June is American Humane's
ADOPT-A-CAT MONTH®
SPECIAL ALL-CAT ISSUE
“I get no respect” may be best known as comedian Rodney Dangerfield’s trademark lament, but it also captures the dilemma of cats as companion animals — which is no laughing matter.

Although the animal welfare community has significantly stemmed the tide of dog overpopulation in many parts of the U.S., most shelters have not seen much — if any — reduction in cat population. More cats than dogs are surrendered to shelters nationwide each year, and we’ll be reminded of that fact all too vividly during the coming months.

In addition, many cat owners take a different attitude than dog owners about the frequency (and even the necessity) of veterinary care for their pet, as well as the amount of money they’re willing to spend on it. Cats suffer — often literally — from the perception that they are aloof, self-sufficient creatures who require little or no attention from their owners.

To help combat this misconception, American Humane has partnered with The CATalyst Council to celebrate our 2010 Adopt-A-Cat Month® in June. The CATalyst Council was formed in 2008 as a coalition of veterinary, animal welfare, academic and industry organizations whose common goal is to improve society’s image of cats and raise the level of veterinary care for cats, thereby maximizing the health and longevity of our feline friends.

Thanks to this powerful and passionate alliance, American Humane’s Adopt-A-Cat Month will not only promote cat adoptions during the busy kitten season, but also encourage a lifetime of proper veterinary care for all cats. Our Adopt-A-Cat Month shelter kit contains tools to help you do both, including:

- This special “cats only” double issue of Protecting Animals
- A “Give a Shelter Cat a Starring Role in Your Life” poster
- Connecting With Cats, a children’s activity book for use in your humane education program
- CATegorical Care: An Owner’s Guide to America’s #1 Companion, a handbook on lifelong cat care from The CATalyst Council

In the following pages, you’ll find articles that address the three cornerstones of cat adoption at shelters: housing/enrichment, foster care and marketing. The content for these articles came from your peers at shelters large and small, urban and rural, across the country, so we’re delighted to be sharing real-world ideas that are making a difference for cats.

Of course, the hard work of increasing cat adoptions and improving cat care won’t stop on July 1. Here at American Humane, we’ll continue to support shelters in their efforts to do both, and we invite you to try out the tips in this magazine and to learn more about the The CATalyst Council at www.catalystcouncil.org.

Please share your Adopt-A-Cat Month stories, successes and suggestions with American Humane at cats@americanhumane.org. We can’t wait to hear from you!

Sincerely,

Debrah R. Schnackenberg
Vice President, Animal Protection Division
As animal shelters have become more progressive, we’ve seen increased recognition of the important role that housing plays in the physical and emotional needs of their residents. In particular, the size and type of housing can mean the difference between health and disease for shelter cats. Susceptibility to upper respiratory infections (URI) and other diseases is directly related to a cat’s stress level. Cats housed in cramped cages with little social interaction and no access to toys, hiding places or climbing places have much higher stress levels and are more likely to contract contagious diseases. Housing styles can also significantly affect cat adoption rates, as studies have shown that animals showcased in settings with toys, beds and attractive décor are much more likely to get adopted. (For an overview of cat housing recommendations from the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program, see sidebar on page 5.)

Fortunately, shelters across the country are outdoing themselves to create cat housing so attractive and appealing that it rivals anything seen on the pages of Architectural Digest. Here’s a sampling of some innovative designs that are helping shelter cats become healthier, happier and more adoptable.

CREATURE COMFORTS: NEW DIRECTIONS IN CAT HOUSING AND ENRICHMENT
The San Francisco SPCA, San Francisco, Calif.

Dori Villalon, vice president

The SFSPCA is known for our Maddie’s Adoption Center, a cageless environment where animals lounge in condos, either singularly or in pairs. Most of the condos come equipped with a television where bird and squirrel videos are shown. Cat trees are essential, as is comfortable and inviting bedding, such as a teepee or cozy bed. Condos have cat-related artwork on the walls and large windows that provide the stimulation of the outside world. Some condos have windows joining each room so cats can see each other and the goings-on of the shelter. Our spacious, quiet and soothing environment is vital for the successful transition of a shelter cat to a loving home.

Underage/undersocialized kittens are housed in double-size laminate cages with a portal opening in the middle. We use a large dry-erase board to communicate with volunteers about which cats need extra TLC and to ensure that all cats get daily interactions.

In all isolation and quarantine areas, we use a papier-mâché (compostable) litter box with clay or Good Mews litter, depending on the cat’s preference or medical needs. This eliminates the need for litter box scrubbing and the possibility of spreading disease.

Our kennel enrichment would not be complete without the loving attention of our volunteers. Our shelter care and adoption housing provide enough space and comfort for the volunteers to spend time with our cats. They provide a vital role in the enrichment and general comfort of our cats and make our shelter the closest thing to a real home.

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The larger rooms are ideal for housing multiple cats and kittens while still giving them the opportunity to showcase their individuality, while the smaller rooms allow a shy cat to blossom at its own pace.

Condos receive daily housekeeping, but we don’t disturb the cats with full cleaning. The condos are thoroughly disinfected when a cat is placed. The cats (and clients) love the Hide, Perch & Go™ boxes (which can be used in a cage and then converted to a cat carrier when the cat is adopted). Cats are entertained with wine corks, ping-pong balls and toothbrushes (cheap and easily sanitized, but watch your drains!). Volunteers make and sell a simple stick toy with rubber tubing hanging from one end (again, easily cleaned and protects hands from accidental scratches).

Our Shelter Medicine Department is made up of individual 6-foot-long, kennel-like condos for new arrivals and cats undergoing treatment prior to adoption. Because of disease control, this housing is more traditional, but cats enjoy their Hide, Perch & Go boxes and have access to an elevated shelf. The open-room quarantine is essential for cats that need the space to roam, especially if they’re being treated for an illness that may harbor longer if they do not have the enrichment and freedom to move. Cats that are under ringworm treatment are housed in steel kennels and cages with individual drainage and higher isolation protocols. They receive the same enrichment, only with tighter restrictions on laundry and cleaning.

Hide, Perch & Go box
Nebraska Humane Society, Omaha, Neb.

Nikki Harris, executive director

We just renovated our cat cages to expand the cats’ space by adding portholes. We have a bank of eight cages where we can open up two cages side-by-side, as well as four cages that are already large. In the rest of the 54 cages, we created the opportunity for the cats to have fourplexes by adding portholes that allow the cats to move up, down or sideways to adjacent cages. The up/down movement provides a lot of entertainment for the cats and the customers!

We also received a donation to convert a dog-nursery area into Cat Alley, where we group-house cats in the summer when we get busy. We cut down the walls, added benches for the public, and provided lots of places to hide and vertical space (including walking platforms up high) for the cats. We also have two rooms we can convert using cat trees and furniture during high-volume months.

Cat Housing Recommendations

from the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program

Colony Housing

Group housing needs to be done with care. It is not appropriate to simply “dump” cats into groups, nor is it a good idea to continually mix and match. Housing groups should be kept as stable as possible (i.e., avoid constantly adding new cats to replace cats who are adopted).

A minimum of about 19 square feet of floor space per cat is recommended to avoid high stress levels in group housing areas. Vertical space can be used in the space calculation/allocation for cats (assuming there are shelves, etc., for them to use). No more than 10-12 cats should be housed in each colony room, regardless of the size of the room. The one reason not to have only colony housing for cats in shelters is that it has been shown that single cat housing is less stressful during the initial shelter stay. There is scientific data indicating that group housing can relieve stress during long shelter stays, but may increase stress for cats that are put into group housing in the first few days of their shelter stay. Importantly, some cats are never comfortable in group housing, so shelters need to have single cages for them as well.

