the small cages typical in many shelters, cats had no option but to rest, eat, and eliminate in the space of a couple of feet—with no separation of these areas. The staff recognized that a secure, quiet intake area for cats—one completely separated from dogs—was crucial for proper welfare, and would give cats the best chance of a smooth adjustment to the shelter environment.

Fortunately, the cat adoption area was separate from the dog population, but it consisted of a hodgepodge of cages of varying sizes arranged in a room. Assorted steel and wire cages were stacked high along the walls, obstructing windows and compromising lighting. An additional row of cages created a center aisle in the room, making it crowded and stuffy, increasing stress for both the cats and their caregivers.

As the standards state (and the staff recognized): “As the length of stay increases (e.g., beyond 1–2 weeks), it becomes progressively more important to provide space that is both mentally and physically stimulating; alternatives to traditional housing must be provided. For animals housed



Intake housing for cats at the shelter was located in a narrow hallway, right next to the dog kennel. Cats were subjected to the sounds and smells of dogs from the moment they arrived, and lived in small cages that offered no separation of space to rest, eat, and eliminate.



Staff relocated the shelter’s intake housing for cats to a secure, quiet room at the front of the facility, completely separate from the dogs. They also selected the largest cages they had on hand, placed them off the floor, and furnished them with hiding boxes and other creature comforts.



long term, the physical environment must include opportunities for hiding, playing, resting, feeding, and eliminating. For cats, the environment should also allow for scratching, climbing and perching.”

The staff recognized that despite their best efforts, the adoption housing simply did not come close to meeting the behavioral needs of their cats.

Because cats are less stressed and feel instinctively safer at higher vantage points, staff elevated the cages off the floor.

Making Changes

As the standards report, a prior study of shelter cats found that cats housed in cages with 11 square feet of floor space (e.g. a 4-foot-wide cage) were significantly less stressed than those with only 5.3 square feet of space (e.g. a 2-foot-wide cage).

To address the intake area issues, the shelter staff identified a small room in the front of the shelter that had been used for grooming and storage, and set out to relocate and redesign their cat intake area in this space. In order to meet the needs of cats during short-term holding, the shelter staff selected the largest cages they had on hand and reconfigured them in that quiet room.

Because cats are less stressed and feel instinctively safer at higher vantage points, the staff elevated the cages off the floor. They also maximized the separation between the areas for food, urination and defecation, and resting. The provision of hiding boxes and other creature comforts greatly improved the cat intake experience. Small changes, but a world of improvement—and no barking dogs!

The smaller cages that were left over did not go to waste—they were set up in a new isolation room for sick cats. By creating portals, two cages could be joined to create a double-sided enclosure for separation of living space and to facilitate cleaning with a cat still safely inside, minimizing the spread of germs. (For instructions on how to make a portal in a cat cage, go to sheltermedicine.com/printpdf/68.)

The Adoption Room Environment

As noted in the guidelines, “The structural and social environment, as well as opportunities for cognitive and physical activity, are important for all species of animals. An appropriate environment includes shelter and a comfortable resting area, in which animals are free from fear and distress and have the ability to express normal, species-typical behaviors.”

To address these issues at Chemung County, staff outfitted the adoption room with a variety of housing styles to meet the widely varying needs of the various felines who would occupy it. Chain-link runs, with top panels, were constructed for pair-housing of familiar or well-matched compatible cats. A variety of inexpensive shelves and perches



Veterinarians Brenda Griffin and Stephanie Janeczko not only advised Chemung County on how to improve cat housing, they checked out a local dollar store to get creative ideas for enrichment. Janeczko studies a dangling wind chime that might tickle a cat's fancy.

were set up to allow for many behavioral options, including climbing, playing, perching, hiding, and jumping. Using donated funds, staff purchased condo-style cage units to house litters of kittens and single adult cats. The large, double-sided enclosures ensured separate functional living spaces, and permanent shelves provided a convenient place for cats to perch. For all enclosures, cardboard, carpet squares, or rope were used to provide surfaces for scratching action, and boxes or other cubbies were provided to ensure cats would have a secure place to hide should they choose to do so.

Behavioral Care and Monitoring to Ensure Welfare

An animal's environment is more than purely physical. As the standards note, shelter staff "must be trained to recognize body language and other behaviors that indicate animal stress, pain, and suffering as well as those that indicate successful adaptation to the shelter environment. When animals are well adjusted and their behavioral needs are satisfied, they display a wide variety of normal behaviors including a good appetite and activity level, sociability, grooming, appropriate play behavior, and restful sleeping."

The staff knew firsthand the importance of spending daily time with animals outside of the routine of cleaning and feeding in order to detect problems as well as to spend quality time with each individual. In order to ensure that the needs of their cats are met, they established a daily routine for monitoring and enrichment, calling it their "cat enrichment hour."

Staff training focused on understanding the normal feline behaviors that well-adjusted cats should display—as well as those that are signs of stress, such as persistent hiding, social withdrawal, or feigning sleep.

Staff members were assigned to monitor all cats daily, as well as to provide social interaction, toys, treats, and a variety of creative and fun forms of mental stimulation each day. They visited the local dollar store for inexpensive trinkets that could help—items such as bubbles, wands, catnip, disposable cat toys, and anything that dangled, rolled, or otherwise looked like a cat might enjoy it! Their purchases kept things interesting for both the cats and the people in the cat room.

The staff saw the success of their efforts in the behavior of the cats—cats "being cats" as never before in the shelter—indicating that they are coping well in their new environment. The changes in the cat room had a tremendous impact, not only on the animals, but on the people as well. Several volunteers and staff members involved in the project were moved to tears by the transformation. It created many new, positive circles of compassion, and ultimately resulted in the sort of intangible benefits that we truly cannot measure, but that are very real and simply invaluable. Indeed, as the cats became happier, so did the people. There is nothing like a bunch of happy cats to increase staff pride and morale and attract volunteers, donors, and adopters! 



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Feeling Insecure?

Shelters turn to technology and training to take a bite out of crime

BY JIM BAKER

Animal shelters are supposed to be refuges for homeless and stray pets, places where people can come to retrieve a lost pet, or find a new best friend.

But anyone who's worked in the field long enough knows that shelters are also something else: targets.

