

We Can Do It!



**Adopt
Your
Way
Out of
Killing**

A No Kill Guide for Animal Shelters



A PUBLICATION OF THE NO KILL ADVOCACY CENTER

MISSION

SAVE AMERICA'S SHELTER ANIMALS



ENLIST TODAY!

YES!

“You 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.



YOU CAN ADOPT YOUR WAY OUT OF KILLING



THE NUMBERS PROVE IT



Roughly eight million animals enter shelters every year. Can we find homes for that many shelter animals? The good news is that we don’t have to. Some animals need adoption, but others do not. Some animals, like unsocialized cats, need neuter and release. Others will be reclaimed by their families. Some animals will go to rescue groups. Others are irremediably suffering or hopelessly ill. And many more can be kept out of the shelter through a comprehensive pet retention effort. While about four million dogs and cats will be killed in pounds and shelters this year, roughly three million will be killed for lack of a new home. Can we find homes for those animals? Yes we can.

Using the most successful adoption communities as a benchmark and adjusting for population, U.S. shelters combined should be adopting almost nine million animals a year. That is almost three times

the number being killed for lack of a home. In fact, it is more than total impounds, and of those, almost half do not need a new home. But the news gets even better. There are almost three times that many potential adopters each year.

There are over 23 million people who are going to get an animal next year. Some are already committed to adopting from a shelter. Some are already committed to getting one from a breeder or other commercial source. But 17 million have not decided where that animal will come from and research shows they can be influenced to adopt from a shelter. That’s 17 million people vying for roughly 3 million animals. So even if 80% of those people got their animal from somewhere other than a shelter, we could still zero out the killing. And many communities are proving it.

DEMAND EXCEEDS "SUPPLY"!

For well over half a century, the killing of millions of animals in our nation's animal shelters has been justified on the basis of a supply-demand imbalance. We've been told that there are just "too many animals and not enough homes." In other words, pet overpopulation. But does pet overpopulation exist?



SUPPLY vs. DEMAND

Number of animals entering
American shelters every year:

8,000,000

Number of animals killed
annually in our nation's shelters:

4,000,000

Of those, the number killed
but for a home:

3,000,000

Number of animals acquired by
Americans every year from all
sources:

23,500,000

Of those, the number who have
not yet decided where they will
get an animal and can be
influenced to adopt from a shelter:

17,000,000

PET OVERPOPULATION:

It Just Doesn't Add Up



EXPERIENCE PROVES IT



There are communities with extremely high per capita intake rates which have ended the killing of all healthy and treatable animals. There are now No Kill communities across the U.S. and abroad: in New York and in California, in Colorado and Virginia, in Utah, Indiana, Iowa, and Kentucky, in Nevada, and across the globe. Washoe County, Nevada, for example, has been very hard hit by the economic downturn. Loss of jobs and loss of homes are at all-time highs. In fact, the state of Nevada has the highest unemployment rate in the nation. As a result, the two major shelters (Washoe County Regional Animal Services and the Nevada Humane Society) together take in four times the per capita rate of Los Angeles, five times the rate of San Francisco, ten

times the rate of New York City, and over two times the national average. If there was ever a community which could not adopt its way out of killing, it is Washoe County. But they are doing just that.

And it didn't take them five years to do it. All these communities did it virtually overnight, *by adopting their way out of killing*. Of course, that doesn't mean that the other programs and services of the No Kill Equation aren't crucial. They are. Some, like foster care, keep animals alive long enough to be adopted because, quite simply, some animals are not ready for adoption when they first arrive at the shelter. But, in the end, all these animals found loving homes.



