



**Engaged: Effective
Community Messaging**

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Best Friends
SAVE THEM ALL



Who likes a good story?





With today's 24/7 news cycle ...



There's never been a better time to get your story out!



First, a little back story





Define your message

What's your unique selling point?

Best Friends Animal Society is the **only** national animal welfare organization focused exclusively on ending the killing of pets in shelters.



Define your message

How do we do this?

- Operate the nation's largest no-kill sanctuary in Kanab, Utah
- Operate high-volume pet adoption centers in Los Angeles and Salt Lake City and an adoption/foster program in New York City
- Provide low-cost or free spay/neuter services to communities that need it most
- Provide staffing and spay/neuter grants, and adoption subsidies
- Collaborate with shelters, rescue groups, and spay/neuter orgs
- Hold innovative adoption promotions and events, such as super adoptions and Strut Your Mutt



Find opportunities



- Research community print, web, and broadcast opportunities
- Features or lifestyle writers/editors are usually best for general stories and adoption profiles
- Pursue news if you have input on a breaking, relevant story or want to pitch larger issues related to animal welfare




Behind the scenes


Newsrooms are short-staffed and reporters are stressed






Opportunity: Most local outlets welcome good story ideas



Making contact



- Email
- Phone
- Social media
- Meetings



Get personal

- Personalize pitches to the writer or editor
- Put “QUERY” and a brief idea in the subject line
- Start email with “Dear _____”
- Say “I know you cover animal welfare issues” or “I know you cover nonprofits in the community”
- Outline your story idea or highlight your press release in a few succinct sentences



What's newsworthy?


- Launch (new campaign or program)
- Adoption events
- Fundraisers
- Periodic announcements of progress toward goal
- Heartwarming adoption stories
- Volunteer profiles
- Pop culture
- National designated days, weeks, or months




Become a resource

- Provide solid assets
- Pitch stories in a timely fashion
- Be available for follow-up





The press release



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE USE
 Contact: Michelle Sathe at 818-643-3987
 or michellesathe@bestfriends.org

Best Friends' #Holiday100 Adds Life-Saving Twist to Black Friday

LOS ANGELES – Black Friday just got a blessing twist with the #Holiday100 adoption marathon at Best Friends Pet Adoption & Spay/Neuter Center in Mission Hills.

The Center is opening its doors at 8 a.m. on Black Friday and will stay open non-stop until Sunday at 8 p.m. Adoption fees for the first hundred animals adopted over the weekend are just \$10.

"Since the holidays are an incredibly popular time of the year for people to add a pet to their family, we wanted to make it as easy as possible for people to adopt over Black Friday weekend," said Marc Paraske, executive director of Best Friends Animal Society – Los Angeles.

The #Holiday100 has a goal of 100 or more adoptions in the 62-hour period. There are 400 dogs, cats, kittens and puppies to choose from and each pet is spayed or neutered, micro-chipped, and vaccinated.

"We have adoption specialists eager to help clients make the perfect pet match for their lifestyle, so we encourage anyone in the market for a new dog or cat to come in and meet their new best friend," Paraske said. "Potential adopters can also go to bestfriends.org to preview our amazing selection of pets."

All of the dogs and cats at Best Friends Pet Adoption & Spay/Neuter Center originally came from one of the six Los Angeles Animal Services shelters.

"Every time you adopt a pet from our center, you're potentially saving two lives: the pet you take home and the one who now has space to come to a city shelter," Paraske said. "It's a win-win for everyone involved."


Best Friends Animal Society, which operates the Center, is a national animal welfare organization focused on ending the killing of dogs and cats in America's shelters. In Los Angeles, Best Friends leads the No Kill Los Angeles (NKLA) Coalition, which is focused on ending the killing of dogs and cats in L.A. city shelters by 2027.

"By taking part in the #Holiday100, not only will adopters get a fantastic pet at a low price, they'll make a huge difference in turning LA into NKLA," Paraske said. "That's something to feel great about over the holidays or any time of year."


The Best Friends Pet Adoption Center & Spay/Neuter Center is located at 15321 Brand Boulevard, Mission Hills. For more information, visit bestfriends.org or call (818) 643-3989.

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- Solid headline
- AP style
- Concise, preferably one page
- Contact information at top
- “Boilerplate” info at bottom



The media alert



MEDIA ADVISORY

Thousands of dogs and people to “Strut” at LA’s Largest Dog Walk/Fundraiser

Media contacts:
 Michelle Sathe, (818) 643-3989 (ext) or michellesathe@bestfriends.org

What: Best Friends Animal Society’s Strut Your Mutt, a national, multi-million dollar fundraiser benefiting hundreds of shelters and rescue groups around the country, Los Angeles is the largest Strut Your Mutt event, with many celebrities in attendance, and has a goal of raising \$600,000 for participating local rescue groups such as Best Friends Los Angeles, Cage Free K9 Rescue Foundation, Umea Happy Homes, Vlogs and Walks and Dogs without Borders.