It's almost routine to hear reports of shelters becoming the victims of crime. It seems that people will steal just about anything: cash, of course, but also animals, whether a cute kitten smuggled out underneath a winter coat, or a lost dog an obstinate owner would prefer to steal than pay to reclaim. They'll also raid the various drugs shelters keep on hand—controlled substances like the sedative Ketamine and painkillers, which are often sold illegally on the street. And plenty of other things get boosted, too: vans and trucks, computers from offices, bags of pet food. In other words, anything that isn't nailed down—and a few things that are, such as heating and air-conditioning equipment, sometimes targeted by thieves looking to sell the valuable copper components.

Security issues have been a longstanding problem for shelters, according to John Snyder, vice president for companion animals at The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). "I experienced more than 60 break-ins during my career in sheltering, which ranged from people stealing their own dogs, to taking dogs they wanted but didn't want to sterilize, to even releasing all the animals," says Snyder, who worked as director of Alachua County Animal Services in Gainesville, Fla., from 1974 to 1998. Items taken from Snyder's shelter included money, an autoclave, a microscope, and a new animal control vehicle—which, Snyder says, the police found a few days later, stripped of its transmission and wheels. Many shelters are located in secluded or remote areas, he points out, which give cover to bad guys,



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and it doesn't help that there's usually no one on the premises after 5 or 6 p.m.

With all their competing priorities, though, shelters rarely focus on security measures or staff training that might protect their organizations. "Since moving to the animal welfare field, I have never seen a class offered at a training seminar on this topic," says Mark Kumpf, director of the Montgomery County Animal Resource Center in Dayton, Ohio.

What's more, shelters—especially older ones—typically aren't designed with security in mind. Access to areas that should be controlled or restricted (and would be in another type of business) are often easily entered by anyone who can turn a doorknob. Alarms, lighting, vault safes, money drops, locking cash drawers, and other simple security measures are frequently absent.

This isn't to say that shelters should be like prisons, foreboding places that the public doesn't want to visit. That's exactly the image shelters are striving to get away from. But there are steps that they can take—and some cost very little—to increase their security, reducing the theft of pets and property, and making everyone feel safer, too.

Smile—You're on Candid Camera

Facilities around the country, tired of getting hit repeatedly by crime, are upgrading their security measures, adding new elements to the systems they've got, and looking for better ways to stay a step ahead of thieves and vandals.

"We literally just installed four security cameras and a DVR [digital video recorder], and I'm now downloading footage of the [people] who drove up and stole our recycle cans and an old file cabinet and washing machine," says Rea D. Cord, director of the Humane Society of Elmore County in Wetumpka, Ala. With this new system, which archives video for 28 days before recording over it, shelter staff can download footage shot when a crime took place, then view the stills frame by frame to identify the thieves or their vehicle. The cameras are pointed at major points of traffic and areas where suspicious behavior might occur: the front door, the parking lot, the office, and an outdoor drop box where people can leave animals at night. Cord can access



the system remotely on the Internet, and monitor what's happening at the shelter. She estimates that the system cost \$1,500 to buy and install.

Cord feels pretty confident about the measures she's taken to protect the small amount of petty cash on hand, which comes from adoption fees and the shelter's thrift store. It's kept in a floor safe that's bolted down, and only three staff members know the combination. Euthanasia drugs are stored in another floor safe, accessible only to Cord and the lead euthanasia technician.

The main security challenge facing the shelter is the potential theft of animals; pit bulls and bulldog mixes seem to be common targets. "The folks who are gonna steal something, that's what they're gonna try to steal," Cord says. Staff keep a close eye on these dogs; they stay inside the shelter, secured in their kennels.

In an added twist, inmates from the county jail are brought to the shelter to do manual labor, such as cleaning kennels and doing laundry. Most have done a good job, but Cord worries that an inmate could spot a beautiful pit bull—or even a cute Yorkie puppy—and get word to a compatriot outside the jail, who could steal the pet. In cases where shelter staff suspect someone's behavior in particular, high-theft dogs are moved within the shelter, and locked up. "If we happen to have a particularly ill-tempered dog on hold," Cord says, "I would

love to have that dog moved to where the at-risk dog was—hoping the thief will enjoy the surprise!"

Sounding the Alarm

Along with video surveillance, many shelters have installed a variety of alarm systems. After several incidents of animal theft, vandalism, and break-ins, the Humane Society of Tacoma & Pierce County in Tacoma, Wash., moved to a new alarm system, made by a company called Sonitrol, that offered equipment to detect intrusion and fire, monitor access to the facility, and provide video surveillance.

Listening devices are planted throughout the shelter, with live feeds to a monitoring station, according to deputy director Denise McVicker. The system will pick up any loud noises at night, and will determine if the noise warrants tripping a silent alarm to notify the police. The audio devices are able to distinguish between unusual sounds like breaking glass

is watermarked, so that it's admissible as evidence in court, too.

McVicker estimates that it cost \$10,000 to install the new system, and the shelter pays a monthly monitoring fee of about \$200. The package proved its worth last year, when a man who wanted to steal a pit bull held a staff member at knifepoint. The man then fled with the dog through an exit, and a volunteer chased after him, and was also threatened. "Two cameras got very good shots of him," McVicker says. "The police came, viewed the video, and they knew him." The man was spotted, and arrested, about three weeks later.

All Keyed Up

Video cameras and sophisticated alarms are great security measures, but shelters can also accomplish a lot by paying attention to a facility's first line of defense: keys. They control who has access to the building,

The main security challenge facing the shelter is the potential theft of animals; pit bulls and bulldog mixes seem to be common targets. Staff keep a close eye on these dogs; they stay inside the shelter, secured in their kennels.

and routine ones, such as a dog barking or the rattling of a cage door. (There are no sensors in the main kennel area, to cut down on false alarms.) Contacts wired on the shelter's doors and windows ensure that if someone tries to force entrance into the building, he will trip the alarm. There are also motion detectors in the shelter's office, where no one should have access after hours. And there are four panic buttons that staff can press in case of a threatening situation, which triggers the silent alarm, bringing law enforcement.

Before moving to the new system, the shelter had an off-the-shelf video surveillance system with four cameras to monitor the inside and outside of the building. But the shelter wanted to upgrade its quality and capability. So the Sonitrol system was installed, with eight additional cameras, and everything was integrated. Video footage shot by the cameras and digitally recorded

high-risk areas within the shelter (such as the office or veterinary clinic), and the animals themselves.