Single Housing

The UC Davis recommendation for singly housed cats is that they have at least 10.8 square feet of floor area. The typical shelter cat cage is barely half this size. If this cage size is not practical, shelters should aim to at least provide enough housing space so that each cat has:

• Enough space to stretch to full body length
• At least a 3-foot separation between feeding, resting and elimination areas
• Room for an adequately sized litter box and a hiding box
• Sufficient floor space for locomotion and play

For more information on cat housing and other topics, visit the Shelter Health Portal at www.sheltermedicine.org.
Animal Humane | New Mexico, Albuquerque, N.M.

Peggy Weigle, executive director

Last year, we built our Robbie Jones Memorial Cat House, which provides communal living for cats in four indoor/outdoor “pods.” We wanted potential adopters to go into the cats’ habitat to meet them on their own turf, rather than having to take the cats out of their comfort zone for a meeting.

- Each pod is 12 feet by 12 feet, and can accommodate six cats at a time, for a total of 24 cats.
- The pods have cubby space, vertical space, shelves and cat doors.
- The interior design was donated by professionals. A San Francisco designer provided the “checkmate” theme (in red/purple and red/mango) for two of the pods, which contain easy-to-build, 2-foot-square wooden cubes with colored Plexiglas fronts with circular openings that we stack for the cats. Local architects designed and built the other two pods: “Pish Posh in the Park” features a plywood cutout of a tree with perches and a picket fence to hide litter boxes, and “Très Chat” has grey-and-orange ramps and shelves, along with a wall-size collage made of black-and-white cat photos.
- Each pod has fenced-in outdoor space with rafters, planks and perches, as well as nearby birdfeeders the cats can watch.
- People seating is available in each pod, which makes it easy for the kitties to approach adopters.
- The Cat House is self-contained with its own sink and laundry. Each pod has its own dedicated cleaning materials, which makes it easy to manage hygiene. We also hang aprons on each door for visitors and volunteers to wear.

We received funding to build the Cat House from a capital campaign that raised $170,000 in three months. The cat people in this area opened their hearts and their pocketbooks, and were thrilled that we were doing this. To thank them, we offered naming opportunities for each pod; for a $10,000 donation, donors had their name and an image of their cat painted on a beautiful ceramic plaque designed by a local artist.

The best news is that adoptions have been higher in the cat pods than in the shelter’s traditional cattery. In February, we also opened a new adoption center — complete with its own “checkmate” pod — in midtown Albuquerque that houses 20 pets at a time. We were hoping to adopt out 45 animals in our opening month, but we adopted 118 in February alone! The location makes it easy for people to stop by on their lunch hour and see the animals, rather than having to come to the shelter.
When we designed our new facility, we made a conscious effort to put our cats front and center so people have to walk past the cats to get to the dogs (kind of like putting milk in the back of the grocery store!). Our shelter is designed to show the personality of the cats. The condo rooms are enclosed pods with glass fronts that allow visitors to see the cats without being aware of the dozens of litter boxes that are around. This also keeps the cats calm and stress-free. There is a special socialization room in between the two pods where volunteers can take the cats to exercise, socialize or just stretch out for a while in a homelike environment. Calming music, L-Lysine additive for their food and hiding perches are provided to keep the cats stress-free and healthy while they await adoption.

We also installed two free-roam rooms with glass fronts that hold up to 10 cats (all free-roam cats must be over 6 months old, non-contagious, and tested and vaccinated against FeLV). We choose cats for these spaces based on their ability to get along with other cats. We also look for cats that we feel might be with us a bit longer and need extra space, as well as cats that just don’t show well in the smaller condo cages. Volunteers have access to work with the cats in these rooms based on their experience level and number of volunteer hours they have put in. While we don’t have these spaces readily accessible to the public for safety reasons, we do allow the public in with an adoption counselor.

We want people to see cats in a normal home environment, so one free-roam room is decorated like a bedroom where cats can sleep in a dresser drawer, on the bed or in the cubbyholes of the shelving unit. The other room looks like a sunroom with comfortable furniture and a table and chairs. The windows at the back of both rooms overlook a yard with trees and birdfeeders; we call this “Cat TV.”

We also just designed our new FIV suite, The Cat Cottage, that can house up to five FIV-positive, asymptomatic cats. This area has a combination of cages and free roam, depending on the cats in our facility at the time. We do a lot of education since these cats tend to be more difficult to place, and we adopt them only into homes with no other cats or with other FIV-positive cats.
Cat Care Society, Lakewood, Colo.

Abbi Collins, adoption manager

All of our cats are housed in colony rooms, and we have been doing it this way since 1981. (You can find pictures on our website under “Virtual Tour” at www.catcaresociety.org.) Enrichment consists of volunteers who come in weekly and visit the cats to play, groom and cuddle. We have an internal program called “Love-A-Cat” where our vet tech selects new or older cats who need extra attention for socialization, easing the transition into the shelter and/or maintaining a healthy attitude. Staff members are encouraged to pick one of the cats on the list to spend time with on a daily basis. Every colony room contains lots of toys, a water fountain, one or more scratching posts or pads, windows and shelves. We also provide various types of bedding arrangements, including open beds, hooded beds and rugs. Four of the colony rooms have outdoor enclosures that we call “Habicats.” The cats have access to them when the weather is nice, via a cat door, and each Habicat has chairs for visitors.

SPCA of Central Florida, Orlando, Fla.

Barbara Wetzler, president

We are really proud of having been able to build a new shelter just for cats at our Sanford facility. Our original design showed only two outdoor recreation areas adjacent to two free-roam rooms, but we added two more outdoor rec areas to the other two free-roam rooms. We also added three meet-and-greet rooms and a much larger, healthier space for treating sick cats.

It is such a treat to pull up to the building and see the kitties jumping in and out of the windows (heaven forbid they should use the cat doors!). All of our cat trees were made and donated by a terrific local company, Pet Tree Houses (www.PetTreeHouses.com).

Outdoor rec area, SPCA of Central Florida

Cat tree, SPCA of Central Florida
Humane Society of Sedona, Sedona, Ariz.
Birgitte “B” Skielvig, executive director

We have two cat activity rooms with outdoor porches: The large one holds 10 adults, and the smaller one can house six to eight kittens. Cats and kittens are introduced to the activity rooms gradually; they are kept in a crate inside the group room for 24 hours or so before turning them loose. Both rooms have a cat door and a sliding glass door that lead to an outdoor porch. The outdoor porch is enclosed using glass panels on the bottom and vertical aluminum rods (custom designed by Snyder Manufacturing) on top — the same design as our dog kennels. Our volunteers love to come and sit with the animals in the cat rooms!

The Chemung County Humane Society and SPCA, Elmira, N.Y.
Jaclyn P. Welles, PR and marketing coordinator

We finished our newly renovated cat adoption room and unveiled it to the public in December 2009, although it was in use starting in June 2009. Veterinary students from the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine helped with the design of the room, and it was paid for by a grant from the Sweetbay Foundation. The new cat room uses colony housing where multiple cats live in an open environment.

Since its opening, we have seen a dramatic decrease in the average number of days cats stay in our shelter. In 2008, our average length of stay for cats was 80 days, while in 2009 our average stay was 48 days — a decrease of about 40 percent.

In shelters that have cat rooms similar to ours, the prevalence of disease present in the population of cats decreased by almost 20 percent on a monthly basis. Also, the incidence of disease and the number of cats at risk for disease decreased by almost half in shelters with similar housing. We have seen similar numbers in disease reduction. A lot of people come into the shelter and drop off goodies for the animals. Every time they do, we ask them if they want to go say hi to the critters in the back. Sometimes they say, “No, it’s too sad back there.” Now we tell them, “Why don’t you go take a look, you might be surprised.” They come to the lobby after their visit glad that they saw our positive changes.

