

Annual Report

A report on Year Five of No More Homeless Pets in Utah

July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005

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Overview

No More Homeless Pets in Utah began in July 2000. Its aim is to stop the euthanization of homeless dogs and cats in Utah. This report provides an overview of each element of the program, and progress made in Year Five (July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005)

Overall, the program has continued the successes of previous years in Year Five. Some results of Year Five:

- Number of animals destroyed is down 27% over the baseline year (1999)
- 7 of Utah's 29 counties recorded a Live Release Rate over 75%, and 4 recorded over 90% during Year Five
- 11,000 dogs and cats have been spared from euthanization
- Adoptions are up 55% statewide. Those done by no-kill organizations are up 221%.
- 10,000 additional dogs and cats have found homes compared to 1999
- 28,000 discount spay/neuter surgeries were performed

We continue to feel proud of these accomplishments while recognizing that there is still much work to be done to save the animals which are still being killed daily for want of a home.

At the end of this fifth year the generous financial support for No More Homeless Pets in Utah from Maddie's Fund came to an end. We faced the question of in what manner to continue the work given the significantly reduced budget without the Maddie's Fund grant.

One resolve that we felt unanimously was that we wished to continue to build on the results already achieved in the last five years. We were convinced that Maddie's Fund has provided us with the resources and impetus to establish a new status quo for animal help in Utah. There is no doubt that through this program the old norms have been questioned in every corner of the state. In many corners of the state those norms have been completely eliminated. In other corners, there are reforms still to be instituted in full.

Throughout the State it is clear that it is no longer considered acceptable to use euthanization as a means of population control. Any agencies following the old norms are considered backward, and their time to change will come.

Because the completion of Year Five is such a pivotal moment for No More Homeless Pets in Utah, we have included in this report our plans for what's next for the program.

As before we continue to consider the balance between focusing on adoptions and focusing on spay/neuter. We want to continue to help, through rescue and adoption, the animals who have already been born, but we know that it is through targeted spay/neuter programs that we can effect a lasting change.

Adoption Programs

Furburbia Pet Adoption Centers

Overview: Furburbia pet adoption centers, were designed to go head to head with pet stores. Their atmosphere is nothing like that of a traditional shelter, and they therefore attract people who are drawn to the idea of adopting, but who aren't comfortable visiting a shelter.

During Year Five each of the Furburbia locations have continued to adopt, on average, 35 animals each week. Participating rescue partners and shelters have used the two centers seven days a week. About 30 of our partners have participated on a regular basis.

Furburbia has received regular media coverage in Year Five, being a terrific place for photographers and videographers to capture touching photos of adopters with their new pets.

What's next:

- **Management change** – In order to effect greater efficiencies in staffing and management we have arranged for specific coalition partners to do the basic running of the two Furburbias in future. HSU will operate the Salt Lake one, and Summit Co Friends of Animals the Park City one. Other organizations will continue to be able to use the centers for their adoptions.

Internet Adoptions

Overview: From the start of the program, we have wanted to provide the opportunity for all participating rescue organizations to list their adoptable animals on the web. About one half already had websites, with varying degrees of sophistication, and greatly varying numbers of adoptable dogs and cats listed. We have provided some partners with a digital camera to make it easy for them to put their animals' pictures and bios online. We use Petfinder.com as our principle database for adoptable animals, and also have instituted a procedure for featuring different adoptables on the utahpets.org home page.

What's next:

- **Continue the focus on online adoptions.** It's proven to be very effective and we feel is essential as a basic method of finding adopters.

Shelter Partnership Program

Overview: Best Friends Animal Society and West Valley City Animal Shelter began a shared project in September of 2002. The partnership is designed to benefit both organizations and to help each achieve its goals. West Valley provides Best Friends kennel space in their shelter as well as unlimited access. In return, Best Friends rescues dogs and cats from the shelter's euthanasia list and finds them new homes through an outreach adoption program.

During Year Five we have chosen an average of 10 healthy, well-behaved animals each week - these are animals who've been available for adoption but are now scheduled for euthanasia - and taken them to various adoption venues around town. Once in our program, they're never going to return to the shelter's general population.

Animals not placed within several weeks are home fostered until permanent homes can be found.

