

If you could accomplish only one thing for animal welfare and protection in your community, what would it be? And why does your area need it?

That's the question we asked for this issue's Coffee Break. You responded by giving us some innovative solutions to your pet peeves. We heard about your dreams for more widely available spay/neuter programs, better humane education, more responsible owners, creative adoption programs for hard-to-place pets, and better cooperation among the people working to save animals.

Check out more of your responses at animalsheltering.org/coffeebreak/



If I could accomplish only one thing, I would like to see animal welfare organizations work together for the good of the animals, not only in my community but all over the world. We have differences, but if we could just put them aside and agree to disagree but work for the good of the animals, think what a great job for them we could do!

—Jean Meyer, adoption coordinator/animal caretaker
Friends of Keokuk Animal Services
Keokuk, Iowa

I sincerely believe that the main thing that can make a “long-term” difference in a community is to get politically active and make a humane, professional animal shelter a priority to the city/county government. Ultimately, open-admission shelters handle the most animals in a community, so it is imperative that the community have a plan that is progressive and informed on the latest information that *Animal Sheltering* provides. It takes citizen participation and demands to make that happen. I could rescue my entire life and not impact animals in the same way as if I make the local powers that be recognize the importance of having a professional and humane animal control department that involves the community in solving the pet owner/population and cruelty issues in a community. So if you are not satisfied about your local shelter, get politically active and make it a priority to your local politicians, or run for office yourself!

—Laura Lanza,
community initiative director, ASPCA
Lake Charles, Louisiana

I would like to educate the public about all the hard-to-adopt dogs. I'd like to see black dogs, pit bulls, coonhounds, and all other difficult-to-place dogs going to wonderful homes. It's tough to have a wonderful dog in the shelter and have people walk by without even pausing because of untrue stereotypes. In that thread, I co-founded *coonhoundcompanions.com* to promote coonhounds and foxhounds as family companions.

—Mary Beth Hall, chief dog warden
Union County Dog Warden
Marysville, Ohio

I would make it illegal to let a dog ride in the bed of a pickup or any open-bed vehicle. I saw a dog fall out of the bed of a truck on the highway at 55 mph, and that is an image that will haunt me forever! And I would make it illegal to leave a dog in a hot car!

—Karen Stout, volunteer
Black Canyon Animal Sanctuary
Crawford, Colorado

Every day we get calls about cats, lots and lots of cats and kittens. They are outside in the cold, wet, pregnant, hit by cars, feral, with litters. ... I wish that there was some way to make people understand that this is a problem for all of us and that they all should neuter their animals and keep them inside. They think it is unnatural, but they don't see the consequences like the shelters do. It speaks volumes about how people see issues as “not my problem,” but the reality is, it is a problem that belongs to all of us!

—Betsy Legnini, management
Main Line Animal Rescue
Chester Springs, Pennsylvania

I would build a facility that could rescue farm animals. We are in a county that has been declared a disaster because of fires and drought. A lot of these animals have been burned, so I would have a burn clinic and rehabilitation center for the farm animals.

—Lisa Herrington, founder
Elite Equine Rescue
Colorado City, Texas

I would like to start a special program to help adopt elderly dogs, and possibly even start a separate shelter for elderly pets only, so that they could get extra attention. Pottawattamie County is a large county in Iowa, and after volunteering for the last year, [I've seen] there is a big need for this as no one wants to adopt the older dog that may have a few health problems.

—Becky Lamb, volunteer
Pottawattamie County Animal Shelter
Carson, Iowa

I believe that educating the public on the importance of animal welfare starts with the kids. I would like to visit schools and do "pet shows." I would bring animals that are in the rescue as well as pets of volunteers and animals who have been adopted from the rescue. I would tell each animal's story and use that story to teach the kids how to properly care for them, and that when you love something you care for it. That means something different for each type of animal. Many animals land in rescue because kids broke a promise to mom. The animal will love the person who cares for them. Finally, I would talk about bullying and explain that studies show that people who abuse animals generally move on to people, and that by telling a parent when you see an animal being abused, you help people.

—Kay Williams, executive director
Glenmoore Small Animal Rescue
West Chester, Pennsylvania

I would provide low-cost or free (if needed) spay/neuter for everyone in my county and change ordinances to make it mandatory. Also, provide funds to treat sick/injured animals of low-income families who are faced with choosing euthanasia due to lack of resources.

—Cindy Foster, director
Georgia Animal Project
Canton, Georgia

Congratulations to Karen Stout, whose submission was selected in a random drawing from those published in this issue. Her organization, Black Canyon Animal Sanctuary, will receive a free coffee break: a \$50 gift certificate to a local coffee shop. "Bone" appétit!

Check out the latest Coffee Break question and submit your responses (150 words or less) at animalsheltering.org/coffeebreak or send them to Editor, *Animal Sheltering*/HSUS, 2100 L St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20037. **Your answer may be printed in a future issue of *Animal Sheltering*.** If your response is chosen for publication, you will be entered into a drawing to win a **free coffee break (valued at \$50)** for your organization. Responses may be edited for length or clarity; no donation or purchase is necessary to win. See animalsheltering.org for contest rules, or send an email or letter to the above addresses to request a printed copy.

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