Now we tell them, “Why don’t you go take a look, you might be surprised.”

- Jaclyn P. Welles
To learn more about the latest advances in shelter housing for cats, American Humane spoke with one of the nation’s leading shelter consultants, Larry Gates of Animal Arts, located in Boulder, Colo.

“The most important issue today in shelter housing for felines is to create lower-stress environments for the cats,” says Gates. He advises shelters to follow the UC Davis guidelines for cat housing — which call for much more space than has traditionally been allotted to shelter cats — in order to decrease sickness and animal care days. According to Gates, “They have put the science behind what all of us have been inherently thinking.”

“Concentrate on creating spaces where cats are less fearful, anxious, frustrated and depressed, and you’ll have fewer stressed-out cats, which translates to fewer sick cats,” says Gates. “And since you can move cats out of the shelter faster when they’re not sick, you don’t need as large of a holding area, so you can actually decrease your shelter size and capacity.”

In addition to providing better housing in terms of size, Gates is adamant about the importance of designing shelter operations to reduce the moving and handling of cats. “At most shelters, cats move from observation to stray holding to adoption at a minimum. That’s three moves and three different environments, and each move increases stress and the chance of getting sick.” Gates advises, “Get them safe and secure, and leave them there. It will make a huge difference in the health of your cats.”

Here are some of Gates’ other suggestions for creating housing that is conducive to healthier, more adoptable cats:

• Make sure you have adequate space for cats, not only in the adoption area, but also in intake and isolation, where they’re living in stainless-steel cages. “Cats in isolation need the most protection, but they typically get the worst housing,” says Gates.
Provide a choice of environment in condos and colonies. “Give cats space to express their normal behaviors. Use soft, warm surfaces and a variety of textures, and don’t place as much emphasis on cleanability.”

Create colonies with vertically separated resting spaces (high and low) where cats can sort out their own hierarchy. The number of shelves should exceed the number of cats so they can move around. Put cat hammocks and shoeboxes in cages to create hiding places and reduce stress.

Design group housing with a variety of resting and hiding spaces, and vertical access, such as stairs, so the cats can move around. Cats need a bubble of personal space — both vertical and horizontal — in group housing, preferably 3 to 9 feet away from other cats.

Provide multiple eating areas that are visually separated from each other, and an excess of litter boxes in multiple areas.

Install hard ceilings, rather than suspended, so cats can’t get lost or stuck in the ceiling.

Design cat condos so you can exhaust air directly through the cages rather than just exchanging air in the room. Cat areas require a high air-exchange rate (into the 30s), but that doesn’t take a lot of mechanical equipment. Gates strongly recommends 100 percent exhaust air in all cat areas, including isolation and adoption, with no exchange/recirculation.

Gates is an advocate of cat porches, stating, “You can get away with more in an outdoor environment, where natural daylight and fresh air help reduce disease. However, you have the same issues in terms of amount of space and separation requirements as you do with indoor cat colonies. The main concern with a cat porch is security.”

What if you don’t have the budget to scrape your current shelter and start over? “Do less with architecture and more with operational modes,” advises Gates. “If you have banks of stainless-steel cages, cut holes in them to allow access between cages, add resting and hiding places, and put them back together. Grouping your existing cages will make a huge difference.”

For information on Animal Arts, visit www.animalarts.com.
ENRICHMENT:
GOOD FOR CATS,
GOOD FOR ADOPTIONS

Do a few toys, some soft music and a little bit of cuddling really make that big of a difference in the lives of shelter animals? Yes, in fact, they do, says Katenna Jones, animal behaviorist at American Humane. “When I was the animal behaviorist at my previous shelter, I strongly encouraged my staff and volunteers to enrich the animals constantly. Initially, many felt it was too much work and money. Once we implemented it, we never had an outbreak of kennel cough or parvo, URI in the cat room was drastically reduced and we had no distemper at all. And in most cases, enrichment improves the animal’s overall disposition and behavior, thereby making the animal much more appealing to adopters. It absolutely works, and the staff enthusiastically jumped on board!”

Jones believes enrichment not only improves the health and increases the happiness of animals in shelters and foster care, but also holds incredible educational impact for the community. “Enrichment is an ideal opportunity to foster service learning in an organization while addressing the needs of the shelter animals,” she states. “Such programs offer the possibility to increase volunteer retention, adoptions and public support while decreasing staff turnover and euthanasia.”

Here are some basic guidelines that will help you reduce stress and enrich the lives of the animals in your care:

- Provide a variety of toys each day to reduce boredom, including interactive toys with treats inside to decrease stress and encourage physical exercise and mental stimulation through problem solving. Cat scratchers (www.StretchandScratch.com) for cages are also an affordable enrichment product that provides exercise and reduces stress for cats in confinement.
- Provide access to resting and hiding spots (paper bags, pillowcases, boxes, teepees, etc.) where animals feel safe and secure.
- Ensure scent familiarity. Every time cats rub or scratch things, they are leaving behind important scent messages. If cages and bedding are thoroughly cleaned every day or animals are routinely moved to new cages, they become stressed when entering unfamiliar-smelling living space. Instead, “spot clean” daily, and limit thorough cleaning to weekly or when an animal leaves or arrives.
- Facilitate social interactions among animals (without forcing them) and between animals and people.
- Reduce environmental stressors, including loud sounds, potentially frightening movements (near doorways and high-traffic areas) and visual contact between cats, dogs and small animals.

Want to learn more secrets to enriching the lives of animals in shelters and foster care? Host or attend American Humane’s “Rich With Enrichment” workshop! This workshop is appropriate for humane educators, shelter volunteers and shelter staff, including managers and directors. For more information, visit www.americanhumane.org/humaneeducation or email HumaneEd@americanhumane.org.
If you were in a lonely and isolated environment, and someone offered you either a treadmill or a crossword puzzle, chances are you’d want both," says CJ Bentley, MHS director of operations and behavior specialist. “We’ve found that by actively addressing an animal’s physical health and emotional well-being, we’re giving them control over their environment, which reduces their stress and ultimately their chances of contracting an illness.”

In addition to keeping cats healthy while they’re in the shelter environment, the program sends animals to their new homes with problem-solving skills and a readiness to engage with their new families. And who wouldn’t want a cat who waltzes into a carrier by himself or high-fives his new friends?

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**Michigan Humane Society, Detroit, Mich.**

**Michael Robbins, director of marketing and communications**

At the Michigan Humane Society adoption centers, you’ll find friendly felines of all ages and backgrounds — and some of them might even throw you a high-five as you walk by! In the summer of 2008, MHS introduced Pawsitive Start, an in-shelter training program designed to enrich the mental, physical and emotional well-being of its shelter animals. Every night, cats work with volunteer “personal trainers” who teach them skills, such as coming to the front of their cage to greet visitors, going into a carrier by themselves, lying on a blanket and giving a “high-five.” All of the skills taught are designed to reduce stress by involving animals in a problem-solving thought process that ultimately builds their “brain muscle” while allowing them to engage with people in a fun and meaningful way.
Animal Welfare Association, Voorhees, N.J.

Maya Richmond, executive director

I’ve been helping my staff really understand the benefits of enrichment and the need to do it for every animal, every day. When you have a process set up, enrichment is easy to fold into the regular daily activities of the staff. The goal is to improve the lives of the cats while they are in our care without adding work for the staff. Enrichment ideas won’t fly if they are burdensome for the staff and take away from duties like customer service, cleaning, behavior or medical rehabilitation work.

