

NO KILL SHELTERING

FALL 2022

OPEN OUR SHELTERS

How Pandemic-Related Closures in a Post-Pandemic Era Are Hurting Animals

WHO'S THE BOSS?
Director/Veterinarian Relationships in the Age of No Kill

MAXIMIZING ADOPTIONS

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IN THEIR EYES
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FALSE CHOICES

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THE SCIENCE OF HEALTH & HAPPINESS

WHAT THE LATEST STUDIES TELL US ABOUT SHELTER ANIMAL WELFARE

— NO KILL ADVOCACY CENTER —

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NO KILL
ADVOCACY CENTER

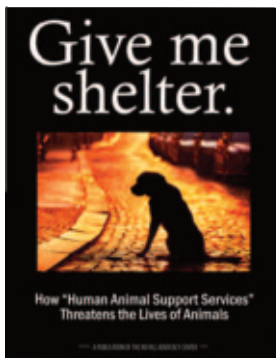
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From the **DIRECTOR**

NATHAN WINOGRAD

SINCE our founding almost two decades ago, The No Kill Advocacy Center has forced tremendous progress upon a resistant and regressive sheltering industry. When we started, mass killing in shelters was the norm. Only one community placed all healthy and treatable dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters, gerbils, and other shelter animals. It didn't matter if they were young, old, traumatized, blind, or missing limbs. They were all guaranteed a home, and they all found one.

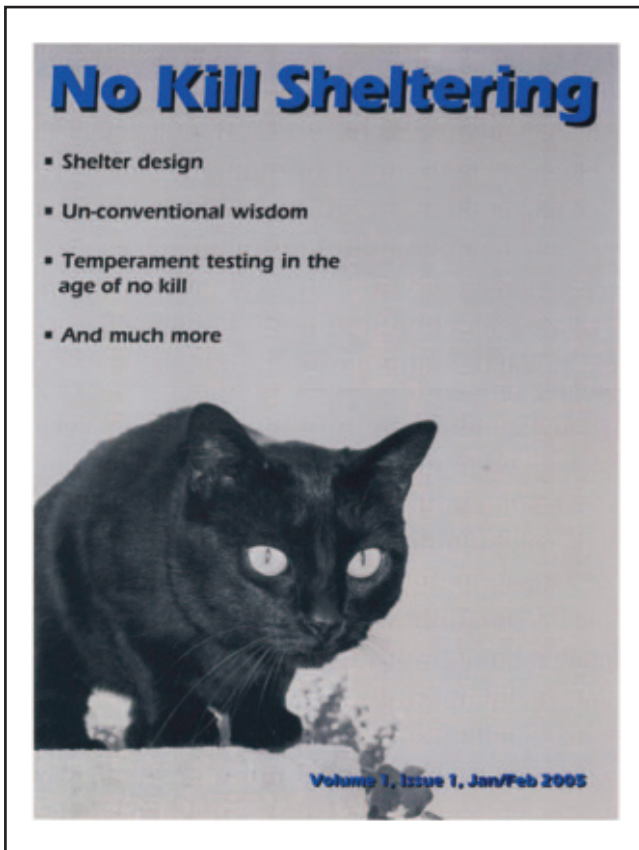
I created that No Kill community, and I started The No Kill Advocacy Center to replicate its success across the country, working to return “euthanasia” to its dictionary definition of ending the lives of irremediably suffering animals for reasons of mercy. And we are succeeding.

We now have No Kill communities across the country, and they all achieved it using the No Kill Equation, our revolutionary approach to sheltering. Because of our efforts, the embrace of the No Kill Equation, and codifying success into law, there's been a 90% nationwide drop in pound killing. Its been called “the single biggest success of the modern animal protection movement.” But progress is not linear, and continued progress is not inevitable.

Today, our movement faces renewed threats to ending the killing of all but irremediably suffering animals, some of which may erase the gains of the last two decades. We share some of these threats in this issue of *No Kill Sheltering*, our quarterly magazine. We are resurrecting *No Kill Sheltering* not only to fight back against these dangers, but to promote the No Kill philosophy and the proven, innovative approach to sheltering that makes it possible.

Our magazine first appeared at our founding and, at the time, offered the only alternative to traditional sheltering practices that sacrificed the lives of animals to expediency, myths about lack of homes, and a failure to innovate. Within these pages, we explained how municipal shelters achieve No Kill and how to address specific challenges, like adopting large, untrained dogs. Indeed, the “No Kill Equation” was coined within these pages. But as the movement became more successful, our approach proliferated, and social media replaced traditional magazines, we discontinued it. We did not want to duplicate other efforts, as our philosophy has always been to fill in gaps in the safety net.





Today, our movement faces renewed threats to ending the killing of all but irremediably suffering animals, and some of those threats may erase the gains of the last two decades. We share some of those threats in the pages of this magazine.

Given recent efforts to close the door of shelters to animals in need and other threats, *No Kill Sheltering* is needed once again. Along with the magazine, we are also doubling down on efforts to spread the No Kill Equation through every means necessary, including legislation, litigation, direct consultation with shelters, assistance to rescuers and No Kill advocates, and more. While threats to No Kill success, and therefore to the animals, are multiplying, the future is not yet written.

THEN & NOW

There was a time when No Kill was just a dream. We dreamed it anyway. And because we did, it is now a reality across the country. We now have a solution to shelter killing, which is not difficult, expensive, or beyond practical means to achieve. Thanks to the No Kill Equation, millions of people now live in communities served by No Kill shelters that place over 99% of all animals entrusted to their care. With so much success already achieved, and as never before, a No Kill nation is within our reach.

For the animals who live in those cities and towns and for the people who love them, The No Kill Advocacy Center has made a life and death difference. But we cannot continue doing it without your support.

Please help us march forward until every animal in every shelter is safe. ***Please donate today.*** Together, not only will we save lives; we will create a future where every animal will be respected and cherished and where every individual life will be protected and revered.

FOR THE ANIMALS,





**OPEN OUR
SHELTERS**

How Pandemic Closures in a Post-Pandemic Era Are Driving People to Breeders & Pet Stores

THE headlines across the country are alarming: “shelter at capacity,” “shelter must put down animals due to influx of pets,” and “people surrendering their pandemic pets in droves.” And the increasing number of them has led some critics of No Kill sheltering to claim that solutions that worked before the pandemic no longer work post-pandemic. Is this true? Thankfully, it is not.

PetPoint – the most widely-used shelter management software with over 1,300 organizations – analyzed shelter intake and outcome data for the first half of 2022, finding that intakes are still below pre-pandemic levels.

So why are shelters killing – or threatening to kill – animals? Why are they claiming mass surrender of “pandemic pets” when that is not happening? One reason is that adoptions are down, and the PetPoint data suggests that “we are losing the next generation of pet parents to other sources.”

Given trends in more people adopting than buying, the increasing number of cities and states banning the retail sale of commercially-bred dogs and cats in pet stores, and the shifting view of rescue as a status symbol instead of pedigree, why are people now going elsewhere to acquire animals?

Shelters have not fully opened to the public and are doing so by choice. It is the result of the deliberate decision to limit their taxpayer-funded services as animal shelters. And not only are some shelters refusing to be fully open to the public, some — like the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control — have announced that they never will. They require an appointment but do not respond in a timely



manner — if at all — to requests for those appointments. Appointments also eliminate the ability of people to visit the shelter spontaneously and fall in love with an animal or meet one that they may recommend to a friend or family member. Exacerbating this lack of public access are hours of operation that do not accommodate working people, such as evening and weekend hours. And finally, there are no offsite adoptions, which would make it easy for people to adopt by taking the animals to where people live, work, and play.

In Austin, TX, where shelter administrators are declaring a “space crisis” but it is a crisis of their own creation. Not only are dog intakes significantly down, but the shelter refuses to return to pre-pandemic adoption hours. Despite being one of

“ Since intake is still low, I don't believe reducing intake can solve for it, we must find a way to bring adoption and transfer (which leads to adoption) numbers back to at least 2019 levels... we are losing the next generation of pet parents to other sources.”

- Analysis of PetPoint data for 2022 YTD. Many shelter remain closed except by appointment, driving people to breeders and pet stores.