Results of the program in Year Five have been dramatic. The Live Release Rate for the shelter has gone from rate less than 50% to 65%.

What's next:

- **Investigating the possibility of partnering with other shelters** – There are opportunities for other coalition partners to establish similar programs with other animal control shelters.

Events and Promotions

Lint Roller Party: We held The Lint Roller Party in October 2004. A fundraiser, silent auction, cocktail-type party to which you were permitted to bring your dog. The party is one of the main fundraising events of our year, providing members and supporters an opportunity to meet and celebrate the results of the year.

What's next:

- **Increased participation by sponsors.** We feel that the best way to increase the amount of money raised at this event is to cultivate more and stronger relationships with sponsors. This will be a future focus.

Utah Awards for Distinguished Service to Animals

The Utah Awards for Distinguished Service to Animals is our annual awards ceremony celebrating those in our community that go above and beyond to help Utah's animals. In Year Five we decided to change the time of the ceremony to the middle of the calendar year.

In Year Five there were seven categories for the awards, including Volunteer of the Year, Organization of the Year, Young Person of the Year, Veterinarian of the Year and so on. Nominations were open to any state resident. The event was a sit down dinner, fairly formal with an awards presentation, and was held on the same day as our Idea Exchange meeting that concluded the program year. It was a great opportunity to recognize the contributions of people and organizations to the programs of Year Five.

What's next:

- **A changed plan for the UADSA-** We feel that it is appropriate in future years to separate the UADSA from the Lint Roller Party and hold it in a separate venue at a separate time. The awards ceremony will be free to any and all that would like to attend and will be very focused on honoring those who do so much for our animals.

Strut Your Mutt

Overview: Strut Your Mutt is designed to be an anchor fundraiser for No More Homeless Pets in Utah, and to bring awareness of the cause to the community in an enjoyable atmosphere. In Year Five the popular dog walk, held in May in Salt Lake City,

attracted about 3,500 people. The event reached its tenth year as the largest fundraiser for No More Homeless Pets in Utah. This year's Strut Your Mutt featured a dog walk, doggie contests, live entertainment, a small adoption area, agility courses and numerous food and commercial booths.

An increased focus this year was the push to get people to raise money. In the past Strut Your Mutt had been promoted as a fun day at the park with your dog. So we pushed it in our advertising – poster, brochure, TV commercial, radio and signage at the event. The addition in Year Four of the ability for registrants to create their own websites a few weeks before the walk to assist them in raising pledges for the the event has shown its effectiveness.

What's next:

- **Fundraising first** – We will continue to focus on the fundraising element of this event and it will continue to remain our main goal.
- **Using the event as an educational tool for NMHP in Utah-** We've seen the affect Strut Your Mutt had in converting Salt Lakers to our mission and the event is a tool to help get the message of No More Homeless Pets out.
- **Expanding the roll of volunteers in organizing the event** – For a number of years we have formed a volunteer committee to carry the load of organizing the event. In future years we will have a lead volunteer who can substantially replace the role of a staff person.

Super Adoptions

Overview: Twice a year, No More Homeless Pets in Utah organizes 3-day “anchor” Super Adoptions. In Year Five, we also organized some smaller adoption events in other communities on the Super Adoption model.

During the twice-yearly Super Adoptions, more than 28 rescue partners and shelters from across the state participated.

Super Adoptions are designed to have a festival-like atmosphere, with bands, food vendors, and kids' activities. This atmosphere provides another venue for the general public to “view” animals outside of the shelter environment. Each event is held in a PETSMART parking lot under rented tents. A significant part of the funding for the events comes from sponsors.

For the May Super Adoption in Year Five we moved the location to a different PETSMART store to test the idea of varying the location. Overall the change was not productive, and we concluded that the value of establishing a known location for a regular event like this is greater.

What's next:

- **Placing more of a focus on fundraising at the Super Adoptions.**
- **Teaching volunteers to organize Super Adoptions** - Next year we plan to have a volunteer supervise other volunteers in organizing the logistics for Super Adoptions in order to reduce the need for staff time.