Enrichment can cost almost nothing to provide if you’re creative about it. Examples of free or inexpensive feline enrichment items include:

- Toilet paper rolls
- Pill bottles
- New sponges that are cut into cubes with a tiny bit of scent applied. We hide these in the community cat room and the cats like to seek the scents and “mark” by rubbing on the area.
- New paint rollers (donated) that we cut down and attach to the cage doors. Cats like the texture and rub, nuzzle and knead the rollers. After a few days of use, they are cut off and tossed.

These items cost more, but never break:

- 4-foot to 6-foot PVC T or Y joints: The kittens love to play in these and they can be washed. (They’re also great for dogs!)
- Lemon or orange squeezers with two parts (a top that fits into a base). We put a bit of tuna juice in the base, freeze it and let the cats work it out.

I’m a thrift store nut who visits stores on “50% off Saturdays” to load up on seasonal durable items that help enrich the cats’ lives while providing colorful, fun décor for the shelter. My recent finds have included colorful colanders for cats to sleep in, plastic eggs to place in cages around Easter and plastic spinners to hang from the ceiling that cats can watch from their cages.

School kids are great at collecting things, so I ask them to make pipe-cleaner toys or buy large puff balls at craft stores. My goal is to give each cat a newish toy every one to two days and then toss it! For every washable item, there should be three tossable items that are donated/collected each week.

We have tubs at the shelter labeled “Monday-Sunday” with the item we are hoping to collect in each one: Monday – toilet paper rolls; Tuesday – milk or bottle caps; Wednesday – pipe cleaners; Thursday – paper bags or boxes; Friday – empty pens or straws (to fill with a little food); Saturday – store-bought toys and paper balls (crumpled index cards); Sunday – ribbon/nylon tutu material for tying to the front of cages. We collect each item by asking the staff, volunteers and public to bring it in. You only need a few people to commit to one or two items, and you can develop a network that meets all your needs without much work.
Grammy-nominated singer/songwriter — and avid horse, dog and cat lover — Mary Ann Kennedy has more than 20 years of success in the country and pop music fields, including collaborations with good friend Emmy Lou Harris, Sting, Reba McEntire, Faith Hill and many others.

Kennedy’s newest CD, *Who Saved Who*, is devoted to dogs and cats, and features a title song that celebrates the special bond between people and rescue animals in particular.

Purchase *Who Saved Who* during Adopt-A-Cat Month (June), and Mary Ann Kennedy and CD Baby will donate 50 percent of the proceeds to American Humane!

Purchase or download *Who Saved Who* now at [www.maryannkennedy.com](http://www.maryannkennedy.com).
While foster programs are not a new concept for animal shelters, their role has increased in recent years as most shelters are no longer choosing to simply euthanize animals when they are filled to capacity. Many shelters now house more cats and kittens in foster homes than in their actual facilities during much of the year. It is not unusual for shelters to have as many as 200 to 300 cats in foster care during the height of kitten season. A robust network of fosters can be a lifeline during the spring, summer and early fall when most shelters are inundated with hundreds or even thousands of kittens, many of which are still nursing and cannot be adopted yet.

Although well worth the effort, building and managing a foster program can present many challenges. American Humane spoke with shelter professionals across the country about their foster programs and how they’re making the most of the foster phenomenon.
Animal Welfare Association, Voorhees, N.J.

In 2009, the Animal Welfare Association (AWA) fostered more than 1,400 cats, dogs and bunnies — a remarkable one out of every two animals that came to AWA. Most of the 1,400 were very small kittens and undersocialized kittens, but the shelter also does respite foster, including placing sick pets in foster homes and providing “foster hospice” for some older cats until they pass away. Says Executive Director Maya Richmond, “Our foster program definitely helps us save lives, because we only have one cat adoption room, one small treatment area and 30 dog runs. We saved 2,500-plus pets in 2009 only because we have been able to expand our capacity to care through the foster home network.”

For the past two years, volunteer Debbie Reindl has managed AWA’s foster program with the help of a volunteer assistant. Says Richmond, “I am truly amazed by all Debbie does! I’ve seen well-run foster programs under staff management, but I think this is the best program I’ve ever seen because of Debbie’s organization, passion, common sense and pure professionalism.”

Recruiting/Retaining

Our best method of recruiting new foster parents is through word-of-mouth from other dedicated foster parents. However, we also post on the community bulletin board of cable TV, provide an online application on our shelter website, and distribute brochures at veterinary clinics, pet stores, pet groomers, pet adoption events and other places animal lovers go. We retain fosters because we let them know they’ve made a very real contribution to helping solve a very real problem in this country. We also acknowledge exemplary foster parents at our “Spring Fling” dinner event.

Screening

The best applicants come recommended by another foster parent or are volunteers at the shelter. For other foster applicants, we get written permission to call for a reference from their veterinarian. We also have a detailed, lengthy phone conversation with each applicant, since allowing prospective foster parents to talk about their previous experience with pets and other organizations yields quite a bit of information. And in a relatively short time, it becomes evident how they care for their foster animals since all animals are seen at least biweekly by shelter staff.

It is not unusual for shelters to have as many as 200 to 300 cats in foster care during the height of kitten season.
Adoption

We encourage foster parents to be involved in finding loving homes for their foster animals, but they are in no way responsible for finding permanent homes for them. Generally once the foster period is over, the animals are returned to the shelter to be neutered and put up for adoption. Some foster animals, particularly adults, are advertised on the shelter’s website. Even though they are physically not in our building, we take applications for those animals and adopt them out once they return from foster care.

Setting Limits

We have no formal policy about the number of foster animals a foster parent can take. However, we are always aware of how many animals a foster has at any one time and monitor that information. In addition, experienced fosters are capable of handling more and/or sick animals better than others. Three kittens may be a lot of work for one foster parent, but be a piece of cake for another.

Compassion Fatigue

“Death of our foster animals is an unfortunate part of foster care,” says Reindl. “While it is more prevalent in the shelter environment, it is sometimes a foreign experience for the volunteer foster parent who may have only experienced it with his or her own pet. We try to stress that the death is not a result of the care the animal received, but is commonly due to the unknown background of most of our animals.”

Funding

Our foster parents provide all food, litter, bedding and toys necessary to properly care for the foster animals. On occasion, we have provided food and other items to good fosters whose finances are stretched temporarily due to unemployment or other circumstances. All veterinary care is provided by our shelter veterinarian and vet technicians.

A robust network of fosters can be a lifeline during the spring, summer and early fall.

Foster kitten, Animal Welfare Association
The San Francisco SPCA, San Francisco, Calif.

The San Francisco SPCA fostered 1,024 animals, including 936 cats, in 2009. Vice President Dori Villalon says most of those fostered were kittens and nursing queens. The program is managed by Alison Lane, a full-time paid foster care coordinator, and Laura Mullen, a part-time foster care veterinary assistant.

Recruiting/Retaining

We recruit foster care volunteers through our regular volunteer information sessions, our website and on-site fliers. Many fosters are referred by current volunteers, and our best recruiters are our foster parents. We make T-shirts foster parents can buy that have photos of foster animals and say, “Ask me how to become a foster parent.” We always have a booth at our events where foster parents can bring their foster kittens or puppies and talk to people about getting involved in fostering.