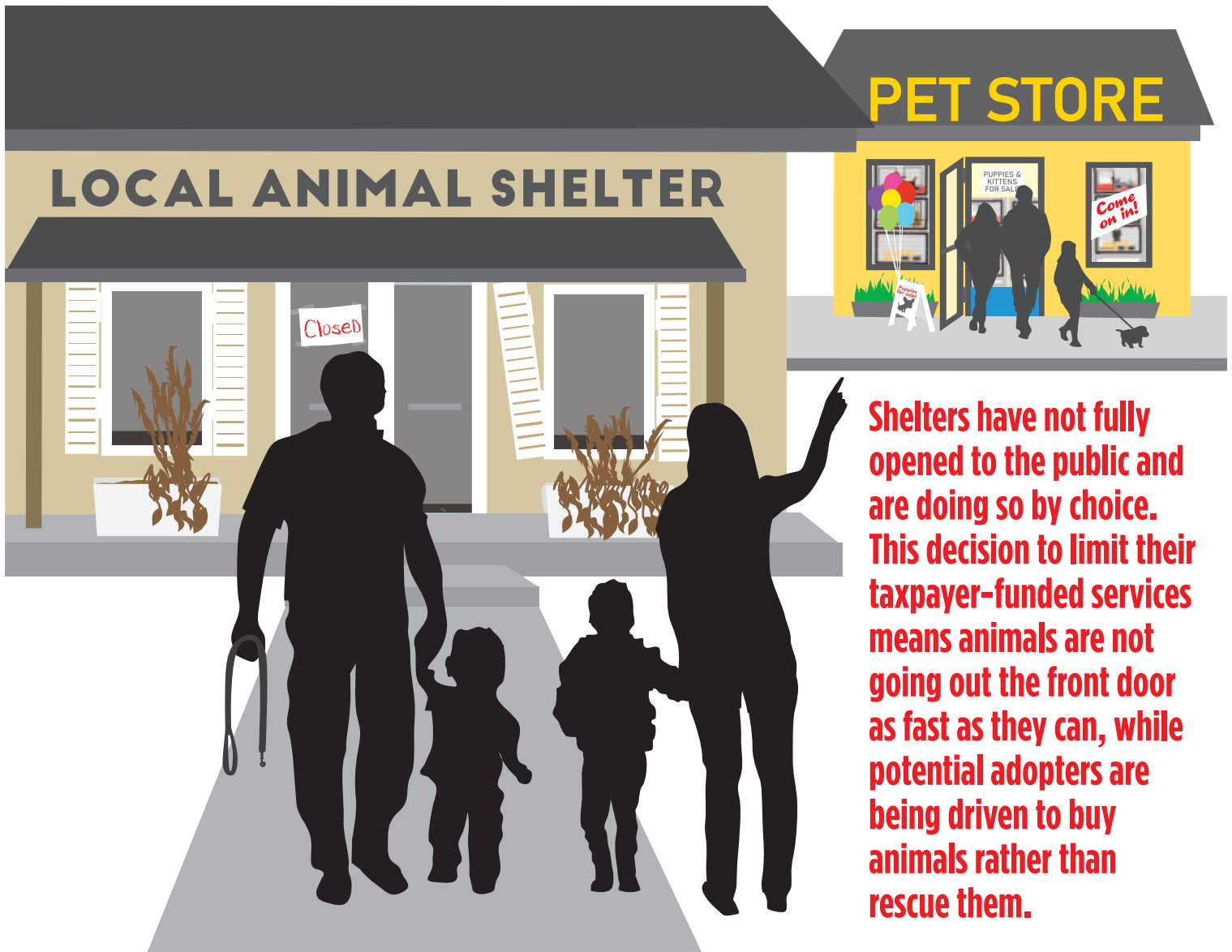
A SUMMER OF LOVE

How the Success of a National Adoption Campaign Proves the Doomsayers Wrong

This summer, shelters across the country participated in NBC's “Clear the Shelters” adoptathon. Thousands of shelters had their best day ever. After finding homes, over 161,500 cats and dogs did, too. That “is the highest single-year adoption mark in the campaign's eight-year history.” Since the event specifically targets municipal pounds, most of these are animals who otherwise faced killing.

The success of Clear the Shelters came during a year when shelters have been sounding the alarm about being at overcapacity due to slowing adoptions. They have even stated there is nothing they can do about it. Indeed, some of the most extreme naysayers — those who appear to want shelters to kill so they can gleefully proclaim the failure of No Kill — have claimed that we can't adopt more because we have reached “peak dog” in the U.S. They argue that the number of households who want dogs is at capacity, resulting in fewer adoptions for generations.

In addition to turnover in the pet population (as a result of animals dying or getting lost), the success of Clear the Shelters proves the absurdity of those claims. Other factors that disprove the assertions include a higher rate of pet acquisitions by Millennials and GenZ compared to prior generations, the success of communities that continue to place 99% of dogs and other animals, and national intake and adoption data. In fact, those factors and others lead to one conclusion: *shelter killing is a choice.*



Shelters have not fully opened to the public and are doing so by choice. This decision to limit their taxpayer-funded services means animals are not going out the front door as fast as they can, while potential adopters are being driven to buy animals rather than rescue them.

the best-funded shelter systems in the nation and, historically, nearly 1,000 dogs being adopted annually on Sundays alone, the shelter remains closed on that day. It also alienates its rescue partners and does not do off-site adoption events. In other words, the “space crisis” is a self-inflicted problem – one in which animals pay the ultimate price – that can be immediately rectified.

During the pandemic, U.S. animal shelters fell into one of two camps. The first were those that lived up to their mission, stayed open as an essential service (with policies to protect staff and the public, such as masks, social dis-

tancing, and virtual adoptions), and met their obligations to residents and animals. By embracing a “can do” attitude, many reported placing “record numbers of dogs, cats, and other animals” and finding themselves empty for the first time in their history.

The second were those that closed their doors, turned animals away, and abandoned the debt and duties they owed animals and residents. These included shelters like Los Angeles and Austin. These pounds did less work, cared for fewer animals, and all but ceased their adoption programs, even though these failures increased animal suffering. As a result, animals

were left on the streets, including a blind pregnant cat found by one couple walking in circles: “It was just heartbreaking... They told us to release the cat.”

After the pandemic, that didn’t change. The first kind of shelter continued to stay open and implement the programs and services of the No Kill Equation: offsite adoptions, foster care, community cat sterilization, medical and behavior rehabilitation, and more. These shelters are still reporting placement rates of 99% and even higher, facing the same kinds of challenges that shelters in the second camp are, without threatening to kill animals or worse, actually doing it.

THE NO KILL EQUATION

FOCUS ON ADOPTION PROGRAMS

“**Y**ou can’t adopt your way out of killing.” It is one of the most enduring dogmas in the animal shelter field. But it could not be more wrong. You actually *can* adopt your way out of killing. The data proves it. Experience proves it. And that is good news for animals and animal lovers. Here are 10 steps to turbocharge a shelter’s adoption program.

NUMBER 1 GET THE RIGHT PEOPLE ON BOARD



People are the heart and soul of any organization, so staff members who are committed to its mission and goals, share lifesaving values, and have a strong work ethic are crucial. The more caring, patient, helpful, and creative they are, the more people will see the shelter as a resource to find lost pets, solve problems, donate to, and, more importantly, a place from which to adopt animals.

RESCUE PARTNERSHIPS

FOSTER CARE

PET RETENTION

ADOPTION PROGRAMS

HIGH-VOLUME, LOW-COST
STERILIZATION

COMMUNITY CAT
STERILIZATION

MEDICAL & BEHAVIOR
PROGRAMS

PUBLIC RELATIONS &
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

VOLUNTEERS

PROACTIVE
REDEMPTIONS

COMPASSIONATE
DIRECTOR

+ COMPREHENSIVE
IMPLEMENTATION

= NO KILL

NUMBER 2 FOCUS ON PET RETENTION

The job is easier if fewer animals come in. A study in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* found that targeted, helpful advice that solves problems results in fewer animals relinquished. At one shelter, the animal help desk resulted in 59% of people who called to surrender their pets keeping them.



ESCAPE ARTIST?

IMPOUND IS THE LAST RESORT!

HOUDINI
402 MAIN ST.
(222) 123-4821

CHECK THEIR TAGS!

JONES

KNOCK ON DOORS!

GET HIM SAFELY HOME!

A successful adoption program is augmented by responsibly lowering shelter intake so that animals who already have a home do not compete for placement (or kennel space) with those who do not.

That is accomplished by reuniting lost animals with their families and helping others overcome challenges that might otherwise result in surrender.

PET PROBLEM SOLVER

Hotline

We want you and your pet to live happily ever after.

LOCAL HUMANE SOCIETY

(987) 654-3210

NUMBER 3 GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM YOUR FRIENDS

Shelters are in the business of helping animals, and like any business, successful shelters reward their best customers by offering them special deals in return for their loyalty. That means appreciating, assisting, and giving something back to rescue groups, who typically save many animals every year, such as free spay/neuter, vaccinations, medical care, and more.

ADOPT
for Victory!

ONLY 88 MORE TO GO!

Have you been thinking about adopting? Now's the time! Help us meet our April adoption goal of 800 animals.

SPECIAL REDUCED ADOPTION FEES

- \$10 for adult cats (6 months or older)
- 2 for 1 on select pairs of dogs!

LOCAL HUMANE SOCIETY

RESCUE GROUPS ARE A SHELTER'S BEST ALLY

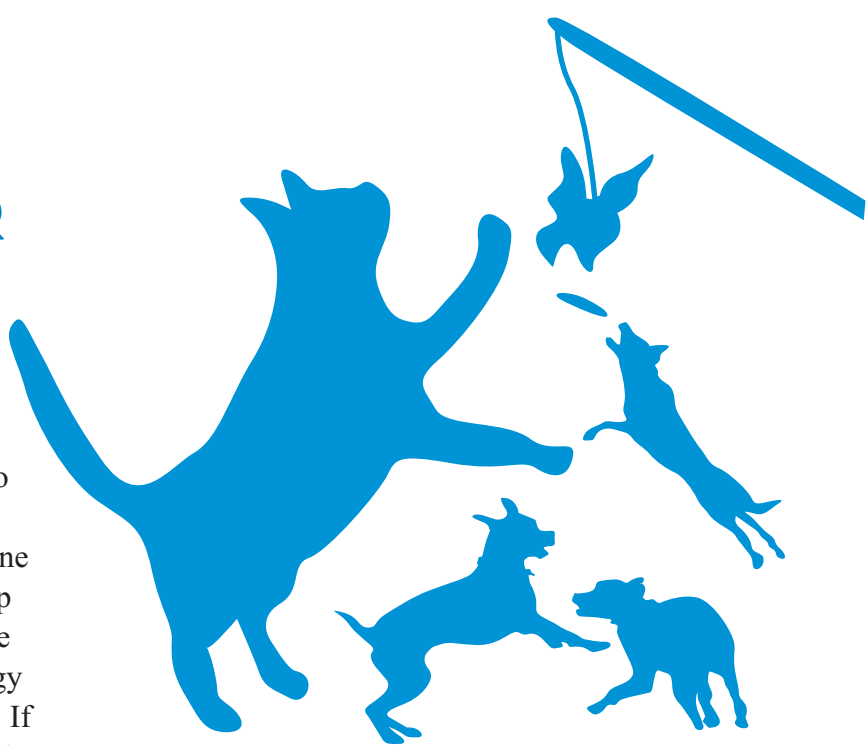
NUMBER 4 SET GOALS & CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Goals unite and inspire people. They also help a shelter gauge when extra effort and outreach to the public are required. And experience in successful No Kill communities has shown that when the public is made aware of the shelter's lifesaving goals and asked to step up to the plate during challenging circumstances, people respond by adopting in greater numbers.



