



Dogs Playing for Life™ Impact Report

June 2018



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Over 200 DPFL seminars provided internationally to date!

DPFL Overview

Dogs Playing for Life (DPFL) is a program rooted in the notion that a dog's natural instinct is to PLAY. Playing can be a dog's most natural form of positive interaction and communication with both humans and fellow canines. Allowing dogs to be dogs in playgroups is often a more reliable indicator of a dog's behavioral tendencies than the dog's reactions during the intake process, while kenneled, or during a formal behavior evaluation. The harsh reality is that being sheltered often correlates with behavioral deterioration that can lead to euthanasia. Concerning behavior can often be attributed to fear, frustration, and overall emotional suffering as a result of finding themselves in a stressful environment. Unfortunately, shelter dogs are often mislabeled as aggressive and may never get the chance to show their true personality under more normal circumstances. Instead, DPFL mentors shelters to see the best in their dogs through observing natural expression shown during play!



DPFL was founded by professional trainer, Aimee Sadler, to enhance quality of life and to ensure positive outcomes for as many shelters dogs as possible.

DPFL trainings demonstrate both the practical efficiencies of playgroups for the shelter, as well as the emotional and behavioral benefits for the animals. Seminars include a classroom presentation

followed by hands-on playgroups demonstrated by the DPFL Team and then coaching provided to staff and volunteers to conduct playgroups themselves. In many cases, playgroups instantly demonstrate to staff that dogs initially feared as being aggressive or unbalanced really are social and adoptable. Playgroups have proven to be a critical enrichment and assessment tool for animal welfare organizations of all different sizes and functions internationally.

Dogs live to play...we let them play to live!

Survey Overview

The goal of the two surveys analyzed for this report was to assess the impact of DPFL seminars and the implementation of playgroups in shelters. **Both surveys gathered information regarding implementation, efficacy of safety protocols, risk of infectious disease outbreak, and the statistical and anecdotal benefits of playgroups.**

The survey distributed in 2016 was created by DPFL staff with Dr. Burling of the University of Florida adding questions pertaining to medical protocols associated with the implementation of playgroups, and asked respondents for statistics both before and after their DPFL playgroup seminar. This survey was created using Survey Monkey and provided via email to shelters that had received a DPFL playgroup seminar between 2009 and August 2016. DPFL staff provided the survey 4-6 weeks after the initial playgroup seminar in shelters that were served after January 2016. Only shelters whose playgroup seminar occurred prior to 8/30/16 are represented in this survey. If shelter staff did not respond, the DPFL Director of Program Development at the time followed up with a phone call and/or additional emails, and some shelters opted to dictate their responses over the phone.



An additional survey was created by DPFL staff using Google Forms and distributed via email to shelters served in 2017. This survey asked for current data which was compared to data supplied individually via Google Forms by each shelter prior to their playgroup seminar when relevant to analyze impact before and after a playgroup seminar. Comparisons of data before and after a seminar are only included in this report if the responding shelter had been holding playgroups for six months or longer, unless otherwise stated. Anecdotal responses from this survey are included in this report only if the respondent has been holding playgroup for three months or longer.

Survey Monkey provided response analysis for multiple choice questions on the survey distributed in 2016, while open-ended data responses were analyzed by DPFL staff. The survey administered in 2017 was fully analyzed by DPFL staff. Due to potential cognitive biases held when analyzing this data, we must acknowledge the potential for the observer-expectancy effect to have impacted the results of this survey.

Responding Shelter Demographics

DPFL serves a wide variety of shelters with demographics that vary accordingly. The demographics noted were annual intake, average onsite populations, and admission policy (open or limited admission). The most significant variance was seen in the annual intake of the shelters who responded to the survey, with the largest shelter maintaining an intake of over 16,000 dogs annually and the smallest averaging an intake of 12 dogs per year. The average annual intake of all reporting shelters was 3,756 dogs. The average number of dogs housed onsite varied from 15 to 430, with an average of 92 dogs housed at shelters hosting DPFL seminars. In 2017, DPFL worked with shelter systems that saw annual intakes ranging from 35,000 to over 56,000 across multiple campuses, but complete statistics were not gathered in time to be included in this report.

Responding shelters vary significantly in intake numbers and policies. Sixty-nine respondents, or 78.41%, were open admission shelters, while nineteen respondents, or 21.59%, indicated that they were limited admission facilities. For many years, Animal Farm Foundation has served as DPFL's primary sponsor and provides DPFL with quarterly funding to provide seminars to open admission shelters (without in-house breed specific policies) at no cost to the organization. Beginning in 2017, the ASPCA and Petco Foundation provided additional annual funding to open admission shelters for playgroup seminars. At this time, there are no funding opportunities for limited admission shelters--which are required to self-fund their seminar or fundraise for the cost of a DPFL training--which may be a barrier for these organizations. This may explain the high proportion of open admission shelters served by DPFL.

We continue to find that responses pertaining to the risk and benefits of implementing playgroups remain consistently positive despite shelters with significantly varying demographics.

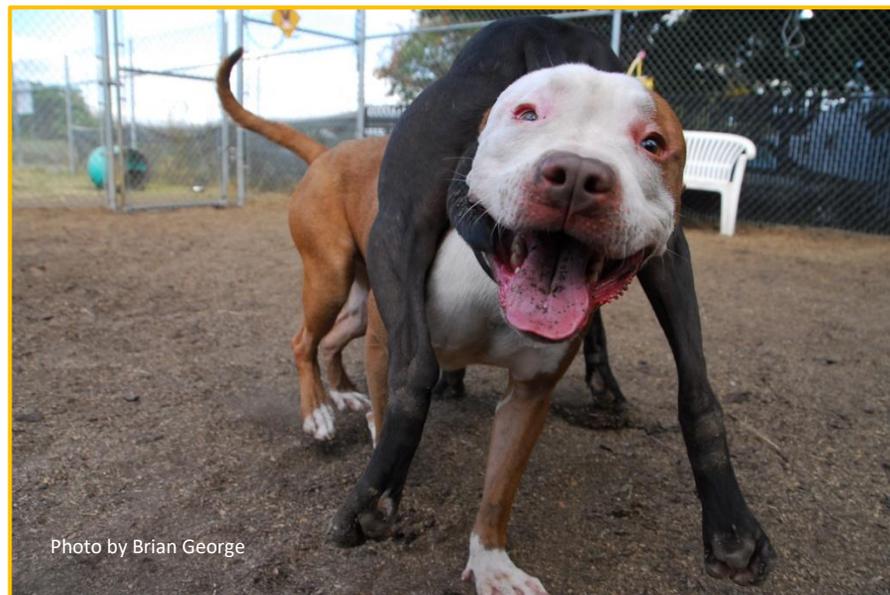
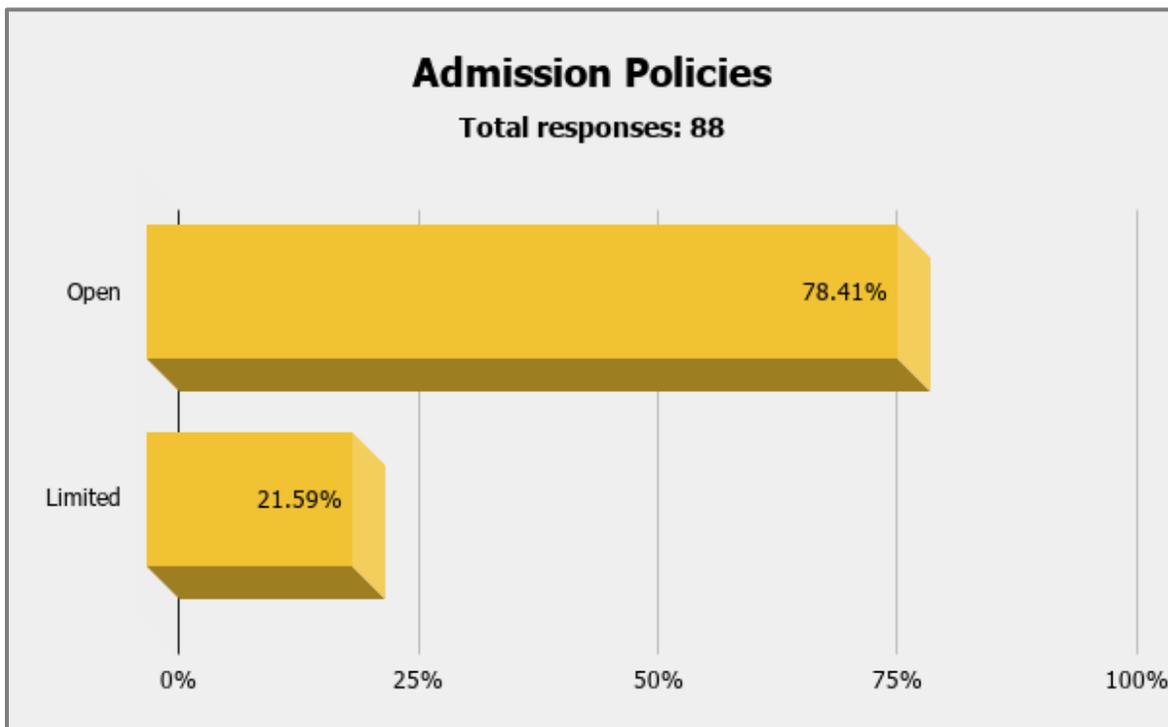
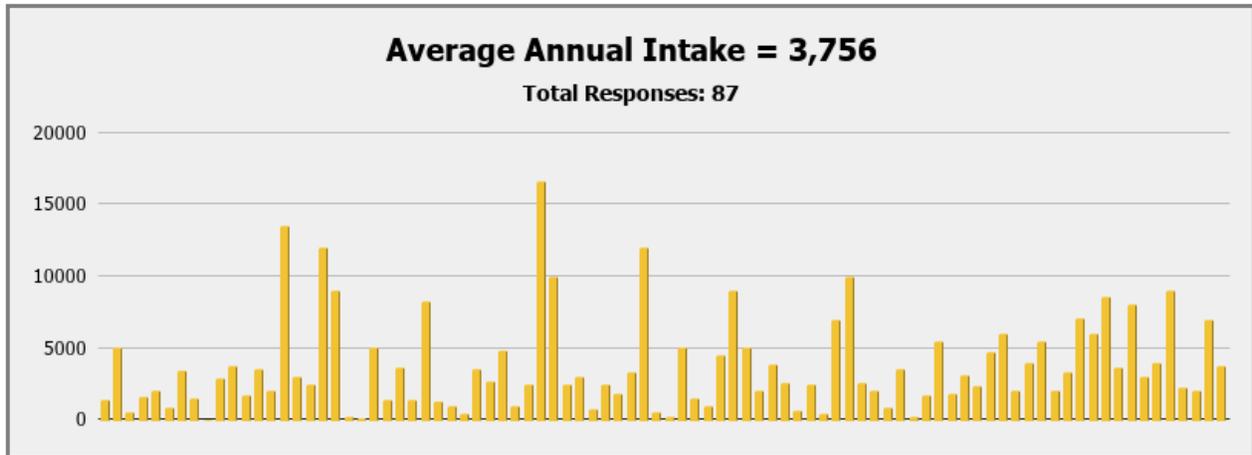
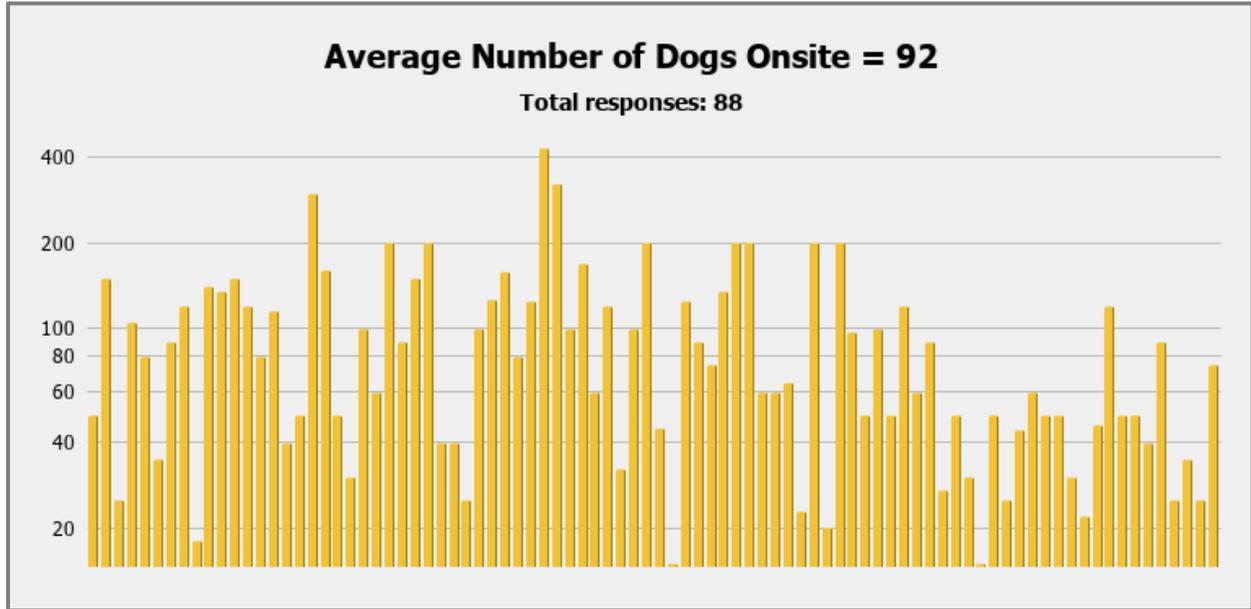


Photo by Brian George





Utilization of Playgroups

As DPFL continues to serve more shelters, we aim to understand how shelters use playgroups within the scope of their individual structures and resources, and identify where more support might be needed to ensure that they are using playgroups to their full potential. With a grant from the Lazin Foundation, DPFL has been able to create a new position that focuses on expanded data collection as well as identifying and supporting shelters that may be struggling to implement playgroups. For those that may need further assistance, DPFL offers remote coaching, intensive playgroup mentorships, and opportunities for revisits.