It's often a challenge to keep track of who has the keys to which doors, cages, and gates—and staff turnover at shelters increases the risk that some keys may go missing when people leave their jobs. It's a common—and commonsense—practice at many shelters to give master keys that open doors and locks throughout the building only to a limited number of staff. All staff members who have opening and closing privileges receive perimeter keys; other employees get keys that give them access only to their assigned areas.

That's the system used at Wayside Waifs, a 33,000-square-foot shelter in Kansas City, Mo., that has about 60 staff and 900 active volunteers. There's a process for retrieving keys when staff turnover

occurs. When staff are issued keys, they sign a commitment stating that they've received them, and will return them when they leave their employment, just as they're expected to do with their identification badges. New staff are also given their own individual codes to use to deactivate the alarm system. When they no longer work at the shelter, their codes are deleted from the system, according to Danny Carmichael, director of facilities. Many shelters use this combination of both keys and alarm codes for staff.

Doing periodic key inventories is a good idea, but sometimes keys still go missing. Cord, from the Alabama shelter, knows how to solve that problem. She has had the facility's locks rekeyed on occasion, just to be safe. A locksmith did the job in a couple of hours, and staff turned in their old keys, and received new ones.

Shelters take different approaches to locking cages, kennel runs, and guillotine doors in order to prevent theft of pets. Carolyn Machowski, manager of shelter services at The HSUS, recommends one

Keep track of your keys. For safety's sake, a lockbox containing a copy of the master key should be placed in a location that only the shelter's director, police officers, and the fire department know about.

standard operating procedure for securing individual animals. Kennels and cages should require the same keys so that only one is needed to open them, making it faster to lock and unlock them all at once. Staff assigned to that particular area should have the master key. The cages and kennels should be locked during the day, but left open at night in case there's

a fire and emergency workers need to evacuate the animals. For safety's sake, a lockbox containing a copy of the master key should be placed in a location that only the shelter's director, police officers, and the fire department know about.

Some shelters have moved from using keys to a computerized system of keycards and magnetic card readers. Wayside Waifs currently uses a combination of keys and keycards, according to Carmichael. He recommends that if a shelter is starting fresh, with a new or renovated facility, it's a good idea to go ahead and invest in a keycard system. Down the road, that makes it much simpler when changes have to be made regarding who has access to the building. Magnetic card readers aren't currently part of the system at McVicker's shelter, but that's an option. "The system ... has the ability to have keycard entry sites, and record those bits of information, and lock out at certain times of the day," she says.

Eyes Wide Open

Among all these technical solutions, what about the human component of security? Staff and volunteers can help prevent crimes, too; the best technology and written procedures in the world are no good if people don't use them. If staff lose or duplicate their keys, give out their alarm codes, or open doors to visitors they don't know, it's the same as having no security at all.

Shelters sometimes just lack a security mindset, according to Machowski. "Because of the fast pace of the environment, they get wrapped up in day-to-day activities of keeping the shelter running, caring for the animals, and servicing the public. ... Security doesn't become a priority until there's an incident," she says. So doors are left propped open, visitors wander the building unescorted, and gates to the loading area aren't locked when the animal control truck leaves.

"I think building a culture of awareness is as important as anything," says Brad Shear, executive director of the Mohawk and Hudson River Humane Society in Menands, N.Y., near Albany. For that reason, staff and volunteers at his shelter are told to say something if they see a person acting suspiciously or in an area they shouldn't be. "It's OK to ask somebody,



"Hey, what are you doing? I don't know who you are," he says.

McVicker agrees: "You never know who's going to come through your door, so the staff just needs to be diligent and thoughtful, and not just assume everybody who comes here has good intentions. So we try to keep it in our employees' minds that they need to pay attention to their surroundings" and to shelter visitors.

At Wayside Waifs, everyone on staff wears an ID badge with their name, photo, and department. Community service workers, who are at the shelter through probation programs, wear orange traffic vests to distinguish themselves. "If someone sees an orange vest traveling somewhere they're not supposed to be, they can approach them and say, 'Can I help you?'" Carmichael says.

In an era of widespread budget cuts, finding the funds to create a secure environment in a shelter is more challenging than ever. But as long as people take things that don't belong to them—whether that's cold hard cash, or warm fuzzy puppies—the need to plan for potential security threats won't go away. Having money to invest in technology helps, but it doesn't drain your budget to train staff and volunteers to be alert, follow procedures, and make the most of what you've got. It comes down to doing what you can, and staying vigilant.

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Busting the Bad Guys—on a Budget

Fighting crime doesn't have to be expensive. There are many simple steps that shelters can take to improve their security without breaking the bank. Shelter experts offer a range of commonsense measures and quick fixes that can help prevent theft, break-ins, and other unwanted incidents.

- Create a standard operating procedure for opening and closing the shelter, which includes entering and exiting the building after hours.
- Enlist a security expert/police officer to discuss your facility's weak points and how to strengthen them. Discuss cash-handling procedures and concerns such as animal and drug theft.
- Repair gates and fencing to ensure they are impenetrable when closed and locked. Keep side and back doors closed and locked.
- Remove the high growth of shrubs and weeds and trim foliage that blocks visibility around the building's exterior.
- Review the controls and operations of your exterior lights. Document the specifications, and create a routine maintenance program.
- Maintain a master list of key assignments, and make sure that staff acknowledge receipt of keys.
- Contact the local police department, and request that a patrol unit regularly pass by the shelter, keeping a close eye out for suspicious activity or trespassers.
- Post prominent signs indicating that the shelter has video surveillance and is monitored and secured 24/7. 

For more information on improving your shelter's security, or advice on other sheltering issues, send inquiries to asi@humanesociety.org.