NUMBER 5 MAKE THE SHELTER FUN & EXCITING

Nothing makes a person feel welcome like a smile and “hello,” but getting people to stay and adopt can only be done by interacting with animals. In other words, once you get them in the room, the animals do the rest. First, that means the shelter must remain clean. The smell of waste and filthy kennels undermine even the warmest of welcomes. Shelters should set up play areas for cats, have many cat toys, and let people take cats out of cages. They should also set up a doggy pool and invite the public to walk and socialize dogs. If people are having fun, they will stay, play, and adopt in greater numbers.



NUMBER 6 GO ON THE ROAD

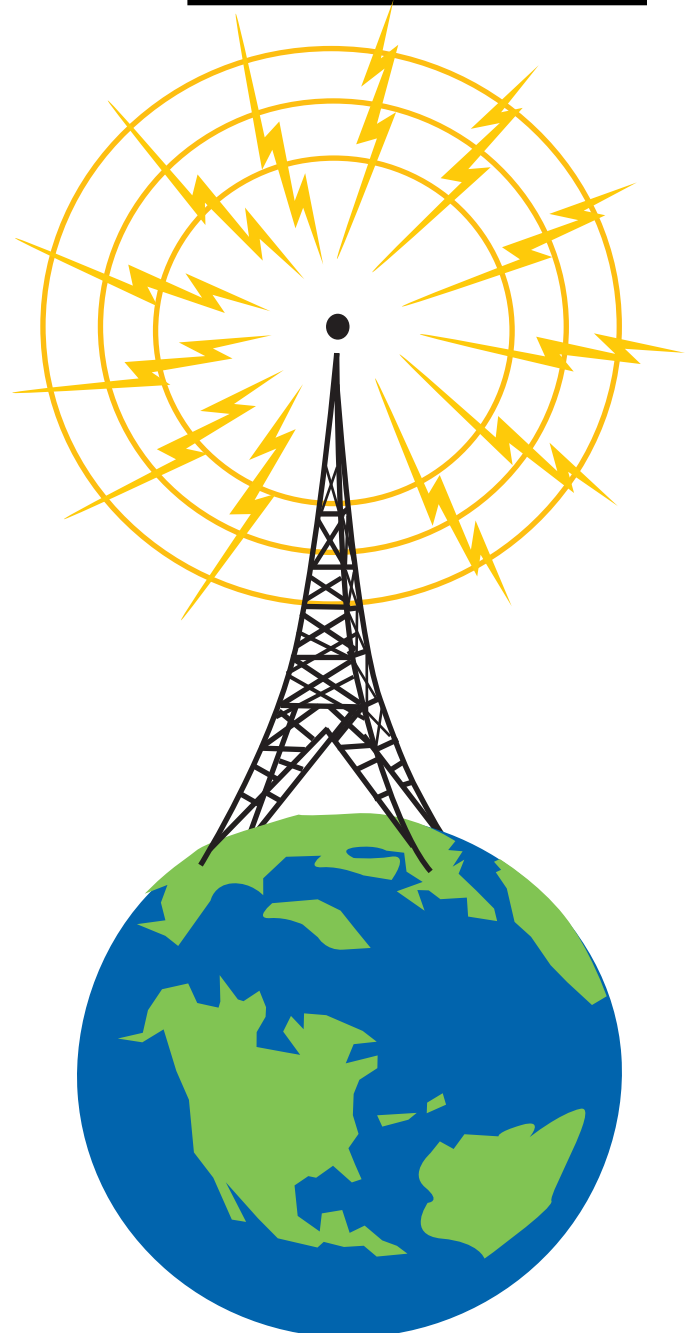
Many shelters are located in remote parts of the community, away from where people work, live, and play. In addition, many people think of shelters as sad and tragic places and may be reluctant to visit. So rather than waiting for people to come to the shelter, successful shelters take the animals to the people. Over 40 years ago, the shelter that created the nation’s first offsite adoption program set up locations throughout the city. During its hey-day, that shelter had seven offsite events every day, where one of every four animals was adopted.





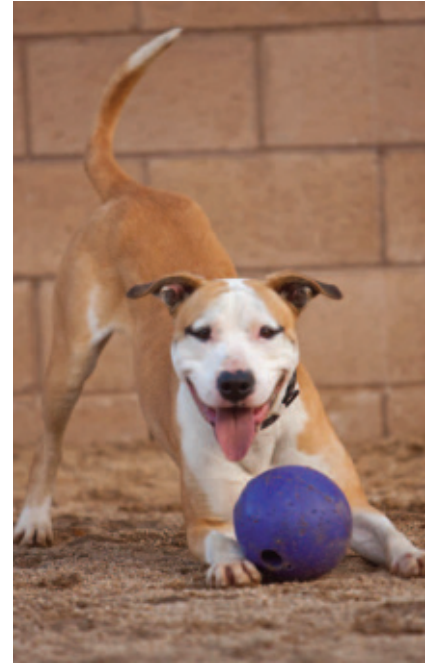
NUMBER 7 MARKET THE ANIMALS

When people are contemplating where to get their next animal companion, out of sight is out of mind, which is why good marketing is essential. In a shelter survey of adopters, 83% adopted from the shelter after seeing an animal on social media, in the newspaper, or at a local community event. Only 17% said adopting from the shelter was their first choice or something they always knew they would do. To get more adoptions, the shelter must be in the public eye.



NUMBER 8 SHOW & TELL

According to directors running shelters with 99% placement rates, a good photograph will get people to the shelter to meet an animal. But it is the story that will close the deal. So rather than focusing on the basics – name, breed, age, and gender – the most successful shelters tell something about each animal: what they like, their favorite activities and treats, and what makes them unique.



NUMBER 9 BE REASONABLE

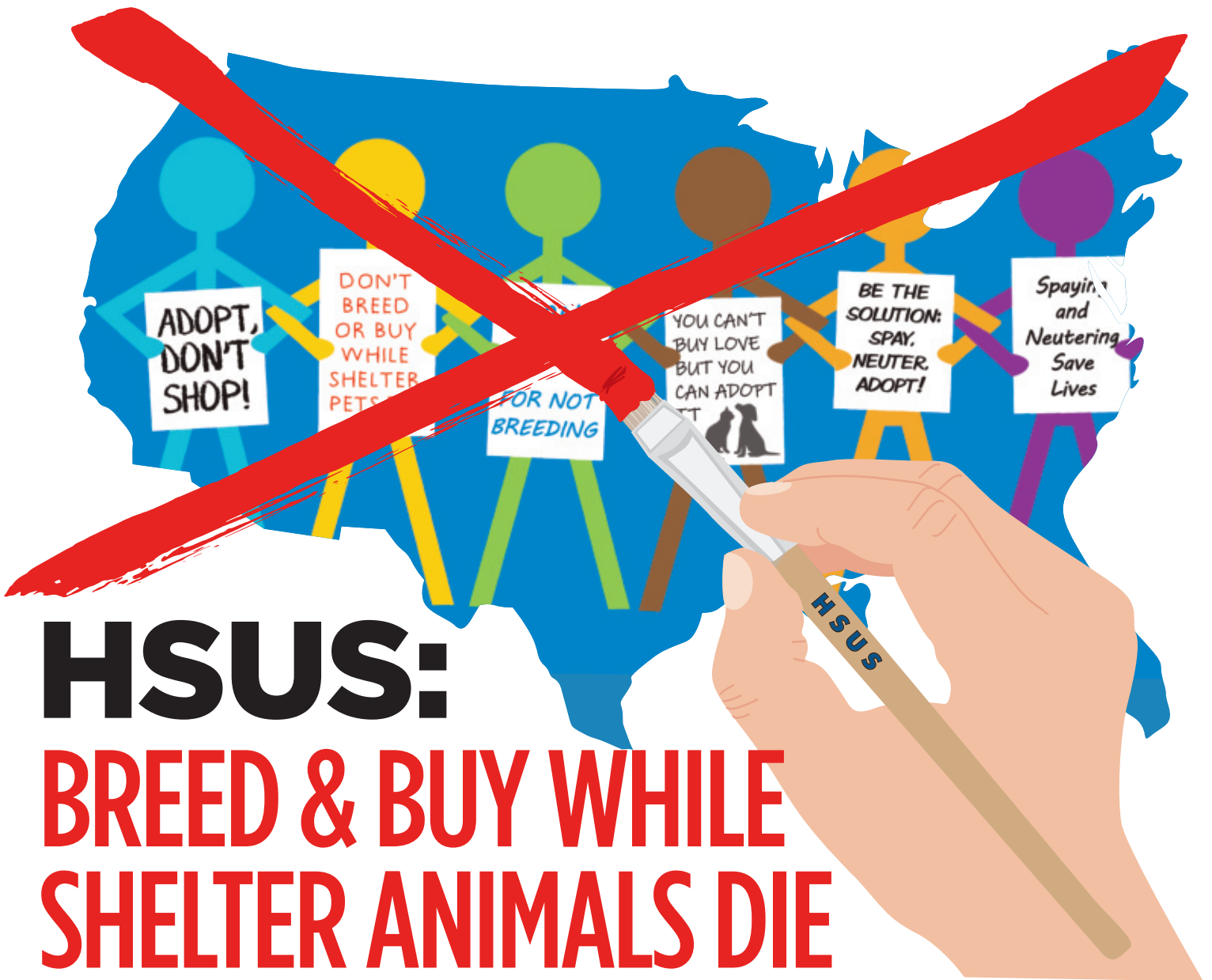
Is your shelter open for adoption without an appointment? Is it open during evenings and weekends when people are off of work and children are out of school? Can people visit the animals without filling out paperwork and getting approved just to play with them? If they adopt an animal, can they take the animal home without waiting days or even weeks for vetting? All these things discourage adoptions and drive people into the arms of breeders and pet stores. Remember: screening may be an important part of the adoption process, but a rigid, bureaucratic undertaking isn't necessary to ensure good homes. Make it easy for people to do the right thing, and they will.



NUMBER 10 TURN CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

At some point, every shelter experiences an extraordinary influx of a large number of animals. The difference between successful shelters and those that fail is the decisions made by those who run them. And the key to success is imagination.

Imagination allowed a shelter that has a “capacity” of 375 but found itself with 750 animals due to a hoarding bust to empty its shelter without killing. Imagination allowed another shelter to more than double its number of adoptions on a weekend in which its street was closed for repair. Imagination allowed a shelter that took in hundreds of orange cats from a hoarding case to find homes for all of them through the “Great Orange Cat Rescue.” When life gives you oranges...