We try to make the foster process as easy as possible with as much support as possible, including:

- Free pet food and medications for foster pets
- A 24-hour hotline that foster parents can call with medical questions
- Phone and email support from shelter staff with quick response time
- A Yahoo chat group where foster parents can share stories, photos and tips, and see an updated list of adoptions showing foster animals who have found permanent homes
- An annual foster party where we give out awards, highlight as many fosters as possible, celebrate the accomplishments of the last season and get ready for the next one
- Acknowledgment of different foster parents in weekly emails

Screening

All prospective foster parents are required to take a foster class before they are accepted. Because our foster coordinator teaches the class, she can get a good feel for people by seeing how well they listen and what kinds of questions they ask. We also have everyone fill out a questionnaire that helps us determine if they will be suitable foster parents. We do ask whether they are willing to have us come in for a home inspection, although we have never had to follow through on that.

Adoption

Many foster animals find homes while in foster care, and we encourage volunteers to work on direct placement. In order to reduce their shelter exposure, foster kittens are returned for spay/neuter on “Foster Fridays” so they are recovered and ready for adoption over the weekend.

Setting Limits

The limits on animals we set for foster volunteers are based on disease control more than anything else. We place animals into foster so our shelter isn’t compromised by overcrowding and the increased potential for illness transmission. Sending multiple litters to one home compromises the integrity of a foster care program and creates the exact problem we are trying to avoid. Once this concept is clearly explained, our volunteers understand that our decisions are not personal, but centered around the welfare of the animals we all want to help.
Compassion Fatigue

We have a monthly Pet Loss Support Group that fosters are welcome to attend, but we have not offered sessions specifically to foster volunteers. Our coordinators and shelter medicine team provide incredible personal support to our volunteers, and this makes a huge difference in keeping people feeling invested and optimistic.

Funding

We set volunteers up with everything they need, including a scale for regular weight management, food, litter box and litter. Funds come from our general funding and program-specific fundraising, such as our wildly popular foster care calendar, T-shirts and poster, all of which are created by our incredibly talented volunteers. We also continually post a wish list for baby food and supplies.

Humane Society of Sedona, Sedona, Ariz.

“Thank goodness for fosters,” says Birgitte “B” Skielvig, executive director of the Humane Society of Sedona. The shelter has about 20 active foster care volunteers, including three who hand-raise kittens without moms, as well as litters with mothers. The volunteers have also fostered rabbits, birds, rats and a 3-week-old puppy.

Recruiting/Training

Many of our fosters are recruited by other volunteers, but we also recruit with fliers and with information about fostering in the Adoption Gallery binders that we place in about 50 local businesses. All volunteers must complete an orientation session. Foster volunteers are then teamed up with veteran fosters to receive special training.

Adoption

For record keeping, we use Adopt-A-Friend shelter software, which makes it easy to track where the animals are. When an animal first arrives, it goes into our isolation area for a few days for evaluation. If it is determined that the animal needs foster care, we make calls to find an appropriate foster home. Once the animals become available for adoption, we try to place them at off-site locations, such as our two local pet stores. The stores follow our adoption protocol, including faxing us the adoption application for our approval. Then they follow our guidelines for the paperwork and fee collection. When they adopt out an animal, we are there the next day with a new animal and to collect the paperwork.

Setting Limits/Compassion Fatigue

Generally, most foster people take one animal at a time. We have two wonderful volunteers who have one room in their home dedicated to foster animals. During our peak kitten season, they might have upwards of a dozen. These volunteers know their limits and tell us when enough is enough. They will make recommendations for euthanasia of animals they feel are simply too sick. Communication between them and us is essential. Both of these volunteers have lost animals, but are very accepting of the situation. Occasionally, they take some time off to regroup. Everyone needs to take a break in this business. We are extremely lucky to find level-headed and understanding foster volunteers.

Funding

Most of our cat foster volunteers pay for their out-of-pocket costs. At the end of the year, they submit receipts for an in-kind donation tax break. Those on limited incomes get food and necessary items from us. We have an on-site vet clinic each week in case an animal needs specific care. All animals are sterilized before going up for adoption.
Cat Care Society, Lakewood, Colo.

More than 3,000 kittens and cats have been successfully placed in foster homes since the Cat Care Society’s foster program began in 1987. Adoption Manager Abbi Collins says that an average of 250 kittens are sent to foster homes each year during kitten season, which runs from February through November in Colorado.

Recruiting/Retaining

We advertise for volunteers in local papers two to three times per year, in our newsletter, on our website and with Metro Volunteers, a local nonprofit that helps match volunteers with service organizations.

Screening

Our foster program consists of no more than 18 volunteers. Foster volunteers must go through our volunteer orientation and be interviewed by the volunteer coordinator before they are accepted into the foster program. They also must meet our criteria, including having a separate room in their home where they can confine the foster kittens, having all resident animals spayed or neutered and vaccinated, and attending a foster orientation meeting.

Adoption

Kittens are not adopted from foster homes; they all must re-enter the shelter and be adopted from the shelter.

Funding

We ask our volunteers to provide all food, litter and other essentials for the kittens they foster. On occasion, we can provide food and litter if we have an overstock. Our donors help us with medical care for cats and kittens that need extensive surgeries. Virtually all of our funding comes from private individuals, with only about 10 percent from grants.

Animal Humane | New Mexico, Albuquerque, N.M.

In 2009, Animal Humane | New Mexico fostered 1,600 animals, 860 of which were kittens. Executive Director Peggy Weigle credits their huge foster network, which cares for bottle babies (including kittens and puppies), post-medical cases (e.g., heartworm) and pets with behavior issues (such as shyness) who would benefit from socialization. Weigle says when Animal Humane has the capacity, they also foster nursing moms with litters from the Albuquerque municipal shelter. The foster program is managed by a full-time foster care coordinator and an adoption counselor who devotes about half-time to the program.

Recruiting/Retaining

Fosters are recruited from our volunteer pool and through our website. All fosters must pass a background check to ensure they have no convictions for animal or domestic abuse, then go through a standard volunteer orientation program followed by one-on-one guidance as needed from our foster coordinator.

Adoption

We track all fosters on a spreadsheet and manage returns based on age, weight and availability of adoption cage space. In peak kitten season, we allocate four or five spaces for foster returns so the foster coordinator has some control over when the animals come back into the system. There are times when they have to stay in foster a bit longer until space opens up.

Funding

We ask for donations of food and supplies, and then fund the balance out of general operating funds.

Thank goodness for fosters!

- “B” Skielvig

Animal Friends fostered 864 animals in 2009 with a network of approximately 269 foster homes for dogs and cats. Says Chief Operating Officer Kathleen Beaver, “We offer just about every type of foster care, including neonatal bottle feeding, geriatric care of older cats and behavior care for cats with socialization issues. Not only does our foster program allow us to extend our ability to help more cats beyond the confines of our shelter walls, it also provides us the opportunity to keep cats with specific issues healthy and well-socialized so they can be adopted more quickly.” The foster program is overseen by the adoption and admissions coordinator and the admissions team leader.

Recruiting/Retaining

After our volunteer orientation, attendees complete a volunteer opportunity form where they can indicate whether they would like to foster cats, dogs and/or rabbits. The form is then given to the adoption and admissions coordinator, who contacts them about the next foster care class. We also send eblasts to volunteers to let them know when foster classes are being held. Every foster family receives training, as well as a comprehensive manual and guidebook to assist them with their foster animals. There is a special phone extension so foster homes can reach our medical staff in an emergency for consult or to be directed to emergency care. We retain fosterers by putting them with animals best suited to their experience level, lifestyle and home environment. Then we work to make sure they have everything they need for a successful fostering experience. Additionally, since foster families do their volunteering in their own homes, we offer the opportunity for them to get together and talk about their experiences through an annual foster “social.”

Screening

Our foster parents must become volunteers first and are screened by the volunteer coordinator. We also have a foster care application process.