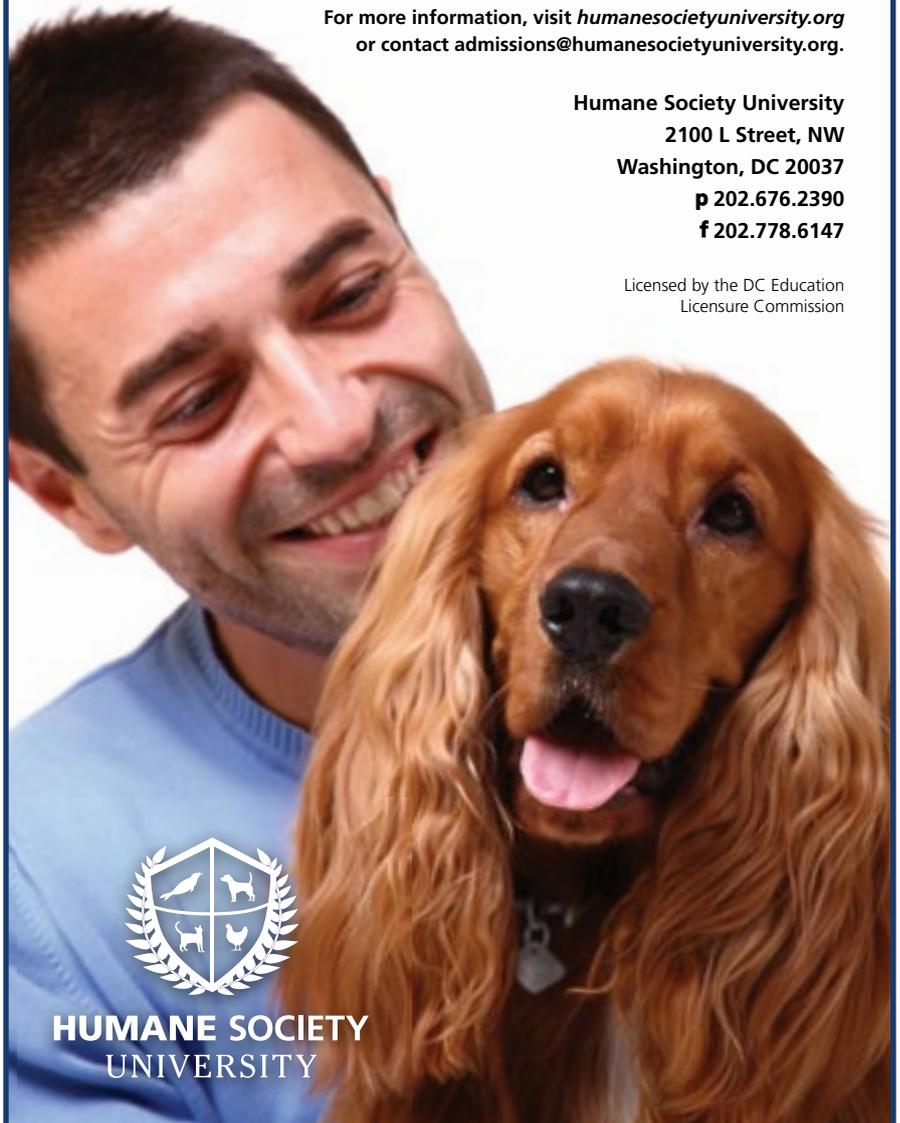
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Sanitation Sanity

Our veterinary columnist answers your cleaning and disinfection questions

BY MIRANDA SPINDEL, D.V.M., M.S.



Recently, while teaching an online class covering infectious disease management in the shelter, I made a mistake: I assumed that the audience of shelter and veterinary professionals would want to know about things beyond cleaning and disinfecting! I quickly found out that, while the subject may seem basic, questions abound about new products, how to eliminate certain diseases, and how to clean effectively in shelter environments. I could not keep up with all the questions that came in!

Recognizing the need for more information on this topic, I've used this article to answer some questions I've received in my courses, and some that came in through *Animal Sheltering's* Facebook followers.

What is the difference between sanitizing, cleaning, disinfecting, and sterilizing?

This is such a good question! You may find that these terms are not used by everyone in

exactly the same manner—and in truth, they mean slightly different things.

I consider sanitizing to be the practice of eliminating as many infectious organisms as possible. In most shelters, sanitation is accomplished through cleaning and disinfecting.

Cleaning is a manual process. It involves removing dirt and organic debris. Examples of cleaning include sweeping floors, taking out the garbage, scooping poop, and scrubbing a kennel with soap and water. Although

cleaning is a very important step, it does not kill infectious organisms. It just mechanically removes them or lessens their presence.

Disinfecting is using solutions to kill or destroy those pathogens that were not removed in the cleaning process. There are some disinfectants, like the quaternary ammonium class, that are able to act simultaneously as both cleaning agents and disinfectants—but many do not have (or possess only weak) cleaning properties; they may fail to effectively remove dirt and grease. In light of this, moderately to heavily soiled areas (typical shelter cages/kennels) should be precleaned. When a product like bleach is applied to a clean cage and allowed to sit for 10 minutes, this is an example of disinfection at work.

Sterilizing is the process of eliminating all microorganisms from inanimate surfaces. Autoclaving spay/neuter instruments is an example of sterilization.

I would like to hear more about accelerated hydrogen peroxide and how to use it. Is it really as safe for staff/animals as they say? Is it effective?

Accelerated hydrogen peroxide (AHP) is a newer type of globally patented disinfection technology only recently made available in the United States. AHP products can be found under different names such as Peroxigard, Percept, Accel, and AccelTB. The active ingredient in AHP products is hydrogen peroxide, but because they contain a combination of surfactants (surface-active agents, which increase the contact of two materials) and inert ingredients, they are very different from typical 3-percent hydrogen peroxide and are capable of cleaning and killing pathogens. Accelerated hydrogen peroxide disinfectants can be purchased as concentrates, wipes, or ready-to-use solutions.

These products have mainly been used in the human health care arena to date, where they are becoming a standard of care. Shelters may be reluctant to employ them due to expense. However, unlike most disinfectants—which require at least 10 minutes of contact time—AHPs are labeled to sanitize (clean) in just 30 seconds and disinfect (kill pathogens) in only five minutes. Efficacy studies indicate a broader spectrum than quaternary ammonium products, including the ability to kill

parvovirus, some activity when organic matter is present, and the product appears to be quite safe for users and for the environment. Accelerated hydrogen peroxide products certainly may begin to gain favor in the shelter arena.

My shelter just heard about Wysiwash. Can you tell me more about this product?