HSUS: BREED & BUY WHILE SHELTER ANIMALS DIE

“**A**DOPT, DON’T SHOP” is a winning strategy. And it is working. Adoptions are up, puppy mills are going out of business, and killing is down 90% nationwide from its high water mark. But at the recent Humane Society of the United States conference, presenters argued that the humane movement should partner with backyard and other breeders and encourage people to buy purposely bred puppies rather than adopt them. Specifically, conference presenters argued for:

- ✔ **BACKYARD BREEDING:** “Shift your messaging from ‘your dog having babies is irresponsible and kills other dogs’ to ‘your successful family dog having babies is a neighborly service to ensure that your friends and family can find good dogs.’”
- ✔ **LESS SPAY/NEUTER:** “Encourage people with healthy, behaviorally sound dogs to have a litter or two before bringing the dog in for spay/neuter.”
- ✔ **BUYING, RATHER THAN ADOPTING:** “Provide resources to people who are already breeding locally.”

The HSUS workshop presenters included a pound director who kills six out of 10 dogs, a “behaviorist” who calls for killing rather than training dogs, and a professor who thinks shelters ought to provide free vaccina-

tion for the dogs of dogfighters rather than rescuing the dogs and arresting their abusers. And they went so far as to argue that “shelters in high-demand areas” should “start[] their own breeding programs” in order to meet demand for puppies; a proposal *Time magazine* calls, “a shocking idea, like a cocktail hour at rehab.” But it is more than “shocking.”

It is a betrayal of the highest magnitude and based on several lies: that there is a severe dog shortage, that breeding is the only way to meet demand, that purposely-bred dogs make better family pets than shelter dogs, and that shelters should be beholden to “consumer choice,” rather than shape that choice given their mission of animal protection.

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

Over the last several decades, the humane movement has been successful in getting more people to adopt and fewer people to buy dogs. In half a dozen states and roughly 400 cities, it has also been successful in passing laws banning the sale of commercially-bred animals in pet stores. Because of these achievements, the number of USDA-licensed breeders/brokers has declined 30%, with almost half of all Nebraska puppy mills shutting down.

HSUS and others appear intent on undermining this progress. The result will not just be an increase in the number of animals killed in pounds; it will

Shelter directors who attended the HSUS workshop pushed back, calling it “tone deaf.” Here’s a sampling of their feedback:

“Shelters in our community are full of dogs deserving of a loving home, as are dogs in other shelters across the country. They don’t need replacing, they need saving... Abandoning the lifesaving mission is unacceptable.”

“The presentation at HSUS was untimely (overwhelmed shelters declaring crisis all around us) and based on the false premise that there is a shelter dog shortage.”

“Animal welfare’s mission is not to supply communities their pets. Adoption is a tool to save animals’ lives — that is the mission, saving lives.”

“Shelters have made such inroads with their transport programs and their spay/neuter programs... If we start advocating for shelters to work with breeders now, a lot of shelters that have made inroads will be left behind.”

“We will be one of those shelters left behind.”

HSUS EXPO

- 1) Discourage spay/neuter
- 2) Stop telling the public breeding is irresponsible. Instead, tell the public breeding is “neighborly”
- 3) Support local breeders; give them resources

mean more misery for dogs at the hands of commercial, backyard, and other breeders.

Instead of abandoning proven methods of lowering shelter killing, we should be doubling down.

Rather than call for breeding puppies, shelters can do a better job of marketing the ethics and benefits of adopting young adult, adult, and mature mixed-breed animals so that we can continue to shape community preferences for the benefit of at-risk animals.

In addition, shelters need to nurture the growing trends in progressive attitudes about rescue vs. buying and embrace the means and tools necessary to achieve real and lasting change in shelters as well — government accountability, a reinvestment and faith in public institutions as a force for public good, and shelter regulation — that will create a more compassionate and just world for dogs (as well as cats and other animal companions). For while the vast ma-



majority of dogs entering shelters are young, friendly, and healthy, even those who arrive in shelters with health or temperament issues are finding homes in those cities where the shelter has embraced a culture of lifesaving that includes rehabilitative care.

Likewise, shelters must expand efforts to educate the public about commercial breeding mills, the physical deformities or defects that result from inbreeding, the immorality of commodifying animals, the unscientific nature of discriminating against animals on the basis of how they look, the false view of shelter animals as damaged, and the equally false view that purposely-bred animals are more “predictable” and make “better” family pets.

We must continue to pass bans on the retail sale of commercially-bred animals in pet stores (not just for dogs, but also cats, rabbits, hamsters, fish, and other animals). We must end the internet trade in commercially-bred animals. Until we muster the political will to ban it altogether, we must expand our efforts to regulate commercial breeding — setting limits on the number of breeding females, creating dog-generous housing, care, veterinary, exercise, and socialization requirements, and ensuring cruelty laws apply to them and are robustly enforced (including one-strike rules for serious offenses). And, finally, we must ensure that no already-born dogs and

puppies die or suffer for want of a home, regardless of where they live.

For despite what HSUS, its presenters, and any of the other large groups argue, until all 50 U.S. states are No Kill, its districts, territories, and reservations are No Kill, its neighboring countries and then the rest of the world are No Kill, adoption of already-born dogs remains an ethical imperative.





THE SCIENCE OF HEALTH & HAPPINESS



THE LATEST STUDIES ON SHELTER ANIMAL WELFARE

SHELTERS are stressful places for dogs and can be stressful places for potential adopters. In most shelters, dogs can't see people or other dogs in neighboring kennels. Where there is glass, it's opaque. Where there are fences or bars, they face a wall. When people visit, they are told not to touch the animals. These are mistakes that increase frustration for dogs.

When dogs are frustrated, they are stressed, bark excessively, and engage in antisocial behavior. Moreover, the louder the barking in the kennel, the less time people spend in them looking to adopt. And the more dogs bark or act out, the less

likely they are to be adopted. Add flawed temperament testing and poorly-trained staff who are not held to high standards, and dogs are labeled "unadoptable" and killed.

Thankfully, there is a lot a shelter can do to counter these problems, including group housing, dog-dog play, toys, walks, human socialization, visual access outside their kennels, the ability to smell and touch people, and music with soft human voices. Ultimately, the shelter's own socialization, training, and care policies determine whether dogs live or die, not arcane notions of "adoptability" based on flawed temperament tests.

Likewise, shelters are stress-

ful places for cats. Shelters that do not have a "mental health" component (touch, talk, play through volunteers) in addition to a "physical health" component (vaccination on intake, other medical care, and cleaning/disinfection) undermine the well-being of cats and put them at risk of getting sick and being killed. Following are the findings of the latest studies into animal shelter health and welfare, information that can help shelters better serve the animals in their care.



DOG STUDIES

STUDY

What is the Evidence for Reliability and Validity of Behavior Evaluations for Shelter Dogs?

FINDINGS

There is "no evidence that any canine behavior evaluation has come close to meeting accepted standards for reliability and validity." Some tests were wrong as much as 84% of the time (a combination of poor tests and poor testing practices by pound workers). While shocking, it should not be surprising since the tests rest on a "fatally flawed" premise: "that the provocations used at a single time during a dog's stressful experience in a shelter will predict future behavior at a different time and place."

STUDY

Enrichment centered on human interaction moderates fear-induced aggression and increases positive expectancy in fearful shelter dogs

FINDINGS

Shelters are very stressful places for dogs, causing them to fail behavior evaluations. "Even in well-man-

aged and funded facilities, dogs are likely to encounter an array of stressors including noise, unpredictability, loss of control... disruption of routines..." and unfamiliar people and surroundings. A small amount of enrichment — being spoken to softly, given treats, petted, and played with — can result in dogs passing temperament tests. After just five days of being treated kindly, "nearly all" fearful dogs passed the test. This is true even for dogs deemed "potentially quite dangerous" at the beginning of the study. Without enrichment, eight out of 10 of these dogs fail.

STUDY

Characteristics and Adoption Success of Shelter Dogs Assessed as Resource Guardians

FINDINGS

While 15% of kennelled dogs guard their food, many of them "do not guard food in their adoptive homes, and, even when dogs continue to display food guarding in the home, adopters do not consider it to be a major problem." As such, shelters should opt for

“adoption rather than euthanasia for most dogs identified as resource guarders.” Dogs returned for food guarding can be re-adopted without incident.

STUDY

Saving Normal: A new look at behavioral incompatibilities and dog relinquishment to shelters

FINDINGS

There is no compelling evidence for the notion that there is something behaviorally wrong with most dogs in shelters.” Most dogs labeled “behavior” are normal as “surrenders often say more about the people doing the surrendering — about ‘owner-related factors, needs, and expectations’ — than the dogs being surrendered.” As such, shelters should stop thinking of dogs as having “behavior problems” and instead use the information to make better adoption matches.

STUDY

Teenage dogs? Evidence for adolescent-phase conflict behavior and an association between attachment to humans and pubertal timing in the domestic dog

FINDINGS

Dogs, like human children, go through a rebellious adolescent phase, and this is the time they are most likely to be surrendered to a shelter. Arming puppy adopters and current families of adolescent dogs with this knowledge and how reward-based training can modify these behaviors is the key to fewer surrenders and better outcomes.

STUDY

Impact of Visual Barrier Removal on the Behavior of Shelter-Housed Dogs

FINDINGS

Stressed dogs are more likely to display anti-social behaviors. Letting dogs see people and other dogs by removing visual barriers reduces stress in shelter dogs.

STUDY

*Evaluating pair- vs. solitary-housing in kenneled domestic dogs (*Canis familiaris*) using behavior and hair cortisol.”*

FINDINGS

Over one-third of dogs housed alone suffer behavior problems, and 10% engage in repetitive behavior (like endless barking). As such, dogs should be pair or group-housed if they get along with other dogs. Fears about aggression and fighting in pair-housed kennels tend to be overblown, with fights being rare so long as staff are thoughtful about grouping.