Adoption

All available animals are showcased on our website, as well as on fliers at the shelter and in the community. Foster parents are encouraged to bring their fosters who are available for adoption to community off-site events. Our foster parents do not adopt cats/kittens from their homes; all animals come to Animal Friends to be adopted. If a foster animal does not show well at Animal Friends, we can permit the approved applicant to meet the pet at the foster parent’s home. If all goes well, the applicant then comes to Animal Friends to complete the paperwork.

Funding

Del Monte sponsors the food that we feed shelter and foster animals, and litter and medical care are provided by Animal Friends. ■
OSHA compliance got you worried?

Get American Humane’s Complete OSHA and Safety Guide for Animal Shelters

American Humane’s Complete OSHA and Safety Guide for Animal Shelters is the only Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliance guide created specifically for animal care and control agencies. Our comprehensive manual takes the confusion out of OSHA regulations as they apply to shelters, guides you through implementing OSHA compliance step by step and helps you create a safe work environment for your staff.

Cost: $25 (American Humane professional members save 15%)

Download your copy today at www.americanhumane.org/store.
With the advent of the annual kitten deluge, you’re probably wishing you had a magic wand to entice people into your shelter, where they’ll become enchanted with your friendly felines and adopt one (or even two!). Here’s the next best thing: Cast a spell with these wildly creative cat-marketing ideas, courtesy of your fellow shelter professionals.
‘CATS AROUND TOWN!’ PROGRAM

Animal Humane | New Mexico, Albuquerque, N.M.

Peggy Weigle, executive director

We shamelessly copied the idea for our Cats Around Town! (CAT!) program from Barbara Carr at the SPCA Serving Erie County in Tonawanda, N.Y. I strongly urge other shelters to do the same, as it has been hugely successful for us!

The CAT! program is based on the fact that people say they acquire a cat because “It was right in front of me,” or “It showed up at my door” or “I got it from a neighbor.” So the idea is to have cats out in public places where people see them during their daily routines. We do this by getting cat-friendly businesses to host one adoptable cat at a time at their location. Right now, we have 11 partners, including a camera shop, a clothing store, and several vet hospitals and pet supply shops. All partners must meet certain guidelines; for instance, they need to have a lot of foot traffic, and somebody must be at the business seven days a week to care for the cat. We provide the cat condo, food and litter, and they provide the daily care. If someone wants to adopt a cat from one of these locations, the prospective adopter calls our adoptions department and we qualify them over the phone. The retailer then fills out the paperwork and collects the adoption fee. (All cats in the program are already fixed, microchipped and vaccinated.) Once the cat is adopted, our CAT! program manager returns to the business the next day with a new cat, disinfects the cage and the whole process starts over.

From February 2008 through February 2009, we adopted out 140 cats through this program. The majority of the cats adopted have been adults and special-needs cats who probably would have been euthanized without this program. One of our top goals this year is to adopt out 100 percent of our healthy pets — and the CAT! program is definitely one of the key elements in helping us meet that goal.

‘MOMMY AND ME’ PROGRAM

Humane Society of Knox County, Thomaston, Maine

Tracy Sala, executive director

When someone is interested in a kitten or two — but doesn’t really have a lifestyle conducive to a kitten left alone or (double trouble) two kittens left alone — we suggest they get an adult cat to help mentor the kitten, teach it how to behave and keep it company. For this Mommy and Me program, kittens are priced at our regular fee ($90) and the adult cat (1 year or older, can be a “daddy”) is half price ($25). It has worked out very nicely, and we get great happy endings with these pairings.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR SENIOR CAT ADOPTIONS

Cat Care Society, Lakewood, Colo.

Abbi Collins, adoption manager

If you haven’t already, sign up for the Purina Pets for Seniors program. It will pay $50 of the adoption fee for a senior who adopts an adult cat (over 1 year), and here we require the cat to be 5 years or older to qualify for the program.

We are a cage-free shelter consisting of seven colony rooms connected by an open hallway. We tend to keep our older cats in the hallway so they get more exposure and attention, and the kitten room is all the way at the back of the shelter so adopters must walk by all the adults before getting to view kittens. We make sure our adoption staff is very familiar with the adult cats, so that someone coming to us with very specific ideas on what they want can be directed toward an appropriate match.

We also have a program called Perpet-U-Care, which provides up to $250 per year in vet costs for any cat with a truly chronic medical condition or any cat 10 years of age or older. About 35 percent of our adoptions are adults and 4 percent are 10 and up.
‘THERE’S A CAT FOR THAT!’
AD CAMPAIGN

Humane Society for Tacoma and Pierce County, Tacoma, Wash.

Marguerite Richmond, director of development

We recently did an ad campaign based on Apple’s “There’s an App for That” theme called “There’s a Cat for That!” One ad reads:

“Need a loving companion? (photo of kitten) There’s a cat for that! How about inspiration for homework? (photo of girl reading textbook with cat rubbing against it) There’s a cat for that, too! How about a friend for man’s best friend? (photo of dog and cat together) There’s even a cat for that! Visit the Humane Society today and see how easy it is to adopt a loving cat!”

We also have “two-for-one” adoption specials, where you can adopt a second cat at no charge (if it’s over 1 year old and came in spayed or neutered), and during kitten season we had a special called “Chipadee-Doo-Dah” where you could adopt any cat or kitten and get a second for the price of the microchip ($16).

MOBILE RESOURCE CENTER/KITTY SHOWERS/PAIRS ADOPTIONS


Kathleen Beaver, chief operating officer

We are able to safely and uniquely promote cat adoptions outside of our shelter after investing in a 30-foot mobile spay/neuter clinic in March 2009. We designed the Animal Friends Mobile Resource Center to be multi-purpose, so it also serves as an adoption/educational tool for taking adoptable pets and the message of compassion and kindness into our community. Four full-size cages can be viewed from outside the vehicle to showcase animals, and prospective adopters can come inside to talk with counselors about the cats and do a meet-and-greet in a safe, quiet setting. This vehicle took cats to 18 off-site adoption events in 2009, and we were able, for the first time, to showcase cats at our largest event — Bark in the Park — with more than 700 dogs.

Another adoption promotion that worked very well in 2009 was our series of Kitten Showers. During our very busy kitten season, they provide a way to showcase the great personalities of our kittens and allow our foster parents to bring the kittens into the shelter en
masse. On a busy Saturday or Sunday, we encourage our foster parents to bring their kittens — that are spayed/neutered, and medically and behaviorally cleared — to our Kitten Shower. Our 3,000-square-foot outreach center is transformed into a kitten playroom with ramps, tunnels, balls and toys. Our staff and volunteers welcome prospective adopters into the room to frolic with the kittens and find one that best fits their family’s personality and lifestyle. It is so much fun for everyone — the staff, volunteers, adopters and, most importantly, the kittens!

Lastly, we strongly recommend adopting kittens as pairs. They bond well and keep each other entertained and active. To assist with this, we name our kittens in pairs: Sampson and Delilah, Spaghetti and Meatballs, Lucy and Ethel. The names are not only fun, but they also make it really hard for adopters to split up the pair — after all, what would spaghetti be without meatballs?

FREE ADOPTIONS OF ADULT CATS

Salt Lake County Animal Services, Salt Lake City, Utah

Shawni M. Larrabee, division director

We began offering cats over 6 months old at deep discounts last spring, and then dropped the adoption fee completely in July 2009. The response has been tremendous, and as of the end of 2009, we had increased adult cat adoptions by 139 percent and overall feline adoptions by 81 percent! The story was picked up by USA Today and ran nationally in January. All cats are sterilized, microchipped and have received at least one set of vaccinations. The cost of the program is covered by more easily adopted pets, such as kittens and puppies. Potential adopters still have to go through the screening process, and we have not seen an increase in returns.

