

## Community and Shelter Policies that Work



The Washington  
**ANIMAL  
RESCUE  
LEAGUE**

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The Washington Humane Society (WHS), the only Congressionally-chartered animal welfare agency in the United States, has been the area's leading voice for animals since 1870. As the open-access shelter in the Nation's Capital, the Washington Humane Society provides comfort and care to over 43,000 animals each year through its broad range of programs and services



Since the 1980s, WHS has held the contract with the DC Government to provide all of the animal control services for the city.

In 2007 WHS began a transformation that started with a new President and CEO

In 2016 we merged with the Washington Animal Rescue League creating one comprehensive agency serving all the animal needs in the city

## 2007, What We Had To Work With

- 30% Live Release Rate
- Strict adoption procedures
- No Pit Bull adoptions
- TNR was a “pilot program”
- Limited off site adoptions
- Limited foster program
- Limited transfer program
- Free pick up of unwanted animals, no questions asked
- Outdated facility



## Turnaround

- Reverse Pit Bull adoption policy
- Change laws
- Internal procedures/policies
- Increase reputation in the community
- Work in the community

## Reverse Pit Bull Adoption Policy

- Current legislation pending in City Council to ban Pit Bulls from DC was in the works. WHS key supporter of bill...until now
- Staff and volunteer fears
- Behavior/training staff concerns about evaluations
- Worries over increased animals being held

## Changing Laws To Save Lives

- Animal Protection Amendment Act of 2010
  - Mandates the reduction in euthanasia
  - Reasonable and enforceable Dangerous Dog law
  - TNR provision
  - Other vital cruelty related updates to current law
- Wildlife Protection Act
  - Prohibits cruel traps
  - Regulates wildlife control businesses

## Changing Laws To Save Lives

1929

SEC. 8. That hereafter the poundmaster shall seize all cats found running at large and convey the same to the pound, or other place to be designated by the commissioners, and there destroyed. Any citizen may deliver any such animal to the poundmaster, who shall destroy the same as above required.



2010

§ 8-1802. Animal Care and Control Agency

(c) The Animal Care and Control Agency shall promote:

(2) The utilization of trap, spay or neuter, and return practices as a means of controlling the feral cat population; provided, that all efforts shall be made to adopt out a trapped, tamable kitten.



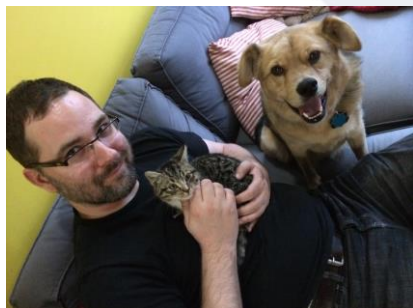
## Managing the flow of Animals

- Cease “Pick up/Give up”
- Managed intake
- PMT
- Overhaul outdated adoption policies
- Increase foster/rescue program
- Enhanced community based programs

## Off-site adoptions, bringing the animals into the community



## Aggressive Foster Program



- Dedicate full time staff
- Part of organizational promotional calendar
- Increase number of orientations
- Increase resources offered
- Decrease euthanasia for certain medical conditions

## Increasing reputation and adoptions through promotions





## PR Strategy

- No negative images
  - No animals behind cage bars
  - Images are meant to show what it would be like to have the animal in a home environment
- No desperate pleas
  - No “Adopt or else...”
  - Exception – “we are in desperate need of foster homes”
- Share happy adoption stories/photos
  - That could be me!
- Rescues are highlighted
  - Before and after once available for adoption

## Working in the Community



## Strategies in the field: Community Cats



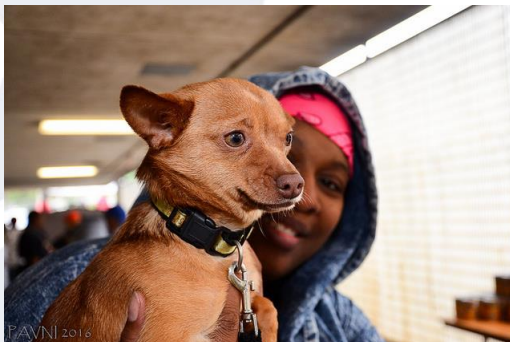
- Loosen restrictions on “feral” management
- Staff program appropriately (\$\$\$)
- Apply for grants
- Focus on conflict resolution
- Door to door outreach
- Provide ongoing assistance





## Strategies in the field: Pets For Life

- Community Assessment
- Door to door outreach
- Provide free services (VX, food, supplies, S/N)
- Download toolkit from HSUS



## Strategies in the field: Animal Control

- Move away from “enforcement”
- Evaluate what is needed vs what is being done
- Community relations
- Only take in sick/injured wildlife or those causing public safety threat
- Present at neighborhood meetings

## Strategies in the field: Humane Law Enforcement

- Community Policing vs Enforcement
- Improve quality of life rather than impoundment
- Evaluate trends and strategize solutions
- Present at neighborhood meetings

## Obstacles: The Staff

- It's harder to save lives than to take them, but we are here for that reason
- Each animal is an individual and deserves available resources
- Can't just "throw the switch", that didn't work
- Let's share a common goal
- Own your mistakes, even if public then learn from them
- Make them part of the solution
- NEVER accept status quo

## Obstacles: Cost Considerations

- Medical costs increase
- Certain programs require additional staffing
  - Can reallocate staff resources
  - Additional overtime may be expected
- Basic supply expenses increase (food/litter)
- Adoptions provide additional revenue

## Live Release Rate