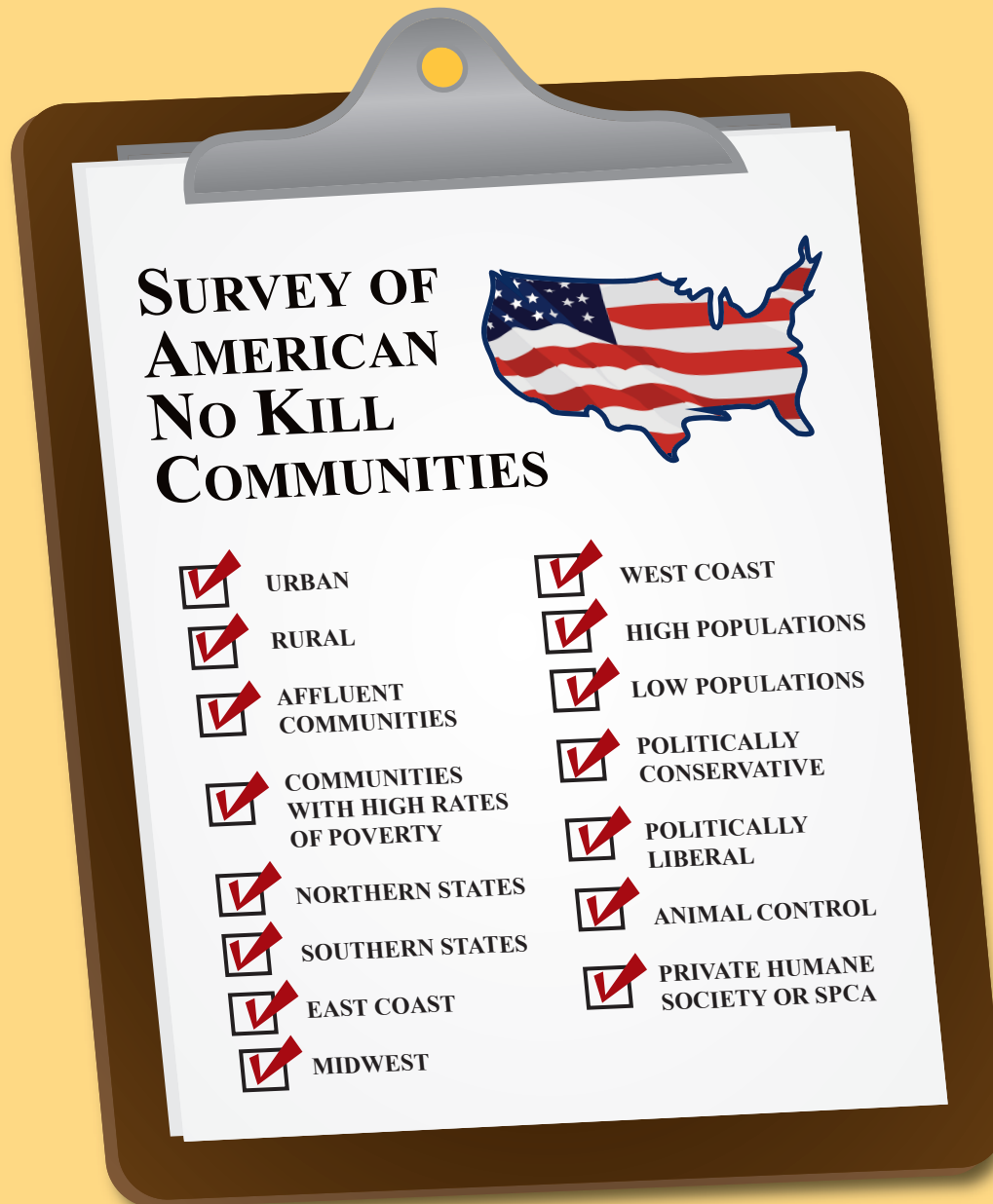
THE EXCUSES DON'T HOLD UP

High-kill, low-adoption shelters like to peddle the fiction that increasing the *quantity* of adoptions results in the lowering of the *quality* of adoptions. They do this to deflect criticism by painting the alternative as darker. But increasing adoptions means public access adoption hours when working people and families with children (two important adopter demographics) can visit the shelter. It means greater visibility in the community, working with rescue groups, competing with pet stores and puppy mills, marketing, offsite adoptions, special events, adoption incentives, foster care, alternative placements, a fun and friendly shelter environment, setting and meeting goals, and a good public image. It has nothing to do with reducing quality.

Some shelters, for example, are open for adoption Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm, when many people cannot visit the shelter. To adopt more,

shelters need to be open when the kids are home, families are together, and working people can get to the shelter. That doesn't always have to mean *more* hours, just *different* ones. Moreover, holidays are when families and working people can come to the shelter and when promotions and media outreach can have great impact. When shelters are closed on holidays, they are still staffed, they still take in stray animals, and they are still required to care, feed, and medicate animals. Days closed are just days of lost adoptions. Recently, an animal control shelter in Indiana stayed open for the first time on the 4th of July and did a big promotion, finding homes for 153 animals in a single day—animals who would have been killed in years past. It was, and remains, the single best adoption day for any shelter in Indiana ever. So how does a shelter adopt its way out of killing? There are ten steps to success.

NO EXCUSES



The numerous No Kill communities throughout America achieved lifesaving success virtually overnight, by adopting their way out of killing. There is no reason why every shelter in the nation cannot do the same.



STEPS TO LIFESAVING SUCCESS



People are the heart and soul of any organization, so staff members who are committed to the organization's mission and goals, share lifesaving values, and have a strong work ethic are crucial. Just because someone works at a shelter, humane society, or SPCA does not mean they care about animals and it does not mean they will leave no stone unturned to save a life. For many staff members, working at a shelter is a *job*, not a *mission*. And given the built in excuse of pet overpopulation and public irresponsibility, they've never been held accountable to their performance or results. Consequently, there is an epidemic of uncaring and underperformance in our nation's pounds and shelters.

To save lives, a shelter must be staffed by people who not only like animals, but like people as well. That may mean termination of employment for

some. Admittedly, this is no fun for anyone involved, but it may prove a necessary step to move forward effectively in many communities. It is always better to fire a bad staff member than kill a good animal. On the plus side, it means the shelter gets to reward the hard workers. It means new people with a passion for saving lives get hired. It means the job just got a whole lot easier because when a shelter has the right people on the team with a good attitude and a strong work ethic, a lot of things fall into place right away.

Tompkins County, New York had 50% turnover in the first six months of its No Kill initiative. The result: a 93% save rate (75% decline in killing). In Reno, only three of the original pre-No Kill 60 staff members remain. The result? A 94% communitywide save rate. Two communities in Delaware saw a 70% decline in killing following an 80% turnover in staff at the shelter. In fact, we are not aware of any shelter/pound going from a culture of killing to a culture of lifesaving without turnover in management and staff.

The more caring shelter staff are; the more educated they are; the more patient they are; the more helpful they are; the more creative they are;

The more caring shelter staff are, the more educated they are, the more patient they are, the more helpful they are, the more creative they are, the more people will see the shelter as a resource — a resource to find lost pets, a resource to solve problems, a place to donate to and more importantly, a place to adopt animals.

the more people will see the shelter as a resource—a resource to find lost pets, a resource to solve problems, a place to donate to, and more importantly, a place to adopt out animals.



“I am friendly and good with people. I love animals and want our shelter to succeed!”

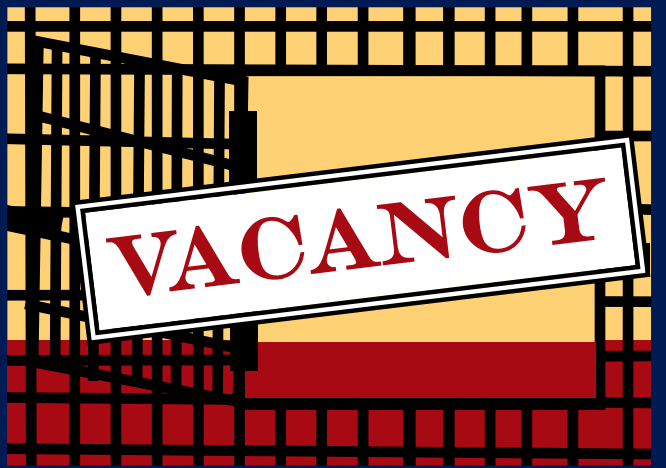
ADOPTIONS

FIND THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE JOB

NUMBER

2

Keep animals out of the shelter



The job is easier if there are less animals coming in, especially animals with “behavior” issues and other impediments to immediate adoption. It is also easier if recently adopted animals are checked up on to make sure adjustment issues or little problems do not skyrocket into intractable ones and result in failed adoptions. And, finally, the job is easier if more lost animals are reclaimed by their families.