BLACK CAT SPECIALS

McKamey Animal Care & Adoption Center, Chattanooga, Tenn.

Tricia Sebes, volunteer and rescue coordinator

Our most successful marketing tool: On the 13th of every month, all black cats are $13 at the McKamey Center. Black cats need all the help they can get!

CLICKER TRAINING FOR CATS

Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter, Bozeman, Mont.

Suz Phillips, operations director

We noticed that when we clicker train dogs to sit when someone approaches their kennel, they are interested and alert. So why not create that same kind of enthusiasm with our cats? We found out we can! We began the program by clicker training a couple cats to do “high-fives.” Cute, cute, cute! We found that these cats, who were a little shy, came out of their shells, looked forward to training times (five- to 10-minute periods) and began to seek attention. To see them think and respond has been a treat for me. We now have five cats in training for tricks ranging from rollovers to spins, plus three cats doing the agility course. As soon as someone learns we have a cat who knows how to give “high-fives,” it is an adopted cat — even the black cats!
‘PICK YOUR PRICE’ AND ‘6/60’ PROGRAMS

Nebraska Humane Society, Omaha, Neb.

Nikki Harris, executive director

With the Pick Your Price program, adopters can adopt an adult cat (6 months of age and up) and choose their price for an adoption fee. The program was advertised on radio, TV and the shelter’s website. In 2009, we adopted out 1,084 cats through the program, bringing in more than $47,000. The average price paid per cat was $43.50, with a range from one cent to $100; the most popular price was $80, with 219 adoptions at that price. Because of its success, the program is being repeated this year.

We also have a 6/60 program, where people age 60 and up can adopt a cat 6 years and up for free, and 67 of those cats found homes in 2009.

‘PROJECT PURRFECT’ PROGRAM/ ‘C-A-T-S! WE’VE GOT CATS!’

Lexington Humane Society, Lexington, Ky.

Susan Malcomb, president

Our Project Purrfect program is a full-spectrum program focusing on all things feline, including improving the care and treatment of cats pre-adoption and post-adoption, encouraging cat adoptions through education and marketing, free educational workshops for cat owners to encourage them to “keep your cat,” a focus on spay/neuter, and increased veterinary appointments for cats. The foundation of the program is detailed training of all staff members on cat health and welfare.

Our local university happens to be the University of Kentucky, where the Wildcats are currently the #2 basketball team in the country. Building on the popular team cheer, we partnered with a local collegiate shop to create some fun and excitement with our “C-A-T-S! We’ve Got Cats!” promotion. We have information tables and volunteers at games providing cat information, along with digital frames featuring current cats up for adoption (we do not adopt off-site) and a “spokescat” to draw attention. The cat adoption packet new adopters receive on-site will include a coupon for a free “Cat Mania” T-shirt specially designed for cat adopters. The collegiate shop is also providing T-shirts for our staff with the “C-A-T-S! We’ve Got Cats!” logo.

ADOPTING OUT CATS AT PET SHOPS

Humane Society of Sedona, Sedona, Ariz.

Birgitte “B” Skielvig, executive director

Two local pet shops have quit selling puppies and kittens, partly because of bad publicity about puppy mills, and partly because one of the pet shop owners sponsored our Petapalooza event, and when he saw the number of animals available for adoption, he decided not to sell pets anymore. So we started showing shelter cats and kittens at the two pet shops, and 10 percent of our cat adoptions now come from those stores. We provide the cage, food, litter box, litter and toys. The shops can have from two to four animals at a time, and there is no set limit on the time the cats can be there. The store owner fills out the adoption application and other paperwork, and faxes it to us. If the prospective adopter is a renter, he or she has to wait until we contact the landlord. Stores reap the benefit of selling pet supplies to adopters.

We also run a thrift shop that’s about 10 miles away from our shelter and show dogs at a local bank for a few hours every Friday, and they both do very well in terms of adoptions. The more animals we can get out into the community, the better off we are, because some people are still funny about coming to shelters.

35TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

CHA Animal Shelter, Columbus, Ohio

Stephanie Wimbish, shelter director

This year is CHA’s 35th anniversary, so that is our theme all year. In January, all cat adoptions were $35. In February, we did “Twice the Love” where two cats could be adopted for the price of one. We also had an adopt-a-thon and used a spinning wheel that was marked with different percentages off (10 percent, 20 percent and so on). Adopters could spin the wheel to determine their discount level. For March, it’s half off all adults, which makes the adoption fee $35.
MY FURRY VALENTINE/SAINT CATRICK’S DAY PROMOTIONS

Asheville Humane Society, Asheville, N.C.

Katherine McGowan, vice president

My Furry Valentine was the first of several adoption promotions the Asheville Humane Society is holding this year. We have found that holidays and special events help call attention to adoptable animals and get us a lot of publicity. As part of these promotions, we are always looking for sponsors to help us maintain the momentum of successful fee-reduced and fee-waived adoptions.

For February’s My Furry Valentine, our shelter stayed open all weekend and offered fee-waived adoptions of cats/kittens, thanks to a grant from the ASPCA. In three days, we adopted out 45 cats and kittens, the majority of which were over 1 year old, and every available cat was adopted (with the exception of three cats placed up for adoption on Sunday). In addition, 18 dogs and puppies were adopted out that weekend.

During the one-day Saint Catrick’s Day event, adoption fees for the first 17 cat/kitten adoptions were waived, all cat/kitten adopters were registered to win a year’s supply of Science Diet cat or kitten food, and both cat and dog adopters were entered to win a gift bag from a local Irish pub. A grant from the ASPCA covered our lost revenue, and our partner, the Humane Alliance, covered spay/neuter costs for those kittens who had not already been altered. We adopted out 19 kittens and 11 dogs for a total of 30 pets in seven hours! This was terrific, because we normally adopt out about 50 animals per week.
**‘FLABULOUS FELINES’ PROMOTION**

Placer SPCA, Roseville, Calif.

*Leilani Vierra, CEO*

In order to encourage adoptions of overweight cats (and ensure they didn’t spend too long confined without exercise in cages), we offered “Flabulous Felines Free to a Good Home” during February 2008. Local author Martha Garvey donated several signed copies of her book, *My Fat Cat: Ten Simple Steps to Help Your Pet Lose Weight for a Long and Happy Life*, which were given to the first few adopters, and all adopters received special counseling to understand the needs of their new plus-size pets. As a result, 11 of the 12 hard-to-adopt overweight cats were adopted during the promotion, with the 12th going home a few weeks later.

Other monthly cat specials at Placer SPCA have included Kitties at the End of the Rainbow in March (green-eyed cats), Celebrate Mothers in May (spayed female cats), Paws for Your Pa in June (neutered male cats), The Color of Independence in July (tortoiseshell and calico cats), Go for the Gold in August (yellow-eyed cats), and Fall Fashions: Everything Goes With Black in September (black cats and kittens).

**‘FELINE FRIENDS’ CAT SPONSORSHIPS**

Young-Williams Animal Center, Knoxville, Tenn.

*Tim Adams, executive director*

Last June, we reduced our adoption fee for adult cats from $120 to $75. Then we instituted a program that started out as Feline Friends, which allowed people to sponsor an adult cat adoption by donating its adoption fee. We would pick the cat and then put a special tag on the holding area identifying the cat as “sponsored by” with the sponsor’s name displayed. Adoptions went great. Then dog people wanted to know if they could sponsor dog adoptions, so Feline Friends became Furry Friends. The sponsorship program has been so wildly popular that we had times during the summer when every adult cat and dog on the adoption floor was sponsored. We extended the program and lowered the price of adult dog adoptions to mirror that of the cats. Both programs were extended to the end of the year, and now have been extended through the end of this June. In 2009, adult cat adoptions were up 50 percent and adult dog adoptions were up 27 percent.

