



The Pet Rescue Foundation

Maddie's Fund NYC Grant

December 2011

Maddie's Fund President Rich Avanzino responds with an open letter to the few critics who want the foundation to get more involved in NYC's animal control operations:

We share your concern for the health, welfare and treatment of New York City's homeless dogs and cats. Our foundation was started in response to the bond that our founders shared with their beloved dog, Maddie. Maddie's spirit is in our entire grant giving, and serves as a constant reminder of the important role companion animals play in our lives.

At this time, we would like to take the opportunity to tell you a little about Maddie's grant giving in New York City, and describe our role as a charitable foundation that donates money to collaborations of animal welfare organizations that work together to save animal lives.

To date, Maddie's Fund has spent \$25 million on adoption and spay/neuter programs in New York City. Our funding is given to the project's lead agency, the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals. This is an umbrella organization that manages and distributes our grant funds to 112 rescue partners and Animal Care & Control (AC&C) to perform adoptions.

The vast majority of project funding for adoptions (nearly \$11 million to date) has gone to the pet rescue partners for taking animals from AC&C and placing them in loving homes. Four percent of project funding for adoption subsidies (\$450,607 to date) has gone to AC&C. In 2010, Maddie's Fund paid for 1,806 AC&C adoptions. Mayor's Alliance partners pulled 15,493 dogs and cats from AC&C in 2010 alone. The coalition has adopted out 150,851 formerly homeless pets over the past six years – thanks in large part to Maddie's Fund support. As a result of these efforts, the community save rate in New York City has jumped from 37% in 2003 to 82% in the first six months of 2011.

Animal lovers are very frustrated right now because they would like to see AC&C do better. A common response is to ask Maddie's Fund to step in and fix AC&C's problems. It's important to note, however, that AC&C is a municipal animal control program, and as such, Maddie's Fund has no authority in this arena. The only legal authority over policy, staffing and oversight rests with the Mayor, the City Council, their appointed representatives, and, ultimately, with New York voters.

The ASPCA has been granted humane law enforcement powers by New York State. The ASPCA's agents, therefore, have the authority to investigate alleged cases of cruelty, abuse and neglect. They can enforce the criminal laws that govern humane treatment of animals by bringing charges against those who violate the law.

Maddie's Fund does not have the legal authority or the investigative powers of such authorized organizations. We are a private grant giving foundation. We can continue to support the coalition that has worked together to save 150,851 dogs and cats in six years, or not. Discontinuing the funding would not improve animal care or save more pet lives in New York City. Therefore, for now, we will continue to support the lifesaving efforts of 112 rescue organizations and look forward to the day in the near future when every healthy and treatable shelter pet in New York City will be guaranteed a loving home.

Although Maddie's Fund does not get involved in local politics or take positions on legislation, we wholeheartedly support the principles of shelter transparency and giving rescue groups legal access to shelter pets. We feel so strongly that shelters and communities should collect and publicly report their statistics that we use our grants as incentives to encourage shelters and communities to do so. Our comparative database of shelter statistics from over 400 organizations is now [posted](http://www.animalallianceny.org/about/progress2010.htm) on our website. The Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals has publicly reported community-wide statistics for six years: <http://www.animalallianceny.org/about/progress2010.htm>.

Finally, we would like to take a moment to put Maddie's lifesaving efforts in context: Since Maddie's Fund started in 1999, we have contributed nearly \$100 million to save the lives of companion animals. We have given more than \$48 million to rescue groups and animal shelters throughout the country to pay for the adoption of more than 700,000 pets. Additionally, Maddie's Fund has invested \$28.7 million to spay and neuter more than half a million dogs and cats and we have given approximately \$9 million to veterinary colleges to develop and implement a new specialty in veterinary science called shelter medicine. One of the most recent lifesaving efforts we're proud of is Maddie's Matchmaker Adoptathon. The June 2011 event, held in two San Francisco Bay Area counties, found homes for more than 2,300 shelter dogs and cats in a single weekend.

Maddie's Fund was created with the personal wealth of two benefactors who are voluntarily giving their money in memory of one little dog to save shelter pet lives. Thanks to their generosity and the efforts of many organizations and people working together, a no-kill nation is within our grasp.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Rich Avanzino, President