Spay and Neuter Programs

The Big Fix on Tour, Mobile Spay/Neuter Clinic

Overview: The first four years of the program have given us invaluable perspective on what is needed from our spay/neuter programs. Initially we intended to focus the Big Fix on under-served areas. We were surprised to discover after year two that one of the few areas in the state to have decreased shelter admissions in Utah was an urban area that the Big Fix visited quite frequently. We came to believe that the decrease in that area showed that the Big Fix was an effective tool to sterilize the pets of the working poor, who are reluctant to go to conventional veterinary clinics. Since this realization we have been concentrating more on areas that have the highest shelter admissions, which is primarily urban areas. We are beginning to see a significant decrease in shelter admissions in other areas through the Big Fix and other spay/neuter promotions.

The change of focus from under-served to urban areas is also based on economics. Visiting rural areas increases the daily cost by \$300-\$350 for hotel, per diem and vehicle expenditures. Rural areas tend to have lower turnouts than do urban areas, because of the decreased population and the generally lower emphasis that rural communities put on animal care, especially cats. The combination of lower turnouts with higher costs dramatically increases the average cost per surgery in rural areas. The Big Fix functions not only more economically, but also more effectively, when it is able to consistently operate at capacity.

In Year Five the Big Fix operated 207 days and performed 8192 surgeries, an average of 39.6 per day. The clinic has been successful and we estimate that approximately half of our patients would not have been sterilized had they not been serviced on the Big Fix.

What's next:

- **Focusing on the Spanish-speaking community in our advertising-** Providing our Spanish-speaking residents with a Spanish message on our phone system as well as spay/neuter materials in Spanish. This is the largest ethnic group in Utah, and we plan to target relevant areas in order to understand more about their feelings and habits related to spay/neuter.

Low-Income Voucher Program

Overview: Our spay/neuter voucher program, dubbed "Clip 'n Save," originally offered a \$20 discount on spay/neuter surgery at participating veterinarians. In Year Five vouchers were available only through an application process, and were targeted to low-income people. Vouchers range in value from \$10 to \$50 depending on factors such as

income, number of children in the household, type of pet, etc. Applications are available on our website and at shelters throughout the state.

This plan generated an average voucher value of \$26 during Year Five. We sent out voucher applications and spay/neuter brochures to all the participating veterinarians in our program on a bi-monthly basis.

What's next:

- **More intense focus on low income spaying and neutering.** With a reduced budget in the coming year we are expecting to be able to subsidize fewer surgeries. This makes it even more important that our spay/neuter efforts are tightly aimed at low income communities.
- **New forms of advertising and addressing the Spanish-speaking community**

The Feral Fix

Overview: The Feral Fix is a program that offers \$10.00 spay/neuter vouchers for feral cats. The Feral Fix is a statewide coalition of feral cat caregiver's lead by No More Homeless Pets in Utah and utilizing a committee of volunteers who run 'Trap Trading Posts' throughout the state. These loan out traps in their local community, provide community resources regarding feral cats, and keep statistical records of feral cat sites. They also fields numerous phone calls and public inquiries, record and administrate overall feral cat programs.

In Year Five we continued to operate the program in West Valley City to promote Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR) as the best method of handling the city's feral cats. No More Homeless Pets in Utah worked closely with WVC Animal Control to provide TNR resources. Results were dramatic with cat intake and hence euthanasia dropping more than 50% during the year.

What's next:

- **Working to educate and get the buy-in of local governments and animal control agencies.** We also plan to propose ordinance changes that will decriminalize TNR.
- **Recruiting more trapping teams across the state.** More teams are needed to aid in the actual trapping for newcomers or those who are unable to trap themselves. Recruit a chairperson to monitor trapping teams.
- **Establishing assistance to help trap those final few really wily cats-** and reiterate to caregivers that if any new cats enter the area, we would be delighted to loan them traps again!
- **Increased program promotion-** New caregivers must be sought out to achieve the goal of 5,000 spay/neuter surgeries planned for Year Five.

Animal Control and Rescue Partners

Working With Animal Control Agencies

Overview: The cooperation of the state's 56 animal control agencies is vital to achieving the goal of No More Homeless Pets in Utah.

Recognizing this, during Year Five we have continued our work fostering good relationships with these agencies and individuals whenever possible.

