



SECOND CHANCE ANIMAL SHELTER

EAST BROOKFIELD, MASS.

By the Numbers

In 2013, Second Chance helped more than 10,000 animals, doing 4,799 spay/neuter surgeries and more than 700 adoptions. Roughly 50 animals a week are vaccinated at the shelter's low-cost wellness clinic.

Ready to Go

"A lot of people think that [shelter animals] have huge medical needs ... so we take care of pretty much everything ahead of time," Blancato says. Offering low adoption fees and already-vetted animals speeds the adoption process at Second Chance, while 50 other shelters and rescues benefit from the clinic's low-cost services.

Help Where It's Needed

When Blancato learned that one of the town's elderly residents was forced to choose between feeding her pet and purchasing her own medication, the shelter created special services for elderly and low-income community members, including free vaccines and vet exams for pets of the elderly, pet food delivered to nine local food pantries, and a shuttle service that transports animals to and from its clinic.

➔ **TO LEARN** more about The HSUS's Emergency Placement Partners Program, visit humanesociety.org/epp.

ON A MASS SCALE

MASSACHUSETTS SHELTER MODELS HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ENDING PET HOMELESSNESS // BY KELLY HUEGEL

BACK WHEN SHERYL BLANCATO, president and executive director of Second Chance Animal Shelter, got started in animal welfare, it wasn't unusual for her to pick up entire litters of puppies running down the street. Now in her 15th year heading Second Chance, she has helped to transform East Brookfield, Mass., into a community mobilized to help animals not only locally, but nationally.

In 1999, Blancato was a city animal control officer up to her eyeballs in strays. She used her own time driving animals to shelters an hour or more away in the hopes they could be adopted out rather than euthanized. She worked with one vet who donated rabies vaccinations, but that was it. "What had been going on in sheltering ... wasn't working," Blancato says, so she decided to create a new organization to shelter animals while addressing the root causes of pet homelessness.

She applied for grants and forged relationships with local donors and businesses. Her idea was to go slow and steady, relying primarily on pro bono assistance and donated building materials. She also kept overhead low by limiting the size of the shelter. Opened in 2002, the

"smaller and leaner" shelter has a bright, colorful adoption center—and no mortgage.

Blancato believed that by focusing on medical needs like spay/neuter and vaccines, Second Chance could dramatically reduce numbers of homeless pets. "We had a lot of people who [said], 'That's not the way sheltering works.'" But she persisted, raising funds for a 6,000-square-foot subsidized veterinary clinic, which opened in 2010. The shelter has reduced the number of strays in the area, and now when someone calls to report a cat colony or ask for help with a sick pet, Blancato has options.

On The HSUS's list of Top 10 Emergency Placement Partners the last three years, Second Chance assisted with huge hoarding cases in Ohio and Michigan. In Ohio, staff made the 10-hour drive to the state three times, taking in 47 animals.

Second Chance is "an important part of a national mission to rescue animals from cruelty," says The HSUS's Michelle Cascio.

But that's not enough for Blancato. "One of our visions is to be a model shelter for the nation," she says. "We want to change the face of sheltering."