To understand how playgroups are being used, we asked respondents to indicate how many days per week they run playgroups, how many dogs are generally out in their playgroups at a time, and who runs their playgroups. **We are pleased to see that almost half of the**

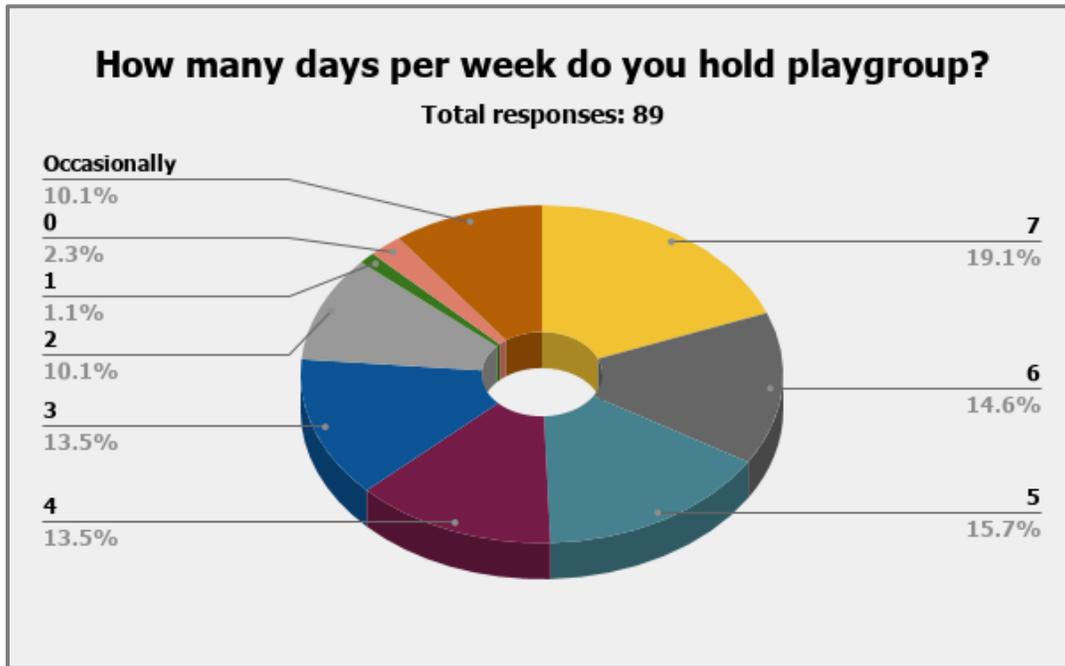


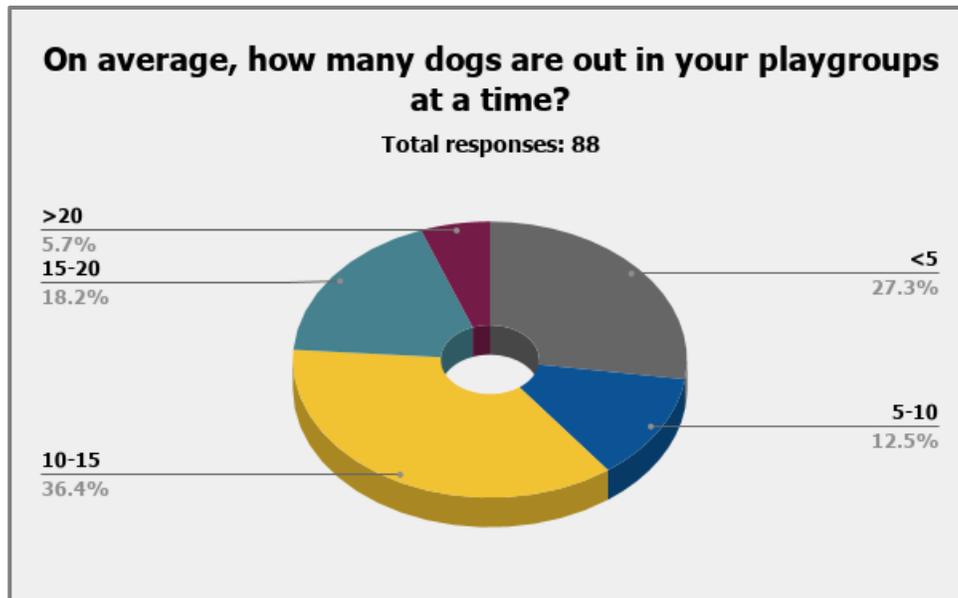
respondents (49.43%) reported holding playgroup more than 5 days per week. The most common response (19.10%) to the question “How many days per week do you hold playgroups?” was seven, while 14.60% and 15.73% of respondents reported holding playgroups six and five days a week, respectively. Two respondents had reported suspending

playgroups when surveyed (discussed in section VII) while one shelter was holding playgroup one day per week, and 9 respondents, or 10.11%, were only holding occasional playgroups. The Lazin Alive Program Coordinator is currently working to offer additional support to respondents that indicated fewer than five days of playgroup per week, with particular emphasis on those who reported one playgroup per week, occasional playgroups, and those who have suspended playgroups entirely.

Regarding the number of dogs out in playgroup at a time, a cumulative response of 67.04% of respondents hold playgroups comprising 5-20 dogs at a time: 12.50% of respondents report 5-10 dogs out at a time, 36.36% report 10-15, and 18.18% indicate 15-20 dogs out at a time. The second most common answer consisted of 27.27% of respondents indicating that their playgroups consist of five or fewer dogs, and the smallest number of respondents, 5.68%,

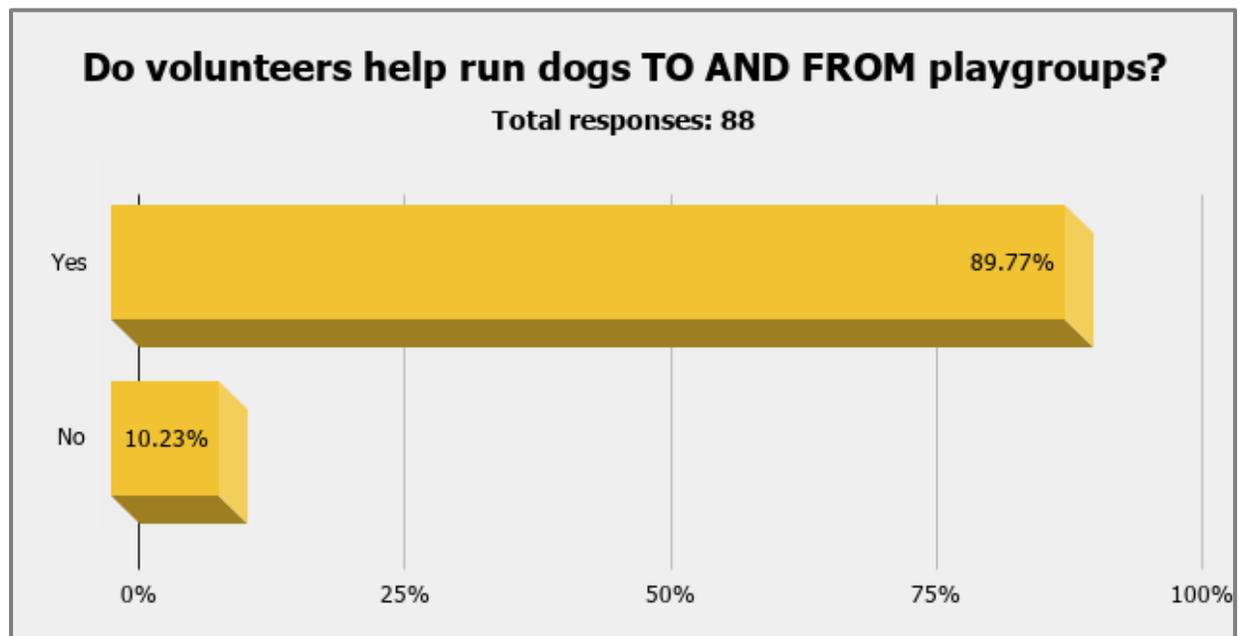
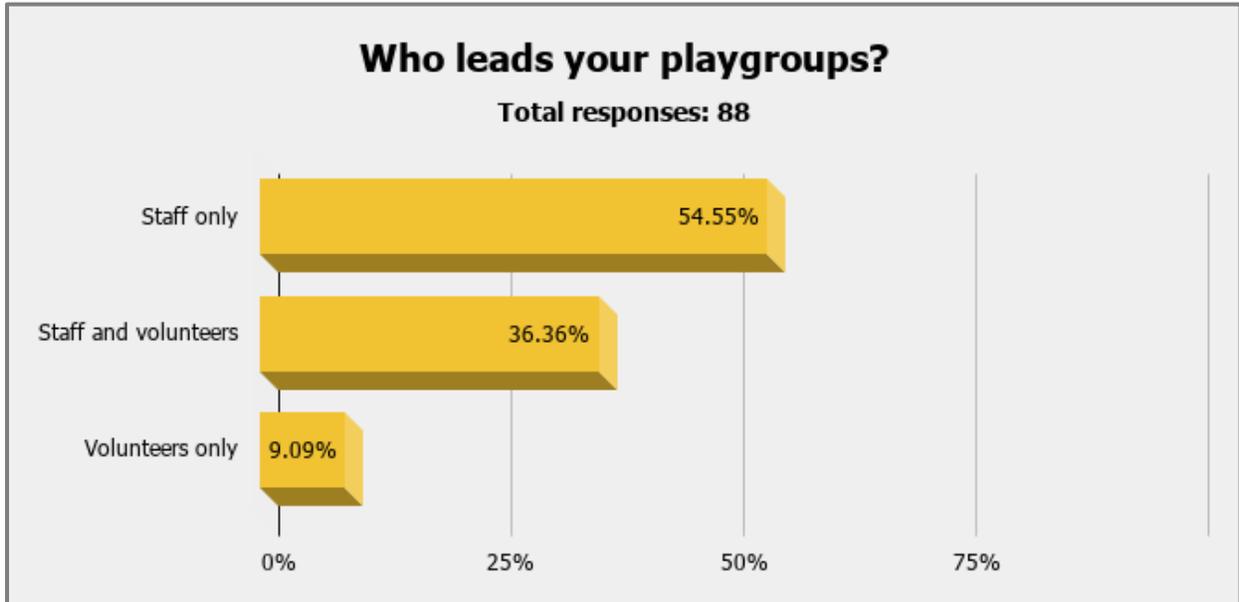
reported more than 20 dogs out at a time on average. Overall, we're happy to see the increase to 36.36% in shelters with 10-15 dogs in playgroup at a time, up from less than 20% in 2017. While the number of dogs in a yard at a time is not necessarily an indicator of playgroup success, increased confidence in running larger playgroups speaks to the ability to give dogs more time out of their kennels, which is significant when attempting to increase quality of life.





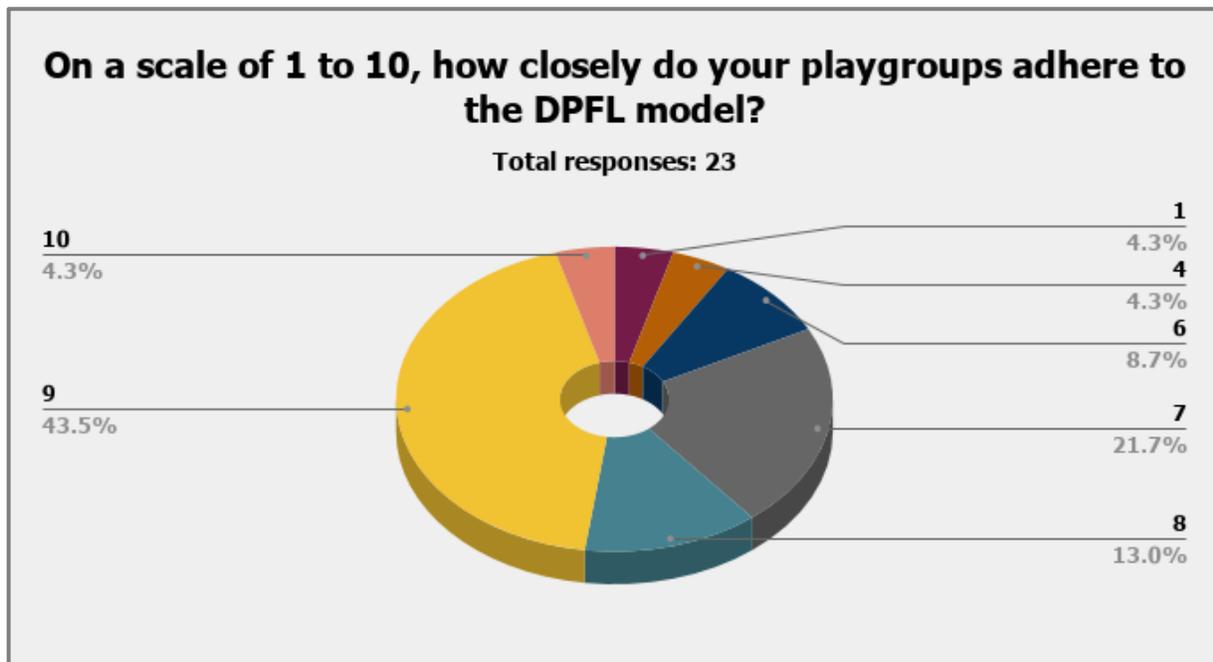
DPFL is also interested to learn how shelters allocate staff and volunteers to ensure the continuation of playgroups, with the understanding that available resources vary between shelters. More than half of surveyed shelters (54.55%) utilize only staff members to lead their playgroups, while 36.36% use both staff and volunteers; less than 10% of respondents use only volunteers to lead their playgroups. We continue to see that the majority of shelters (89.77%) report using volunteers to move dogs to and from playgroups. Two survey respondents who do not allow volunteer participation provided additional feedback, with one shelter citing reliability issues as a hindrance, and the other stating that they had not yet taken the initiative to train and include volunteers but planned on doing so in 2018. DPFL continues to recommend the broad use of volunteer participation in playgroups when such a resource is available and can be safely applied, and has begun offering further one-on-one support to shelters who report a desire to establish or grow a volunteer program to support playgroups.

Alternatively, DPFL encourages shelters to consider a paid enrichment-focused position to support more robust canine socialization efforts, if at all possible. Anecdotal findings in 2017 and 2018 point to success in increasing the frequency and size of playgroups among shelters that have either restructured their budget or staff layout, or have otherwise created or received funding for such a position, but more research is needed to identify a statistical correlation.





