

December 12, 2007

Maddie's Fund
2223 Santa Clara Avenue, Suite B
Alameda, California 94501-4416
Attention: Richard Avanzino, President
Mary Smith, Vice President
Of Operations

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for considering the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA for a Maddie's Fund Lifesaving Award. We appreciate this opportunity. We have enclosed the following materials for your review:

1. Maddie's Fund Pioneer Grants Program – Pre-Grant Inquiry for a Lifesaving Award;
2. Maddie's Fund Annual Statistics Table shelter statistics for the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA for 2006;
3. Maddie's Fund Statistics Table, monthly shelter statistics for the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA for 2006 (which includes a monthly table for dogs, cats and combined dogs and cats); and
4. Maddie's Fund Statistics Table, monthly shelter statistics for the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA for 2007 as of November 30, 2007 (which includes a monthly table for dogs, cats and combined dogs and cats);
5. The Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA No-Kill Coalition Report documenting how No-Kill was achieved in our community, including:
 - Attachment A – SPCA Asilomar Accord classifications
 - Attachment B – Examples of public disclosure of our No-Kill guarantee.

The Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA is committed to maintaining a No-Kill community. We would be honored to receive a Lifesaving Award from Maddie's Fund. Please feel free to call me at (434) 964-3323 if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Susanne M. Kogut
Executive Director

The Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA No-Kill Coalition Report

Introduction

The Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA (“SPCA”) began its journey to create a No-Kill community in early 2005. At that time, the SPCA had just moved into a new facility (July of 2004) and operated as the only animal shelter serving the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, Virginia, under contract to be the local “pound.” At the end of 2004 (prior to adoption of a No-Kill philosophy), the SPCA saved 83 percent of its dog population but only 47 percent of its cat population¹. Many in the organization believed that No-Kill was not achievable at an open-admission facility, and that “you cannot save them all.” Despite moving into a new building with a new veterinary clinic, the organization operated reactively, dealing only with animals as they walked in the door and euthanizing when space was not available. The organization was not proactively working towards reducing intake and routinely adopted out animals that were not altered (approximately 50 percent adopted were unaltered). In March of 2005, the Board of Directors hired a new executive director with the desire to make Charlottesville-Albemarle a No-Kill community.

Shortly thereafter, the SPCA embraced a new mission and vision for the future. The SPCA’s mission is to provide a safe environment for the lost, abandoned, and homeless animals of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, place them in good homes and strive to set a standard of excellence and leadership in animal care, humane education, and progressive animal welfare programs. More importantly, the SPCA’s vision for the future focused on an adoption guarantee and the goal of creating a No-Kill community. Specifically, the SPCA’s vision statement is as follows:

Vision

To guarantee a good home to every healthy and behaviorally sound companion animal.

To save all dogs and cats that can be medically treated and behaviorally rehabilitated and do not pose a public health and safety risk.

To be a leader and an example for other organizations. To set the standard for our region, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the nation for how to save lives. To develop constructive relationships that advance the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA’s mission and vision with our community, our city/county governments and other nonprofit organizations.

¹ The 2004 save rate figures were calculated from information available at the time, and may not be consistent with the live release rate as calculated under the Asilomar Accords.

The Beginning of Our No-Kill Journey - Early to Mid-2005

In the second quarter of 2005, we declared that it was time for a change – a change of attitude – from excuses to solutions. We decided that it was no longer acceptable to hide behind the excuse of too many animals and not enough homes. The SPCA made an adoption guarantee commitment to our supporters and most importantly, to the animals in our care -- a guarantee of a forever home to all healthy and behaviorally sound animals. With an acceptable save rate of 83 percent for dogs, we immediately implemented a policy that no healthy dog would be euthanized for space, and that we would care for and save all dogs with treatable medical conditions and behavior issues that we could rehabilitate. With cats and kittens, our stated goal was to save all healthy cats and kittens, and to do our best to save all treatable cats and kittens.

With our new goal in place, we needed to initiate programs to reduce intake and increase our adoptions. To do this, we embraced the life-saving strategies advocated by No Kill Solutions. Our first step was to change the attitude of existing staff and when necessary, hire new staff with a desire to take on this challenge. We encouraged staff and volunteers to adopt a more positive outlook and steer their focus from complaining, to developing solutions. Second, we needed to ramp up our customer service and marketing efforts to encourage more people to come and adopt from our facility and at outside adoption events (especially for dogs that did not show well in the kennel environment). We changed the SPCA hours to make it easier for people to visit our facility after work. Third, we increased the number of animals that were cared for by foster parents. The foster care program was absolutely essential if we were to achieve our goals. Fourth, we began altering every pet prior to adoption and treating more medical conditions. Finally, we established a new process of evaluating dog behavior (a process that involved several opinions regarding behavior and the ability to rehabilitate behavior issues) and a formal euthanasia process that required managers' approval prior to euthanasia.

