

Maddie's® Pet Rescue Project in Erie County

Adoption Guarantee Plan of Action

Beginning on October 1, 2009, the partners of the Maddie's® Pet Rescue Project in Erie County have pledged that no healthy dog or cat will be euthanized. By 2014, all treatable animals will be guaranteed a home. The partners have agreed to the following plan of action to ensure that the Project's adoption and euthanasia goals are met.

Plan of Action Guidelines – Healthy Animals

1. The partners will follow the Pet Evaluation Matrix to properly evaluate each animal upon intake.
2. The Project partners will regularly examine their capacity to confirm what space is available (i.e how many kennels/cages are open, how many foster volunteers can take a placement).
3. A priority of each organization will be the speedy adoption of healthy animals through promotions and adoption events.
4. Each organization will examine its animals daily to look for signs of kennel stress and deterioration. An animal's status can be downgraded at any time, but should not be upgraded.
5. Healthy dogs and cats will remain up for adoption at the City of Buffalo Animal Shelter as long as the animal remains physically and mentally sound. If the animal has been up for adoption for more than four weeks, the City Shelter will assess the animal and determine if a transfer should be made.
6. When the City Shelter and the SPCA place animals into foster care due to capacity issues, treatable animals will be placed before healthy animals (subject to foster home constraints). This will help make certain that healthy animals get slotted first for adoption.

Plan of Action Guidelines – Treatable Animals

1. Each organization will examine its animals daily to look for signs of kennel stress and deterioration. An animal's status can be downgraded at any time.
2. The City Shelter and the SPCA will first concentrate its efforts on animals that can be easily rehabilitated such as weaned kittens, or those with conditions such as kennel cough or URI.
3. If the City Shelter or the SPCA is at capacity, and space must be made to take in new public surrenders, euthanasia will take place in the following order:
Unhealthy & Untreatable, Treatable – Manageable, Treatable - Rehabilitatable
4. The Project partners have agreed to one or more specialty conditions to focus on. The partners will be contacted in the event that these more difficult needs arise. The conditions are outlined as follows:
 - SPCA – Major surgeries such as amputations
 - TLC – FIV
 - HEART – Kittens, weaned and unweaned
 - Second Chance – Kittens, weaned and unweaned
 - Buffalo Humane – dogs including pit bulls (adult or pups), puppies at risk of illness, mild aggression (including food, anxiety-based, kennel stress)

Emergency Plan

1. In the event of an emergency situation where a healthy animal is in danger of euthanasia, the agency in possession of the animal will put out an urgent plea to its foster care base.
2. If no foster care volunteer is available, the Maddie's Project Coordinator will be reached by cell phone. She will, in turn, contact a representative from each AG organization to determine if a transfer can be made within a 24 hour time frame, or less depending on the circumstances.
3. Other local rescue groups out of the coalition will be contacted, such as breed specific rescue groups, if a transfer cannot be made to an AG organization.
4. If the City Shelter has exhausted all of its resources and cannot find a placement for a healthy animal, the SPCA has agreed to take the animal in danger of euthanasia.

Outbreak Protocol

In the event that a Project partner experiences an outbreak such as feline distemper, the suspected animals will be immediately isolated based on the available facilities. The affected organization will close down the intake of unvaccinated animals of that species. If the affected partner is the SPCA, rescues and seizures that take place during the quarantine time must be transferred to the AG organizations.

To reduce the risk of feline distemper outbreaks, the City Shelter will begin administering distemper vaccinations immediately upon intake. Additionally, each partner has agreed to the following strict cleaning procedures to help prevent outbreaks from occurring:

- When handling various animals, gloves are changed in between, hands are washed or anti-bacterial hand sanitizer is used.
- Transport carriers are cleaned thoroughly between each use.
- To disinfect against parvo and distemper, a 32:1 bleach solution will be used on all equipment including cages, exam tables etc. with an adequate contact time.
- Since bleach is inactivated by organic matter, soap will first be used.

Transfers

In order for the Project to succeed, transfers must be made between the partners. The partners will work together to ensure that each animal is transferred to the most appropriate organization. The receiving organization will re-evaluate the animal upon intake, classify it according to the Pet Evaluation Matrix, and decide upon a course of action based on the organization's protocol. If the receiving partner of a transfer re-evaluates an animal and decides upon euthanasia, the original organization will be given 24 hours to take it back.

If an adoption guarantee organization receives an animal that does not match up with any of the available foster homes, all attempts will be made to accommodate the animal at another organization, either in or out of coalition. If those efforts fail, the partner that made the initial transfer will agree to take back the animal.

The SPCA will make every effort to spay and neuter its animals prior to a transfer, as well as ensure that the animal receives any necessary medical treatment.

Communication with the City Shelter

It is the responsibility of each participating agency to assist in relieving the City Shelter of healthy and treatable animals. A flexible schedule has been arranged to organize the transfer process. The schedule is ideal in that dogs and cats are consistently transferred out, yet it also offers leeway to allow the partners to deal with unforeseen emergencies. Below is the transfer schedule:

Buffalo Humane – Wednesdays, Saturdays
HEART – Ongoing throughout the week
Second Chance – Mondays and ongoing throughout the week
Ten Lives Club – Wednesdays
SPCA – Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays

Both the City Shelter and the AG organization will come to a consensus on what animal will be transferred at any given time. The partners recognize that the City Shelter has adoption goals of its own, and will accept the City Shelter employees' determinations of what animals they can place.

Animals with Behavioral Conditions

The SPCA's admissions staff will offer counseling to owners who are surrendering an animal due to a behavioral condition and provide the names of local trainers in the area who they can consult with. There may be instances where owners simply need guidance, not to surrender their pet. When appropriate, Buffalo Humane's behavioral specialists can be contacted as well. They are willing to provide a complimentary initial consultation.

The SPCA agrees to notify the CBAS and the adoption guarantee organizations if a dog or cat that was transferred from the CBAS is scheduled for euthanasia due to behavioral reasons. The adoption guarantee organizations will have 24 hours to arrange for their own independent evaluation and to determine if they have availability for the animal in a foster home.

Foster Care

The SPCA, the lead agency, is ultimately accountable for guaranteeing that no healthy animal is euthanized and, by 2014, that no treatable animal is euthanized. As such, the SPCA will continue to expand its base of 200 foster care volunteers who can be relied upon to temporarily care for animals. In addition, each Project partner will concentrate its efforts to grow its foster care base. Several AG agencies will be using their adoption subsidy money to advertise for foster volunteers.

Adoptions

To avoid the euthanasia of healthy and treatable animals, concerted efforts must be made to increase adoptions. Accordingly, the Project partners are constantly exploring sites for adoption events as well as new off-site adoption locations. Currently, the SPCA has 17 off-site adoption locations. The City Shelter recently secured a deal with PetSmart to expand its presence there. HEART and Second Chance have cats up for adoption at PetSmart as well. Ten

Lives Club continues to see an overwhelming response to its McKinley Mall store, and has cats for adoption at seven other off-site locations. Finally, Buffalo Humane has entered into an agreement with Petco to showcase dogs available for adoption on a regular basis.

In addition to securing more off-site locations, the partners are exploring promotional offers that will result in more cat adoptions. The SPCA will be rolling out fee-waived adoptions for cats three years of age and older. While all of the partners may not participate with this change in fee structure, they are willing to participate with other promotions such as offering 50% off cat adoption prices.

Media

The SPCA has several local radio segments along with a weekly television spot to promote animals that have been at the shelter for a length of time. The spots will also be used to remind the public of our goal of zero healthy and treatable euthanasia by 2014 and how they can help to make it a reality.