Our strategic plan for the year also included focusing on certain shelters in order to guarantee homes for all their healthy animals. This involved working closely with no-kill partners and the shelters, keeping in close contact with them, and transporting animals regularly.

This work helped build bridges between "no-kill organizations" and shelters. Our relationship with animal control requires constant upkeep, great patience, and compassion.

What's next:

- **Encouraging more shelters to post their adoptable animals online**
- **Continued face-to-face meetings with Animal Control staff statewide-** Our staff will continue to take trips to visit with Animal Control shelters throughout the year. We feel this will increase their openness to working with our program and other rescue partners
- **Brainstorm and implement new ideas for increased shelter adoptions-** We will focus a great deal of our efforts on finding ways to increase shelter adoptions in addition to rescue group adoptions.

Working with Rescue Partners

Overview: Twenty-six rescue partners now participate in the No More Homeless Pets in Utah coalition. These partners range from small to large, from brand new to long established, from rural to urban, from volunteer based to staff based and from facility based to non-facility based.

To participate in the program, partners must report their monthly adoption statistics, increase their adoptions, attend twice yearly Idea Exchange meetings, and cooperate with other partners, individuals, and agencies. In exchange for all this, the partners received stipends and other assistance to bolster their adoption programs.

They also benefit from the increased name recognition provided by our advertising, program website, Furburbia Adoption Center, mobile spay/neuter clinic and special events such as the Super Adoption.

Other subsidiary benefits are the camaraderie, networking ideas and animal rescues, and strength in numbers they gain by aligning themselves with No More Homeless Pets in Utah and other rescue partners/animal control agencies.

During Year Five we added a new member to the Partner Development Team for animal transportation purposes. This person worked on a part time basis to connect shelters and rescue groups and assist with animal transportation.

What's next:

- **Recruiting new foster homes** – The only thing limiting some of our partners from doing more adoptions is their need for more foster homes.
- **Closer involvement by partners with coalition strategy** – We are planning to increase the ways of involving interested coalition partners in discussing and making plans for overall coalition activity.

Idea Exchange Meetings

Overview: Idea Exchange meetings are held twice a year. They are designed to build the skills of our participating rescue partners and shelters. To achieve this objective, No More Homeless Pets in Utah has developed the Idea Exchange Meetings into a higher impact program, which offers intensive 'one subject oriented' workshops to rescue partners twice a year.

In Year Five in one Idea Exchange we focused on internet adoptions, and ways of improving the use of the internet to increase adoptions and improve their quality. On the second meeting we put the emphasis on working with animal control agencies and customer service.

What's next:

- **In future years it is probable that resources will allow us to hold just one Idea Exchange each year.** The Idea Exchanges are very effective networking opportunities and much welcomed especially by no-kill coalition partners.
- **Doing a better job of convincing veterinarians and animal control officers to attend meetings.**

Gathering and Tracking Success Through Statistics

Overview: To gauge progress toward our annual goals, No More Homeless Pets in Utah prepares monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual reports. These reports contain statistics on intake, adoptions, spaying and neutering, and euthanasia. To create the reports, numbers are gathered from animal control shelters and participating rescue partners, spay/neuter clinics, and veterinarians.

The program has increased the tracking of statistics in Utah immeasurably. It is important that the animal welfare community knows the progress of their work and what type of direct or immediate effect their programs are having in their local area.

What's next:

- **Simplifying Reporting**– We expect to simplify the reporting requirements on shelters and no-kill organizations. We will review the statistics to ensure that we continue to collect the most essential numbers.
- **Changing to a Calendar Year** – Because our Maddie's Fund grant began in the middle of the year our fiscal year began July 1 and our statistical reports have been kept coincident with that year. To make for easier comparisons with other communities, we will reassemble the monthly statistics into calendar year format.
- **Tracking Live Release Rate as a primary measure**
- **Tracking the E-Metric regularly.** The E-Metric is the number of animals euthanized per year per 1000 human population, and therefore adjusts statistics according to population changes.

Marketing, Advertising & Public Relations

Marketing

Overview: Before beginning the No More Homeless Pets in Utah program, we hired a marketing firm to conduct a telephone survey relating to adoptions and spay/neuter. We also integrated a survey the Humane Society of Utah conducted several years prior. We believe this is one of the most important uses of money and resources. Based on this information, we were able to construct an advertising campaign to directly target our primary audience. We also rely heavily on information we glean from our exit surveys.