Over one-third of dogs housed alone suffer behavior problems, and 10% engage in repetitive behavior such as endless barking. Group housing gives dogs access to other dogs, reducing these frustrations.

STUDY

Identifying environmental and management factors that may be associated with the quality of life of kennelled dogs

FINDINGS

Conventional wisdom says the longer dogs are in the shelter, the more likely they are to become “kennel crazy” and thus “less adoptable.” However, acclimation and enrichment can overcome this challenge: “dogs adapt to the kennel environment over time” and “environmental enrichment helps animals to cope with their environments.” In other words, newly admitted dogs and those who only get the basics — food, water, and shelter — are highly stressed, unlike socialized and exercised dogs. And the longer socialized dogs are in a shelter, the better behaved they become.

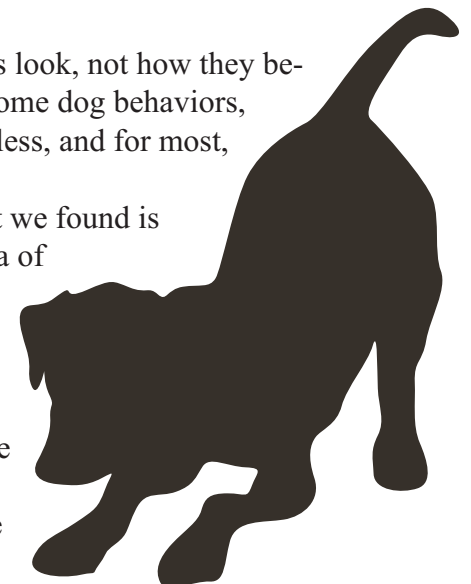
STUDY

Ancestry-inclusive dog genomics challenges popular breed stereotypes

FINDINGS

Breed tells us how dogs look, not how they behave. For “predicting some dog behaviors, breed is essentially useless, and for most, not very good.”

For example: “What we found is that the defining criteria of a golden retriever are its physical characteristics — the shape of its ears, the color and quality of its fur, its size — not whether it is friendly.” Likewise, the findings “would seem



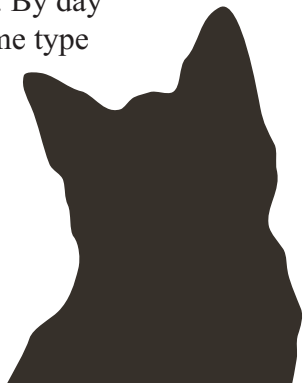
to cast doubt on breed stereotypes of aggressive dogs, like pit bulls.” The study adds to a growing scientific literature that demonstrates breed bans are useless for public safety and breed descriptions are useless for matching dogs with prospective adopters.

STUDY

The effect of different genres of music on the stress level of kenneled dogs

FINDINGS

Soft music with human voices reduces stress in kenneled dogs. This was measured by lowered cortisol levels, heart rate, and stereotypy behavior. Dogs preferred, in order, soft rock, reggae, pop, and then classical. The soft human voice is the most important part of the musical experience for dogs. Of note, dogs get bored of the same playlist. By the end of the first day, the impact on stress reduction of playing the same songs was eliminated. By day seven, the impact of the same type of music (e.g., classical or soft rock) was eliminated. For dogs as for people, variety is the spice of life.



CAT STUDIES

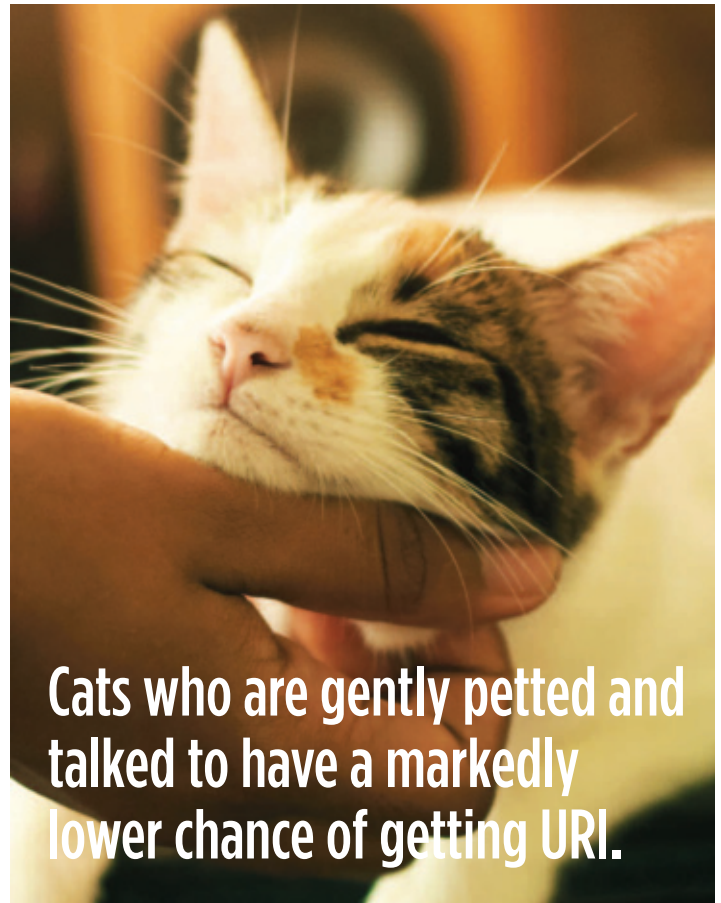
STUDY

Effect of gentle stroking and vocalization on behaviour, mucosal immunity and upper respiratory disease in anxious shelter cats

FINDINGS

Cats who are gently petted and talked to have a markedly lower chance of getting an upper respiratory infection. Cats who are not petted and talked to gently were over two times more likely to get sick (due to stress) than cats who were. Unfortunately, many shelters do not allow people to touch cats due to fear of disease, placing signs throughout the shelter to that effect. This is the exact of opposite of what they should encourage.

The study also has enormous implications for the lives of cats deemed “feral.” Cats who are labeled “feral,” “unsocial,” “fractious,” or “aggressive” are



Cats who are gently petted and talked to have a markedly lower chance of getting URI.

virtually all killed unless the shelter embraces a community cat sterilization program. The study found that while 18% of the cats they tested would have been deemed “feral” due to “aggression” when they started (and thus killed), none of the cats responded that way after day six. This is also true of cats who could not be touched when they arrived and were stroked “mechanically” with a fake hand. The study concludes that “a 3-4 day holding period” is not “sufficient to differentiate non-feral from feral cats.”

NOTE: *Killing a cat for “behavior,” “aggression,” or being considered “feral” should never occur. If they are not social with humans and are used to living outdoors, they can be sterilized and returned to their habitats. Pet cats with “catitude” can be adopted.*

This is not to say that cats who experience behavior issues in the shelter do not warrant changes in shelter housing, shelter treatment, and behavior intervention to address those needs. They do. But they can be adopted despite those issues because the resolution of behavior challenges is almost always done by getting them out of the shelter. Moreover, for those who do need further treatment, it will be more effective and efficient in a home, than in a shelter.



PUTTING THE FINDINGS INTO PRACTICE



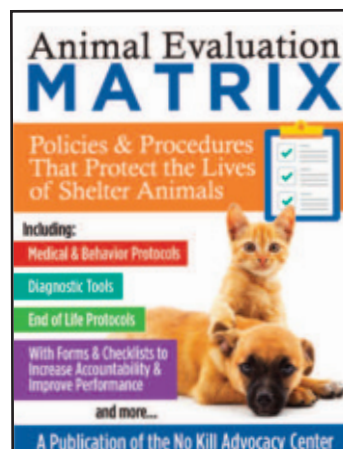
FINDINGS

A community cat program reduces intake and killing of community cats, illness in the shelter, complaint calls to animal control, spending, and waste of taxpayer money. It also increases opportunities to expand lifesaving of other animals, such as dogs, too.



FINDINGS

Traumatized dogs deserve safe harbor and time to abandon fear, forget a haunted past, and, most important of all, learn to trust. With the right amount of love, kindness, compassion, positive conditioning, and, when necessary, veterinary intervention, psychologically wounded animals, like humans, have a remarkable capacity for resilience.



FINDINGS

The Matrix includes medical and behavior protocols, diagnostic tools, and end-of-life protocols, with forms and checklists to increase accountability and improve performance. The No Kill Advocacy Center developed these protocols in collaboration with some of the most successful shelter directors in the country (directors running municipal and animal control-contracted shelters with placement rates of 99%).



FINDINGS

Based on four recent studies, the pioneering work of behaviorists, and the results of some of the most successful and progressive shelters in the country, shelters can place 99% of dogs.



“If you leave the kittens here, we will kill them in the morning.”

This is Ginger. She and her two siblings, Adam and Naomi, are three orphaned kittens who were found on a construction site without their mama. The finder tried local shelters, but they are no longer accepting kittens and local veterinarians, who used to work with those shelters, said that they would kill them. And while this happened in the San Francisco Bay Area, it is also happening in Texas, New York, Florida, Tennessee, and elsewhere under a disastrous program called “Human Animal Support Services.” Under HASS, shelters nationwide have closed their doors to animals in need.