The survey distributed to shelters served in 2017 also inquired about how closely the respondents' playgroups adhered to the methods demonstrated by DPFL at their seminar on a scale of one to ten, where one indicated a significant difference and ten indicated that their methods mirror those shown. Nearly 50% of respondents (47.82%) reported very close adherence to DPFL methods, offering nine or ten, with nine being the most common answer cited by 43.47% of respondents. Further, 43.47% reportedly fall between six and eight on the scale, while 8.69% indicated four or lower. Most responses of seven or lower identified the main differences as using smaller groups than DPFL demonstrated and making equipment changes. One respondent mentioned that they use playgroups as an evaluation rather than enrichment tool, and the shelter with the lowest reported adherence to DPFL methods explained that they do not use any of the demonstrated tools or techniques, and run much smaller groups one day per week. While subjective, these results may suggest that the DPFL playgroup model is accessible and fairly easy to implement even among shelters with varying demographics, resources, and structures.



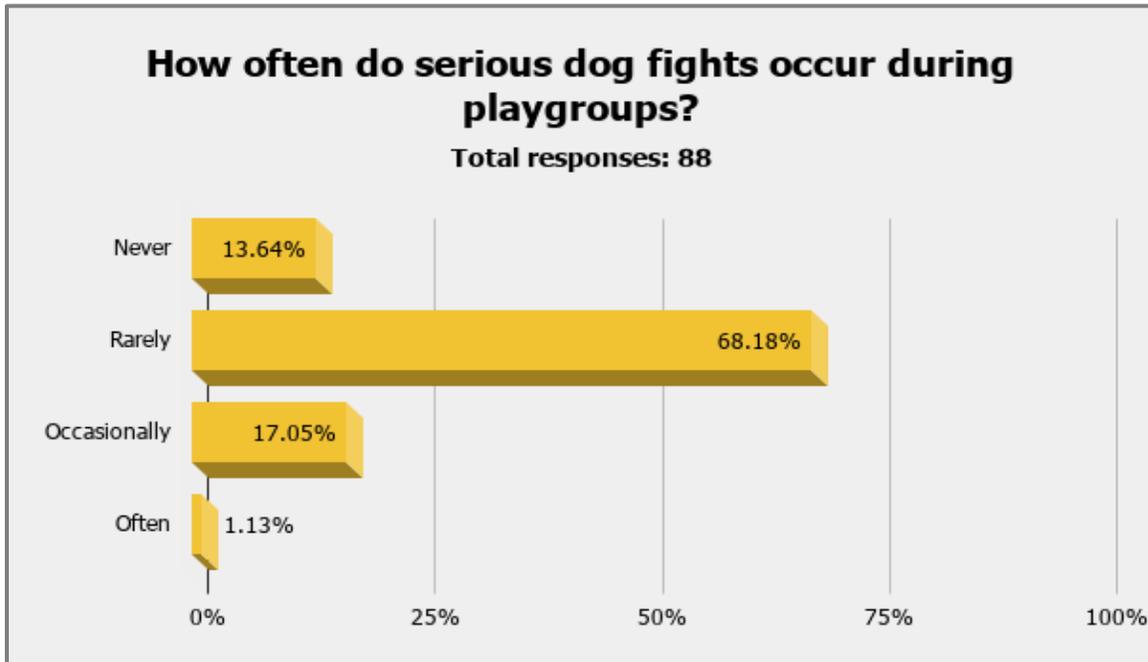
On the chart above, 1 indicates that the responding shelter's playgroup methods differ significantly from the DPFL model demonstrated, and 10 indicates that their methods mirror those demonstrated by DPFL staff.

Dog Fights, Bites, and Handler Injury

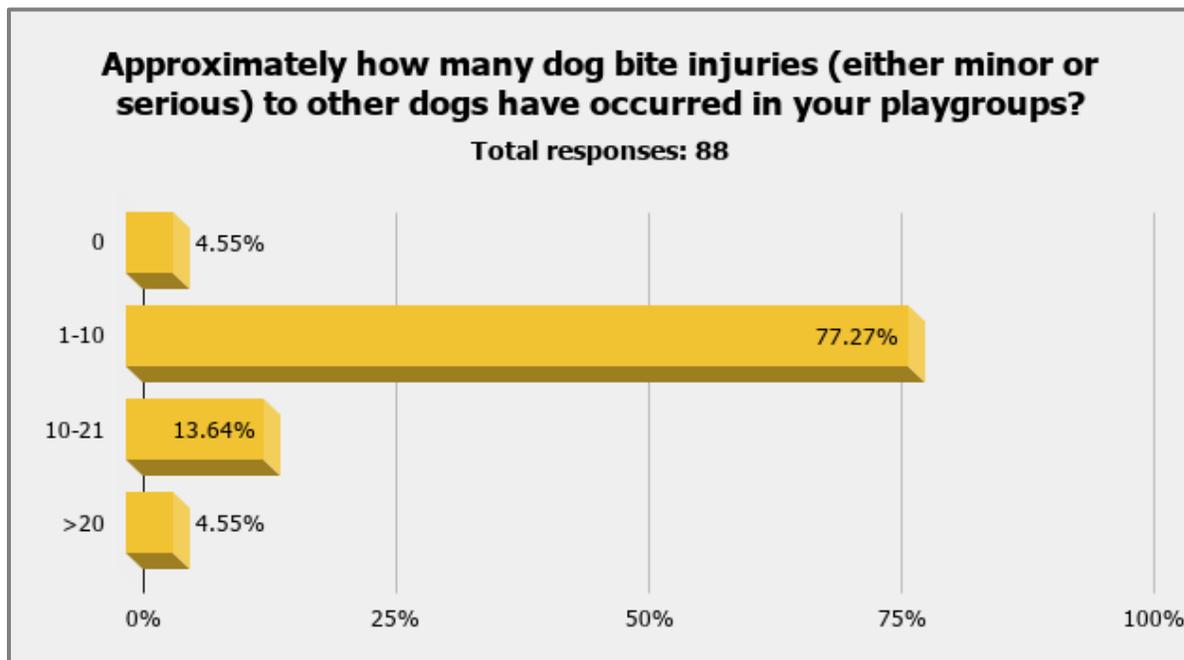
DPFL continues to emphasize safety as a critical component of playgroup by devoting a significant portion of seminar training to safe handling. DPFL considers safe participation in playgroups for both dogs and humans a fundamental principle and included survey questions geared toward gauging the safety of playgroups and DPFL programming.

In response to the question “How often do serious dog fights occur in playgroups?”, 68.18% of respondents indicated that they occur rarely, and 13.64% reported never. Occasional serious fights occurred among 17.05% of respondents, and only one shelter (1.13%) replied that they occur often. The one shelter that reported fights occurring often also answered that they were no longer running playgroups at the time of survey submission; DPFL staff attempted to contact this shelter in 2018 but received no response. When prompted to quantify how many overall dog bite injuries to other dogs, either minor or serious, had occurred in playgroup, the majority of respondents (77.27%) offered 1-10 since they began running playgroups. When given the option to elaborate on injuries, 17 respondents indicated that they have no concerns about the frequency or degree of injury to dogs in playgroup and cited only minor injuries. As discussed earlier, the length of time elapsed between playgroup implementation and survey submission varied from three months to several years. Additionally, population size and frequency of playgroup lend to further differences in the amount of dog-to-dog interactions taking place among respondents. So, while these questions do not allow for “apples to apples” comparisons, they do indicate that the risks associated with canine contact within a playgroup setting remain low among a broad sample and that the majority of respondents accept the inherent risks of dog-to-dog contact in playgroups.



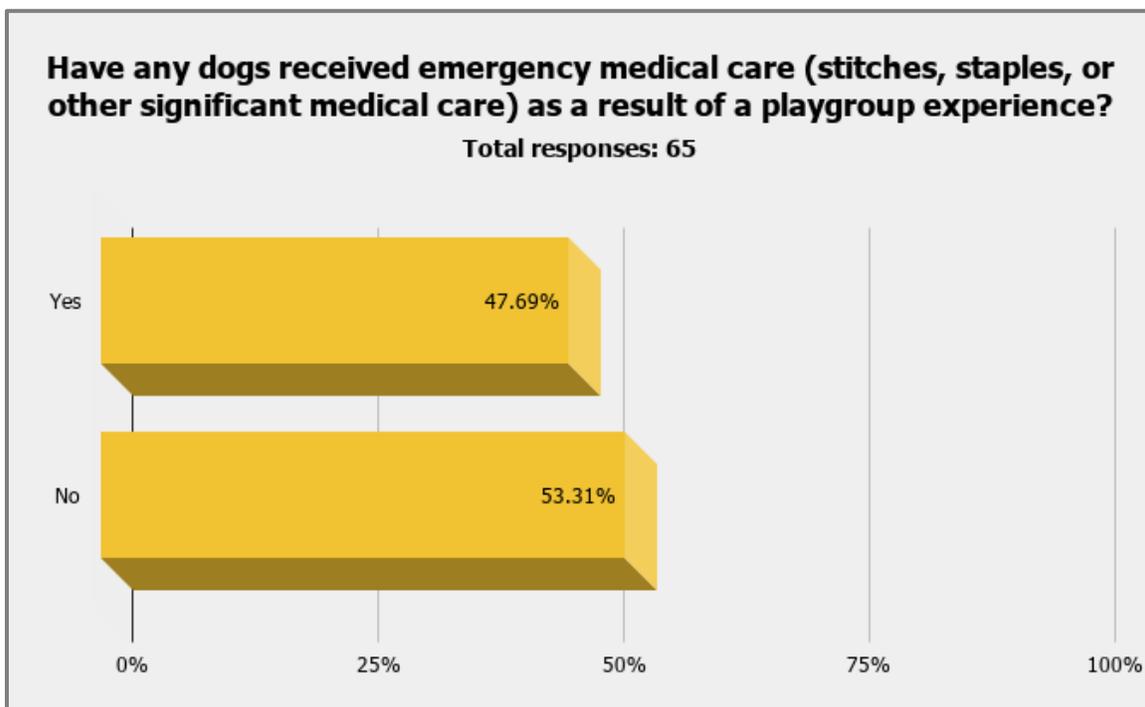


Some of the responses in the chart above reflect the question “How often do serious dog fights, which require immediate veterinary attention, occur during playgroups?”





The survey distributed in 2016 asked if *any* dogs had received emergency medical care--defined as requiring stitches, staples, or other significant medical care--as a result of a playgroup injury since they began playgroup, to which 47.69% responded yes. As we understand, behavior is not static and when working with living beings in adverse conditions (such as standard kennels) there can be an unpredictable component to behavioral expression and fights will happen when contact is allowed. In fact, when providing DPFL seminars we ask if shelters have experienced dogs running loose in the kennels despite best attempts to avoid the latter and all shelters respond YES! This indicates that handling animals kept in confinement has associated safety risks and challenges for both animals and people; this is an accepted aspect of work in an animal shelter. DPFL works with shelters one-on-one to identify whether injuries arise due to specific problematic patterns, and offers assistance if so, or whether the injuries reported to us can be counted as part of the expectation that fights *will* occur at some point when dog-to-dog contact is allowed in a playgroup setting. Safety remains a top priority at DPFL and every effort is made to ensure that our programming minimizes injuries.

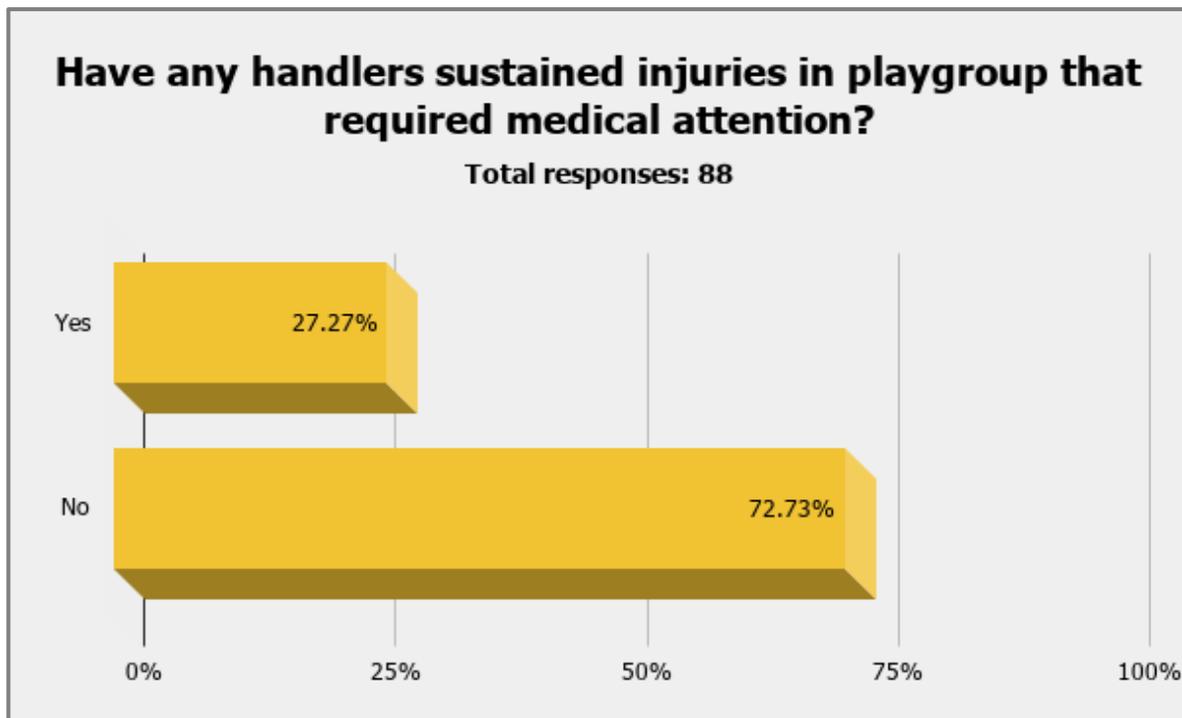


Regarding injuries sustained by handlers in playgroups, 27.27% of respondents answered yes, while 72.73% answered no. 2017 survey respondents were asked to elaborate on any serious injuries and gave the following responses: three shelters indicated bites to handlers while breaking up a dog fight, one shelter reported an unprovoked bite, and one shelter indicated an injury to a handler when fight protocol was not employed. In comparison, we see a decrease in overall bites to staff, volunteers, and the public among shelters that have implemented playgroups.



