The Pet Rescue Foundation

A Nine-Step Program for Saving Lives

You love cats and dogs and want to help them, but you don't know where or how to begin. Here are nine ways to start:

1. Get your employer involved
2. Become a foster parent
3. Support veterinarians who provide low cost spay/neuter
4. Compile a community animal survey
5. Support a no kill organization
6. Ask your landlord to help
7. Volunteer at your local shelter
8. Become a feral cat crusader
9. Join the All-Maddie Team

1. Get your employer involved. There are lots of ways companies can help save lives. The simplest is to allow the posting of Adoptable Pet Flyers or Volunteer Wanted posters on company bulletin boards. But a business or corporation might also be willing to host an adoption outreach site (in which the local shelter or rescue group brings pets available for adoption) or promote a local rescue group in their newsletter. One bold move would be to offer employees three paid hours a week to volunteer at a local shelter. Another idea: offer a matching funds program to build donations for a community no- kill organization.

2. Become a foster parent. Nowadays, most shelters and rescue groups have a foster care program. This is a great way to save lives in the comfort of your own home. Foster parents provide temporary care (a few days to a few weeks, generally) for infant kittens or puppies too young to be permanently placed. Or they provide peace and solitude for an animal recovering from an illness or injury. To find out more about fostering, see Fostering Kittens and Foster A Dog.

3. Support veterinarians who provide low cost spay/neuter programs. If you have a companion animal and you're looking for a practitioner to care for her, consider supporting a veterinarian who is helping to lower animal death rates in the community by providing low cost spay or neuter surgery. There are many outstanding and highly respected veterinarians who provide free or very low cost surgeries for low-income clients and/or for feral cats or who participate in discount programs sponsored by local shelters. These doctors are an integral part of the community-wide safety net of care—let's give them our thanks and support. (Click here for links to doctors participating in the

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California Veterinary Medical Association's Feral Cat Altering Program, sponsored by Maddie's Fund).

4. Compile a community animal survey. Are research projects your cup of tea? If so, you can put together a community animal survey that 1) lists the animal welfare organizations in your area (include animal control/municipal shelters, private shelters and rescue groups—any agency that finds homes for cats and dogs). Then, 2) list how many animals each takes in and how many animals each places. 3) List how many animals are killed at each facility. 4) List the reasons given why the animals were killed, e.g., sick and injured, underage, too old, facility ran out of space, aggressive, feral etc. Once you've talked with your shelter directors and compiled your data, write up a report titled something like, "The Status of Companion Animals in Riverdale." Get comparative data from other communities if you can and then send your findings to local reporters, community portal web sites, and elected officials. Local residents will then know how your community stacks up as animal care providers.

5. Support a no-kill organization. Whether you use e-charity or a checkbook, there are more than a thousand no-kill organizations who need your help. The question is, how do you find one, and how do you know if the organization is sound? To help you assess an organiation's effectiveness, check out the article, Criteria For Selecting An Animal Charity in the How You Can Help section of the Maddie's Fund website. To find a no-kill shelter in your area, you can order the No-Kill Directory from Doing Things For Animals. Or search the web. Look under No-kill or go to some of the national shelter registries such as Petsville.com, Pets 911 and Petfinder.org. Several active no-kill organizations are listed on this site under Our Funded Projects and No-Kill News From Around the Nation.

6. Ask your landlord to help. More pets can find homes if more rental housing is open to them. If you live in an apartment or condominium and have a no-pets policy, there's an easy way to provide your landlord with all the information he needs to change his mind. The Department of Law and Advocacy at The San Francisco SPCA will send you their free Open Door kit that details why pets in rental housing are beneficial to landlords. Or, if you have a pet and need a place to live, ask them for the Tenant kit!

7. Volunteer at your local shelter. A direct way to save lives is to lend a hand at the local shelter. Volunteers are desperately needed as dog walkers, groomers, cat socializers, behaviorists, adoption counselors, adoption outreach volunteers and more. Volunteering is a great way to help animals and have fun at the same time. Contact any one of your local animal welfare organizations.

8. Become a feral cat crusader. There are about 70 million pet cats in the United States. There are many million more feral cats who were once cherished companions but have since been abandoned to fend for themselves. There are several ways you can help these outcasts. You can financially support any number of organizations who are active in the trap/vaccinate/alter/release of these animals. You can also ask your local animal welfare organizations for feral cat programs in your area. If there is such a program nearby, we're

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sure they would be thrilled to have your hands-on help with trapping and transporting ferals for spay/neuter surgery. Don't worry, they'll teach you how. But if you don't have the time or money to provide direct support to ferals right now, you can still help by becoming a feral cat advocate. Check various web sites, and do some research about ferals. These guys are frequently at risk of "round up and kill" programs through some animal control agencies and they need educated advocates to stand up for them. To find out more about helping feral cats, click here. For more information about feral cat programs, check out this Resource List.

9. Join the All-Maddie Team. If you do any one of the eight items listed above, write a one-page essay describing what you did and how you did it and e-mail or snail mail it to us. For doing your bit to stop animal suffering and end the killing, we'll make you an official member of the All-Maddie Team and send you a genuine All-Maddie t-shirt free of charge.

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