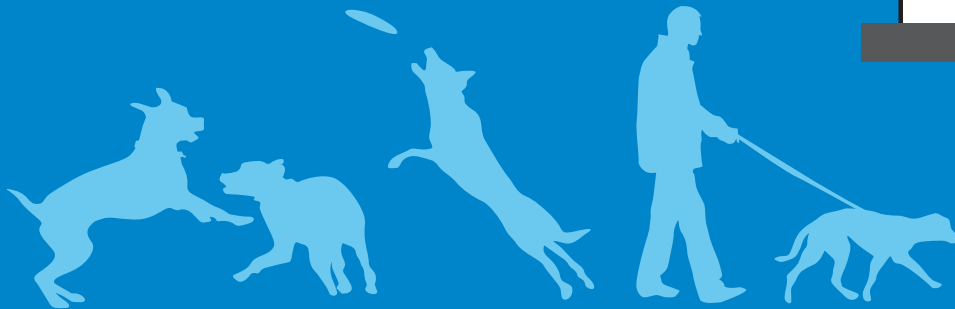
When the finder called us because she had nowhere else to turn, we took them in. But we don’t just want to save these kittens, *we want to save them all*. So we’re not only arming activists across the nation with the knowledge they need to fight HASS, we’re gearing up for a busy legislative year with bills to mandate rescue rights, prompt and necessary veterinary care, court-appointed advocates in cruelty cases, and requiring shelters to take in but not kill animals — animals like Adam, Ginger, and Naomi. But we cannot do it without your help. [Click here to donate today.](#)



DONATE TODAY

MOTIVATED BLINDNESS

WHEN THOSE WHO ARE
SUPPOSED TO KNOW
BEST, KNOW LEAST



WHAT
B E K D
DOGS
Y E V S
NEED
P W B Z

THE last two decades have seen a meteoric rise in the number of university professors and other scholars focusing their research on understanding and improving dog welfare in animal shelters. This includes studies showing that, “Dogs experience fear and anxiety immediately upon admission” to a shelter. Unless those “shelters” provide clean environments and social enrichment, dogs will experience continuing stress and physically and mentally deteriorate over time. Dogs who are housed alone likewise suffer and should be pair or group-housed (if they get along with other dogs). Isolating dogs in barren kennels harms them.

Much of that research has confirmed what people outside of the shelter who care about dogs already know: that, in order to thrive, dogs need love, routine, nutritious food, exercise, veterinary care, a clean environment, socialization with people and other dogs, and a sense of belonging.

Volunteers in shelters know it. Most Americans who live with dogs know it. And they know it because they are familiar with dogs, love dogs, and want what is best for them. But a new study finds that some managers and staff in kennel environments like animal shelters claim not to know it. In other words, the very people tasked with caring for the neediest dogs in our society are the least concerned about their wel-





fare. And that has enormous implications for the health, well-being, and lives of these dogs.

Specifically, the study looked at whether existing research into what dogs need for good welfare while housed in kennels — such as in pounds and shelters, laboratories, breeding facilities, and working dog facilities — changes how these facilities house and care for dogs.

The short answer, unfortunately, is “No.”

A RECIPE FOR FAILURE

While the public and volunteers saw socialization as vital to dogs in kenneled environments, the study found that staff and managers did not. Instead, employees were most likely to support “limiting social opportunities for dogs housed in kennel environments,” even though doing so undermines dog welfare. The study also found that employees were less likely to view health, hygiene, and enrichment as important. These beliefs put dogs at risk: “What people believe is important will influence their behavior, with direct relation to care provided to animals.” And given inconsistent, unenforced, and in many cases, non-existent regulations that mandate a commitment to dog welfare, what dogs need “may not be successfully

While the public and volunteers saw socialization as vital to dogs in kenneled environments, the study found that staff and managers did not.

translating into evidence-based changes in industry practice.”

Of course, employees overwhelmingly *claimed* they were concerned about the welfare of dogs. One would not expect them to say otherwise, but they also said that dogs in kenneled environments were not at risk for poor welfare and didn’t need to be socialized while there. Given intuitive, experiential, and scholarly understandings of what dogs need and want, these views appear to be willful indifference to dog welfare.

This finding is tragic, though perhaps not surprising, for staff in kennel environments where dogs are mere “things” to serve human ends or maximize profits, such as laboratories, breeding operations, and “working” dog facilities. But unfortunately, these findings also apply to some animal “shelters” where dog



Shelters that close their doors have fewer adoptions, more killing, more “behavior”-related killing, dirtier facilities, and more abuse. What they propose is, once again, precisely the *opposite* of what dogs need.



protection, dog welfare, and treating dogs kindly are supposed to be the mission.

For example:

- Even though studies prove dogs suffer if they are not provided “mental and physical stimulation, time out of the kennel and close interaction with people,” managers who are responsible for that deterioration (by not providing those things) simply label these dogs as “kennel crazy” or “aggressive” and kill them.
- Likewise, studies have found kennelled dogs housed alone are more likely to suffer behavior problems and engage in repetitive behavior. Still, pair and group housing remain the exception rather than the norm.
- Finally, despite “no evidence that any canine behavior evaluation has come close to meeting accepted standards for reliability and validity,” testing and killing dogs who “fail” remains the norm.

NOT EVERYONE WANTS WHAT IS BEST FOR DOGS

Given this disconnect between what dogs need and how many animal shelters are run, we need to stop pretending that managers and staff at poorly performing shelters are there because they love dogs and are passionate about doing what is best for them. Instead, staff and managers appear ignorant of basic dog welfare, are not keeping up with the latest research, and are not implementing the findings. That suggests that staff at poorly performing shelters are not motivated by genuine concern for the welfare of dogs, but doing as little as possible at their expense.

The study found that younger kennel attendants in shelters were more likely to agree that kenneling reduces welfare than older attendants and managers. Worst of all, this divide was not merely philosophical; it was evident in the shelter’s practices. The study found that kennel attendants with more enlightened views “are prevented from engaging in practices they believe to be of high value to the welfare of dogs” by senior employees and managers, leading them to “experience compassion fatigue, burnout, and moral distress.” Not surprisingly, this hostile work environment can lead such employees

to resign their positions, leaving dogs and other shelter animals in the custody of those who do not have their best interests at heart. The result is a continuation of poor practices.

In addition, these managers appear committed to making matters worse, not better, given the growing trend by these facilities to close their doors to the public without an appointment. Although they claim that an “appointment only” policy will increase lifesaving (somehow), reduce intakes, and reduce stress for animals by limiting activity and noise levels, this is misleading. For animals, visitors mean stimulation, walks, getting out of their kennels, getting played with, and finding homes. Shelters that close their doors have fewer adoptions, more killing, more “behavior”-related killing, dirtier facilities, and more abuse. What they propose is, once again, precisely the opposite of

what dogs need.

Nor do these facilities have standards to measure success. Without substantive guidelines created to implement our growing knowledge about dog welfare in kennel environments, some managers and staff are not using objective measures to determine if they are meeting their obligations. For example, has the shelter fully implemented all the programs and services of the No Kill Equation? Do sick and injured animals receive quality veterinary care? Does the shelter follow the latest vaccination and cleaning protocols to ensure the health of the animals? Are the animals well-socialized? Are they exercised to reduce stress and anxiety? Do dogs get out of the kennels regularly? Do dogs have visual and direct access to people and other dogs? Of course, there are many more, like those in The No Kill Advocacy Center’s *Animal*

Evaluation Matrix: Policies & Procedures That Protect the Lives of Shelter Animals.

Given that the answer to these questions is often “No,” then the next obvious question is, “Why not?”

The answer appears to be self-interest. If you are an agency that is supposed to be providing high-quality care (and high placement rates) and you intentionally fail to do so, standards are a threat. Standards invite comparison and comparison can compel criticism. So while questions that attempt to gauge success and highlight areas of deficiency are important if you are seeking improvement and accountability; if you are not — if no matter what the answers, you do not intend to do anything about them — then they are dangerous questions to be asking. And that is precisely why we must.

Even though studies prove dogs suffer if they are not provided “mental and physical stimulation, time out of the kennel and close interaction with people,” managers who are responsible for that deterioration (by not providing those things) simply label these dogs as “kennel crazy” or “aggressive” and kill them.



FALSE CHOICES



How Austin Pets Alive’s HASS Program Abandons Animals & the Mission of Shelters

THE STORY OF NESA

Microchipped and wearing a little pink harness, Nesa should have had her whole life ahead of her. Had El Paso Animal Services taken her in and scanned her for a microchip after she was found roaming the streets, she would have been reclaimed within 15 minutes. Instead, she was turned away by the municipal shelter; her finder told to release her back on the street. She was subsequently found dead.

Though Nesa died in an El Paso alleyway, her death had its genesis over 500 miles away in Austin, TX. It was there that the leadership of Austin’s sheltering establishment and others hatched a plan to manipulate intake and placement rates by abandoning the fundamental purpose – *indeed the very definition* – of a shelter: to provide a safety net of care for lost, homeless, and unwanted animals.

They called the program “Human Animal Support Services” (HASS). Under the proposed policy, “Intakes of healthy strays and owner surrenders doesn’t

exist anymore,” and there is “No kennel space for rehoming, stray hold or intake.” Instead, the community — whose taxes and donations already go to pay for shelters — is expected to pick up the slack (hence the term “community sheltering”).

Care for homeless and stray animals is left to chance: people who find animals are told to take them into their own homes until their families are located or

“Community sheltering” is a euphemism for “no sheltering,” placing animals at risk.

leave them on the street. According to HASS, the “hope” is that the lost animal “finds its way back home.” Such hope is misplaced. Indeed, for Nesa and many others like her, it proves fatal.

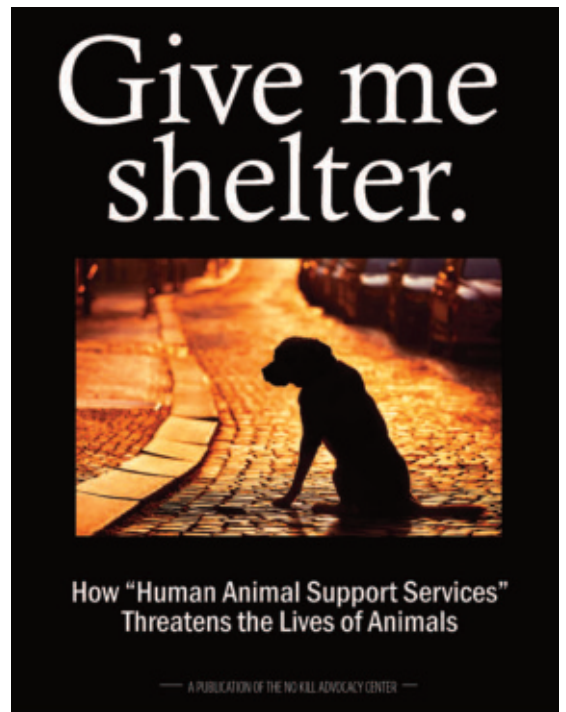
HASS LACKS EVIDENCE & IS BASED ON FALSE ASSUMPTIONS

The HASS assertion that dogs will find their way home without human intervention is based on a study which they claim says that most dogs are found within one mile of where they live. Accordingly, HASS tells shelter administrators that “if a person who locates an animal is unable to hold on to it until the owner is located, encourage them to leave it where it is in hopes it finds its way back home. Our thinking is most lost animals are within 1,000 yards of their home.” Their thinking is wrong.