Shelters are a taxpayer funded safety net for a community’s lost animals. It is a shelter’s responsibility to provide as much assistance as possible to ensure that lost animals are safely reunited with their responsible caretakers.



When someone calls to surrender their animal, many shelters fail to give them any more information than how they do so. But more successful shelters know that before a discussion of the process to surrender is had, they need to discuss why the person wants to do so and offer advice to help them keep their companion, if the person inquiring is inclined to do so. A study in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* found that targeted helpful advice that actually solves the problem results in a better than 90% decline in chances of relinquishment. In one shelter, their animal help desk, a central part of their pet retention program, fields over 20,000 calls a year. Of those who agreed to try and resolve their issues after calling to surrender their pet, 59% ended up not doing so.

One of the most overlooked areas for saving lives is getting more lost animals back to their families. Unfortunately, shelters kill unclaimed strays blaming the “irresponsible” or “uncaring” public. In reality, the reasons why reclaim rates are low are more complex and all of them contribute to the number of lost dogs and cats who are never claimed by their families. These include poor ‘lost and found’ matching techniques, filing lost pet reports but not matching them with animals in the shelters, lack of diligence, killing animals too quickly before a match can be made, providing erroneous information about animal behavior, and giving the public a false assurance that once the report of a lost pet is made, the “owner” will be called when

ESCAPE ARTIST?



IMPOUND IS THE *LAST* RESORT

**CHECK
THEIR
TAGS**



**KNOCK
ON
DOORS**



GET HIM SAFELY HOME

Shelters have increased their redemption rate for lost dogs to 65% and even higher. By being proactive, working hard, utilizing technology, and working diligently to get animals home in the field every shelter can do the same.

the animal is recovered. Beyond scanning animals for microchips, however, most shelters do very little to help people recover their lost pets. Worse yet, most shelter workers and pet owners have absolutely no idea how lost pets behave, the typical distances that they travel, and the best techniques that should be used to recover them, even though shelter staff should know this information and provide it to the public. The result is that people get discouraged. People who are discouraged lose hope. People without hope give up searching. And lost pets are not recovered. It is this broken system that dominates sheltering in the United States today and it is time for a new approach. Some communities have increased their redemption rate for lost dogs to 65% and even higher by being proactive, working hard, utilizing technology, and working diligently to get animals home in the field.

Imagine this: If a shelter takes in 10,000 stray dogs, on average 2,000 will be reclaimed. That leaves roughly 8,000 dogs competing with “owner-surrendered” dogs for homes.

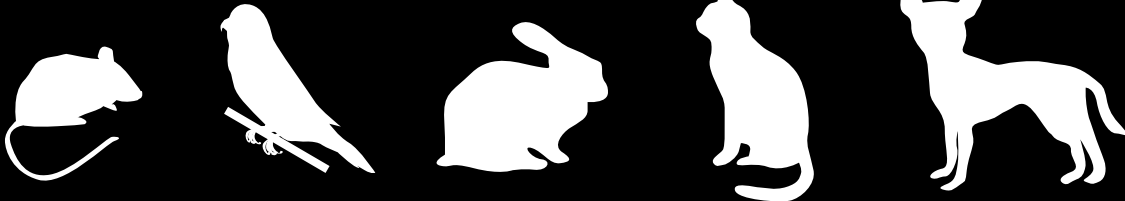
Now imagine this: If the shelter worked more diligently as they do in some communities, they could reclaim 6,500 dogs, leaving only 3,500 dogs. If they then partnered with rescue groups and, on the “owned” animal side, employed a pet retention program, the total number of dogs needing homes would fall to below 1,000, a world of difference.

Give Expert ADVICE



A study in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association found that targeted helpful advice that actually solves the problem results in a better than 90% decline in chances of relinquishment.





PET PROBLEM SOLVER HOTLINE



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

Are neighbors complaining about your dog barking? Is your cat refusing to use her litterbox? Get free expert advice to help you overcome whatever issue you may be having with your pet. Help is just a telephone call away!



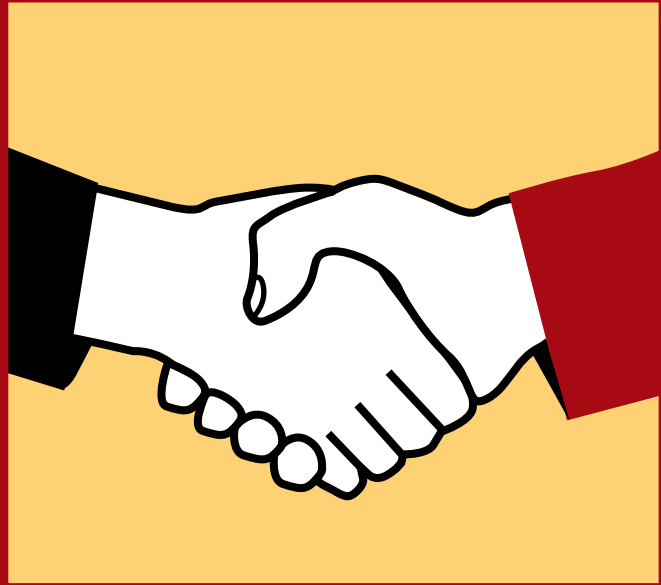
(1 2 3) 4 5 6 - 7 8 9 0

LOCAL HUMANE SOCIETY

NUMBER

3

Get by with a little help from your friends



At one SPCA, adopters receive a free health examination at any local veterinarian of their choice, free grooming at a local pet salon, a 15% discount at a pet supply store, free behavior advice for life, a free month of someone picking up dog waste in their yard, a free engraved identification tag, a free bag of pet food, a 10% discount at a puppy obedience class, a 10% discount for a pet massage, the “Pet Lover’s Guide to Your New Pet,” a discount at the local coffee shop, and more. These were all donated by local businesses to encourage adoptions and gain customers—a classic “win-win.”