Among shelters that provided data from both before and after playgroup implementation, we see a 40.37% decline in the amount of onsite dog-to-human bites within shelters that have been running playgroups for at least 6 months: from an average of 11.84 to 7.06 onsite bites per year. Dogs may be less frustrated due to the appropriate energy outlet that playgroups provide, and we also believe that playgroups can reduce reactivity while walking dogs through kennels, both of which help make dogs easier and safer to handle. Responses from shelters served in 2017 also indicate that staff and volunteers at these shelters have improved their overall handling skills as a result of playgroup implementation, which may be a factor in fewer overall bites onsite and further contribute to a safer environment. As we know, fights and injuries *will* occur, so DPFL continues to focus on training handlers in a way that minimizes injury to both humans and dogs. The sample size for these data points remains small (33 and 23 respondents, respectively) but, as we work together with more shelters to begin tracking this more closely, we anticipate a continued decline in onsite bites to humans.

From these results, we learn that serious injuries to dogs and humans occurs at a low rate--particularly in relation to the 67.04% of respondents holding playgroups that consist of 5-20 dogs (or 20-380 social interactions per playgroup)--and that playgroups may be contributing to safer overall shelter environments.



Recorded number of dog-to-human bites onsite (including staff, volunteers, and the public)

Total responses: 33

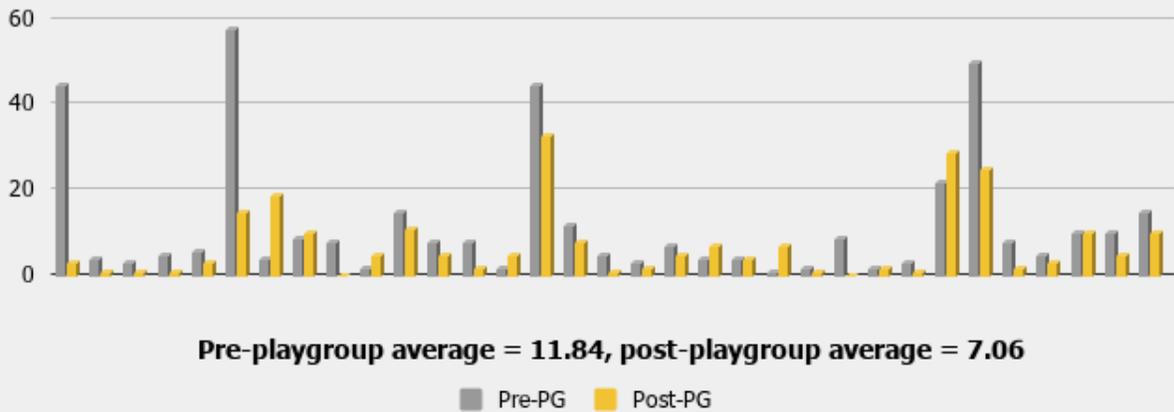
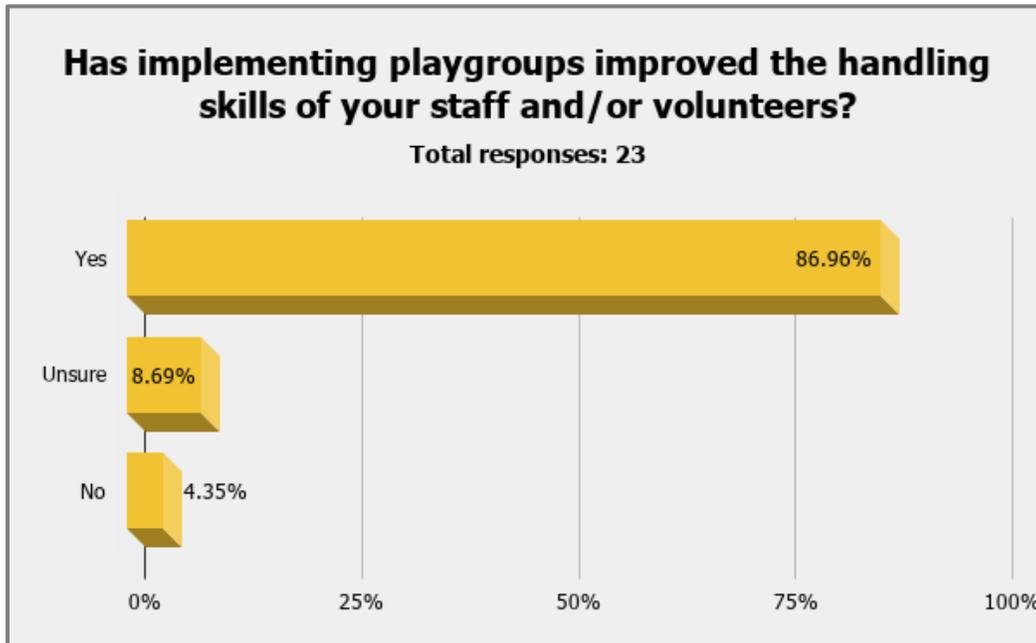


Photo by Brian George

From our follow up discussions with shelters we have discovered that there are more potential benefits to receiving DPFL trainings than originally anticipated. For example, shelters quickly shared the enhanced quality of life for caretakers, a question we hadn't originally posed. Similarly, we began to hear feedback from respondents around the general handling improvements and confidence of staff with the dogs. As a result, we added the following question to start monitoring if this was a consistent trend and, therefore, worth discussion.



Infectious Disease and Playgroup

The fear of spreading disease remains a common barrier to the acceptance and implementation of playgroups. Managing contagious illnesses can be a challenge in many shelters and may result in euthanasia, so the desire to minimize disease spread springs from the best intentions. While we know that many veterinarians have long discouraged nose-to-nose contact in an effort to reduce disease spread, a recent and growing trend in shelter medicine practices recognizes the potential for unavoidable vectors in kennel environments and allows for more flexibility in managing herd health. Less rigid guidelines surrounding dog-to-dog contact can offer shelters the opportunity to address the mental and emotional wellbeing of the dogs in their care in addition to maintaining their physical health.

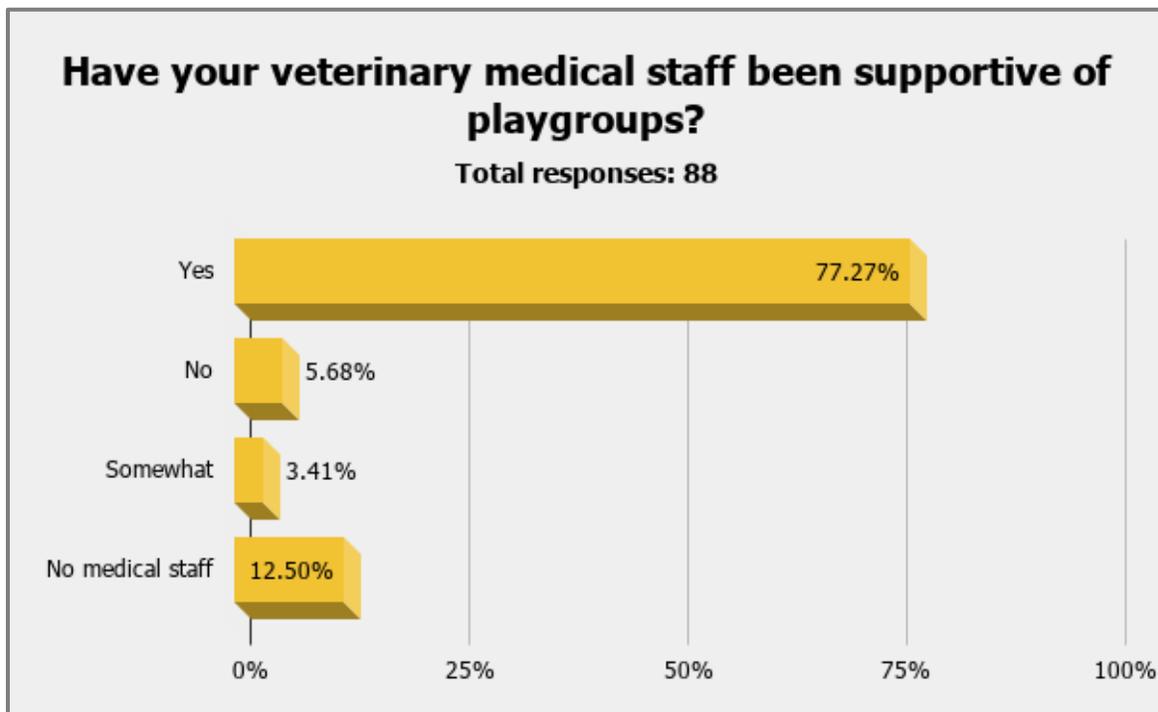
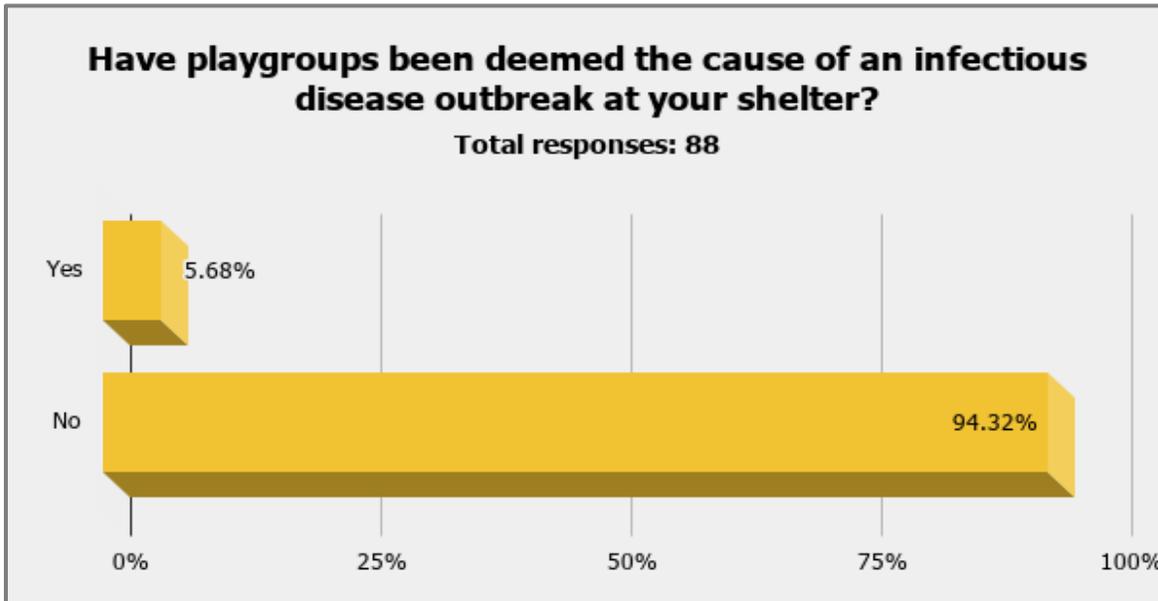


What we continue to see regarding the *fear of the risk* of spreading disease is that the fear is statistically unsubstantiated. Out of 88 respondents, 94.32% reported that playgroups have not been deemed the cause of an infectious disease outbreak at their shelter. Among the five respondents who reported disease outbreaks attributed to playgroups, the distribution was as follows: two shelters reported outbreaks of kennel cough and, of those, one was uncertain; two shelters reported outbreaks of ringworm and, again, one was uncertain; one shelter that experienced an outbreak of Parvovirus in four dogs found participation in playgroups to be the only common denominator. Further, one

of the two shelters that indicated ringworm qualified their response by adding the playgroup did not cause an *outbreak*, but they did identify one dog with confirmed ringworm and underwent the isolation process for all other dogs in that group. We also learn from these results that veterinary staff is largely supportive of playgroups, according to 77.27% of respondents. Among shelters with veterinary staff, only 5 respondents (5.68%) indicated a lack of support and, of those, 3 also indicated that they have discontinued playgroups.

In contrast, some shelters believe that the benefits of playgroup--fresh air, biologically appropriate expression, and the company of their own kind--contribute to generally healthier canine populations, suggesting that fewer dogs overall were breaking with kennel cough or that dogs may be staying healthier longer before breaking with kennel cough. Many shelters have expressed this anecdotally, and DPFL has begun working with shelter partners who may be able to offer more concrete data to support this theory. It is appropriate to note that Shelter Veterinary Medicine Specialists, such as Dr. Cynda Crawford, Dr. Sandra Newbury, and Dr. Kate

Hurley, endorse and support playgroups as an integral component of canine enrichment in progressive sheltering and that their inclusion is congruent with the ASV Guidelines for standards of care. Our hope is that the trend of comprehensive wellness comprising both medical and behavioral resources continues in lieu of prioritizing one at the expense of the other.



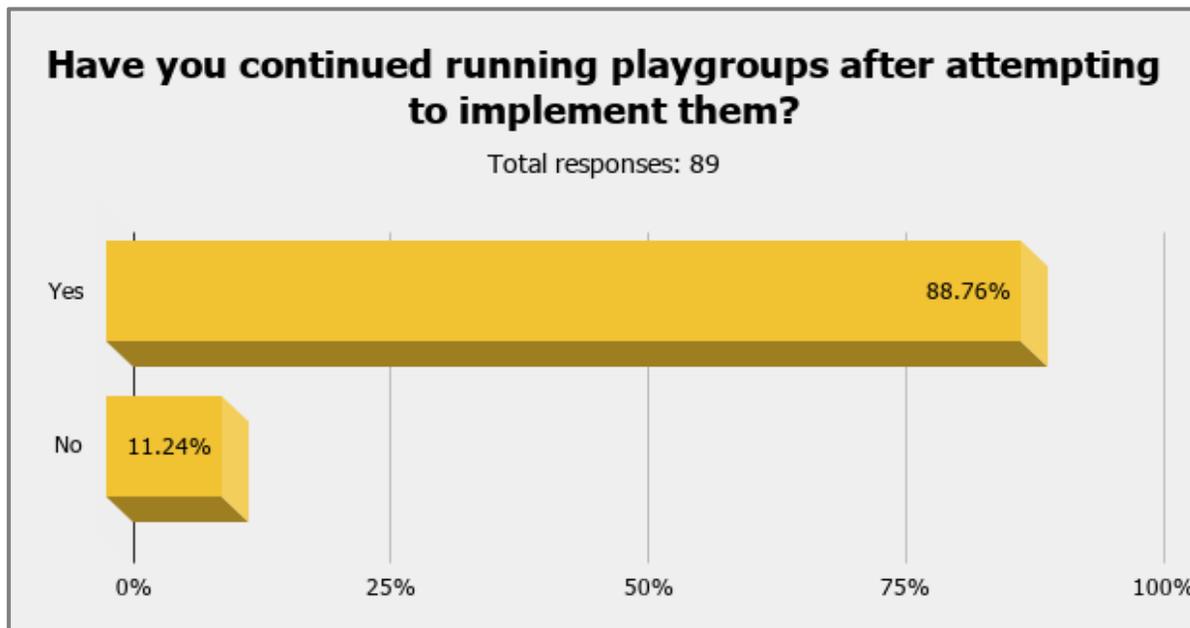
Respondents to the 2017 survey were given the option to answer *somewhat*, which was not previously provided.