Wysiwash is a patented power-wash delivery system for calcium hypochlorite tablets that is being used in some shelters. Calcium hypochlorite is a derivative of chlorine and is the same chemical used to chlorinate swimming pools. To use Wysiwash, a compressed caplet of calcium hypochlorite is placed into a special hose-end sanitizer that discharges diluted solution when sprayed.

Bru-Clean TbC is another product that I have had some recent questions about. It is also available as a patented cleaning and disinfection system and as a premeasured disinfection tablet for dilution in one gallon of water. It, too, is a chlorine-releasing compound. The active ingredient in this product is sodium dichloroisocyanurate (NADCC), a chemical that is commonly used to disinfect drinking water. The Bru-Clean company has developed several special applicators for this product that can be used with degreasers in addition to Bru-Clean TbC. The applicators allow for a foaming cleaning step, a water rinse, and then a disinfection step to occur. The applicators are available as wall-mounted units, portable rolling units, or quick-connect foamer/sprayer units.

Both Wysiwash and Bru-Clean may be desirable alternatives to bleach in a shelter setting due to their easy application systems. Each also may be less corrosive to surfaces and safer for the environment and staff when handled properly. Although Bru-Clean has some detergent capability, Wysiwash does not, and a precleaning step and adequate contact time of 10 minutes are still suggested when either is used. In several independent, controlled laboratory studies, both Bru-Clean TbC and Wysiwash have performed comparably to household bleach in terms of disinfecting capabilities, showing efficacy against common shelter respiratory viruses, canine parvovirus, and calicivirus when used per manufacturer's direction. Because each of

The War on Bugs

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SOAPS AND DETERGENTS are cleaning agents that work by suspending dirt and grease and breaking up organic matter. Dish soap is a common shelter detergent, but soaps do not necessarily kill germs.

DEGREASERS are strong cleaners formulated for removal of tough oils and greasy buildup. There are many brands of degreaser available for use in the shelter.

DISINFECTANTS are chemical solutions that kill germs. The particular germs killed depend on the ingredients. While some disinfectants serve a dual purpose and have some cleansing properties, many disinfectants do not effectively remove dirt and grease. Bleach, quaternary ammonium products (like Roccal, A-33, Kennelsol), and potassium peroxymonosulfate (Trifectant, Virkon-S) are examples of common shelter disinfectants.

these products is still not widely used in shelters, there remain some unanswered questions about their efficacy in the field.

What should I clean with to get rid of giardia? What about coccidia?

This question comes my way quite often. Giardia is a pesky little protozoan organism that can be the cause of diarrhea in dogs and cats as well as other species. Animals become infected with giardia by ingesting a cyst that has been passed in the stool of an infected animal. Although these cysts survive well in stool and in moist environments, quaternary ammonium products (like A-33, Roccal, Kennelsol, etc.) effectively kill giardia. Thus most typical shelter cleaning protocols should prevent outbreaks from occurring.

In shelters where giardia is an ongoing problem, proper cleaning and disinfecting can be augmented by additional help-

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ful measures such as ensuring that stool is being promptly picked up and disposed of, bathing and grooming affected animals to prevent them from re-ingesting cysts and becoming re-infected, and eliminating any standing water.

Coccidia, unfortunately, is a bit trickier. This organism cannot be killed with routine disinfectants. Steam cleaning with commercial machines is recommended for contaminated environments, but is impractical for most shelters. In shelters where coccidia is a common issue, frequent stool removal and pretreatment of high-risk animals with a drug like Ponazuril may be the best option for decreasing environmental contamination.

I am an animal control officer and would like more information about best practices for cleaning my van.

Thanks so much for asking a question about part of shelter work that is frequently overlooked! If an animal is shedding infectious disease and the van area is not properly sanitized after transport, as animals continue to be brought in, there is tremendous opportunity for infectious disease transmission to occur. Several nasty shelter outbreaks have started exactly this way (see animalsheltering.org/distemper-outbreak for a story about a distemper outbreak that may have begun with transport issues).

Vans are essentially very short-term intake housing for most facilities, and the cages and equipment inside should be a part of routine shelter sanitation schedules, just like any other area of animal housing. Best practices would ensure that in addition to cleaning and disinfecting cages between occupants, a certain amount of time is allotted at the end of each shift/day for thorough stocking and sanitation tasks.

A daily written cleaning protocol or check-sheet can also be a great tool. Here is an example of what this might look like:

Vehicle cleaning procedures

- Van supplies should be checked at the beginning and end of each shift.
- Supplies on hand should include:
 - Spray bottle of disinfectant
 - Disposable gloves
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Clean laundry
 - Dishes, etc.
- Equipment that contacts animals (microchip scanner, snappy snare, rabies pole, leashes) should be disinfected between uses.
- Every kennel and all kennel items should be cleaned and disinfected between occupants.
- All kennels should be cleaned and disinfected daily (even if an animal was not housed during the day), using the standard shelter cage cleaning protocol.
- Dirty food and water bowls should be kept in a closed container/bag and removed daily.

- Soiled bedding should be kept in a closed container/bag and removed daily.
- End-of-day tasks should include:
- Disinfection of the floor
- Wiping down of high-contact and/or soiled surfaces, including the steering wheel, walls, and keyboards.

Why is the rotation of chemicals recommended?

Like so many aspects of shelter medicine, there's no single solution that will be universally applicable for all situations. It is important to have a thorough understanding of the pros and cons of common shelter choices. You may find that it can be useful to rotate chemicals on a regular basis, or during times of particular disease concerns at the shelter. Some shelters rotate quarterly. Others use one product several days of the week, and a product with a different spectrum of activity on alternating days. While it can seem overwhelming to sort through the vast variety of available chemicals, don't fret! My advice would be to think practically and ask some key questions.

- What are the infectious diseases that the shelter is challenged by? Canine parvovirus, panleukopenia, calicivirus, and ringworm are four of the more hardy pathogens that shelter disinfection protocols should target.
- What needs cleaning and disinfecting? Are surfaces easy to clean, or will you need a product that will work in the face of organic material that may never be fully removed (i.e. wood, carpet, gravel, grass)?
- How much time and expense can be dedicated to cleaning and disinfecting? Most disinfectants require a 10-minute minimum contact time after application. Some of the newer—although more expensive—products have decreased contact times. It could be worthwhile for some shelters to evaluate whether the cost savings in staff time may be worth the expenditure.
- Is staff compliance and ease of use a major concern? Some chemicals come in simpler application formats than others. This should play into your choice, because no matter how much is spent, or how much thought goes into choosing a chemical, if the staff who use it



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every day do not do so efficiently and correctly, the effort and expense will not pay off. (A sample weekly rotation schedule: Monday—quaternary; Tuesday—quaternary; Wednesday—bleach and degrease; Thursday—quaternary; Friday—bleach; Saturday—quaternary; Sunday—quaternary.)