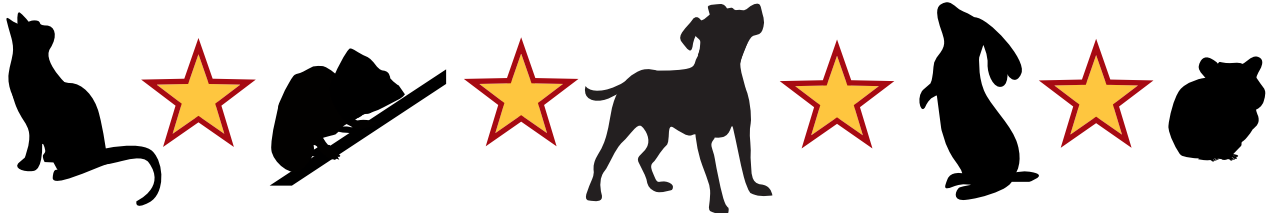
But a shelter’s biggest friends are rescue groups. Shelters are in the business of saving lives and like

any business, successful shelters are rewarding their best customers by offering them special deals in return for their loyalty. That means giving something back to rescue groups, who typically save many animals every year. The deal: “any animal, any time.”

In 1998, California passed a law making it illegal for shelters to kill animals when rescue groups were willing to save them. As a result, the number of animals saved, rather than killed, increased in California from 12,526 before the law went into effect to 58,939 in 2010—a lifesaving increase of over 370%.



RESCUE GROUPS ARE A SHELTER’S BEST ALLY





NUMBER

4

Set Specific Goals and Celebrate Success



Goals have a way of uniting and inspiring people. Setting specific goals motivates staff members and volunteers by giving them a specific benchmark for which to strive, especially when those benchmarks are tied to the larger, overall plan to end the killing. Being able to measure success at any specific time in relation to a specific goal helps 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 general public is made aware of the shelter's lifesaving goals and asked to step up to the plate during times of unanticipated or challenging circumstances, people respond to the shelter's determination to maintain lifesaving not only by adopting in greater numbers, but often, with increased financial generosity as well.

In addition, every success should be celebrated. It is a powerful motivator for staff and volunteers to be made aware when the shelter is succeeding. According to a local humane society, "We ring a bell and everyone pauses to applaud when each adoption is completed. It reminds us all of what we are doing here and it makes the pet adopter feel special." It is also important for the shelter to make sure that volunteers, who donate their time and

energy, are made to feel appreciated, too. In addition to friendly staff who greet and thank volunteers, an annual event which awards and celebrates a shelter's volunteers helps the shelter to retain those volunteers, who feel that their important contribution is recognized and rewarded.

A colorful poster for a volunteer appreciation ceremony. It features a woman in a white sailor-style uniform with a blue collar and a white hat, standing and looking towards the right. The background is a gradient of blue, green, and yellow. At the top, there is a banner that reads "JOIN US FOR A SALUTE TO OUR VOLUNTEERS". Below this, the text "Local Humane Society's Annual Volunteer Appreciation & Awards Ceremony" is displayed. Further down, the "Location: Town Hall", "Date: May 6", and "Time: 7-9 pm" are listed. At the bottom, there are silhouettes of a dog and a cat. The poster concludes with the phrase "A special thank you to our partners in lifesaving!".

**JOIN US FOR A
SALUTE
TO OUR VOLUNTEERS**

**Local Humane Society's
Annual Volunteer
Appreciation & Awards
Ceremony**

**Location: Town Hall
Date: May 6
Time: 7-9 pm**

A special thank you to our partners in lifesaving!

NUMBER

5

Make the shelter fun and inviting



Nothing makes a person feel welcome like a smile and hello, but getting people to stay and adopt can only be done by interaction with the 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 a smile and “hello” at the door. Shelters should set up play areas for cats, have lots of cat toys, and let people take them out of cages and interact with them. They should set up a doggy pool, have tennis balls and Frisbees, and invite the public to walk dogs and play with them, too. People will stay longer, interact more, and adopt more.

Old-school animal sheltering dogma advises minimizing public contact with animals, but it is human nature to want to make personal contact. Shelters should encourage the public to interact with the animals—to touch, spend time, and fall in love with them. Even if they do not adopt, the animals enjoy the attention. Studies show that the benefit of socialization and contact not only increases adoptions, but also decreases the animals’ stress which makes them more resistant to disease.

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INVITE THE PUBLIC TO A PARTY!



It's easy to get the public to fall in love with the animals in your shelter; the trick is making sure they have the opportunity to do so. This requires reforming the image of your shelter from a sad place where abandoned animals are killed to a happy place where animals are celebrated and given a new lease on life. Find multiple opportunities throughout the year to invite the public to the shelter. Host holiday celebrations and other parties to boost community participation in special adoption incentives or to celebrate when your shelter reaches important benchmarks. Promoting upcoming events in local newspapers or through the social media will ensure a good turn out. Such events can rebrand your shelter as a family-fun destination that will not only increase people visiting the shelter, but promote adoptions as well.

Encourage one of your most desirable adopter demographics—families with children—to visit your shelter by hosting fun animal-related activities for the whole family.



