**Capacity for Care: When less adds up to a Whole Lot More for Shelter Cats**

HSFTPC is a nonprofit organization, founded in 1888, providing sheltering services for seven jurisdictions, with a population of 912,500, in two counties in Washington State’s South Puget Sound region.

The Humane Society accepts every pet that comes to our doors, regardless of age, health or adoptability. In 2014, 706 dogs, 1,451 cats, 36 rabbits and 64 other animals with untreatable medical or unsafe behavioral issues were euthanized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 Shelter Statistics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cats Received</td>
<td>4,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cats Placed</td>
<td>4,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cats RTO</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs Received</td>
<td>4,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs Placed</td>
<td>2,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs RTO</td>
<td>1,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbits Received</td>
<td>221</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Animals</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Kathleen Olson, CAWA – Executive Director
#Cap4Care

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**Capacity for Care for Cats**

**Goals:**
- Discover ways to match the number of cats cared for at any one time with the capacity required to assure the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare for all cats in our care.
- Eliminate euthanasia of healthy cats.

**Challenges:**
- Status of Community Cats
- Inefficient use of space
- Undersized housing units
- Inefficient cleaning and care protocols
- URI impacting LOS
- Open admission - unpredictable intake flow
- Lack of resources for neonate kittens

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**“Just stop euthanizing them.”**

Humane Society for Tacoma and Pierce County
Community Cat Policy

As of June 1, 2014 the Humane Society for Tacoma and Pierce County will do everything possible to not euthanize healthy “Community Cats” brought to the shelter. “Community Cat” is an umbrella definition that includes any un-owned cat. These cats may be “feral” (un-socialized) or friendly, may have been born into the wild or may be lost or abandoned pet cats. Some community cats are routinely fed by one or more community members, while others survive without human intervention. Whatever a cat’s individual circumstances, the term “Community Cat” reflects the reality that for these cats, “home” is not within the community as defined by an individual household. Feral cats are not socialized to people and are therefore not adoptable. Instead of impoundment, the Humane Society now promotes and participates in Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) for feral cats. Through TNR, feral cats are humanely trapped, vaccinated, microchipped, neutered, ear tipped and returned to the location from where they originated, whenever possible, to live out their lives.

We always encourage the community to engage in TNR independently whenever possible. We do have appropriate TNR traps available for these Good Samaritans. (There is a $65 deposit which will cover the cost of the trap if not returned.) These are available through Customer Service. Both Northwest Spay & Neuter Center and Pasado’s Spay Station will alter these cats.

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Showcase Available Cats

Portals!

Pathways to Shorter Length of Stay

- Create Cat Team
- Improve Intake Exams
- Start Daily Rounds
- Recruit More Foster Homes
- Shelter Neuter Return
- Intake Appointments
- If it meows, fix it for free!
Improve Shelter Operations

Switch to one step cleaning protocol

Shorten public hours for more staff training and animal care time

Establish a Dedicated Customer Service Call Center &

Director of First Impressions
Greeter Station
Launch a “Foster to Surrender” Program for Neonates

Challenge Ahead: Capital Campaign for Shelter Remodel

Thank you! Kathleen Olsen, CAWA Executive Director #Cap4Care
Capacity for Care
When Less Adds Up to a Whole Lot More for Shelter Cats

Presented By
Ollie Davidson
Director of Programs and Digital Marketing
Tree House Humane Society
#Cap4Care

Brief History
Started in 1971 and became a leader of the no-kill, cageless movement - proving cats better off in colony environments
Innovative programs, including AAT, Pet Food Pantry, housing FIV+ cats
Mismanagement in the 90s lead to, among other things, severe overcrowding and stalled programs.

By 2004
350 cats in building, 90% of which were feral or semi-feral
Adoptions around 300 annually and around 400 admissions
Cats were overcrowded in community housing, and health issues were out of control
Identifying the Problems

Majority of Cats Hard to Adopt

Too Many Feral Cats

- Cats overcrowded and segregated (feral room semi-shy room, aggressive/alpha room, etc.)
- Unstructured Volunteer and Enrichment Programs
- Many Cats with Chronic Health Issues