What's next:

- **Continued emphasis on analyzing our exit surveys** – We believe that it is vital to understand who we are reaching and why they do what they do. Exit surveys will continue to be an important mechanism.
- **Targeting Hispanic areas for spay/neuter** – Learning more about this community so that spay/neuter programs can be more effective in these areas.
- **Addressing the Pit Bull 'problem'** – Despite some attempts we have not yet found the key to this. It is not as serious a problem in Utah as in some communities, but is nonetheless a factor here.

Advertising

Overview: We believe strongly in the importance of placing a significant portion of our budget into advertising. We also feel that advertising plays an important role in public education and therefore contributes importantly to the achievement of our mission.

Our advertising campaign covers the spectrum from general messaging regarding spay/neuter to specific grassroots events. During Year Five we have used TV, radio, billboards, bus boards and newsprint. Billboards and radio advertising have shown particular success this year.

What's next:

- **Using more 'guerrilla' advertising methods** – We have seen the success of using inexpensive tactics for advertising like well positioned posters, flyers, door hangers, targeted postcard mailings, and yard signs. Our budget will dictate the use of these methods more than in the past.
- **Focusing on leveraging our advertising budget** – Dollars spent on media can always be leveraged to buy more time through good negotiations with media outlets. We will focus more attention on this in future, as well as maximizing sponsorship arrangements with media.

www.utahpets.org

Overview: While recognizing that a website cannot replace advertising and other forms of promotion, right from the start we felt that the Internet could be an important element in our program and could reflect our upbeat, fun “brand.” Utah has a high level of Internet penetration – approximately 60% – and we wanted to make full use of this 21st century resource.

In Year Five we added a fund raising mechanism to our website, including some e-appeals. This showed some initial success and is an avenue to develop.

Our site includes:

- Background information on the purpose and ideals of NMHP in Utah
- Facts, figures and FAQs
- Details of and links to participating organizations, shelters and veterinarians
- Information on upcoming events
- Spay/Neuter information, including the downloadable discount voucher
- A link to an online pet database used by our participating groups
- Reports on how the program is progressing

What’s next:

- **A plan for a revamp of the site** – we are finding that this seems to be a necessity every three years or so.

Fundraising

Overview: In anticipation of the ending of the Maddie's Fund grant, we stepped up our fund raising in Year Five, and will obviously continue this in the future. New fundraising methods begun in Year Five include direct mail appeals, moves to increase our membership, formation of regional fundraising teams, and creation of a volunteer team of 'Animal Ambassadors' to represent the program at community events, recruiting new members and selling merchandise.

We also established a new Community Board of influential and well connected individuals, one of the main functions of which is to raise funds. The Board organized a fundraising party in April 2005 the 'Save A Stray Soiree', which is planned to become an annual event.

What's next:

Expanding the fundraising mechanisms for the program. Next year will include the following:

- **Cause marketing programs**
- **Direct mail campaigns**
- **E-mail appeals**
- **The Lint Roller Party**
- **Strut Your Mutt**
- **The Save A Stray Soiree**
- **Corporate sponsorships**
- **Merchandise sales**
- **On line sales**
- **Small community events**
- **Animal friendly License Plate**
- **Legislation to authorize a check-off on state tax returns**

Volunteer Program

Overview: Volunteers are essential to our program's success. We have a volunteer base of approximately 600 individuals. Collectively these people average 1,400 hours each week. With the reduction in our budget for next year, the importance of volunteers fulfilling essential functions is increasing. This year our volunteers provided essential resources for all our programs and events.

A Christmas party was held to recognize the volunteers, and was very well attended.

What's next:

- **Improving the software used to track our volunteers** – We have used a rudimentary database for this. We will upgrade to provide increased records and tracking ability.
- **Summer volunteer recognition party** – An outdoor summer barbecue to recognize and thank volunteers.
- **Review of tasks previously performed by staff** – We feel more can be delegated to volunteers, and will undertake a review of staff tasks to increase volunteer involvement and save staff time.