NUMBER

6

Go on the road

Most shelters are located in remote, out of the way parts of the community. In other words, they aren't located 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 wait for people to come to the shelter, successful shelters are taking the animals to the people. Over 20 years ago, the San Francisco SPCA created the nation's first offsite adoption program, setting up adoption locations throughout the city: at shopping malls, in the financial district, at neighborhood gathering places. During its heyday, the San Francisco SPCA had seven offsite adoption locations seven days a week. Roughly one out of four animals were adopted offsite, and over the years, that has meant tens of thousands animals have found a home while being showcased outside



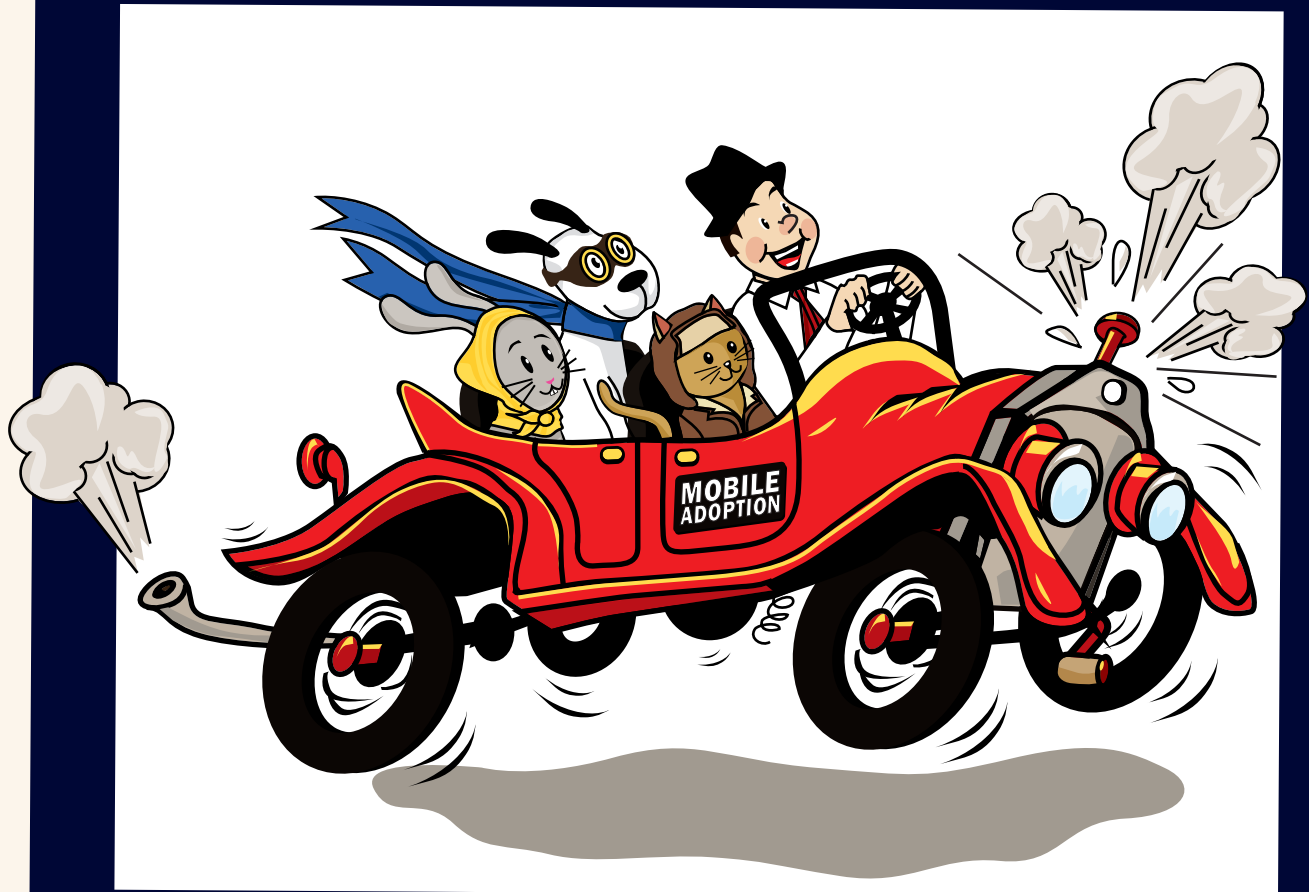
of the shelter. In Tompkins County, New York, in addition to adopting out animals seven days a week at the shelter, regularly scheduled offsite adoption events throughout the week, adoptions at the local pet supply store, and adoptions at the local mall during peak periods, the SPCA partnered with local businesses—a hardware store and a groomer—to use their lobbies as permanent satellite adoption locations. Both were located in prime shopping locations and conducted adoptions onsite seven days a week. Periodic adoption events at a local pet supply store help, but they are only the tip of the iceberg.

PERMANENT AND POP-UP ADOPTION VENUES

Pet supply stores, groomers and other pet related businesses make great permanent offsite adoption locations. Not only are they staffed by those who care for animals and do not mind tending to them, they are visited by people who already have animals and are therefore potential adopters. From the store owner's perspective, they also encourage new and potentially lucrative customers who need to stock up on supplies for their new best friend, items such as food, bowls, beds, leashes, brushes and carriers.

But permanent offsite adoption venues are only one option to increase out-of-the-shelter exposure for animals in need of homes. Such offsite venues should be augmented with temporary, "pop-up" offsite adoption events throughout your community. Good locations include regular, weekly events such as the local Farmer's Markets or a sporting event. Locations where there is likely to be heavy foot traffic such as malls or parks are successful, too, especially on the weekends. And don't forget special occasions such as grand openings, community festivals, and church bazaars. The shelter benefits from publicity already being done for such events; while business owners and event sponsors know that advertising animals for adoption will result in more exposure and bigger crowds.

HAVE PETS, *Will Travel!*



Meet your new best
friend at one of our offsite
adoption locations **TODAY!**

LOCAL HUMANE SOCIETY

NUMBER

7

Market & Promote the Animals & Your Mission



Out of sight is out of mind when it comes to where people get their next companion. In a shelter survey of adopters, 83% said they were influenced to adopt from the shelter by hearing about the organization: reading about them in the newspaper, seeing them at a local community event, finding them online, hearing about them on the radio, or word of mouth. Only 17% said

adopting from them was their first choice or something they always knew they would do. To get more adoptions, the shelter must be in the public eye.

A shelter gets the message out on radio and television, in the newspaper, with posters and flyers, by speaking to community groups, and doing offsite adoptions. In one year, the shelter in Tompkins County, New York was mentioned either on the radio, television, or a newspaper 409 times, averaging 37 stories per month, with a public relations budget close to zero. Have fun, be creative, and the community will do the rest. And just as importantly in this day and age, go viral.