Playgroup Discontinuation and Challenges

DPFL's mission is to reach every shelter dog, every day. We strive to deliver programming that is accessible to shelter staff and volunteers, and efficient enough for shelters to maintain after their seminar even with limited resources. Thus, we are happy to report that, when asked if they had discontinued playgroups after their seminar, 88.76% of respondents reported that they had not. Ten shelters, or 11.24%, reported discontinuing playgroup, but only two had suspended them permanently at the time of survey submission. One shelter could not be reached for clarification to determine if playgroups had been reinstated, and the other confirmed that they had restarted playgroups seven days per week after appropriate volunteer training. The remaining eight shelters had temporarily ceased running playgroups for a period of time either due to a lack of personnel or outbreak of contagious illness.

Through email and phone follow up conversations, DPFL has identified five additional shelters that have discontinued playgroup, two of which reported upcoming plans to restart them. The remaining three shelters cited injuries to dogs, staff shortage, and lack of support from new management as reasons they have discontinued playgroup. DPFL has reached out to each shelter individually to offer support to combat these challenges.



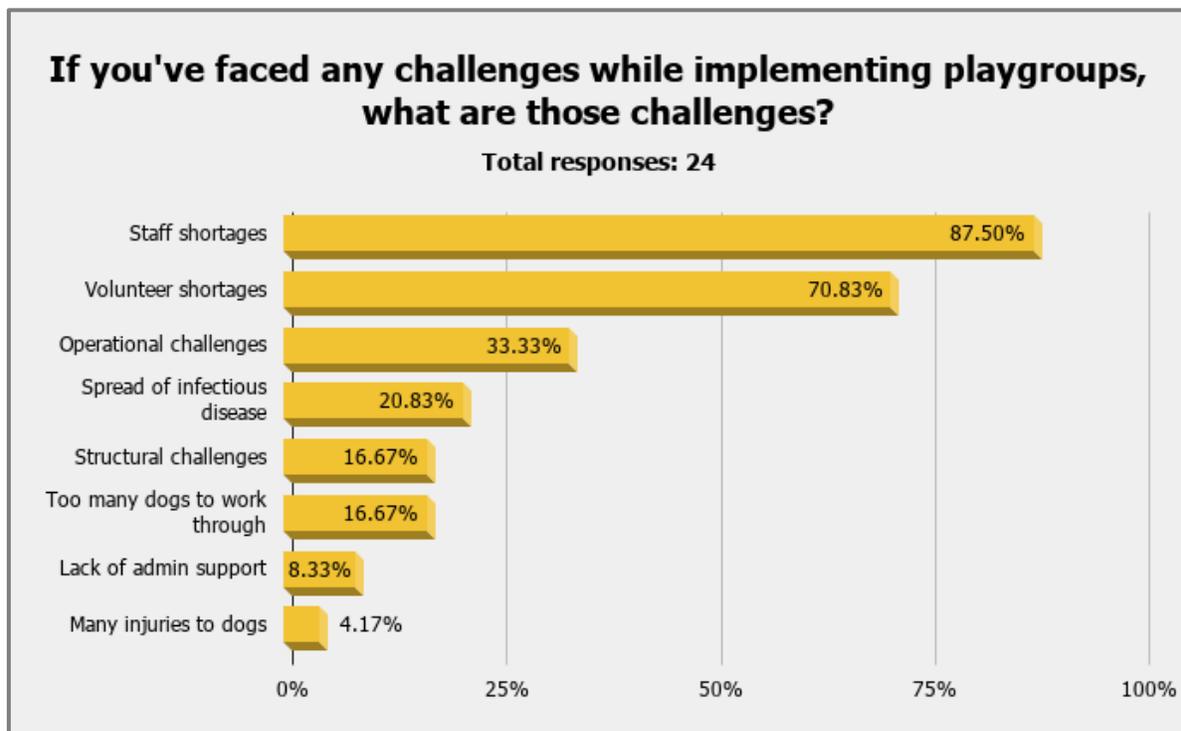
Regarding challenges faced while attempting to implement playgroups, 87.50% of respondents reported staff shortages as a challenge, while 70.83% included volunteer shortages as a challenge. DPFL's playgroup model is designed to function effectively with minimal handlers, but endemic understaffing of shelters often results in enrichment being perceived as a luxury while shelters struggle to meet basic feeding and cleaning needs. As more shelters begin to successfully integrate playgroups into their daily routines, either in spite of shortages or by



creating the needed staffing, we anticipate that the perception of enrichment as a luxury will shift over time to a basic necessity, thereby fulfilling the Association of Shelter Veterinarians Five Freedoms.

Operational challenges (playgroup routine inefficiencies, unable to coordinate with cleaning, etc.) presented difficulties for 33.33% of shelters surveyed, while structural challenges (yard setup, fencing, etc.) and feeling overwhelmed by the amount of dogs to work through were each cited by 16.67% of respondents. Five respondents cited spread of infectious disease as a challenge; while none of these five shelters were among those who indicated that playgroup contributed to an infectious disease outbreak, they have found it challenging to manage otherwise unwell animals in relation to playgroup. Additionally, the one shelter that reported many injuries to dogs reported 1-5 injuries since their seminar in May 2017, and they routinely include 60-69% of their population in playgroups seven days per week. With these numbers in mind, 1-5 injuries remains relatively low.

Through the Lazin Alive Program Coordinator, we also aim to identify possible structural or organizational challenges prior to visiting a shelter so that DPFL can best provide tailored guidance during their seminar and beyond. Many structural difficulties can be addressed with renovation grants already available. **Ultimately, we're pleased that close to 90% of respondents have maintained playgroups in spite of experiencing a variety of challenges, and we will continue to develop our programming in a way that addresses these challenges.**

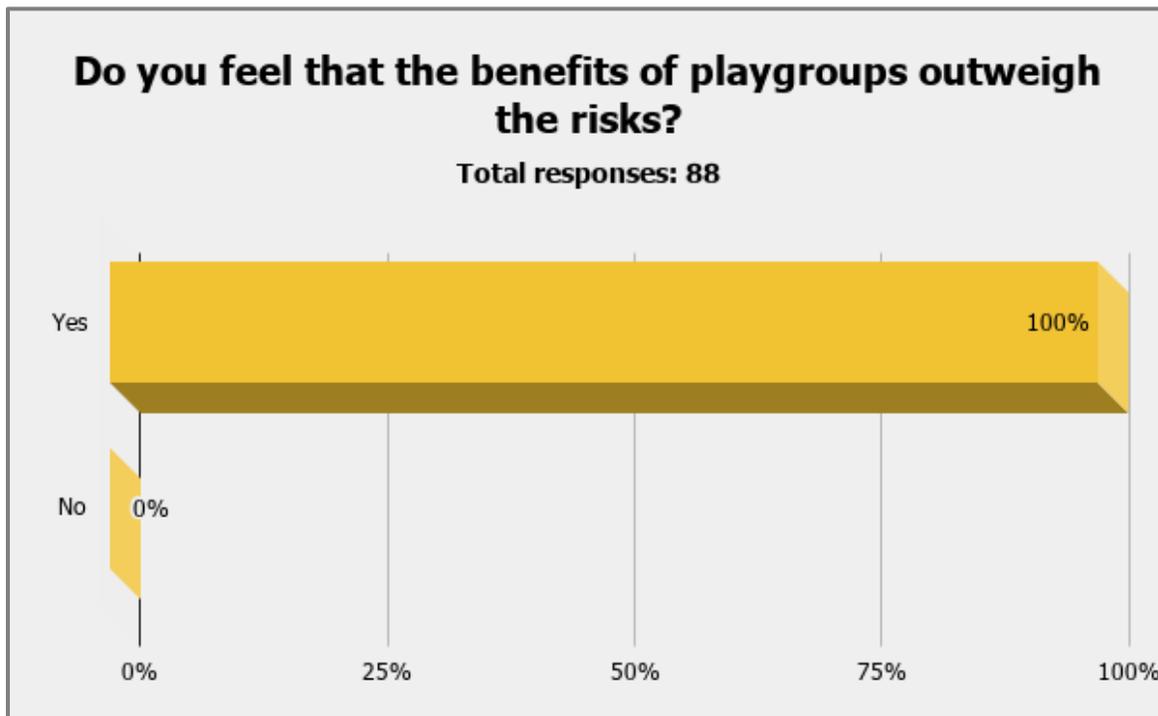


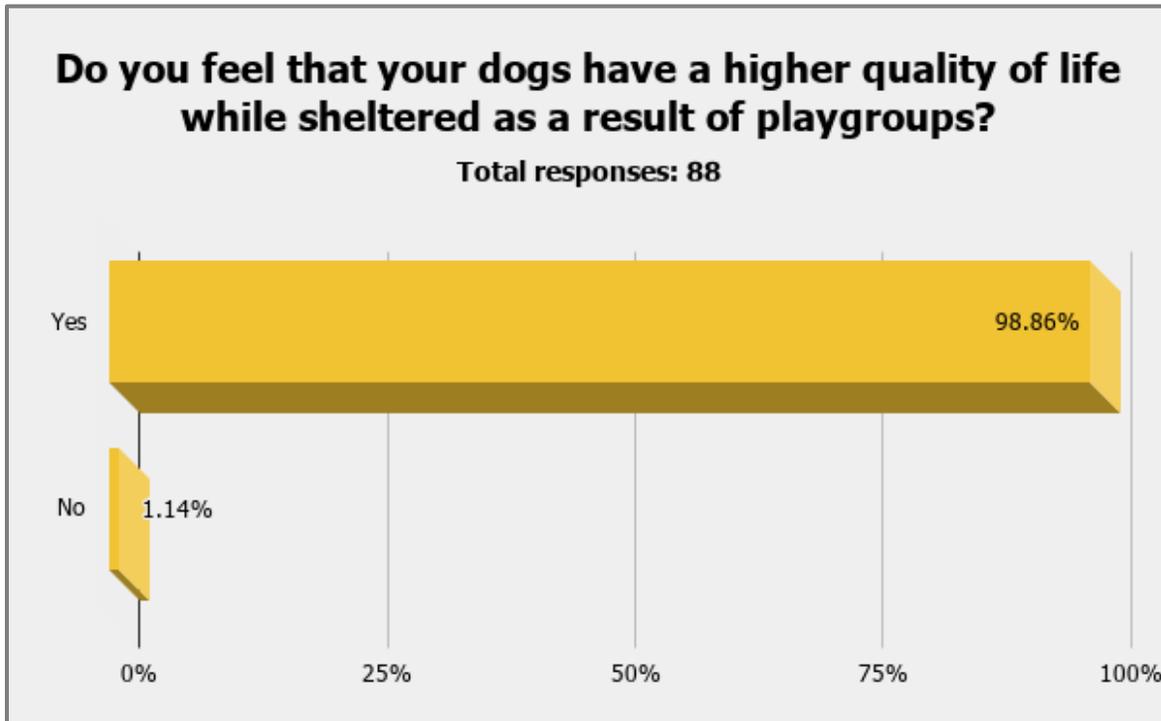


Benefits of Playgroups

The core of DPFL's mission is to enhance quality of life for sheltered dogs and increase positive outcomes for as many of them as possible. It's important that the benefits of playgroup are realized--for both humans and animals alike--in order for them to function as a lifesaving tool, and DPFL aimed to get a sense of both anecdotal and statistical benefits through these surveys. Anecdotal questions pertained to some of DPFL's key objectives, such as increased quality of life, better dog-to-dog assessments, and enhanced adoption matching, while we asked for statistics on factors including live release rates, length of stay, and adoption returns for behavior.

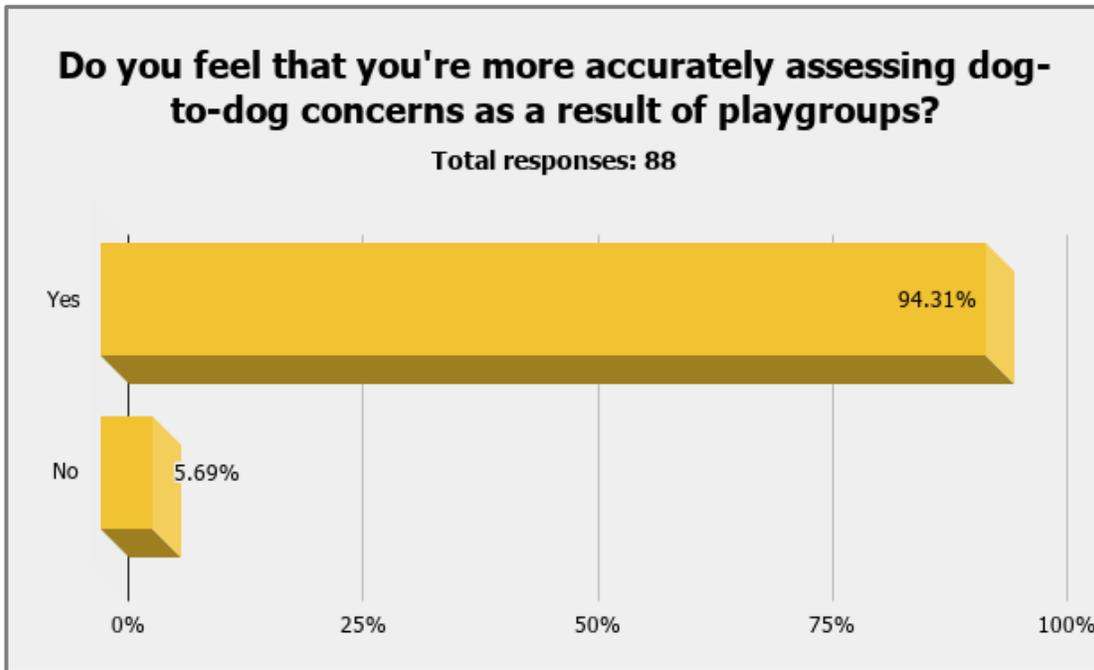
We continue to see that 100% of respondents believe that the benefits of playgroup outweigh the risks. Additionally, 99.86% of respondents believe that playgroups contribute to a higher quality of life for their dogs while they are sheltered. Measuring quality of life can be challenging and, since there is no agreed upon and absolute set of standards used to gauge this within animal welfare, subjective reports from shelter staff and administration remain the most accurate measurement. It's important to note that respondents to the 2016 survey were able to answer these questions even if they had discontinued playgroup; respondents to the 2017 survey were only given access to these questions if they had continued playgroups, and this qualification will continue going forward. While playgroup continuation is not necessary to understand the benefit versus risk relationship or the effect of playgroups on quality of life, it can be telling that playgroup benefits are understood even among those who faced challenges that resulted in discontinuation.