Do hand sanitizers really work?

Proper hand hygiene is recognized as the best way to stop the spread of infectious disease. Yet studies show us that in health care facilities, hands are only washed appropriately about 25-50 percent of the time.

Especially in animal shelters, reasons for poor hand hygiene include lack of time and inconvenient facilities. Hand sanitizers certainly seem like a practical solution ... but do they really work?

Most infection control experts will tell you that they are very effective. They improve compliance and reduce infectious disease transmission. In one interesting study comparing hand washing to alcohol and to

chlorhexidine-alcohol gels for reduction of bacterial loads on the hands of people after they performed physical exams of equines (a dirty job!), the use of the gels was equivalent or superior to hand washing.

However, hand sanitizers do have a few limitations. The sanitizer does not kill ringworm, parvo, or calicivirus. In order to work properly, sanitizers have to be selected and used correctly. Alcohol-based products with concentrations above 60 percent are recommended for best efficacy. Hands should be washed a lot in a shelter—at minimum, before and after handling animals and items in animals' environments; after gloves are removed; and at the beginning and end of each shift. Alcohol-free products should generally be avoided. In addition to being less reliable against calicivirus, some of these products contain compounds like phenols (Triclosan) that can be harmful at high concentrations.

To use sanitizer properly, apply a quarter-size amount to your palm, work the sanitizer into the fingertips of opposite hand, repeat

with your opposite hand, and rub briskly until dry without rinsing.

The bottom line? In the shelter, hand washing is critical for infectious disease control. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers should be considered an important adjunct to use of disposable gloves and soap-and-water hand washing.

Sanitation in the animal shelter truly is an area where good practices can save lives. Small pieces of misinformation or glitches in protocols are often the root of serious, widespread, and persistent infectious disease problems.

If you have more questions or want more information to ensure that your shelter's protocols and practices are up to date, check out the great resources available here:

- animalsheltering.org/cleaning
- aspcapro.org/shelter-sanitation.php
- sheltermedicine.com/category/keywords/sanitation AS

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People Who Need People

Effective recruitment for volunteer programs

BY HILARY ANNE HAGER



Sooner or later, every volunteer program manager finds herself asking how to find the people she needs to do all the work that needs to be done. And while it's perfectly appropriate to develop a strategic recruitment plan for volunteers, recruiters need to ensure the program is already running smoothly before they arrive.

The fact is that a well-run program is the best volunteer recruitment tool. Volunteers who enjoy their experience within an organization are sure to speak of it among their acquaintances, helping spread the word throughout the community. A sensibly structured program, along with the opportunity to make a positive impact and to learn additional skills, attracts the types of

people who make strong volunteer programs. Chaos, on the other hand, often attracts chaos. Clear expectations and organization attract effective volunteers who want to be strategic about where they can have the most impact.

Digging to find help, organizations often fall back on fool's gold, simply bringing in more warm bodies. The real gold is harder to find, but worth the effort. By paying more attention to the structure of the existing program rather than simply piling on more people, organizations can avoid the "crisis/chaos spiral," in which coordinators must continually replace volunteers who are leaving because their time and efforts were not well-spent or well-received. Recruitment

of new volunteers should take place only after the foundation of the program is well-developed and can support the increase in numbers.

Before launching an extensive recruitment plan, program managers should work to strengthen the essential building blocks of their programs: getting buy-in from leadership; involving staff in development of the program; clearly defining the role of volunteers; identifying the requirements and screening process; developing and providing volunteer training; implementing the tools to make the program easier to manage; creating a process for acknowledging volunteers; acquiring the appropriate equipment for volunteers; and

[volunteer management]

developing and maintaining excellent lines of communication between management, staff, and the volunteer team.

Bringing in new volunteers before the program is ready is a recipe for disappointment, frustration, and high turnover.

Putting Your Best Foot Forward

When the organization is ready to bring on new volunteers, take a few final steps to make sure you're presenting an appealing, accurate image of your program.

A thorough review of all recruiting materials is in order. Try to look at the organization through the eyes of an outsider, and be honest about what you see. Better yet, enlist a friend or relative to act as a sort of "secret shopper" of your program and recruiting process. From the website to the application, from the description of the opportunity to the orientation, how does your program rate?

How does everything look? Is it inviting? Do the materials present a professional, well-

run, and organized opportunity to participate, or does it appear to be a desperate cry for help? Does the process make it easy to get involved, or are there obstacles and confusing steps at every turn?

Start with a review of all brochures and pamphlets. It's nice when they can be professionally designed and printed, but when restricted budgets make that a challenge, all printed materials should still be neat, easy to read, clear of all typographical errors, with photos that don't look like fuzzy blobs.

Where People Seek Info about Volunteering

YOUR AGENCY

- Information from staff (make sure staff know what to tell visitors/callers)
- Voicemail system for organization
- Volunteer space (visitors will assess whether volunteers are appreciated in the organization)
- Website (make sure information is easy to find and very clear)
- Information posted at the organization
- Word-of-mouth from current volunteers
- Board members

MEDIA

- Classified advertisements in your local paper/magazines
- Newspaper/local magazine stories/interviews about your agency
- Radio PSAs (public service announcements)
- Radio – stories/interviews about your agency
- Television PSAs
- Television – stories/interviews about your agency

COMMUNITY

(See expanded list, p. 55)

- Presentations to community groups/service clubs
- Community events – tabling
- Fliers and posters at community groups
- Presentations to local businesses (especially those around your neighborhood)
- Joint advertising with local businesses (they may be willing to develop an advertisement that simultaneously promotes their service and your volunteer opportunities)
- Volunteer referral services in the community, including volunteer centers (*pointsoflight.org*)
- Yellow Pages

EDUCATIONAL/GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

- On-campus recruitment
- Specific department recruitment
- High school – mandatory community service hours
- Support for persons with mental disabilities
- Support for persons with physical disabilities
- Court-ordered programs
- Employment assistance programs
- AmeriCorps and VISTA
- Youth internship programs through local city government and community groups

WEBSITES

- Your agency's website
- Volunteer recruitment sites
 - *VolunteerMatch.org*
 - *SERVE.net.org*
 - *usafreedomcorps.gov*
 - *idealist.org*
 - *UnitedWay.org*
 - *dosomething.org*
 - *singlevolunteers.org*
 - *seniorcorp.org*
 - *cns.gov*

Group Volunteer Recruitment Sites

- *onebrick.org* (This site is great if you want to organize a large project at your site. This is a good way to get people interested in longer-term volunteering.)