Today, having a website is an indispensable part of any organization, but it isn't enough to save all the lives at risk. Seven out of ten internet users are on social marketing websites like Facebook and Twitter. If a shelter is not utilizing those social networks, it is missing out on an important market share for promoting their animals. According to Animal Ark shelter in Minnesota, a pioneer in this field, "The sharing of adoptable animals via social networking sites is viral marketing in its truest, purest and best form. It costs virtually nothing to get started, and the payoffs are tremendous: more and quicker adoptions, donations, and other support."



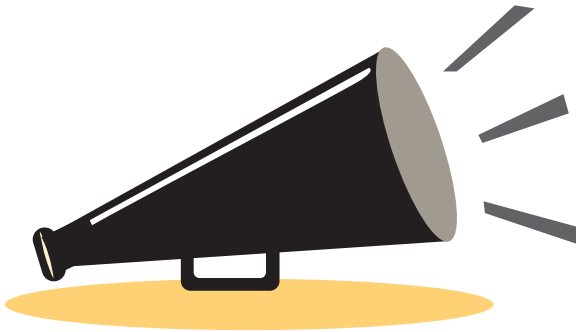
ADOPT



LOCAL HUMANE SOCIETY



TALK TO YOUR COMMUNITY



Visuals that announce your lifesaving mission to the community and enlist support are important tools to recruit the public's help and maximize its vast potential. In a world saturated with images, make sure yours are fun and creative so that they command attention.

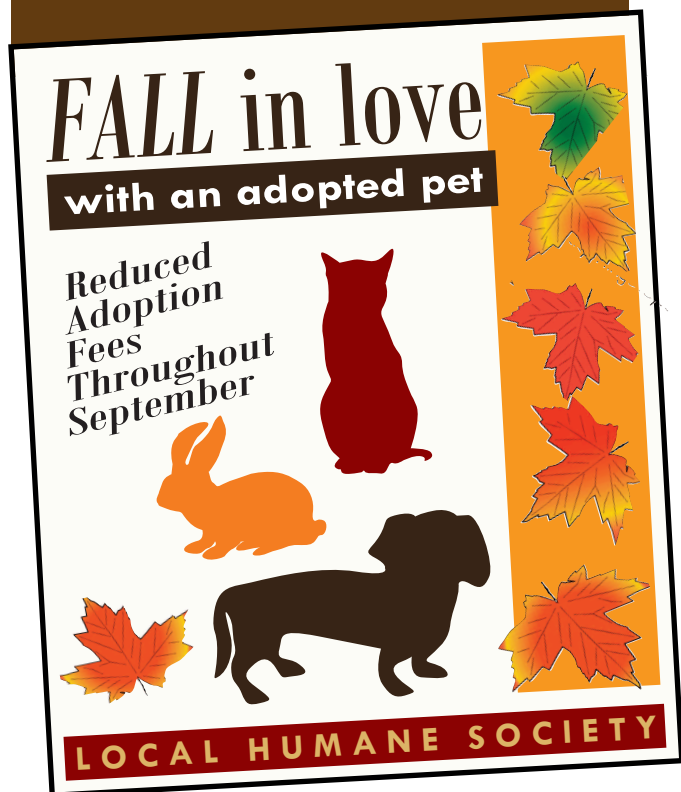




Targeted Incentives Motivate Adopters

Sometimes potential adopters need a little push. They've been wanting to adopt for a while but haven't taken the plunge so give them a reason to do so *now*.

Holidays, the changing of the seasons and other occasions that are marked by ritual and transition can be harnessed to motivate potential adopters. Remind the public that adding a new member to the family can be a wonderful way to celebrate special occasions. At the same time, incentives such as lowered adoption fees to go with such promotions give adopters another reason to adopt now rather than later.



Seize the day. Need help reaching an adoption goal? Has the shelter experienced a large, unexpected influx of animals who need new homes? Everyone wants to be a hero so show them how they can be one! Not only do adopters get the reward of being one, but they get a new best friend, too!

Special Delivery!

Home
for the
Holidays

Experience magic
this holiday season!
Adopt a pet from the
Local Humane
Society this
December & Santa
will deliver him to
your home.

LOCAL HUMANE SOCIETY

HARNESSING THE POWER OF THE MEDIA

Harnessing the power of the media in all of its various forms is vital to a shelter's success. The public cares about their community's homeless animals and members of the media know it. Approach the decision makers at your local radio, television, and print media outlets to ask if you can partner to keep the public informed and up-to-date on the latest happenings at the shelter. Use these opportunities to ask the community for help, to highlight animals with special needs, to announce upcoming events and to share your successes and goals.



TELEVISION

Set up a regular Pet-of-the-Week segment on a local television station. Contact local cable access shows to inquire about guest opportunities to promote your organization and the many wonderful animals available for adoption. And remember, animals make for great television. Invite news crews to the shelter whenever you have adoption specials, parties, holiday celebrations, or whenever extraordinary circumstances such as a cruelty case or a large influx of animals require additional assistance from the community.

RADIO

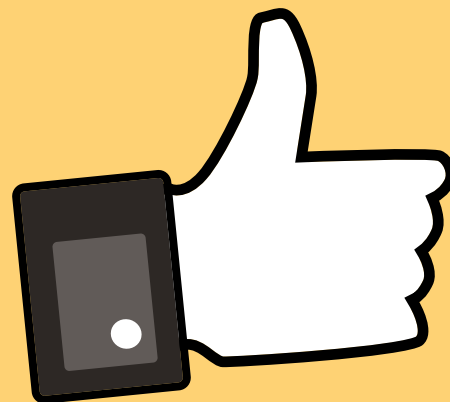
Pitch the idea of a short weekly spot for the shelter on a popular local morning talk show. Be sure to take advantage of free public service announcements on the radio as well. Record short ads about your shelter and its mission and give them to the local radio station to have on hand when filler is needed. Often, they will run these ads for free.



NEWSPAPER

In addition to a Pet-of-the-Week piece that includes a heartwarming description of an animal currently available for adoption, pitch the idea of a monthly column in the local newspaper.

THE SOCIAL MEDIA



Today, having a website is an indispensable part of any organization. But in sheltering, it isn't enough to save all the lives at risk. Seven out of ten internet users are on social marketing websites like Facebook and Twitter. If a shelter is not utilizing those social networks, it is missing out on an important market share for promoting their animals.