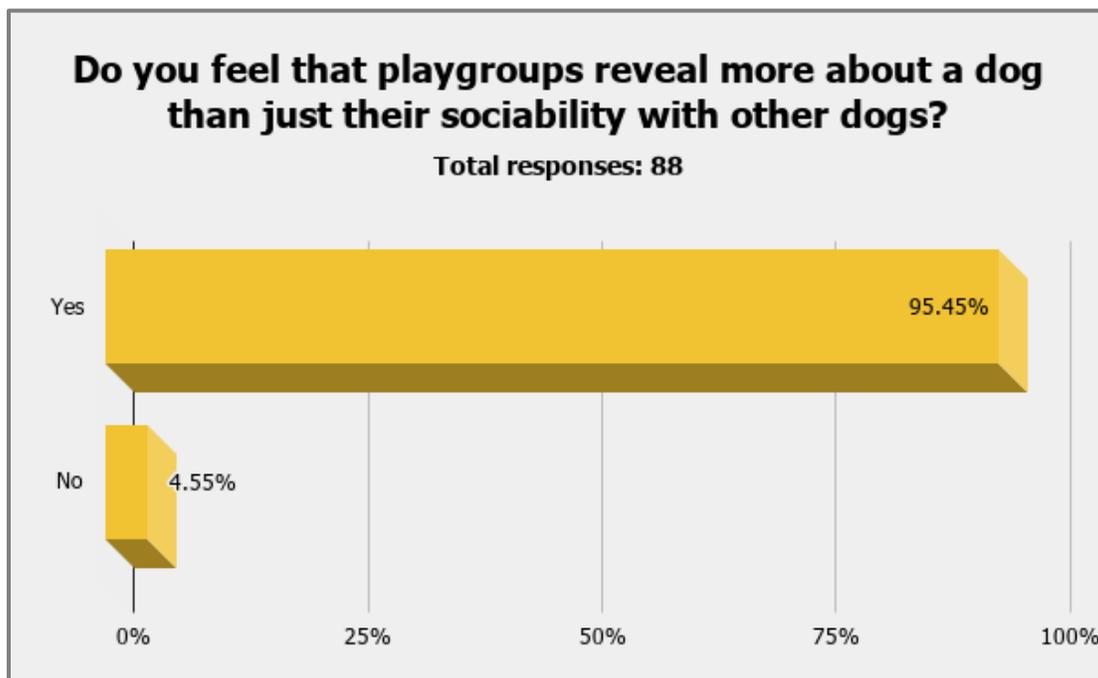


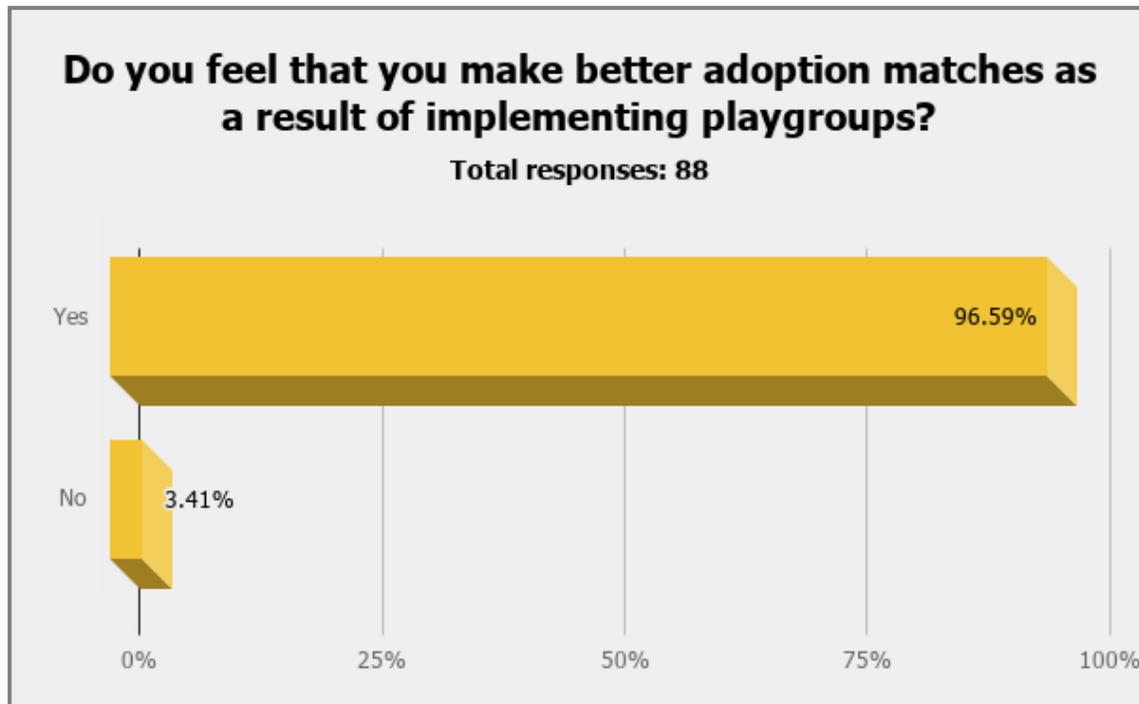
It's important to note that the one shelter responding *no* to the question above has reported that they do not adhere to DPFL playgroup principles and only run playgroup one day per week. DPFL staff made many attempts to contact this shelter for clarification but received no response.

Respondents also reported the following benefits as a result of playgroups: 94.31% feel that they are better assessing dog-to-dog concerns, 95.45% feel that they learn more about a dog than just their sociability, and 96.59% feel that they make better adoption matches. Few, if any, survey respondents are able to track these points with concrete data and, until that occurs with reliability, these subjective responses are used to help measure the efficacy of DPFL programming and the benefits experienced as a result. These results point to playgroups as a tool to learn valuable information about a dog beyond what can be gleaned from kennel behavior and traditional assessments alone and to potentially place them into more appropriate homes.

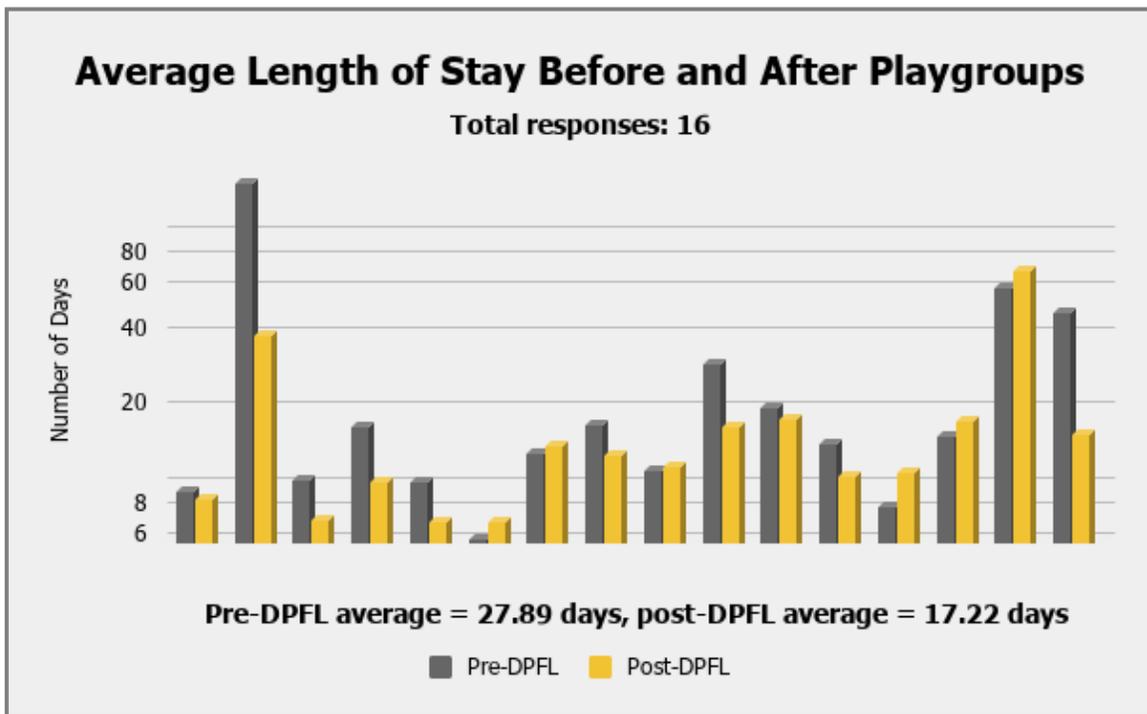
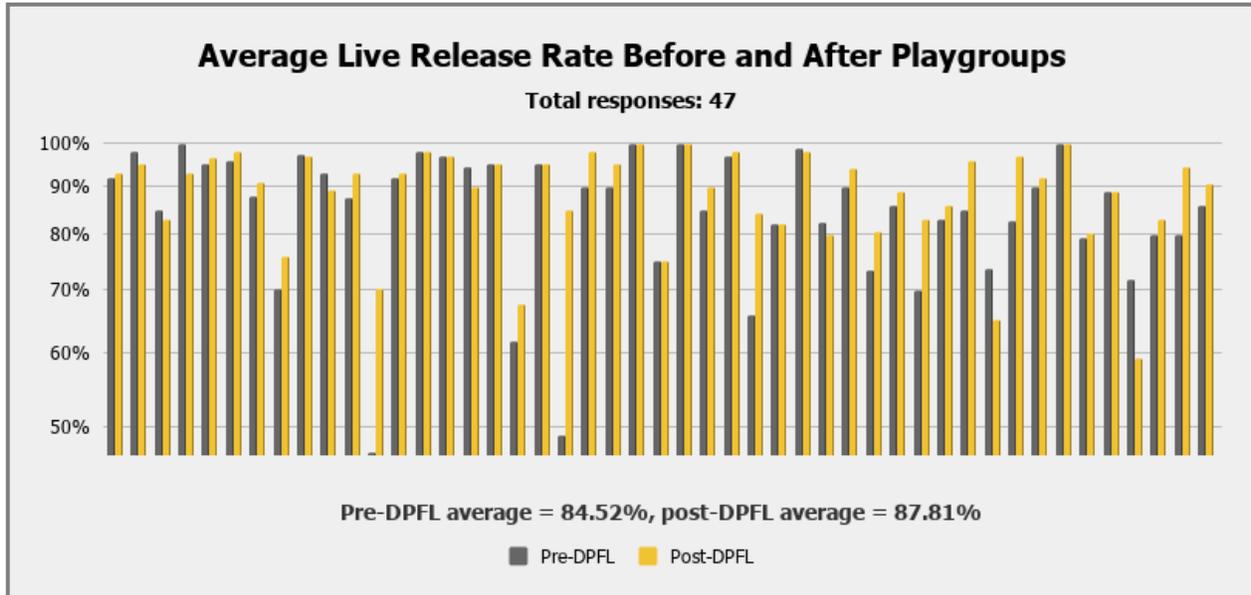


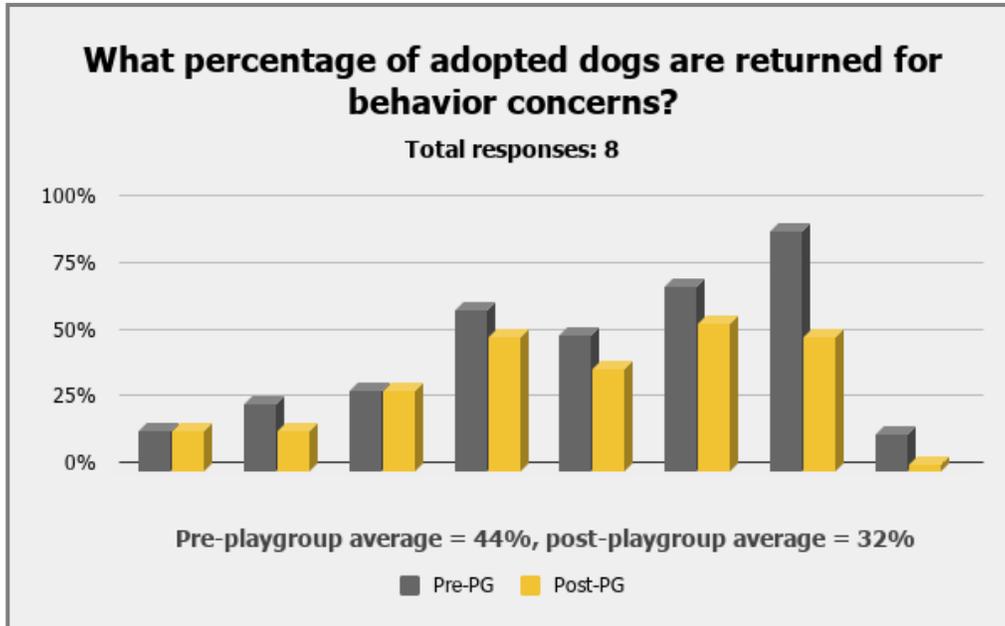
The chart above includes responses to the question "Do you feel that you're more accurately assessing dog aggression as a result of playgroups?"





With the above playgroup benefits manifesting within responding shelters, it follows that we should also see movement in statistical outcomes within these shelters when comparing data from both before and after playgroup implementation and, in fact, **we see a 3.89% increase in live release rates among shelters that have been running playgroups for six months or more.** Regarding length of stay and rate of adoption returns for behavior, the response rate remains low as many shelters do not track these statistics reliably and consistently. However, the data supplied does point to a trend that suggests that DPFL programming may contribute to a decrease in the average length of stay and rate of adoption returns for behavior. There is a 38.25% decrease in length of stay among respondents holding playgroup for at least three months (a 10.67 day decrease on average), and a 27.27% decrease in the rate of adoption returns for behavior among shelters tracking this data point before and after implementing playgroup. DPFL has begun working more closely with shelters in an effort to garner a higher response rate to these questions and better understand the statistical impact of playgroup implementation. It's also important to note that one shelter has experienced a decrease of approximately 800 days from playgroup inception to present, but their response is not included here as it is not representative of most shelters and misrepresents the data in DPFL's favor.