All of the above measures were embarked upon during 2005. The process was fluid and changes to processes and policies were made as operations evolved. One of the first changes to occur was the elimination of rigid rules and reasons for euthanasia, such as the policy that all kittens under five weeks of age would be euthanized. We promoted a more positive adoption process instead of a process where potential adopters felt judged. We eliminated a policy of putting “holds” on animals giving people days to decide on adoption, as this policy resulted in multiple holds delaying adoptions of highly desirable pets. We utilized our resources to efficiently move animals quickly through the sheltering and adoption process. We implemented multiple marketing measures to increase traffic through the SPCA and adoptions.

We partnered with the media to inform the community about us and our goals and that we needed their time, talents and dollars. Radio and television spots made people aware about animals for adoptions, events at the SPCA, and other needs. Every week we had two radio spots, two television spots, a Sunday television spot (every other week), and newspaper adoptable pet spots. In addition, we received media coverage for many of our adoption and fundraising events and other animal welfare newsworthy items.

In 2005, we held many new adoption events and adoption specials – our Spring and Home for the Holidays Adoptathons, two “Kitten Showers”, Fat Cat and Big Dog Rules adoption specials, and a Howl-o-ween event. We found that these adoption events were instrumental on many fronts: finding homes for pets (at our first Kitten Shower, 29 kittens and 13 adult cats were adopted in one day); bringing a substantial number of visitors into our new facility; and promoting our cause in the media (these fun events proved newsworthy in our community). These new programs resulted in a 26 percent increase in adoptions (from 2,063 total adoptions in 2004 to 2,601 total adoptions in 2005). In addition, we increased our transfer program from the prior year, to address the overpopulation of our hound, hound mixes and puppy influxes. As our local community is a hunting community, we receive a number of hounds, beagles and other hunting dogs. We worked with shelters to our north, that do not have the disproportionate intake of these breeds, to transfer some of these dogs when space required.

We applied resources to our foster home network. One staff member with the assistance of two volunteers took charge of reviewing foster home applications, conducting home visits, and placing animals into foster homes. We trained willing foster parents how to bottle feed young puppies and kittens when needed and to care for some of our sick animals. The growth of our foster home network was a lifesaver. In 2005, we doubled the number of animals placed in foster care; from 300 in 2004 to over 600 in 2005 (this number would later grow to be 1,500 in 2006).

Another important element was to eliminate the control of euthanasia decisions from staff that did not embrace the No-Kill goal. This included training additional staff to conduct behavior evaluations, requiring several staff members to support euthanasia decisions for behavioral reasons, consulting with our veterinarian prior to medical euthanasia, and implementing a written form with executive director/manager approval for euthanasia.

Continued and Improved No-Kill Strategies (Late 2005 - 2006)

As we saw our adoption numbers increasing and our euthanasia numbers decreasing, we knew we were on the right path to achieving our No-Kill vision. Dog euthanasia was at a very low-level. We began an informal behavior modification program for aggression issues primarily dealing with food guarding and possession aggression. With staff and volunteers working with dogs, we found that new behaviors can be taught and these dogs could be made available for adoption.

Our efforts then turned to cats. With our adoption programs proving successful, the key would be to increase the number of foster homes to care for the cats and kittens until we could find them homes. We increased marketing and flyers, informing people that more foster parents were needed to support the large numbers of kittens that would enter our facility in the summer of 2006. Our existing foster parents became marketing agents to recruit new foster homes. Our newsletter promoted our foster care program. We modified our internal foster care process to address the additional medical needs of

cats and kittens in foster care. The result -- our foster program grew incredibly during 2006 with 1,500 animals being cared for at the homes of our foster parents.

Although adoption events and specials were successful, we still needed to do more to increase cat adoptions. Accordingly, we focused on off-site cat adoptions. We formed the “Purr-fect Partnership” program, where local business would house our cats in their business, so cats would be seen by local shoppers. A number of cats were adopted through these partnerships. However, the real difference came for the cats when one of our Board members approached commercial realtors in the area to obtain space for an offsite cat adoption facility. Due to such individual’s perseverance and determination, the result was “*Purrin’ at Pantops*” an offsite cat adoption center; located in a retail shopping center over 30 minutes from the SPCA facility (to date this space has been donated). Since its inception, Purrin at Pantops has been crucial and is essential to our No-Kill mission (over 1,000 cats and kittens have been adopted from this facility). It reaches adopters that, for different reasons, are not coming through the shelter doors. It is run by one staff member and a very organized group of volunteers, who have decorated the space to be inviting to the public. Approximately 70 cats and kittens live at Purrin daily and are showcased in a very happy, healthy, and stress-free environment. Senior citizens, disabled volunteers, and kindergarten classes take pride in caring for the animals at Purrin. Not only has this center helped the cats, but it has improved the lives of the many people who have come in to visit, volunteer, and adopt. Purrin has become an integral part of the SPCA’s identity in our community. We also implemented a “Barn Cat Room” at Purrin, where feral or stray cats that would not otherwise make good house cats could be showcased and adopted as barn cats. In addition, in 2006, a new Petsmart (the only in our area) was built, and we have cats and kittens for adoption at this site. Off-site adoptions now make up approximately 25 percent of our cat and kitten adoptions.