**LONELY HEARTS CLUB/ADOPT A FIXED PET FOR FREE ON SPAY DAY’ PROMOTION**

The Chemung County Humane Society and SPCA, Elmira, N.Y.

*Jaclyn P. Welles, public relations and marketing coordinator*

We have a very special cat club called the “Lonely Hearts Club” to showcase the 12 cats who have been at the shelter the longest. During February, we ran a promotion called “Follow Your Heart,” which offered a $28 discount (for the number of days in February) on all members of the Lonely Hearts Club. The club was expanded to include 14 felines in honor of Valentine’s Day. Eight of the 14 cats went to loving, forever homes — a 57 percent success rate and one of our most successful promotions ever!

In celebration of Spay Day 2010, we waived adoption fees on all fixed animals. Nine of the 33 animals that were available under this promotion went home, including seven of our 23 available cats and two dogs.
Colored Nail Caps for Black Cats

Virginia Beach SPCA, Virginia Beach, Va.

Sharon Adams, executive director

Our open-admission shelter takes in about 1,800 cats per year, but we do not euthanize them for lack of space thanks to our innovative adoption programs. One of these involves putting colored Soft Claws® nail caps on hard-to-adopt cats, including black cats, older cats and very shy cats. We match the colors to the holidays and seasons, such as orange for Halloween, red, white and blue for July 4, red and green for Christmas, and pastels for spring. This has definitely been a fun, humane and successful way to draw attention to these cats. Potential adopters notice the nail caps, stop to ask questions and want to see the cat, which usually leads to adoption!

We will not adopt a cat to anyone who wants to declaw it. Instead, we use nail caps to educate people about why declawing is inhumane and to demonstrate a humane alternative, including:

• Counseling on directing the cat’s scratching instinct toward appropriate surfaces, and methods to deter it from scratching furniture and carpets, and

• Free Soft Claws application for the life of the cat. The adopter must purchase the Soft Claws, and the shelter staff will then apply them at no additional charge for the lifetime of the cat. Although this is optional, it makes a huge difference for many people who are reluctant to adopt a cat due to concerns for their furniture.

We also have fun, interactive programs throughout the year to promote adoptions of adult cats. The “March Madness” promotion gave adopters three chances to shoot baskets, and each time they made a basket, they got $10 off a cat adoption.

Tuxedo Tuesdays and December Sing-Along/Funny Hat Specials

Kokomo Humane Society, Kokomo, Ind.

Jean McGroarty, executive director

We promote Tuxedo Tuesdays during the holiday season, when the fee for black-and-white cats is reduced (an offer extended to gray cats if requested). Also in December, anyone who comes into the shelter wearing a Santa hat or reindeer antlers, or who sings a holiday song, gets a discounted adoption fee for cats and dogs.

'Certified Pre-Owned Cats' Campaign

Michigan Humane Society, Detroit, Mich.

Michael Robbins, director of marketing and communications

“They come in many makes and models, loaded with adorable features and the latest technology, and best of all, they’re available with $0 down/0% financing. What’s more, their value actually increases when you take them home!” So begins the press release that launched our “Certified Pre-Owned Cats” campaign in June 2009. During the program — which was originally intended to last only through the difficult summer months, but was extended until year end due to its success — the adoption fee for cats age 4 months and older was waived.

Promotional materials for the program list “Features and Specs,” such as standard 4-paw drive, a 100,000-purr warranty, no-charge microchipping and a multi-
point inspection, including spay/neuter surgery, age-appropriate vaccinations, and a medical check-up and behavior evaluation. Potential adopters can also get the history of their cat before adopting by visiting www.catfax.org, a special webpage featuring Petfinder.com listings, but designed to look like the popular car-history website CARFAX. The shelter itself is festooned with hand-painted window signs and checkered flags to resemble a car lot. This unique campaign has garnered multiple television appearances for the shelter, including live remotes during the morning news broadcast of the local NBC affiliate, and a 30-second used-car-style TV commercial produced by the shelter is featured on YouTube and the shelter website.

Thanks to the campaign, awareness is up, traffic is up across the board and adoptions are way up for cats. From June 2009 through January 2010, the Michigan Humane Society adopted out 3,319 adult cats, compared to 1,290 cats during the same period a year earlier — a 61 percent increase! Due to the program’s success in saving cats’ lives, it has been extended through 2010.

Visit our website for free promotional tools (including a sample press release and social media messages for Facebook and Twitter) and helpful information on cat adoption and cat care. And while you’re there, order our new Connecting With Cats activity book for kids! www.americanhumane.org/aacm
From the Storm

Special Adopt-A-Cat Month Edition!

Herding cats!
Cool cat.

Look, what the cat dragged in.
Cat got your tongue?

Raining cats and dogs!
Fat cat.

Fighting like cats and dogs!

Happy Adopt-A-Cat Month!
Reunite more pets and owners with free microchip scanners from American Humane and HomeAgain®

American Humane is partnering with HomeAgain to offer American Humane/HomeAgain Universal WorldScan™ grants to shelters that are members of both American Humane and HomeAgain. These state-of-the-art handheld scanners read all known microchips currently sold in the U.S. Grant recipients must be American Humane agency professional members, as well as HomeAgain members.

For a grant application, visit www.americanhumane.org/scanner. Questions? Email grants@americanhumane.org.
Animal Protection Division Training Calendar: June – September 2010

### ANIMAL WELFARE SERVICES

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<th>Service</th>
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| Customer Service for the Animal Welfare Professional | Pittsburgh, PA — July 15  
Lebanon, OH — Sept. 12 |
| Euthanasia by Injection                      | Sacramento, CA — June 21-22  
Upper Sandusky, OH — July 20-21  
Milwaukee, WI — Aug. 23-24  
Lexington, KY — Aug. 30-31  
Ft. Wayne, IN — Sept. 20-21 |
| Euthanasia by Injection for Horses           | Carey, OH — July 22                       |
| Managing Compassion Fatigue                  | Lexington, KY — Sept. 1                    |
| National Fundraising School                  | Altoona, PA — Sept. 14-15                  |
| Playful Parrots                              | Pasadena, CA — June 18                     |
| Shelter Operations School                    | Altoona, PA — June 14-15  
Salt Lake City, UT — Aug. 26-27 |
| Shelter Operations School for Managers       | Irving, TX — July 12-13                    |

### ANIMAL EMERGENCY SERVICES

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<th>Service</th>
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| Basic Animal Emergency Services              | San Jose, CA — June 26-27  
Pasadena, CA — June 26-27 |
| Disaster Sheltering for Companion Animals    | Boston, MA — Aug. 6-7  
Lexington, KY — Aug. 6-7  
San Jose, CA — Sept. 17-18  
Dallas/Fort Worth, TX — Sept. 25-26 |

### HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND

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<th>Service</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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| Handler Training                             | Denver, CO — July 30-31  
Denver, CO — Sept. 25-26 |
| Team Evaluation                              | Denver, CO — June 10-11  
Denver, CO — Aug. 20-22 |

Visit [www.americanhumane.org/proevents](http://www.americanhumane.org/proevents) to confirm dates, get additional dates and register. Interested in hosting an American Humane training in your community? For more information, email training@americanhumane.org.
Pounce on more great cat-related content for shelters, cat owners and veterinarians at www.americanhumane.org/aacm.