Community Sites

- *craigslist.org*
- Your community-specific bulletin boards and websites
- Ask for links to your volunteer program on websites of other community groups and businesses

Animal Adoption Sites

- *petfinder.com* (It has a volunteer recruitment section. Make sure your group has a home page on the site!)
- *pets911.com*



Looking for Help in All the Right Places

The best (and easiest) place to start getting ideas on where to recruit is to ask your existing volunteers how they heard about the opportunity. Do a brief survey of volunteers already on board. Where did they hear about your organization? What motivated them to volunteer? What are their feelings about the process, the recruitment materials, and what makes the organization an attractive option for people looking to get involved? Your existing volunteers will likely have some great insight into what works, and will provide a great starting point.

Does the organization capitalize on every opportunity to acknowledge the impact of volunteer involvement and the ongoing need for assistance? Any contact with the public ought to include a snippet about volunteer opportunities. Volunteering information on the website should be easily accessible. The phrase “and volunteers” should be added to anything that promotes the work of the organization, i.e. “the organization, staff, and volunteers.” Volunteer involvement should be engaged, praised, and solicited at every turn.

Next, look at the descriptions of the volunteer opportunities. Do they detail specific ways to help? Do descriptions of the positions accurately portray what volunteers do?

What about the benefits of volunteering? Do your recruiting materials offer more tangible reasons to participate in your program than simply feeling good? What skills and knowledge will be gained by participants? People often feel inspired to help because they know the need, but it’s smart to create a program in which volunteers can benefit through learning new skills.

Take a look at the application and evaluate its usefulness as a tool. Is it strictly for information gathering, or is it the basis for making decisions about whether to invite the prospective volunteer to participate in the program? If the latter, does it ask the necessary questions, ones that will help you assign volunteers appropriately, or are the questions soliciting answers that won’t have any impact or relevance at all?

If you don’t have it on your application already, ask incoming volunteers where they learned about your organization’s volunteer opportunities. Track the answers to determine what seems to be working and what doesn’t in order to focus energy where it’s likely to be most productive. There is no reason to spend time, at least initially, on recruiting methods that don’t seem likely to yield the desired results.

The recruiting plan will be dictated by the type of volunteers and skill sets you’re seeking to acquire. If the organization needs people with specific skills and abilities, the recruiting will need to be much more targeted toward a specific audience. If the program has the ability to train the general public to do the required work, the recruitment process can be much more broadly based.

For instance, a spay/neuter clinic needing volunteer help with pre- and postsurgical care may be better served by focusing efforts on local vocational training programs, or preveterinary programs in local schools. Shelters seeking professional dog trainers should contact local training businesses rather than inquiring of the public generally. On the other hand, if the shelter is primarily seeking dog walkers or cat socializers and can provide the training needed to get people of varying experience levels up to speed, a general call to the larger community may be in order.

There are a variety of volunteer recruitment resources on the Internet where you can list and promote your volunteer opportunities; *volunteermatch.org*, *idealist.org*, *unitedway.org*, and *dosomething.org* are some of these. These sites allow you

Expanded List of Community Sites (from *Volunteer Management for Animal Care Organizations* by Betsy McFarland)

- Advocacy groups
- AmeriCorps programs
- Animal-friendly areas—dog park/runs, obedience training clubs
- Associations of retired executives and teachers
- Business and professional organizations
- Chambers of commerce
- Churches and religious groups
- Community service restitution programs
- Conferences/special events
- Corporations and small businesses
- Employment assistance programs
- Families
- Job seekers
- Job Training Partnership Act and other job training programs
- Military units and retired military personnel
- New residents of the community
- Parents’ groups
- Pet food stores
- Public agencies and retired personnel
- Realtors (welcome wagon packages often include volunteer information)
- Rehabilitation agencies/programs
- Schools, especially service-learning programs
- Scout troops or other youth groups
- Senior citizen groups
- Senior Corps programs
- Service organizations such as Kiwanis, Rotary clubs and Junior Leagues
- Sororities and fraternities
- Students seeking internships and service opportunities
- Student vocational training programs
- Unions and trade associations
- United Way
- University/college/community college organizations
- Veterinary clinics
- VISTA volunteers
- Volunteer centers

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Hilary Anne Hager is the former shelter activities coordinator for Everett Animal Services in Everett, Wash. In April, she took on a new role as director of the National Volunteer Center at The Humane Society of the United States.

to post your opportunities, requirements, process, and contact information to allow interested parties to connect with you directly. More and more people utilize the Internet to find volunteer opportunities, which makes this low-effort method of recruiting well worth the time.

Research indicates that the No. 1 reason people decide to volunteer is because they were asked. A more active approach to recruiting volunteers requires outreach to the local community to make "the ask." Consider recruiting existing volunteers or board members to help with this activity so the effort is shared and more ground can be covered. Be sure to



train the ambassadors in some key talking points about your organization and the volunteer program so that everyone is on the same page. It's also important to focus not only on why the organization needs help, but on what the volunteer stands to gain (emotionally, intellectually, or otherwise) from getting involved.

Taking the message to the people will require presentations to local service groups, schools, business alliances, neighborhood groups, individuals, and tabling at local events. This is where having well-developed and attractive collateral material to hand out will be important, in order to make it easy for interested parties to take the next step toward working with an organization that is professional and reflects that professionalism in its materials. Animal organizations also have an easy way to target animal lovers in the community by reaching out to local animal-centered businesses. Veterinary hospitals, groomers, and doggie day cares all cater to animal lovers, some of whom may have even adopted their companions from you. Animal fanciers, breed rescue groups, and 4-H clubs may also have members interested in spending time in your organization.