FIRST, shelters cannot assume that lost animals are within a thousand yards of their home. The No Kill Advocacy Center analyzed detailed records of lost and found dogs in several communities. The average distance was roughly two miles (1.96 miles), with one shelter’s average being 3.2 miles. This is consistent with the study HASS relies on, which found that the average distance was as high as 2.5 miles away in some areas. And while many dogs were within one mile of their home (which is still very far for a dog), others were four to five miles away.

SECOND, shelters cannot assume that lost animals will find their way home on their own. While the study showed where people picked up dogs, it did not reveal where they were going. The No Kill Advocacy Center’s review of reclaim data shows that the longer dogs were missing, the further away from their homes they

To view a detailed analysis of HASS by the No Kill Advocacy Center (below), visit our toolkit at nokilladvocacycenter.org. *Give Me Shelter* can be given to shelter boards, policy makers, elected officials, and members of the media to highlight the dangers of the HASS Program.



HASS is illegal in many states. For example, California law, which is typical, mandates, “The taking up and impounding of all dogs which are found running at large...” (Food & Ag. Code § 31105(a).) It does not permit shelters to turn them away.

tended to be found, precisely the opposite of HASS assumptions. Moreover, the study HASS relies on showed that roughly half and, in the case of dogs without microchips, more than half were not reclaimed; many did not have homes to go back to. Without a shelter to rehome them, these dogs will stay homeless.

THIRD, regardless of how far away from home they are, lost animals face risks. There are many factors, for example, that might impact how likely a free-roaming dog is to be struck by a vehicle: time of day and traffic level, whether a dog is roaming in open space or on a busy road, in an urban area or a rural one, or the level of anxiety and fear a dog is exhibiting that might result in poor judgment. These are not necessarily related to how far the dog is from their home or if they even have one. Nonetheless, under HASS, shelters are directed to treat all free-roaming dogs the same and leave them to whatever fate might befall them.



Imagine it's *your* dog.

Take a moment to find your home on Google maps. Then, using the “measure distance” feature, span a circumference of one mile from your home. This is the distance HASS supporters argue is safe for dogs on the street in the “hope” they find their way back home without help. Depending on the city, a square mile can include up to 400 blocks.

Do you know the people who live around this circumference in every direction your dog might roam? Would the people who live there recognize your dog and know where she lives? How many roads would your dog need to cross to get home?

Assuming your dog continued in any possible direction, what additional threats would she encounter, such as a busy intersection or a freeway onramp?

If your dog found herself this far from home without you, would she be scared or anxious?

Would this lead to poor judgment that might increase the risk of harm, such as crossing busy streets? And would this anxiety increase the longer she was away from home?

What are the chances your lost dog will turn toward home instead of roaming further away?

Now imagine that before your dog can get any further away from you, someone finds her and calls the local shelter, only to be instructed that if they can't care for your dog, they should just let her go where they found her in the “hope” she gets home herself, even though your dog may have no idea where home is. And that person, believing that the people at their taxpayer-funded animal shelter must know best, does just that, and the chance for your dog to get safely home is lost.

Closing the doors of shelters to animals in need threatens not only to erase the gains of the last three decades but bring about a return to 1970s sheltering norms when dogs and cats were left to fend for themselves on the street and were a familiar sight.

“Community sheltering” is a euphemism for no sheltering. That such a retreat should occur at this mo-

ment, when the American public has shown itself more enthusiastic and generous in its embrace of animal welfare than ever before, adds to the tragedy of wasted potential inherent to such an approach. Just as our fellow Americans are standing up for animals, HASS would have us stand down.

WHAT’S WRONG WITH HASS?

- Human Animal Support Services gambles with the welfare of animals, placing the responsibility for animal care on random members of the community, thereby leaving whether or not an animal gets home or even survives to chance;
- It is illegal in many states. For example, California law, which is typical, mandates, “The taking up and impounding of all dogs which are found running at large...” (Food & Ag. Code § 31105(a).) It does not permit shelters to turn them away;
- It hides poor shelter performance by turning animals away and not recording their subsequent deaths in publicized statistics;
- It lacks evidence and relies on faulty assumptions;
- It fails to meet the public’s expectations for humane animal services, which it is paying for with both taxes and donations;
- It undermines faith in government;
- It calls for reducing already strained shelter budgets;
- It is embraced by regressive shelters with a history of neglect, abuse, and killing;
- It reverses 50 years of progress in lifesaving and reducing the number of stray dogs roaming American cities.

Under HASS, care for homeless and stray animals is left to chance: people who find animals are told that if they cannot take the animal into their home, they should leave the animal on the street.





SHELTER DIRECTOR /VETERINARIAN RELATIONS IN THE AGE OF NO KILL

THE No Kill Advocacy Center has received a number of e-mails from shelter directors expressing concern that their staff veterinarians are pushing for policies that would increase killing. This includes demanding the ability to “exclusively dictate all euthanasia,” “restrict foster care,” and “limit treatment options.” As the number of communities implementing No Kill initiatives is on the rise, so have the number of complaints.

These veterinarians liken their role to a medical director of a human hospital and claim their “professional judgment” cannot be interfered with. To assist shelter directors committed to ending the killing of all but irredeemably suffering animals, this article addresses veterinarian claims to show why they are wrong and offers guidance on hiring, managing, and firing shelter veterinarians. Of note, this article does not address the reverse scenario, which also appears on the rise: shelter veterinarians trying to save animals against shelter directors who are choosing to kill them. We address this concern in a series of shelter policy guides available at nokilladvocacycenter.org.

THE ROLE OF A SHELTER VETERINARIAN VS. A HUMAN HOSPITAL MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Shelter veterinarians rely on two primary sources for their claim that their medical decisions are not subject to review. First, they cite a Maddie’s Fund position paper that likens their role to that of a medical director in a human hospital and calls for giving them similar autonomy. Specifically, Maddie’s Fund says that “Hospitals employ both a CEO and a medical director who reports to the CEO but is responsible for overall

patient care” and that “shelter veterinarians should have the same authority to make decisions for patient care as the medical director in a human hospital.”

This analogy doesn’t work because human hospital medical directors do not consider killing a “treatment option” alongside vaccinations, antibiotics, surgery, and fluid therapy. As such, they do not intentionally kill patients, especially those who are healthy or treat-

able. Shelter veterinarians do.

Moreover, under American Hospital Association guidelines:

The patient has the right to make decisions about the plan of care prior to and during the course of treatment and to refuse a recommended treatment or plan of care to the extent permitted by law... In case of such refusal, the patient is entitled to other appropriate care and services...

In cases where the patient cannot give “informed consent” as required by law, such as in the case of children or the incapacitated, a guardian for the patient provides consent or refuses it. Since animals fall into this category, they also have the right to refuse through a guardian (as discussed in the next section) when the proposed “treatment” is a lethal dose of barbiturates. In short, if one believes that a shelter veterinarian should serve in a similar capacity to a medical director, then like a medical director, they should not be able to impose their will on patients incapable of giving consent.

The analogy to human hospital medical directors doesn't work. Such doctors do not intentionally kill patients, especially those who are healthy or treatable. Shelter veterinarians do.



THE ROLE OF A SHELTER VETERINARIAN VS. A SHELTER DIRECTOR



In addition to the inapt analogy to human medicine, shelter veterinarians argue that the veterinarian's oath, state law, and American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) guidelines prohibit “interference with the professional judgment of a veterinarian.” That argument, too, is wrong.

It does not constitute “interference with the professional judgment of a veterinarian” when an agency adopts policies requiring the veterinarian to get permission from the executive director or a committee to kill an animal. A veterinarian's judgment is their own: an opinion on how to proceed with a particular case. But this does not mean the client or employer must mindlessly obey the veterinarian.

The job of a shelter veterinarian is to provide a professional and medically informed judgment call as to diagnosis, prognosis, and course of treatment. In a small number of cases, less than 1% of intakes, it is to provide the judgment that an animal is irremediably suffering. By contrast, it is the job entrusted to the executive director, in consultation with others and subject to ultimate review by the public they serve, morality, objective rigor, animal rights, and ideally law, to make the decisions necessary to meet No Kill goals in service to animals and the community. (Like the shelter veterinarian, a shelter director

should not be permitted to kill healthy and treatable animals.)

Otherwise, the veterinarian not only forces a client to do something they do not believe is in the best interest of an animal they are responsible for, but in the case of a shelter, the veterinarian would become the *de facto* executive director.



It is the job entrusted to the executive director, in consultation with others and subject to ultimate review by the public they serve, morality, objective rigor, animal rights, and ideally law, to make the decisions necessary to meet No Kill goals in service to animals and the community.

THE ROLE OF A SHELTER VETERINARIAN VS. LAW & POLICY

Adopting the view that shelter veterinarians are ultimate arbiters of animal care and treatment would create a perverse incentive for people not to seek veterinary care for fear that veterinarians would impose their will on them, including killing animals over their objections.

It would also violate the AVMA's Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics, which require that the "needs of the client" be considered in terms of treatment. The client has the right to decline to follow a prescribed course of treatment, so long as they do not allow the animal to suffer.

The veterinarian's oath also requires continual improvement of professional knowledge/competence. Stepping backward from what the profession has already achieved — open-admission shelters with placement rates of 99-100% — violates this oath.

But most importantly, the veterinarian's oath requires, above all else, a commitment to animal health and welfare and the prevention of suffering. Veterinarians violate that oath when they kill an animal who is not irremediably suffering. According to a veterinarian who takes this oath seriously, "Veterinarians protect animal life. We do not end it to serve the professed needs of a culture that has not yet become sufficiently enlightened with respect to the welfare of its animals. Until it does, we will not participate in this practice, regardless of what our larger society deems acceptable."

A veterinarian who kills healthy and treatable animals "should do so at the risk of losing their license to practice veterinary medicine."