NUMBER

8

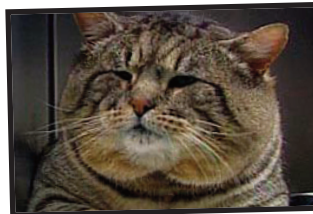
Put their best face forward



According to shelter directors who have tops-in-the-nation rates of lifesaving, there is no doubt that a good photograph that shows off the animal's best qualities advertised in a newspaper, a pet of the week ad, a flyer, or online will get people to the shelter to meet him or her. But it is the story that will close the deal. 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 even a little about their ideal home. In fact, PetRescue, an online adoption gateway in Australia, doesn't allow people to search by breed. Their philosophy is that people want to know what the dog is *like*, not what he is *supposed to be like* and they are trying to replicate the experience of going to a shelter and looking at all the dogs. And the payoff has been big: over 50,000 animals find a home through them every year.

Please Allow Me To Introduce Myself

Just like people, every animal has a personality. Some animals are energetic and playful, some animals prefer the quiet, sedate life. Some animals are gregarious and extroverted, others are shy and sweet. Shelter staff and volunteers should get to know the animals so they can convey their character and disposition to potential adopters. When adopters can identify with an animal as an individual, they are more likely to make a personal connection. When they make a personal connection, they are more likely to adopt. Have fun with the descriptions of animals in newspaper "Pet of the Week" ads and on shelter cage cards, using humor when appropriate. The way to a person's heart is through their funny bone.



**BUSTER
MALE, NEUTERED
DLH, TABBY
BRN & WHT
5 YEARS**

Hello, nice to meet you, my name is Buster. I am a five year old tabby cat and I'd love to watch you watch T.V. If you are a couch potato, I am the cat for you. When I am not eating, I prefer a recumbent position, preferably while lying in a lap and being scratched behind my fuzzy brown ears. Studies show that petting a cat can lower your blood pressure and I know it lowers mine: a classic "win-win." Adopt me and you can keep your heart healthy by doing nothing more than exercising the hand that pets me. And whether you prefer "Cops" to "Downton Abbey" or the other way around, it's all the same to me. I promise to never ask you to change the channel or to give me the remote - just keep on pettin' and we're good. The dude abides...

LOCAL HUMANE SOCIETY

A Picture Speaks a Thousand Words

Who will be adopted first?



The photo above of a dog described as a “Pit-mix” was posted online by a Texas shelter. Because the dog is being weighed in the photo, it was most likely taken immediately upon admittance and possibly during a physical examination. The dog appears both nervous and shy, and his anxiety comes through in the photograph. With the dog facing a barren wall and a rope (not even a leash!) pulling on his neck, it is a sad, even tragic picture that conveys heartbreak. It is hard to look at, summoning to mind the dogs’ possibly sad history rather than what should await him: a bright and hopeful future. Taken from above, the photograph also makes it difficult to see the dog’s face. It does not capture the dog’s personality or highlight his unique and most appealing physical characteristic: an adorable “Petey from the Little Rascals” spot around one eye.

Unlike the depressing photo of the dog on the left, the picture of this dog below conveys the message “I am cute, frisky and fun!” With her big purple ball, a wide grin and a stance that says, “Let’s play!” the personality of this dog comes through loud and clear. Neither nervous nor shy, she is fully acclimated to the shelter where she is no doubt being well-socialized and well-cared for, allowing her natural charms to shine through. A photo like this sparks the imagination of potential adopters who can easily envision a great time playing fetch at the park or taking this cheerful, energetic dog for a long run on the beach. The lure of this dog, captured so beautifully by this photograph, is undeniable. Just try not to smile when looking at it.



NUMBER

9

Be reasonable



Some shelters think that by charging an arm and a leg, they guarantee good homes. But this is a mistake. A multi-state survey found that even waiving adoption fees did not reduce either the quality of the home, the strength of the bond, or the longevity of the adoption. It did find, however, that it greatly increased the number of adoptions. Why? People have lots of choices on where they can get an animal and price will influence their decision. In addition to the adoption fee, adopters have lots of other expenses such as collars, leashes, toys, and even a trip to the veterinarian.

Moreover, adoption policies should be thoughtful, not based on outdated myths. Before a cat, dog, rabbit, guinea pig, hamster, or other animal is killed while a home is being turned down, shelter managers should honestly ask themselves what they would want if they were the one facing the needle. Some shelter animals already have enough going against them: false perceptions that shelter animals are “damaged goods,” poor shelter location, poor hours, poor customer service, a dirty and dilapidated facility. Shelters should not add unnecessary roadblocks like one rescue group in Pennsylvania which refuses to adopt to “unmarried cohabitating adults.”

Ensuring a good home doesn't mean arbitrary rules, it doesn't require that potential adopters be grilled for an hour or to fill out a 10-page application. Americans have many options when it comes to getting a new best friend, and when they make the decision to adopt from a shelter rather than going to more convenient places, like the local pet store,

shelters shouldn't start out with the presumption they can't be trusted.

Screening may be an important part of the adoption process, but a rigid, bureaucratic undertaking is hardly necessary. By talking to and educating potential adopters rather than interrogating them, shelters can place animals in loving homes, without alienating people or making them feel like criminals.

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FOR A JOB WELL DONE...

“The animals and the people in our community are counting on us. We won’t let them down.”



REMEMBER! **ADOPTION IS LIFE**

NUMBER

10

Turn challenges into opportunities



At some point, every shelter experiences an extraordinary influx of large numbers of animals. The difference between those shelters who are successful and those who fail are the decisions made by those who run them. A shelter's options are only limited by imagination.

Imagination allowed a shelter which has a "capacity" of 375 but found itself with 750 animals due to a hoarding bust to empty its shelter without killing. Imagination allowed an open admission shelter in New Zealand to triple its adoption rate overnight. And it allowed a Nevada shelter to more than double its number of adoptions on a weekend the Department of

Transportation closed the street it was on for repairs. All by being creative, marketing animals, running promotions, and engaging the community.