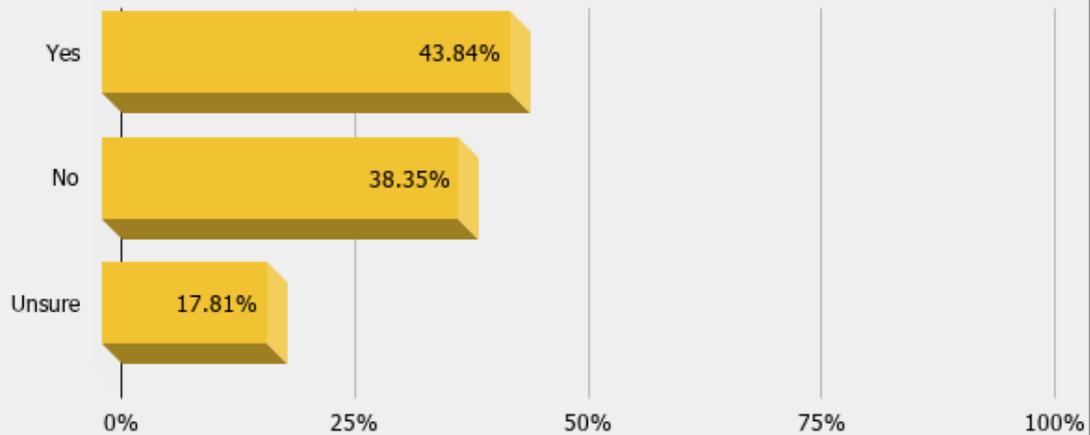


We’ve also learned that 43.84% of respondents have experienced an increase in volunteer support since implementing playgroups, while 38.35% have not. DPFL continues to encourage the use of volunteers and often consults on how to grow volunteer programs to support playgroups. As we continue this targeted support effort, we hope to see more shelters embracing and inviting new volunteers into their programs.

The survey distributed to shelters served in 2017 asked if respondents had experienced an increase in morale among staff and volunteers, and we’re pleased to see that 73.91% reported that they have. Additionally, 76.19% of respondents feel that playgroups have improved public perception of their shelter. Not all shelters have the ability to make their play yards visible to the public, and many hold their playgroups outside of open hours for operational efficiency; however, DPFL encourages the promotion of playgroups via social media outlets and special events and will continue to track this going forward. These two questions rely on a sample size of 23 as they were only presented to shelters served in one calendar year, but they indicate a trend of playgroups helping to making shelters a more inviting environment for staff, volunteers, and the public.

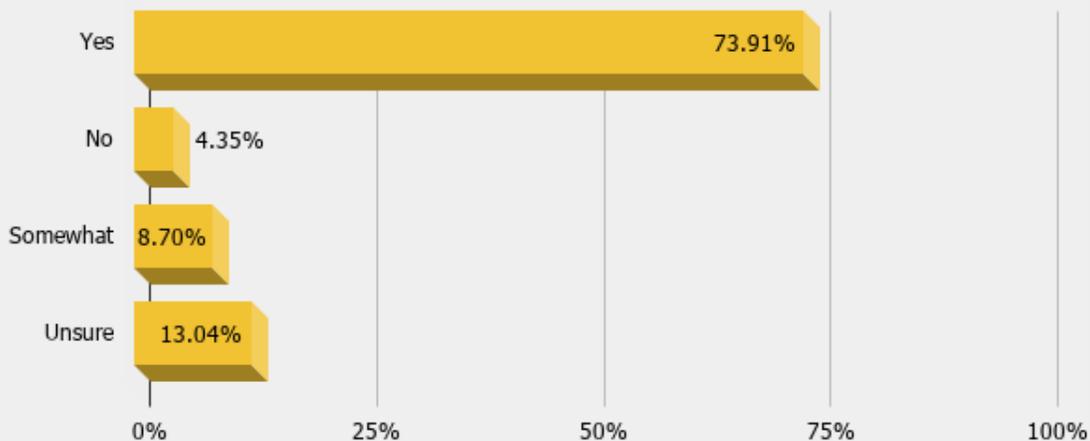
Have you experienced an increase in volunteer support since implementing playgroups?

Total responses: 73



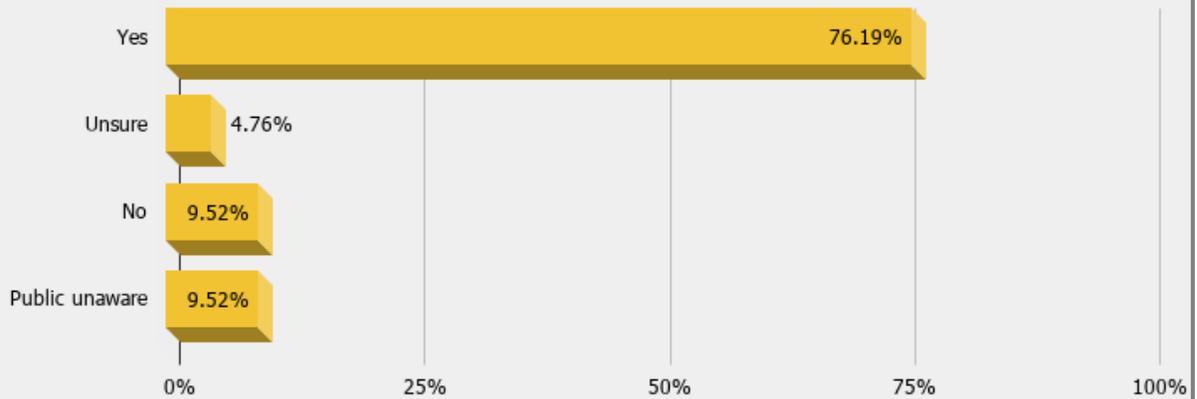
Has implementing playgroups improved staff and volunteer morale?

Total responses: 23

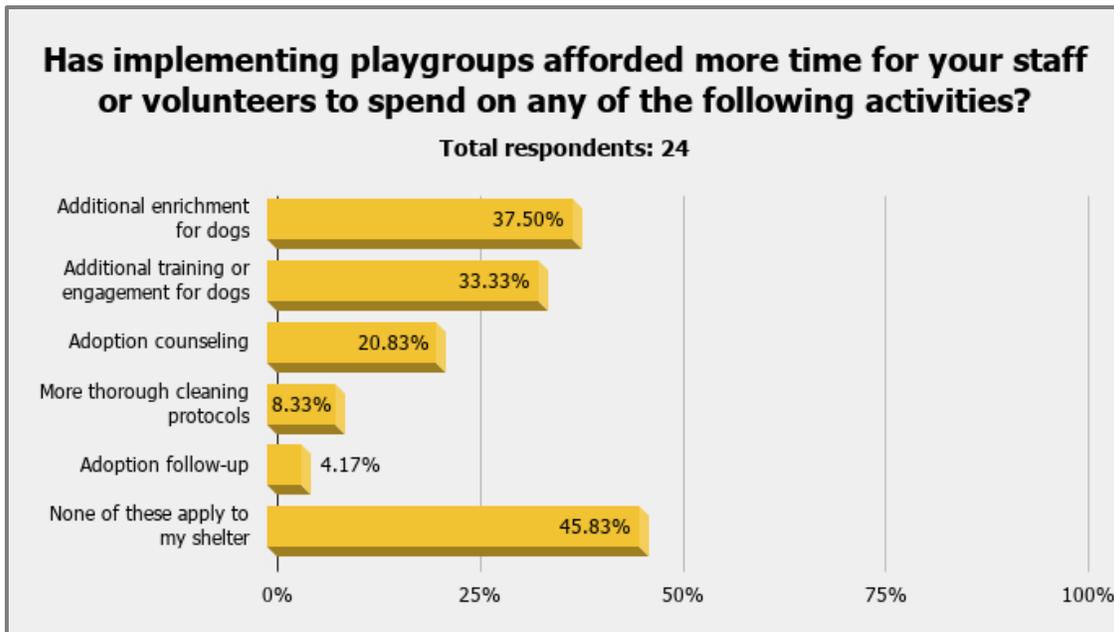


Do you feel that implementing playgroups has improved public perception of your shelter?

Total responses: 23



DPFL always aims to help shelters implement playgroups in a way that makes their lives and operations easier--not more difficult. We do see that, in some instances, the time-saving effects of playgroups may allow more time for other activities, but that DPFL must continue improving our programming and support efforts to ensure that these benefits are realized. The most common response (45.83%) was that shelters had not found playgroups to offer more time for other activities. However, 37.50% of respondents indicated that playgroups allowed them to dedicate even more time to additional enrichment opportunities for dogs, and 33.33% were able to activate additional training and engagement activities for the dogs in their care. While we must work to improve these results going forward, we are thrilled to see that playgroups beget even more enrichment within some shelters, and we're hopeful that this signifies a turning point in animal welfare that begins prioritizing enrichment, in many forms, as a standard of care. DPFL will continue to research this in more detail in coming years.



What's Next?

The results discussed above help illustrate that playgroups continue to benefit shelters while imposing minimal risk to humans and dogs. **With this data, we can reason that DPFL programming is having an overall positive impact on the shelters and dogs that we serve through seminars.** We have seen that the benefits of playgroups are experienced throughout many facets of shelter life, and we will continue to gauge the efficacy of our programming through survey distribution and focused data collection with shelter partners. At this point, however, it's clear that playgroups have a profound effect on quality of life for sheltered dogs and their caretakers, and we anticipate further positive results on live release rates, lengths of stay, and adoption returns.

As mentioned throughout this report, there are many areas in which DPFL will expand their research, including gathering more formal data on the possible contribution of playgroups to generally healthier populations and better identification of medical concerns, as well as how



playgroups may be contributing to safer and more welcoming environments for animals, staff, volunteers, and the public. We're also interested in learning more about how playgroups might affect dog assessment procedures, the purposes for which playgroups are used, and how they have initiated operational shifts. The Lazin Alive Program Coordinator has begun identifying and working with shelters who have successfully implemented DPFL programming to collect

targeted data in areas where more statistical evidence is needed. Reliance on anecdotal information will continue to be the standard for items that cannot be reasonably counted, but DPFL aims to gather more objective data on the contribution of playgroups to overall lifesaving and operations. With the data and information gathered up to this point, DPFL has adjusted its approach to seminar planning and follow-up to better address the needs of each shelter and offers individual coaching and guidance as needed. Additionally, DPFL is creating materials to aid in post-seminar playgroup continuation and is exploring ways to create a network of shelters served to allow those running playgroups to troubleshoot directly and share successes.

As an industry, we must continue working towards our shared goal of providing humane care, and DPFL hopes to inspire more and more shelters to include enrichment as a standard of care. At its core, DPFL believes that playgroups grant unrivaled enrichment to sheltered dogs and offer the "best bang for your buck" when balancing quality of life efforts, operational needs, and statistical outcomes. DPFL is dedicated to working with shelters who strive for a higher standard of care and we will bolster our support efforts to ensure that shelters are empowered to continue their advocacy and reach their maximum lifesaving potential.



Dogs Playing for Life™ Participating Shelters

Legend: QOL = quality of life, AM = adoption matching, DAA = dog aggression assessment, IVS = Increased volunteer support, LRR = live release rate, = survey respondents

Name of Shelter	Shelter Location	Date	Reported Benefits
ACCT Philly	Philadelphia, PA	11/12, 4/14	QOL
Aiken County Animal Shelter	Aiken, SC	4/16	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Alachua County Animal Services	Gainesville, FL	4/13, 5/14	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Alachua Humane Society	Gainesville, FL	10/15	QOL, DAA, AM,
Albuquerque Animal Welfare (East & West)	Albuquerque, NM	3/12	QOL, AM
Alleghany County Animal Services	Cumberland, MD	6/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Alpine Humane Society/Animal Services	Alpine, TX	9/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Almost Home Humane Society	Lafayette, IN	10/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Amarillo Animal Welfare & Management	Amarillo, TX	1/18	QOL, LRR, LOS, AM, IVS
Angels of Assisi	Roanoke, VA	11/12	QOL, DAA, AM, IVS, LRR
Animal Care & Control of NYC	Brooklyn, NY	10/14	QOL, DAA, AM, LRR, IVS
Animal Care & Control of NYC	Manhattan, NY	10/14	QOL, DAA, AM, LRR, IVS
Animal Care & Control of NYC	Staten Island, NY	10/14	QOL, DAA, AM, LRR, IVS
Animal Compassion Team	Fresno, CA	8/16	QOL, DAA, AM, IVS
Animal Farm Foundation	Amenia, NY	8/14	QOL, DAA, AM
Animal Friends	Pittsburgh, PA	6/14	DAA
Animal Rescue League	Pittsburgh, PA	6/14	QOL, DAA
Animal Rescue League of Boston	Boston, MA	10/09	QOL, AM, DAA
Animal Rescue League of Alexandria	Alexandria, VA	4/14	QOL, AM, DAA
Animal Rescue New Orleans	New Orleans, LA	6/15	QOL, AM, DAA
Animal Welfare League of Arlington	Arlington, VA	11/11, 4/14	AM
Animal Welfare League of Charlotte County	Port Charlotte, FL	10/15	QOL, DAA, AM, LRR
Arizona Animal Welfare League	Phoenix, AZ	3/17	QOL, DAA, AM
Asheville Humane Society	Asheville, NC	1/16	QOL, AM, DAA
Austin Animal Center	Austin, TX	8/15, 1/17	QOL, DAA, AM, IVS
Austin Pets Alive!	Austin TX	6/11	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS, LRR
AWSOM	Stroudsburg, PA	12/13	QOL
Bakersfield Animal Care Center	Bakersfield, CA	9/15	QOL, DAA, AM, LRR
Bakersfield SPCA	Bakersfield, CA	9/15	QOL, DAA, AM, LRR
Baltimore Humane Society	Reisterstown, MD	9/12	QOL, DAA
BARC Animal Shelter and Adoptions	Houston, TX	5/18	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS, LRR
BARCS	Baltimore, MD	3/11, 11/11, 4/12	QOL, DAA, LRR, IVS
Beaver County Humane Society	Aliquippa, PA	6/17	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS, LRR