"Being admitted to the profession of veterinary medicine, I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health and welfare, the prevention and relief of animal suffering..."

- The American Veterinary Association Oath

Veterinarians violate their professional oath when they kill an animal who is not irremediably suffering.

HIRING & FIRING SHELTER VETERINARIANS

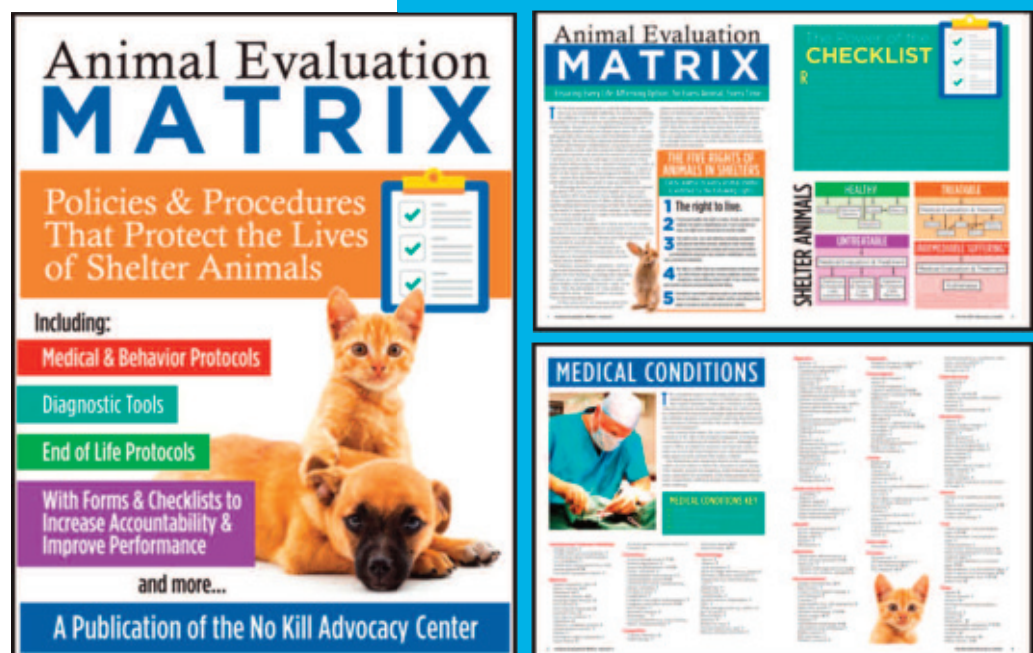
So how should shelter directors, administrators, and other stakeholders respond when a shelter veterinarian complains? The same as when other employees, especially those with specific expertise, complain about working conditions or workplace policies — by keeping an open mind. We can never lose sight of the fact that something we believe might be wrong, either about an individual animal or as a matter of policy. Even when that is not the case, giving someone a forum to express their views and sharing reasons for one's disagreement in an environment of mutual respect is often enough to keep things running smoothly despite not adopting them into policy.

That open mind, however, must be tempered by healthy skepticism and the shelter director's broader perspective when evaluating the merits of their arguments. And when that evidence — objective, thoughtful, considered — betrays their claims, shelter directors and other stakeholders who find themselves facing pushback by shelter veterinarians trying to put the brakes on the No Kill initiative inappropriately should push back.

Shelter directors should also consider hiring veterinarians on a contract/contractor basis that spells out the roles and responsibilities and limits their discretion by requiring them to rehabilitate — via prompt and necessary veterinary care — all but irremediably suffering animals, such as in The No Kill Advocacy Center's guide *Animal Evaluation Matrix*.

During interviews, it is also important to ask a prospective shelter veterinarian if they are able to take direction from a non-veterinarian. We do not recommend hiring candidates who say no. Instead, and until a suitable replacement can be hired, directors should outsource the care staff veterinarians would have provided to private veterinarians. Not only do the animals get the care they need, but as private practice veterinarians rely on repeat business, they take direction from clients.

Hiring veterinarians on a contract/contractor basis that spells out the roles and responsibilities and requires the treatment of all but irremediably suffering animals (such as those with conditions specifically defined in The No Kill Advocacy Center's *Animal Evaluation Matrix*) can eliminate discretion that allows for needless killing.





In Their Eyes

That twinkle in your dog's eyes? They are tears of joy. ❤️❤️❤️❤️

FOR years, scientists have cautioned against “anthropomorphizing” animals, saying we shouldn’t assume they are capable of human emotions. Rather than answering the question, “Do dogs and cats love us?” with a resounding “Yes!” They argued that we couldn’t say that dogs and cats feel love. At best, they had “emotion states” or “emotion-like states,” even when the behavior was indistinguishable from humans, except perhaps in the language ability used to express them.

They aren’t saying those things anymore.

Dogs and cats are strikingly similar to humans in the *caudate nucleus*, the region of the brain associated with positive emotions, like love. As such, dogs and cats experience love and attachment comparable to that of a human child and in much the same way. Indeed, the capacity to “love may be natural selection’s most compelling force, driving us and our fellow animals to care beyond reason for our families, loved ones, and children.”

Dogs and cats do love us. And in a recently published study – “*Increase of tear volume in dogs after reunion with owners is mediated by oxytocin*” – researchers prove we can see it in their eyes. Like people after a long absence, dogs shed

tears of joy when reunited with family (and those tears are filled with oxytocin, the feel-good “love” hormone associated with bonding). They only did that with their human family and not with others, even those with whom they are familiar.

But in typical, though scientifically understandable fashion, researchers concluded that “Through this process, their tears might play a role in eliciting protective behavior or nurturing behavior from their owners, resulting in the deepening of mutual relationships and further

leading to interspecies bonding.” Or, you know, they could just be happy to see us, because... love.

Cats love us, too. Another study in the same journal – “*Attachment bonds between domestic cats and humans*” – finds “that cats share social traits once attributed to dogs and humans alone” and that we are “underestimating cats’ socio-cognitive abilities.” Historically, people claimed that dogs bond to people and cats bond to place. Hence, the notion that cats are aloof. That is wrong: cats form strong attachments to people, too.

The study sought to determine whether cats, like dogs and human children, have secure or insecure attachments to their caregivers. Like dogs and human children, cats with secure attachments have less stress when their caregivers are around, initiate contact with them, and vocalize when they leave and return.

The study found that most cats saw their caregivers as surrogate parents or, in research parlance, had “secure attachments towards human caregivers.” Their attachment was as good as children’s and better than dogs. Unlike kids and dogs, however, they don’t always wear their hearts on their sleeves.

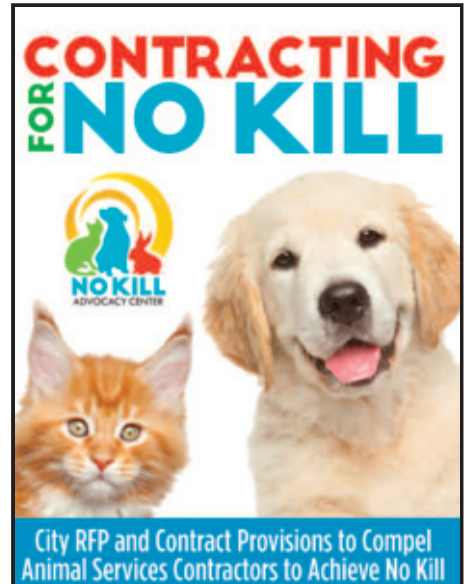
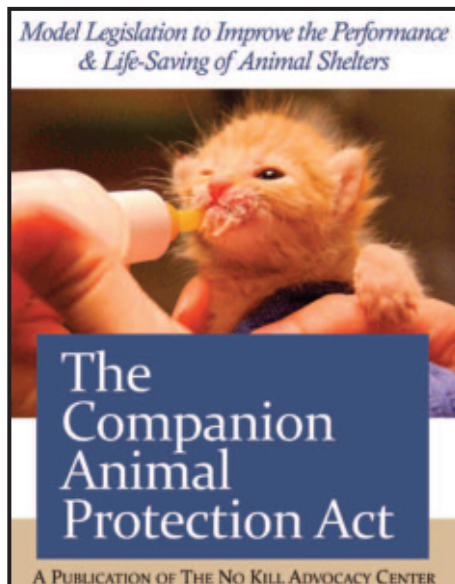
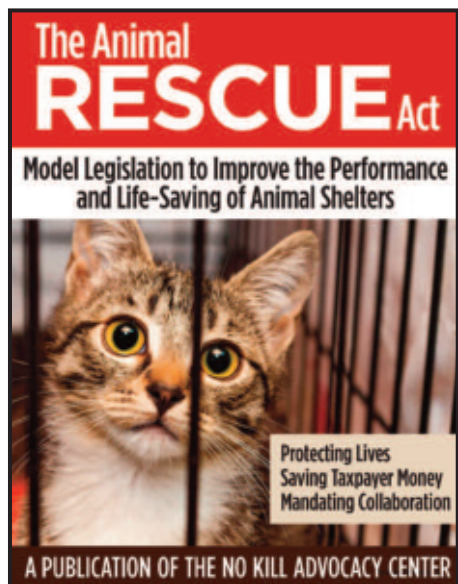
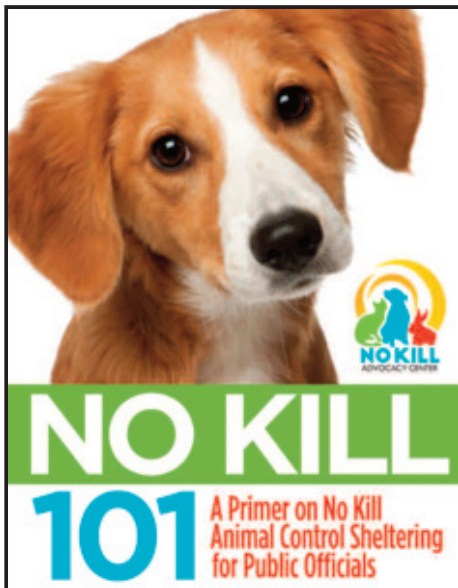
YES!
Your dog
and cat
love you,
too.



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