

Outline of the Proposal/Workbook Submitted to Cherryland Humane Society
by Jennifer Isbell on November 2, 2009

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO ACHIEVE A NO-KILL SHELTER (Community)?

A. Define What is Meant by “No-Kill” as Well as “Healthy” and “Manageable”

No-kill shelters are not 100% no-kill but what they aim to do is make sure that every healthy, treatable, adoptable animal is given the chance to find a home. This first step is about the Humane Society making a decision to be no-kill and defining what that means.

B. Taking Inventory of the Shelter, the Animals and the Problems in the Community

To be able to solve the homeless pet population, the Humane Society needs to know what challenges it faces in its own shelter as well as the community. A thorough inventory needs to be taken so that the right creative solutions can be used. Which animals are being euthanized and why? What are the main reasons animals are surrendered to the shelter? How many of the pets get returned after being adopted out and why? After doing the inventory, the Humane Society should set a priority list to meet their challenges and a timeline to fix the problems. The most immediate problems should be fixed as soon as possible to stop the euthanasias of the cats.

C. The Animals in Their Care are “Worth” Something and Should be Treated as Such

This speaks for itself. The ideas incorporated in this section includes things such as: vet checks for all pets; having an intake fee to support the spay/neuter cost as well as having the person surrendering the animal realize they hold some responsibility for that pet; having waiting periods on intake when the shelter is full; fulfilling the dog and cat’s mental and physical needs while living at the shelter; utilizing the space of the shelter better so the cats can be in catteries instead of small cages; and treating the dogs as individuals and utilizing training for problem behaviors.

D. Spay-Neuter Commitment

The shelter should spay/neuter 100% of the pets they adopt out and not leave that responsibility to the new pet owner. In addition, the Humane Society takes in a substantial amount of unaltered animals, which means there is an overall community problem. A low-cost spay/neuter program needs to be started in the area to address this problem.

E. Foster Homes

There are times when the shelter will be full or the animals aren’t adjusting well to the shelter environment. What if a litter of kittens is brought in without a mother? It seems unlikely that the shelter has the time to bottle-feed these kittens which could explain the high euthanasia rate of cats 6 mos. old and younger euthanized in 2008. Foster homes are an important part of this proposal. A foster home program should be implemented.

F. Work With Other Rescue Groups in the Community

Getting to a “no-kill” goal requires collaboration with the community and other animal welfare groups in the area. These groups need to have a working relationship with each other to meet the needs of the animals in the community. In addition, the Humane Society should be using their “extra” kennels to accept ALL adoptable dogs from the Grand Traverse Animal Control so they are not euthanized.

G. Communication

The lines of communication between the Humane Society and the members should be opened. A yearly meeting will not keep members active and engaged with the shelter. There should be monthly membership meetings so that the members understand the needs of the shelter and how they can help. In addition, an updated website will keep everyone informed about CHS.

H. Increase Volunteer Base and Support

In order to be successful, the Humane Society will need the support of members and volunteers. To do this I have proposed the following positions:

- **Volunteer Coordinator**
- **Foster Home Coordinator**
- **Local Event Coordinator** - Increase Adoptions - increase visibility - fundraise. Also called adoption outreach.
- **Rescue Group Liaison**
- **Feral Cat Coordinator**
- **Intake Community Liaison** - deals with pet problems to try to help people keep their animals - behavior advice, discount training, etc.

I. More Visibility - More Adoptions

CHS does not seem to be visible at local events. Animals should be out in the public as much as possible with “adopt me” vests on the dogs. I have suggested numerous local events and ideas where Cherryland needs to increase its visibility in the community to showcase more of their animals and to get more donations. Here are a few ideas:

- Cherry Festival - having adoptions and working as volunteers
- Friday Night Live
- Booths at local fairs and festivals all summer long
- Participating with local baseball and football teams for promotions
- Holding promotional events at the shelter on a regular basis
- Participating in group events (Bark at the Park, etc.)

J. Working With Feral Cats

Feral cats should be considered in any no-kill program because the ferals are often the ones producing the kittens that the Humane Society becomes responsible for. A trap-neuter-release program should be set up for the benefit of the community and the shelter.

K. Funding

During the initial phase of this plan, there is funding available directly from CHS according to their 2008 financial report. CHS can utilize an agreed on portion of the \$400,000+ of investment income that is available to them. To continue the funding for the new programs, the Humane Society needs to be active and aggressive in grantwriting as well as having a renewed focus on fundraising.