Admissions and Adoptions Programs Outdated/Mismanaged

- Admissions were arbitrary, inefficient and lacked structure
- No behavior assessment, leading to many feral admissions
- Health care protocols were outdated, slowing down both admissions and adoptions
- Poor lines of communication with admitters and adopters
- Adoption process was restrictive, and limited hours for adoption
- Inferior promotion of adoptable cats - outdated restrictions like no black (or white!) cats adopted out during month of October!
Lack of Programmatic Advancement

Lack of leadership and enthusiasm lead to stalled growth and inertia
Too much bureaucracy - staff were unable to advance new ideas because of unnecessary red tape
Lack of collaboration - much of the shelter was controlled by a couple close-minded (paranoid) individuals

Solving the Issues

Cats classified into 5 groups internally: Shy, Semi-shy, Overstimulated, Special Needs, “Friendly”
Divided larger spaces into smaller colony rooms, and determined maximum number of capacity per room based on current metrics (today 18 sq.ft./cat - 20 sq. ft. for FIV+ cats)
Mixed populations, ensuring an equal mix of our 5 categories and promoting “mentor cats” in each room

Turning Unadoptable Into Adoptable
Turning Unadoptable Into Adoptable cont.

Created smaller enclosures, or condos, for cat(s) that needed extra attention or did “play well” other cats

Volunteers certification program was developed, and volunteers were directed into structured socialization and enrichment programs

Cats with ongoing medical issues were given health contracts to cover future medical issues related to the ongoing issue

Revamping Admissions and Adoptions

Date-based intake system developed, based on requests placed on a waiting list - committees decide complicated admissions, with emergencies pushed through

Behavior assessment on multiple levels, including initial admission request and intake exam Our Director of Veterinary Services Dr. Lynda Ewald, and Dr. Sandra Newbury, streamlined veterinary protocols

Greater emphasis was put into customer service and reception, with push for non-judgemental communication, and all calls and emails returned within 1 business day

Application process was made easier, with open adoption conversation style and adoption hours extended to 7 days a week/6 - 8 hours/day

Digital presence was created, multiple platforms for adoption promotion used - especially social media, and street teams spread our message on a weekly basis

Innovative Programs Created

Changes at the top, including the hiring of Executive Director David de Funiak, and Development and Community Cats Program Director Jenny Schlueuter brought fresh ideas and new purpose

The core team of Dave, Jenny, Dr. Ewald and myself were given the freedom to research and implement new ideas that brought our organization to the next level

These ideas included the creation of Community Cats - with its offshoots, Working Cats and Feral Freedom Programs, Our Transfer and Kitten on Deck Programs with Chicago Animal Care and Control, and expanded Foster and Off-Site Adoption Programs to help us save this huge influx of cats we were dealing with

Seminal moment - a fire next door caused an evacuation of all 350 cats at the shelter. This event lead to many adoptions, as some of our shyest and neediest cats were fostered by volunteers who decided to keep them. The event lead to a foster to adopt program, where cats that were shy or had special medical needs are placed into foster with “Adoption Ambassadors” who work to adopt the cat from their home.
Impact of Programs

Our Community Cats Program allows us to return and relocate feral cats to managed colonies, keeping them out of our shelter - Tree House was also one of the lead agencies to help create the Cook County Feral Cat Ordinance.

Our Foster Program allows us to admit more cats, provides them with extra socialization and TLC, and provides more exposure to potential adopters while reducing stress and expenses at shelter resident clinic.

Off-site adoption and “Adoption Ambassador” Programs increase adoptions and allow us to reach different audiences who might not otherwise come to the shelter.

Tree House Today

Upward trending adoptions, with a record being set every year for the last 8 years, culminating with 1470 adoptions in 2014 (totals include in-house and offsite).

Over 900 cats admitted in 2014, with another 1000 transferred from Chicago’s Animal Care and Control.

Tree House now has two locations, with an average of 110 cats at our Headquarters and 45 cats at our Bucktown branch.

Tree House Today cont.

Of our previous classifications, less than 5% considered shy or semi-shy.

Over 100 foster homes, with an average of 150 cats in foster at any given time.

In spring, 2016, Tree House will be opening the largest, state-of-the-art, cat-focused facility in the country. The building, consulted on by Dr. Sandra Newbury and Jackson Galaxy, will feature a cat'fe, education center, resident clinic, low-cost public client (dogs and cats), and of course, modern and comfortable cat wings, complete with outdoor enclosures.
Less Cats Housed Equals More Cats Served!

Contact Me for More Information About Our Programs - We Can Help!

ollie@treehouseanimals.org