



In this Issue:

▪ **Letter from Maddie's Fund**

Winners of Maddie's Fund
®/Petfinder.com Marketing
Competition For Hard to Place
Pets

▪ **Feature 1**

Marketing Contest Awards

▪ **Feature 2**

Meet the Top Winners:
KittyKind Inc.
Senior Dog of Oregon

▪ **Making a Difference**

Saving Hard to Place Pets



Letter from Maddie's Fund



Dear Animal Advocate,

This month's newsletter is devoted to the results of the Maddie's Fund®/Petfinder.com Marketing Competition for hard to place pets.

Maddie's Fund is distributing \$300,000 in prize money to more than 100 organizations that submitted entries describing their marketing techniques for adopting hard to place pets.

We're publishing the complete submissions of the top two prize winners in this issue. (Other top entries are posted on the Maddie's Fund website—the rest will follow in the weeks ahead.)

Finally, in this month's editorial, Maddie's Fund President Rich Avanzino lauds the groups that focus their adoptions on difficult to place shelter pets.



Best regards,
The Maddie's Fund Team



Features

MADDIE'S FUND® AWARDS \$300,000 FOR COMPETITION TO ADOPT HARD TO PLACE PETS

Top Prize Winners:

Kitty Kind, New York, New York – \$25,000
Senior Dog Rescue of Oregon, Philomath, Oregon – \$25,000
Humane Society for Hamilton County, Noblesville, Indiana – \$15,000
Pom Rescue.com, Spartanburg, South Carolina – \$15,000
SPCA of the Triad, Inc., Greensboro, North Carolina – \$15,000
Nevada Humane Society, Reno, Nevada – \$10,000
Pets for Seniors, Edwards, Illinois – \$10,000
Richmond SPCA, Richmond, Virginia – \$10,000

One hundred and ninety five rescue groups, traditional shelters, animal control agencies and adoption guarantee shelters described all manner of methods for re-homing elderly, disfigured, blind, deaf, unattractive and shy pets as well as dogs and cats with medical and behavioral problems in the Maddie's Fund®/ Petfinder.com marketing competition for adopting hard to place pets.

The quality and quantity of entries prompted the Maddie's Fund Board of Directors to triple the award over the originally announced sum of \$100,000. In addition to the top prize winners listed above, more than a hundred other organizations will each receive between \$500 and \$5,000 in prize money from Maddie's Fund. Award winners will be notified by mail within the next few days.

"We wanted to offer as much support and encouragement as possible for the many great ideas we received," said Maddie's Fund President Rich Avanzino. "These organizations have demonstrated that a significant market does exist for disadvantaged animals. In fact, many pet lovers are particularly touched by the plight of difficult to place dogs and cats and are eager to shower them with love and a new forever home."

"This contest demonstrates that a tremendous number of organizations are pioneering the way in saving hard to place pets and laying the foundation for others to follow," said Petfinder.com Director of Public Relations, Kim Saunders. "It also provides a wealth of 'how-to' information for other shelters to utilize."

Both Maddie's Fund and Petfinder.com will post the entries on their websites within the next few weeks.

Entries were judged by the quality of the submission, the marketing idea, the implementation of the idea, number of animals placed, documentation of results, size of the organization, sophistication of the organization, and resources available in the community.

Maddie's Fund and Petfinder.com will hold this competition again in Fall 2008.





Features

Maddie's Fund Contest Winners

KittyKind Inc. and Senior Dogs of Oregon were the top winners in our 2007 Marketing Campaign contest.

KittyKind Inc.

KittyKind, a rescue organization located in Murray Hill Station, New York, focuses on placing "Extra Special" cats with disabilities who are blind, FIV-positive, and even paralyzed. KittyKind uses a multi-faceted approach to placing these pets including newsletters, website, and online venues such as MySpace and Facebook. To learn all about their comprehensive marketing strategies, go to http://www.maddies.org/organizations/marketing_awards_pdf/KittykindInc_sm.pdf.

Senior Dog Project of Oregon

For the most part, the dogs that come to Senior Dog Rescue have at least one strike against them. But the tireless volunteers help these seniors find new homes. A grant from Maddie's Fund will enable them to expand their adoption network area, create a video to be shown to businesses interested in sponsoring pets' medical expenses, and increase the number of foster homes by helping with expenses. To learn more about the Senior Dog Project, go to http://www.maddies.org/organizations/marketing_awards_pdf/SeniorDogRescueofOregon_sm.pdf



Making a Difference

SAVING HARD TO PLACE PETS

By Maddie's Fund President, Rich Avanzino

Animal shelters have always considered themselves a morally superior alternative to commercial pet sources. After all, to adopt from a shelter is to save a life, and not support puppy mills or backyard breeders.

But rather than focus their marketing on lifesaving, many shelters have tried to go head to head with retailers. Their message has been, "we have a huge assortment of adorable puppies, kittens and purebreds and they're all healthy, 'high quality' pets—you'll find exactly what you're looking for here." These shelters seem to fear that to say anything else would be to lose what market share they already have.

In the past, shelters could use their 'perfect pet' messaging because they had those animals 'in stock.' That's not true anymore. In many communities, puppies and small dogs are practically an endangered species. But rather than change their message or their approach to adoptions, many shelters are simply importing the cutes and cuddlies the public wants, to the detriment (often resulting in death) of treatable, overlooked and hard-to-place pets.

I think these shelters are missing the boat by abandoning their humane message and not marketing to their strength—the importance of saving lives. To me, the point should be, "every life is precious, every life is important. This dog may be large and nondescript, this cat may be sixteen years old, but we are a 'humane organization' and our job—our mission—is to save the animals in our care. Won't you help us? Let's build a humane community together."

Some organizations—many of them small, all volunteer grassroots rescue groups—are focusing on a lifesaving message. They're promoting dogs with disabilities, geriatric pets, shy cats, big, brown, nondescript canines or cats and dogs with medical and behavioral issues—and having great success! One hundred and ninety five of them entered Maddie's Marketing Competition for hard to place pets. Some of their stories are in this issue of our newsletter.

These groups are demonstrating to the bigger, better funded agencies that a significant market does exist for treatable and hard to place pets—you just have to tap into it. In fact, many pet lovers are particularly touched by the plight of disadvantaged dogs and cats and are eager to shower them with love and a new forever home

In my opinion, all of the animal welfare organizations providing care for and finding homes for our nation's 'left behind' pets are real heroes. These are the groups that will guide us to the promised land of a no-kill nation within ten years.