Where:
 WB Rogers State Historic Park, 1821 WB Rogers State Historic Park Rd, Los Angeles, CA 90272

When:
 Saturday, September 6
 7:30 a.m. – Registration
 8 p.m. – Twilight dog walk
 8 p.m. – World premiere of Mandy Patinkin/Duffy’s video “Dare to Love”
 Followed by Eat2BeachBar showcasing of “Dirty Dancing”

Who:

- Courtney Thorne-Smith (“Fox and a Half Star”, “According to Jim”, “My Mr. T”, “Madame Pleasa”)
- Lacey Chabert (“It’s a Wonderful Life”, “The Librarian”, “V.I.P.”, “Single Ladies”, “Starz’ “Spencer”)
- Heather McComb (“Ray Donovan”, “Rally of Fire”)
- Teen pop stars Wandy Ray and Kaitlyn Dwy
- Behind America’s Funniest Home Videos
- Members of the LA Kings Ice Crew
- Best Friends co-founder Francis Sattola
- Best Friends Los Angeles executive director Marc Paraske

About Best Friends Animal Society:
 Best Friends Animal Society is the only national animal welfare organization focused exclusively on ending the killing of more than 5,000 cats and dogs per day in America’s shelters. Last fall, Best Friends launched their new cat to adopt campaign, Save Them All to create awareness for the issue and of the need to adopt and spay/neuter all pets. Best Friends is working collaboratively in Los Angeles with animal rescue groups, city shelters and passionate individuals who are dedicated to the mission of making Los Angeles a no-kill city. As part of this mission, Best Friends hosts adoption and fundraising events such as Strut Your Mutt and NKLA Adoption Showdowns, runs both the Best Friends Pet Adoption & Spay/Neuter Center in Mission Hills and the NKLA Pet Adoption Center in West Los Angeles, and leads the [NKLA](http://NKLA.org) initiative.

- Enticing headline
- What, where, when, who
- Contact info (use cell number if you’re going to be off-site at the event)



Meet their needs



Journalists are always on deadlines, so:

- Reply quickly
- Don't have the info? Give an ETA of when you will have it
- Make their job easy and you will become a resource



Designate a spokesperson who ...

- Can articulate your message
- Is comfortable talking to the media
- Is presentable and appropriate
- Knows there is no such thing as “off the record”





Ready for your close-up?



- Develop talking points
- Practice interview skills
- Know your audience
- Learn responding vs. reacting
- Is interview live or taped?



Know your audience

- General public, not advocates
- Don't use jargon
- Keep a positive attitude and explain how any animal lover can play a part to Save Them All





Responding vs. reacting #1

Always have 2 to 3 messages in mind you want to get across



Responding vs. reacting #2

Be prepared for negative questions. For example, you might be asked, “Aren’t shelter pets damaged goods?”

Instead of saying “Of course not, you *&#@% idiot!” you could respond:

No, not at all. Most of these fantastic dogs and cats were once part of a family and found themselves in a shelter through no fault of their own. As such, shelter pets acclimate wonderfully to being part of a home again and really appreciate the second chance they’ve been given. Shelter pets are often fixed, vaccinated, and microchipped, so adoption is also convenient and cost-effective.



We're all in this together

For no-kill to become a reality, we have to work together.



Create interest: #Holiday100

- Campaign capitalized on timely pop/culture event
- Great photo
- Promotion had urgency and a goal
- Community invited to make a difference





Coverage for #Holiday100



- Release and photo picked up by Associated Press
- #Holiday100 was covered by almost every single TV news station in Los Angeles
- KNBC producer sent a news crew after the 100th adoption once he saw the update on Twitter



Create interest: “The One”



- Campaign capitalized on timely pop/culture event
- Unique spin on the concept of love and how it relates to pet adoption
- Adorable photos
- Celebrity involvement
- Social media component: #AdoptTheOne

 Coverage for “The One”



231 million impressions


 **BREAKING NEWS:**
Bela the German shepherd



- An Indiana woman died and her will stated that her dog Bela be euthanized or given to Best Friends
- Best Friends had not been contacted previously, but offered to take Bela in and controlled the story from that point on
- National media covered Bela's journey to Best Friends as well as his subsequent passing, for more than 600 million impressions

 **BREAKING NEWS:**
Stolen dog turns up at NKLA Adoption Weekend



 **Ideas and resources**

- Look for local PR, photography, social media and design help by listing your needs on VolunteerMatch.org
- Ask your local college's graphic design class to help with logos, collateral materials, websites, etc.
- Ask your local college photography class or professional photographers for help with pet photos and overall images

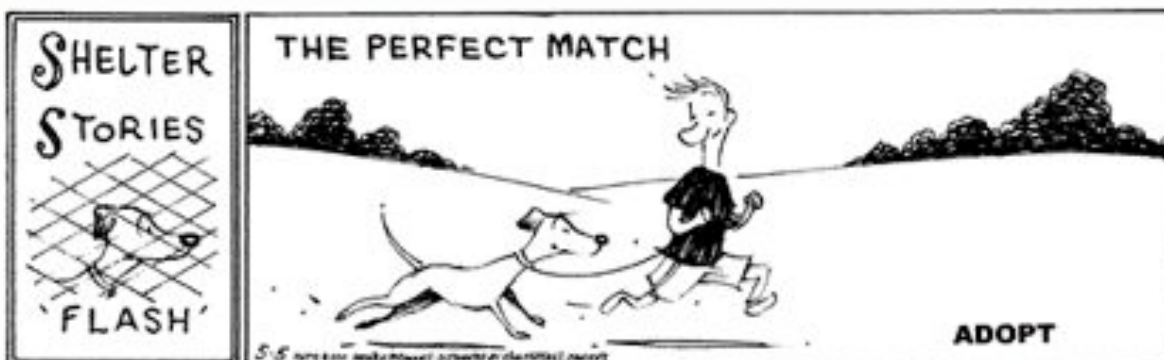


Ideas and resources

- Reach out to local PR professionals and ask if they would consider assisting your org as a pro bono client or at a greatly reduced cost
- Sign up to www.helpareporter.com and you will receive daily inquiries from journalists looking for experts to interview on a wide range of topics
- Don't be afraid to scope out the competition and emulate whatever they're doing right



Remember the end goal



#SaveThemAll

Questions?