TAP THE POTENTIAL

There is enough love and compassion for animals in every community to overcome the challenges every shelter encounters. But to realize this overwhelming potential, shelter leadership must embrace it.



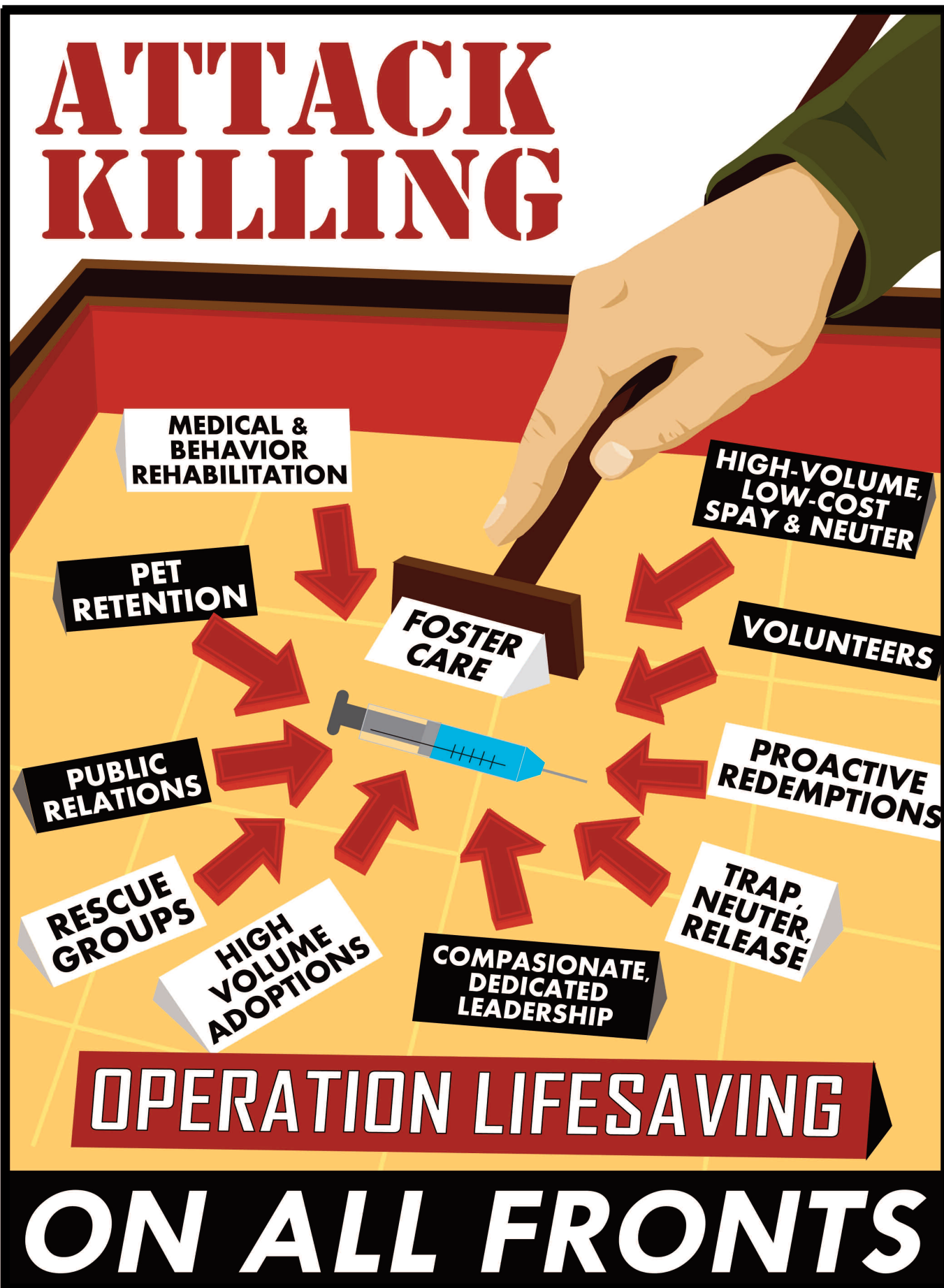
WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU ORANGES



IN 2007, the Nevada Humane Society took in 54 orange cats from an alleged hoarder. At a traditional shelter, animals from such households are often killed, while the shelter director claims that there is simply no choice because there are too many animals for the too few homes available. Thankfully, NHS is not a “traditional” shelter. As with the 11 other hoarding cases the shelter has handled since it embraced the No Kill philosophy, creative outreach to the public resulted in loving, new homes for all the animals. None were killed. Moreover, the shelter reaped the rewards from a grateful public, too. The people of Reno were so touched by “The Great Orange Cat Rescue” that the shelter quickly raised all the money it needed to cover medical care for the cats—and most of it from individuals who had never donated to the shelter before. One man who loved orange cats was so moved by their response that he sent them a \$5,000 donation just to say, “Thank you.”

If a shelter does good things for animals, tells people about it and then asks for their help, people will give it.

ATTACK KILLING



Creating a Brighter Future

IMAGINE:

Through your pet retention program, you reduce the number of people who surrender their animals after you help solve their problems by 59%.


Through your proactive efforts to get strays home, you triple the percentage of dogs and increase seven-fold the percentage of cats being reclaimed by their families.

Through your TNR program, many feral cats don't come into the shelter. Through your barn cat program, when they do, they go into barn homes.

Through your low cost spay/neuter program, almost 70% of people with unsterilized animals get their animals altered.

Through your partnerships with rescue organizations, your volunteer foster parents, and medical and behavior rehabilitation programs, animals are moving expeditiously through the system and into the care of the community.

And then, you turbocharge your adoption program. What would be the result? For the animals who remained in your shelter, you will have adopted your way out of killing.

An illustration featuring a large black silhouette of a dog sitting on the left and a black silhouette of a cat standing on the right. They are positioned on a green grassy field. In the background, a bright yellow sun with rays is rising over a horizon line. A red rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the illustration, containing white text.

**You will have
achieved a
No Kill
community.**



NO KILL ADVOCACY CENTER

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