

For this issue's Coffee Break, we asked you what the animal protection movement needs more of—whether it's money, innovative thinking, adopters, or something else. We also asked you about the things you think we could do without, things that you'd subtract from our field.

You responded with calls for organizations to work together, boost our humane education programs, and more efforts to direct our message of caring for animals to the folks who need to hear it most.



Based upon my shelter experience, I would say low-cost or free spay/neuter options available for the community. In this economy especially, owners are struggling, and the poor simply cannot spay or neuter their animals, as it's prohibitively expensive.

—Lynda Nesbitt, volunteer
Pinal County Animal Care and Control
Stanfield, Arizona

There are so many groups out there—large and small—that do terrific work on behalf of animals. Each one seems to have its own special niche with its own set of priorities, resources, and capabilities. I would like to see a greater emphasis on working together instead of each functioning in its own little “silo.” We should create a central repository of all the recognized organizations and a way to network in order to help even more animals.

—Linda Caradine, executive director
Other Mothers Animal Rescue Inc.
Portland, Oregon

Action! A lot of people claim to be animal lovers, but few actually get involved in activities that create change for animals. Too many “armchair activists” and not enough people rolling up their sleeves and jumping into the trenches and volunteering.

—Michelle Bartlett, president
Solano Feral Cat Group
Fairfield, California

We could do without division amongst our shelters and rescues. For example, the term “no kill” has morphed, been used and abused—becoming a term for “those who care about animals” as opposed to “those who don't.” Division is unproductive, takes energy away from animal welfare, and ultimately sucks away creativity that could be used for solutions to pet overpopulation and establishing common ground amongst shelters.

—Erica Seaver Engel, outreach coordinator
Humane Society of Central Washington
Yakima, Washington

The movement needs the media and public's attention on how the future for cats and dogs is to become a “no kill” society. It is happening nationwide now! Meaning no healthy, adoptable cats and dogs will be put to sleep due to lack of space/overcrowding. To achieve this, we need everyone's help. Whether they foster a cat/dog, bottle-feed newborns without a mother, or help with trap-neuter-return of feral cats, the community as a whole has to come forward and be prepared to take a stand and make a difference. When shelters are overloaded, the media needs to announce this to ask for the public's help, stressing the fact they need society's help so that animals aren't put to sleep. No rescue group can achieve this alone—it takes more than a village to help this come true!

—Marie Edwards, founder/executive director
Ten Lives Club
Hamburg, New York

The animal protection movement has come a long way in the past 20 years, through the rise of “umbrella” groups such as The HSUS and The ASPCA, which have effected political change and tremendous public education. The masses are now aware of issues such as dogfighting, neglect/cruelty, puppy mills, factory farming, etc. The pet rescue movement has also emerged as a powerful force to reduce the number of animals euthanized each year. This grassroots movement has grown through the creation of local, all-volunteer nonprofits that rescue, foster, and adopt out homeless pets. In my opinion, the most crucial current need of the animal protection movement is professional support at the grassroots level. These volunteer-driven groups are long on passion and empathy, but short on legal, accounting, and nonprofit managerial skills and resources, as well as funding for nonmission work. Professional support will empower these nonprofits to reach ever-higher animal rescue and placement goals.

—*Banu Qureshi, volunteer (dog trainer/fosterer for difficult dogs)*
PetConnect Rescue,
Potomac, Maryland

What the animal protection movement needs more of is collaboration. National organizations such as The HSUS, the ASPCA, and the Animal Welfare Institute are setting a great example by working together on many initiatives. Hopefully, their example will continue to filter down and influence the smaller organizations. Together we are so much stronger, smarter, and resourceful.

—*Cindy Gendron, volunteer programs director*
Virginia Beach SPCA
Virginia Beach, Virginia

We agree that what the movement needs more of is money, innovative thinking, and adopters! However, over and above all of those things, we need a huge boost to our humane education outreach. We work so hard to educate the public on the benefits of the proper care of animals, in hopes that we can reduce the number of homeless and uncared-for dogs and cats.

—*Brenda Jones, shelter manager*
Mission Valley Animal Shelter
Polson, Montana

I feel that there need to be more resources available to low-income residents. If clinics advertised more or came to the community with services it would help people and their pets stay together. While there is a wide array of resources, such as the Pet Food Pantry by the Connecticut Humane Society, it would be easier to publish a list, or promote an inner-city guide for responsible pet ownership. How can we make this happen? Everyone wants the best for their pets; for some it is just harder than others. I hope we can find a way to connect resources and organizations to make this happen.

—*Sharon Andrews, assistant animal control officer*
Plainville Police Department
Plainville, Connecticut

I have been thinking for a long time that more media coverage would be helpful in dog owners seeing themselves in the treatment of their animals. For example, what’s the result of not having a dog spayed or neutered, tying it to a tree for its entire life, not treating it with heartworm medication (a big problem here in the South), and the puppy mill problem, as well as the still-great number of dogs and cats euthanized every year? I recall a TV ad years ago that I felt was very powerful and something many people could relate to. It showed a family getting a puppy in the spring, playing with it during the summer, but by the time fall approached and the wind began blowing, the dog had been relegated to the outside. The last scene was during the winter on a day like Super Bowl Sunday, with people gathered in a house, happily eating and drinking. Suddenly one man said, “Hey Bob, whatever happened to that cute little puppy you got?” The camera then panned to a dog tied to his house out in the cold, pawing at an empty bowl. I’ll never forget it. I would really like to see less “preaching to the choir” and more efforts directed at the people who are creating the problems. Thank you for all you do.

—*Linda Conley, flight attendant*
Delta Airlines
Tyrone, Georgia

Congratulations to Linda Caradine, whose submission was selected in a random drawing from those published in this issue. Her organization, Other Mothers Animal Rescue Inc., 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.