There are also opportunities to partner with local media to get the word out. Many news outlets have a community page on their websites—suited to listing events like volunteer orientations—and many smaller local papers are always looking for great stories about what's happening in the community. It may be possible to pitch a story about the volunteer program, or solicit free advertising space in those smaller papers to promote the opportunities to their readership. Local radio stations may be willing to promote your work through public service announcements as well.

In the movie *Field of Dreams*, the message was "If you build it, they will come." This principle holds true for volunteer programs as well. A well-run program and a corps of highly effective, engaged, and satisfied volunteers will usually generate the number of additional new volunteers needed to complete the required work—when done well, the program itself will do most of the recruiting it needs. **AS**

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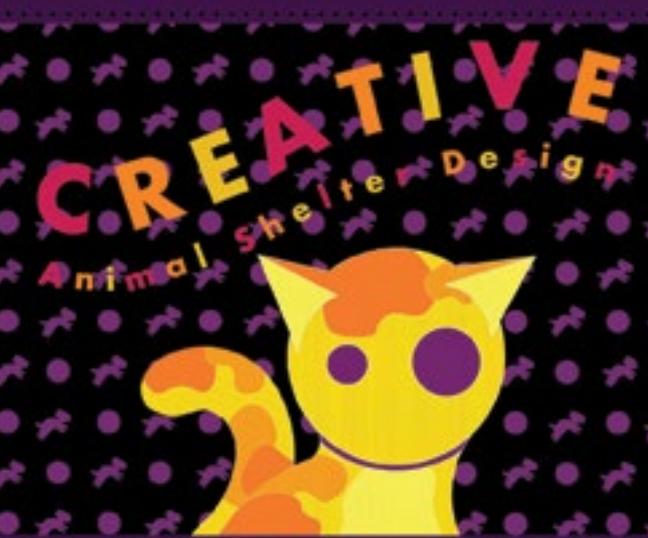
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Lifting Them Up

An AT&T staffer wants to reach out and comfort someone—in your shelter

BY SHEVAUN BRANNIGAN

It's a problem many shelter staff are all too familiar with. They try to keep the kennels as warm and pleasant as possible, but cold, hard floors—which allow for sanitation but aren't pleasant to curl up on—aren't exactly conducive to a good night's sleep.

That's the problem Tracey Robinson set out to fix.

Like many private citizens, Robinson wanted to help homeless pets but didn't know how. "So I'd make my ... monetary donations now and again. But at some point in 2008, I decided that I really needed to be more active for myself. And I set up a nonprofit and sort of figured that I'd learn what I needed to do as I go."

Robinson formed her nonprofit, Animal Rescue Aid (ARA) in 2008. In her full-time job as a senior product manager for AT&T, she had access to "cool, very fun [and] cutting-edge products" which occasionally got discarded or recycled. From time to time, she was able to donate such goods to shelters and rescue groups so that they could use them in silent auctions or other fundraising efforts.

A few years later, after reading articles describing the difficulty shelters and rescue groups had providing beds for the animals in their care, she was inspired to start ARA's bed donation program. At around the same time, she read an article about an Arizona woman who fundraised tens of thousands of dollars for donations of 425 Kuranda beds to her local animal care and control facility. Robinson was amazed at the work—but also amazed at how few beds the money had bought. She knew Kuranda made terrific beds, but she worried the costs—\$49 for the basic model—might deter donors.

Being the solution-oriented person she is, Robinson didn't give up. She took her research a step further, and contacted a Chinese manufacturer of elevated pet beds directly to investigate—and negotiate. She settled on an elevated bed made of rustproof aluminum and PVC-coated canvas, and got a price that seemed more workable. "So at the



Jake, a Staffordshire mix awaiting adoption at Almost Home Animal Rescue, rests easy on his bed, which keeps him up off the cold floor.

end of the day, long story short ... basically I can bring the beds in directly at the cost of \$15 per bed, and that would be delivered to the shelter itself."

Robinson promotes this donation program through ARA's website, and it's been a major hit. Erin Schuch of Almost Home Animal Rescue, located in Michigan, says that when the dogs get their beds, "they get so excited, then get right on it and curl up and lie down. You can see a sense of contentment on their face." And the dogs aren't the only fans: "When I found out how many were donated, I literally stopped and cried I was so happy," Schuch says.

The number of beds that went to Almost Home? An outstanding 147.

Robinson stresses that providing a bed does more than give the animals a good place to sleep. "It gives them a chance to be adopted." An animal who's more comfortable and less stressed is more likely to show her true personality when potential adopters come by.

Lady's Hope, a Washington state-based rescue, raises money to help shelters in rural

areas purchase pet beds. Yvonne Deveraux, the group's founder, has seen the way dogs at some shelters end up sleeping. "Imagine lying on a cold, hard, concrete floor, dirty with feces or urine, with no relief or escape from the draining cold," says Deveraux. She notes that one of her dogs "was showing signs of stress ... and since he received his bed, he is much quieter and less stressed now."

The beds not only improve comfort levels, they're also easy to clean—disinfectant and water is all you need, says Robinson.

She'd like to be able to devote herself to ARA full time, "because that's where my heart is," she says. In the meantime, she's taking it one order at time.

At press time, 39 shelters and rescue groups were participating, and more than 500 beds had been donated. Robinson will also be attending the 2011 Animal Care Expo in Orlando, Fla. Visit animalrescueaid.org for more information. **AS**

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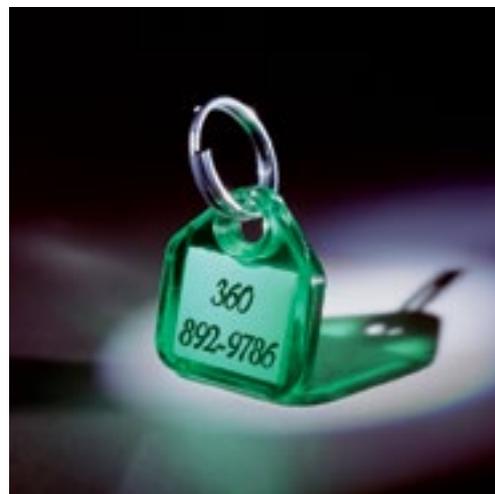
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