Berkeley Animal Services	Berkeley, CA	3/15, 4/16	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Best Friends L.A.	Mission Hills, CA	12/12,3/13,9/14,9/16	QOL, AM, DAA
Big Dog Ranch & Rescue	Wellington, FL	2/15	QOL
Blue Mountain Humane Society	Walla Walla, WA	7/16	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Brookhaven Animal Shelter	Brookhaven, NY	1/15, 10/15	QOL, AM, DAA
Broward County Animal Care & Adoption	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	2/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Burlington County Animal Shelter	Westhampton, NJ	9/14, 5/16	QOL, DAA, AM, IVS
Capital Area Humane Society	Lansing, MI	7/14	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS, LRR
C.A.R.L.	Santa Paula, CA	1/15, 9/15	QOL, AM, DAA
C.A.R.M.A.A.	Pittsburgh, PA	6/14	QOL, DAA, IVS
Charleston Animal Society	Charleston, SC	4/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA	Charlottesville, VA	11/11	QOL, AM, DAA
Chester County SPCA (Now Brandywine Valley SPCA)	West Chester, PA	4/15	QOL, AM, DAA
Cheyenne Animal Shelter	Cheyenne, WY	12/13	QOL, AM, DAA
Chicago Animal Care and Control	Chicago, IL	6/18	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Cinderella Pet Rescue	Palmview, TX	1/16	QOL, AM, DAA
Citrus County Animal Services	Inverness, FL	11/17	QOL, AM, DAA
City Dogs of Cleveland (CACC)	Cleveland, OH	5/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Clay County Animal Care & Control	Green Cove Springs, FL	11/14	QOL, AM, DAA
Clearcreek/Gilpin Animal Shelter	Dumont, CO	2010	DAA, AM
Cleveland Animal Protective League	Cleveland, OH	6/15, 8/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR IVS
Collier County Domestic Animal Services	Naples, FL	5/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Conroe Animal Shelter	Conroe, TX	3/18	QOL, AM, DAA
Cuyahoga County Animal Shelter	Cleveland, OH	8/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Dan Cosgrove Animal Shelter	Branford, CT	8/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Dane County Humane Society	Madison, WI	8/09	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Dakin Humane Society	Springfield, MA	4/17	LOS, IVS
Dallas Animal Services	Dallas, TX	12/17	QOL, AM, IVS, LRR
DeKalb County Animal Services	Chamblee, GA	4/18	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS, LRR
Dog Tales	King City, Ontario	4/16, 6/16	QOL, AM, DAA
Dutchess County SPCA	Hyde Park, NY	7/11	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Edmonton Humane Society	Edmonton, Canada	9/12	DAA, LRR
Escambia County Animal Services	Pensacola, FL	1/18	QOL, AM, LRR, IVS, LRR
Fairfax Animal Shelter	Fairfax, VA	11/13, 4/14	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Faithful Friends Animal Society	Wilmington, DE	4/15	QOL, AM, DAA



Five Acres Animal Shelter	Charles, MO	6/16	QOL, AM, DAA
Foothills Animal Shelter	Golden, CO	3/11	Not reported
Franklin County Humane Society	Roanoke, VA	11/12	DAA, AM
Fresno Humane Society	Fresno, CA	8/16	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS, LRR
Front Street Animal Shelter	Sacramento, CA	4/18	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Friends of the Animal Shelter	Phoenix, OR	5/15, 5/16	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Fulton County Animal Services	Atlanta, GA	4/18	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS, LRR
Gateway Pet Guardians	St. Louis, MO	6/16	QOL, AM, DAA
Geauga County Rescue Village	Novelty, OH	8/17	AM, DAA, IVS, LRR
Georgetown Animal Services	Georgetown, TX	5/15	Not reported
Glynn County Animal Control	Brunswick, GA	12/16	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS, LRR
Great Plains SPCA	Merriam, KS	4/13	DAA, AM
Harbor Humane Society	West Olive, MI	6/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Harris County Animal Shelter	Houston, TX	5/18	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS, LRR
Helping Strays of Monroe County	Columbia, IL	6/16	QOL, AM, DAA
Hillsborough County Animal Shelter	Tampa, FL	3/12, 2/15, 12/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Homeward Bound Rescue	Elberta, CA	4/17	TBD
Homeward Trails Animal Rescue	Arlington, VA	8/15	AM, DAA
Hope Rescue	Godfrey, IL	6/14	DAA
Humane Society of Calumet Area	Munster, IN	6/14	QOL, AM, DAA
Humane Society of Hamilton County	Noblesville, IN	5/13	Not reported
Humane Society of Huron Valley	Ann Arbor, MI	4/16	QOL, AM, DAA
Humane Society of Northern Nevada	Reno, NV	1/13	QOL, DAA, AM, LRR
Humane Society of Parkersburg	Parkersburg, WV	12/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Humane Society of Raleigh County	Beckley, WV	12/16	QOL, LRR, AM, IVS, DAA
Humane Society of Silicon Valley	Milpitas, CA	12/12	DAA, AM
Humane Society of Southeast Texas	Beaumont, TX	5/18	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Humane Society of Southwest Missouri	Springfield, MO	6/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Humane Society of South Mississippi	Gulfport, MS	10/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Humane Society of Tampa Bay	Tampa, FL	10/12	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Humane Society of Western Montana	Missoula, MT	11/13	QOL, DAA, AM
Humane Society of Wicomico County	Salisbury, MD	6/18	QOL, LRR, DAA
Indiana County Humane Society	Indiana, PA	8/16	QOL, AM, DAA
Indianapolis Animal Care & Control	Indianapolis, IN	5/13	QOL, AM, DAA
Irvine Animal Center	Irvine, CA	9/15	QOL, DAA, IVS
Jackson County Animal Care	Phoenix, OR	5/15, 5/16	QOL, DAA, AM, IVS
Jacksonville Animal Care & Protective Svc	Jacksonville, FL	10/13	QOL, AM, DAA



Jacksonville Humane Society	Jacksonville, FL	10/13, 5/18	QOL, AM, DAA
Jefferson County Animal Services	Golden, CO	3/11	Not reported
Jefferson Parish Animal Shelter	New Orleans, LA	6/15	QOL, DAA, LRR
Kanawha-Charleston Humane Assoc.	Charleston, WV	9/15	QOL, AM, DAA
Kansas City Pet Project	Kansas City, MI	4/13	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Kansas Humane Society	Wichita, KS	7/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Kokomo Humane Society	Kokomo, IN	6/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
La Plata County Humane Society	Durango, CO	3/14	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
League City Pets Alive!	League City, TX	11/17, 6/18	QOL, AM, DAA
Lee County Domestic Animal Services	Fort Myers, FL	2/15, 10/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Lewis & Clark Humane Society	Helena, MT	6/15	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Little Guild of St. Francis	West Cornwall, CT	8/14	QOL
Long Beach Animal Care Services	Long Beach, CA	4/16, 1/18	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR,
Longmont Humane Society	Longmont, CO	9/05	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Los Angeles County ACC - Baldwin Park	Baldwin Park, CA	12/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Los Angeles County ACC - Carson	Gardena, CA	5/17, 7/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Los Angeles County ACC – Castaic	Castaic, CA	4/18	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Los Angeles County ACC- Downey	Downey, CA	2/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Los Angeles County ACC - Lancaster	Lancaster, CA	10/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Los Angeles County ACC - Palmdale	Palmdale, CA	5/18	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Lowell Humane Society	Lowell, MA	4/15	Not reported
Lucas County Dog Warden	Toledo, OH	6/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Madera County Animal Shelter	Madera, CA	6/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Manatee County Animal Services	Palmetto, FL	2/15, 12/15	QOL, AM, DAA,
Manatee County Humane Society	Bradenton, FL	10/16	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Maricopa County Animal Services- West	Phoenix, AZ	2/17, 3/17	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS, LRR
Maricopa County Animal Services- East	Phoenix, AZ	3/17, 4/17	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS, LRR
Marlboro County Animal Shelter	Bennettsville, SC	4/18	QOL, AM, DAA
Maui Humane Society	Puunene, HI	11/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR,
McKamey Animal Center	Chattanooga, TN	4/18	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Mendocino County Animal Control	Ukiah, CA	3/15, 9/16	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Mendocino Coast Humane Society	Fort Bragg, CA	3/16	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Montgomery County Animal Shelter	Conroe, TX	3/18	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Miami Dade Animal Services	Miami, FL	2/15, 7/16	QOL, AM, DAA
Milwaukee Area Domestic AC&C	Milwaukee, WI	4/15, 4/17	QOL, DAA, LRR



Michelson Found Animals	Culver City, CA	4/17	QOL, AM, DAA
Mohawk Hudson Humane Society	Menands, NY	7/11	Not reported
Multnomah County Animal Services	Troutdale, OR	3/10, 11/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Niagara County SPCA	Niagara Falls, NY	9/12	QOL, DAA, AM
Napa County Animal Shelter	Napa, CA	11/15, 2/17	QOL, DAA, AM
Nevada Humane Society	Reno, NV	1/13	QOL, AM, DAA
New Mexico Pets Alive!	Albuquerque, NM	9/14	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Oakland Animal Services	Oakland, CA	12/12, 3/15, 6/17	QOL, AM, DAA
Old Yeller Ranch Rescue	Los Olivos, CA	3/16	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Orange County Animal Care	Orange, CA	9/16	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS, LRR
Osceola County Animal Services	St. Cloud, FL	11/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Palm Beach County ACC	Palm Beach, FL	4/13, 2/15, 2/17, 2/17	QOL, AM, DAA
Palm Springs Animal Shelter	Palm Springs, CA	1/15, 12/15, 4/17	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Palm Valley Animal Services	Edinburg, TX	5/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Panhandle Animal Shelter	Ponderay, ID	6/13, 7/14	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Pasadena Animal Care and Adoptions	Houston, TX	6/18	QOL, LRR, IVS
Pasco County Animal Services	Land O Lakes, FL	12/14, 12/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Peggy Adams Animal Shelter	W. Palm Beach, FL	4/13	DAA, AM
Peninsula Humane Society	San Mateo, CA	10/15	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Pennsylvania SPCA	Philadelphia, PA	3/11	QOL, AM, DAA
Pet Helpers	Charleston, SC	4/15	QOL, AM, DAA
Pets Alive	Middletown, NY	5/15	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Pinellas County Animal Services	Largo, FL	5/14, 12/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Placer SPCA	Roseville, CA	8/16	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Pound Buddies	Muskegon, MI	6/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Prince George's County Animal Services	Upper Marlboro, MD	4/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Raton Animal Shelter	Raton, NM	3/12	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Rancho Cucamonga Animal Care Adoption	Rancho Cucamonga, CA	9/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Rochester Animal Services	Rochester, NY	8/13, 6/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Sacramento County Animal Care	Sacramento, CA	11/15, 8/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Sacramento SPCA	Sacramento, CA	6/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Safe Humane Chicago	Chicago, IL	4/12, 10/12, 4/14	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Salt Lake County Animal Services	Salt Lake City, UT	1/11	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
San Diego Humane Society	San Diego, CA	1/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Santa Barbara Humane Society	Santa Barbara, CA	3/15, 3/16	QOL, DAA, AM, IVS
Santa Barbara County Animal Services	Santa Maria, CA	9/15	QOL, DAA, AM, LRR



Santa Barbara County Animal Services	Goleta, CA	3/16	QOL, DAA, AM, LRR
Santa Barbara County Animal Services	Lompoc, CA	3/16	QOL, DAA, AM, LRR
Santa Clara County Animal Shelter	San Martin, CA	4/18	QOL, AM, IVS
Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter	Santa Cruz, CA	12/12, 4/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Santa Fe Animal Shelter & Humane Society	Santa Fe, NM	3/14, 9/14	QOL, AM, DAA
Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society	Buellton, CA	1/16, 3/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Save-A-Pet	Grayslake, IL	10/17	
Shadow's Fund	Lompoc, CA	3/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Sonoma County Animal Services	Sonoma, CA	11/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
South Bend Animal Care and Control	South Bend, IN	10/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Southampton Animal Shelter Foundation	Hampton Bays, NY	1998	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Southern Oregon Humane Society	Medford, OR	5/15	Not reported
Southern Pines Animal Shelter	Jackson, MS	2/14	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Southold Animal Shelter	Peconic, NY	11/14	QOL, DAA
SPARC	Santa Paula, CA	5/13, 10/13	QOL, AM, DAA
Spartanburg Humane Society	Spartanburg, SC	10/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
SPCA of Erie County	Erie County, NY	8/13	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
SPCA Florida	Lakeland, FL	5/14, 12/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
SPCA of North Brevard	Titusville, FL	12/15	QOL, AM, DAA
SPCA Tampa Bay	Largo, FL	2009	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Speaking of Dogs	Toronto, ON, Canada	10/14	QOL, AM
Stray Hearts	Taos, NM	6/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Stray Rescue of St. Louis	St. Louis, MO	5/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Summit County Animal Control & Shelter	Frisco, CO	10/10	Not reported
Tallahassee Animal Services	Tallahassee, FL	11/14, 10/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
The Amanda Foundation	Beverly Hills, CA	1/16, 3/16	QOL, AM, DAA
The Animal Foundation	Las Vegas, NV	3/15, 5/16	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Toronto Humane Society	Toronto CANADA	10/14, 10/15	QOL, AM, DAA, IVS
Town of Huntington Animal Shelter	East Northport, NY	5/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Tulare Animal Services	Tulare, CA	3/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Ulster County SPCA	Kingston, NY	7/11	QOL
Vanderburgh Humane Society	Evansville, IN	6/18	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Ventura County Animal Services	Camarillo, CA	1/15, 9/15	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR
Wake County Animal Shelter	Raleigh, NC	10/13	QOL, DAA, IVS
Washington Humane Society	Washington, DC	3/11, 4/12	QOL, DAA, LRR, IVS
Watauga Humane Society	Boone, NC	5/17	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS

Western PA Humane Society	Pittsburgh, PA	6/14	QOL, DAA
Willamette Humane Society	Salem, OR	3/10, 9/14	QOL, AM, DAA, LRR, IVS
Williamson County Regional Animal Shelter	Georgetown, TX	2/16	QOL, AM, DAA
Young-Williams Animal Center	Knoxville, TN	6/15	QOL, AM, DAA