Although we were pleased with our marketing accomplishments, we knew the long-term solution was to reduce the intake of animals. We continued to offer a low-cost spay/neuter certificate program to the public; however, under this program, actual surgery prices were still dependent on local veterinarians. Often, despite these discount certificates local veterinarians would charge in excess of \$100 (some as high as \$400), a price out of reach to many low-income residents. We needed a more acceptable spay/neuter assistance program for residents who could not otherwise afford this expense. Since our SPCA clinic was struggling to care for our sick pets and altering SPCA pets, we contracted with a mobile high volume spay/neuter clinic, known as Angels of Assisi, to offer surgeries to the public. With our SPCA subsidizing the cost, prices ranged from free (for pitbulls) to \$20 for low-income residents and \$50 for middle income residents. In addition, we began working closely with the local feral cat group, Voices for Animals, to provide free spay/neuter clinics for feral cats.

In July of 2006, with a new team of employees that embraced our No-Kill vision, we contracted with Nathan Winograd of No-Kill Solutions to visit our SPCA and to spend a couple of days providing staff training (prior to this time, management had consulted with Nathan for assistance as issues arose). As part of this process, Nathan

assessed our current operations and provided suggestions for improvements. We also held a public presentation so Nathan could help our community understand the importance of our No-Kill commitment. Nathan's presentation inspired our staff and volunteers and energized our No-Kill efforts.

We achieved our No-Kill goal during 2005 with respect to dogs, and at the close of 2005 with respect to our cat population. As of January 1, 2006, we made a No-Kill guarantee, and committed to saving all dogs and cats that could be medically treated and behaviorally rehabilitated and that did not pose a public health and safety risk. In 2006, we finished the year saving approximately 90 percent² of the dogs and cats animals in our care.

Since that time, we have maintained this standard. We have continued with our innovative adoption events and specials, Purrin at Pantops and Petsmart adoptions, our marketing and media focus, and our wonderful foster home program. During this time, we have improved our relationship with our animal control officers to work closely as a team on many matters. In 2007, we partnered with the City of Charlottesville to produce a television program, *Whisker and Tales*. We now have a half-hour television show that plays three times a day on the City's television station. *Whiskers and Tales* is updated monthly. We will end 2007 meeting our No-Kill goal and are committed to doing so in the future. We expect our save rate for 2007 to be approximately 87 %.³

Sustaining our No-Kill mission

To sustain our No-Kill mission into the future, we plan on continuing the adoption and marketing programs that contributed to our past success, constantly innovating to keep things fresh, interesting and fun. We will analyze our adoptions, intake, medical issues, behavior issues, fundraising solicitations and other statistics to enable us to respond to trends that we identify and proactively address any potential issues. We will continue to spread our message to local supporters, so we can raise funds to further our medical care and spay/neuter efforts. We are working to expand and develop our Board of Directors. More importantly, we hope to expand our existing clinic (to increase recovery space and have a separate public entrance) and hire additional veterinary help. Our goal is to reduce our intake of animals by substantially increasing the amount of public spay/neuter surgeries provided to our community and to surrounding communities. In addition, we hope to reach out to other communities to share information about our successful programs and help others achieve No-Kill in their own backyard.

² This 90 percent rate is the annual live release rate under the Asilomar Accords.

³ This 87 percent rate is the "to date" annual live release rate under the Asilomar Accords. Our cat save rate declined due to an increase of medical issues, primarily an increase in deaths relating to FIP. Our dog save rate declined slightly due to aggression related euthanasia.

Attachments

Attachment A – SPCA Asilomar Accord classifications (Pet Evaluation Matrix)

Attachment B – Examples of public disclosure of No-Kill guarantee:

- Fall/Winter 2005 newsletter
- 2005 Annual Report
- Summer 2006 newsletter
- Winter 2006 newsletter
- 2006 Annual Report
- Summer 2007 newsletter
- Winter 2007 newsletter
- Whisker and Tales – DVD – First Episode
- Charlottesville Inside-Out