Working with volunteers

Volunteers: They can accomplish a great deal for the municipal animal shelter or humane society by supporting staff efforts and allowing more programs to be put into action.

But a volunteer cannot be brought to the shelter, given a job and then forgotten.

To maximize the effectiveness of volunteers, your organization must work out a careful program of placing the right volunteers in the right jobs, so the needs of both the volunteer and the shelter can be met.
First, your staff should outline where volunteers could help meet the goals of your organization. Volunteers will need continuing communication with staff, so you should also determine which staff members are most interested in working with volunteers.

You may be tempted to give volunteers the routine tasks you are longing to be rid of -- and there will, of course, be many persons willing to help with such routine chores as addressing envelopes. But remember that volunteers will be more active if you give them interesting things to do.

Could volunteers form a speakers bureau to represent your organization and schedule speaking engagements? Could volunteers plan and carry out fund-raising campaigns? Could volunteers present humane education programs in the schools? Try to think of as many jobs as you can where volunteers can help you meet your goals and increase your impact on the community.

Next, you need to determine where to find the volunteers to do the jobs you have outlined.

Different people have different needs. People generally volunteer for work to meet some needs of their own. Whether your organization fulfills the needs of your volunteers will affect how productive they are and how long they work for you.

Some human needs that have been identified by researchers are: the need to be involved with other people, the drive to get things done, and the need to influence other people. In seeking a volunteer to be a speaker, you would look for a person who enjoys being before the public and having an influence on people. Retired professionals and members of professional and service clubs and neighborhood associations are potential volunteers for this kind of job.

Volunteers for your pet adoption and follow-up program should enjoy being involved with other people. Volunteers with this interest could come from church and social clubs and schools and universities. Newcomers to the community or temporary residents (for example, military spouses) may welcome the chance to make new friends through volunteer work.

Organizing and supervising recordkeeping are good jobs for people who like to get things done. Retired or unemployed professionals with managerial skills would probably enjoy this
The number of dog rabies cases is lower in states with compulsory vaccination laws. Twenty years ago, most reported cases were in dogs, while today most are in wildlife.

Although most of the actual human rabies cases reported in recent years were due to exposure to rabid wildlife, dog bites are still responsible for most human anti-rabies treatments administered, whether the dog proved rabid or simply could not be examined. But the last reported rabies case in a human caused by a dog bite in the US was in 1965. Dog-to-dog transmission is now rare in the US.

The study shows that a program based on a three-year vaccination schedule protects the community as well as a program based on a one-year schedule. The study authors also point out that vaccinated dogs tend to be otherwise well cared for, and therefore less likely to be exposed to rabies. More effort is needed in controlling rabies in wildlife and free-roaming dogs.

The study conclusions also recommended a standardization of rabies programs throughout the country. Currently, 27 states and the District of Columbia have compulsory rabies programs, but there is little uniformity between the various state and local regulations.

Standard immunization procedures have been developed by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, Inc. Their recommendations include:

- That vaccines with the three-year duration of immunity be used since they offer the least expensive and most effective method of community rabies control.
- That vaccines be administered intramuscularly at one site on the thigh.
- That vaccines be restricted to use by or under the supervision of a veterinarian.
- That neither wild nor exotic animals be kept as household pets since no vaccine is licensed for use in wildlife in the US.

Existing vaccines have not proved effective, and there is an increase in rabies reported in wild "pets." The State of Oklahoma has made it unlawful for anyone to descend or vaccinate skunks for the purpose of making them into pets, because of the number of people being exposed to diseased animals.

That rabies control authorities adopt a standard certificate and tag system. Standard tags can help a bite victim identify the vaccination status of an animal that cannot be caught.

The NASPHV has devised a standard vaccination certificate, and makes available samples and "ready-to-print" proofs -- write PO Box 13528, Baltimore, MD 21203. Recommendations for tag colors and shapes are: 1979 - green bell-shape; 1980 - red heart-shape; 1981 - blue rosette-shape; 1982 - orange fireplug-shape.

The earliest age recommended for vaccination for dogs and cats is three months. When the triennial vaccines for dogs are used, the dog should be vaccinated again one year later and then started on the three-year schedule.

In a compendium of rabies vaccines, NASPHV lists the following as triennial vaccines for dogs: Raboid marketed by Fromm, Endurall-R by Norden, ERA by Jensen-Salsbery, Neurogen-T-C by Bio-Ceutic, Rabvax by Pitman-Moore, and Trimune by Ft. Dodge.

Also, there are state and local regulations for the kinds of vaccines that are acceptable and how often they should be administered.

The NASPHV recommendations and complete list of vaccines marketed in the US are available from the Baltimore address above or the Center for Disease Control of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Atlanta, GA 30333.
Pyramid Films offers a 12-minute color film titled "Animals Can Bite." Its primary purpose is to teach children how to avoid being bitten by dogs and cats and what to do if an injury does occur -- but it is instructional for adults as well. Part of the production funding came from the American Veterinary Medical Association.

The sale price is $205; the film can also be rented for three days for $25. A videocassette is $165. Write Pyramid Films, Box 1048, Santa Monica, CA 90406.

The booklet "Building and Managing a Kennel" is available from Gaines Professional Services, 250 North St., White Plains, NY 10625. Although some of the information applies specifically to breeding kennels, the animal shelter will find the material on sanitation and kennel construction and management very useful. Write to the address above to request a copy.

The North Carolina Humane Federation is offering copies of Humane Handbook of North Carolina to help societies and animal control agencies become more professional. The book is in looseleaf form, so that groups outside North Carolina can insert local information. It covers cruelty investigation, euthanasia, medical and emergency animal care, legislation and other topics.

For a single copy, send $10 to North Carolina Humane Federation, PO Box 5542, Greensboro, NC 27403. Two or more copies are $8 each.

If your society or agency is planning programs for schools next fall, why not apply now for organizational membership in The National Association for the Advancement of Humane Education (NAAHE). The Humane Education magazine published by NAAHE provides a wealth of material that has practical uses in your school presentations.

Humane Education magazine gives you dry copy masters which you can run through a copy machine or have reprinted, including true and false quizzes on animals as well as fiction stories. In addition, every issue of Humane Education includes a page or more of clip art which you can use to enhance your newsletters and handouts.

One of the most popular features in Humane Education has been "Humane Education Happenings," a column devoted to short articles about programs all over the country. Each article includes the names and addresses of people you can write for copies of booklets, plans for doghouses, new films, and more. It's like a "Yellow Pages" of humane education activities.

To receive a free sample copy of a back issue of Humane Education, write Humane Education Sample/Shelter Sense, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

We've also arranged for you to get sample copies of HSUS's children's magazine, KIND. You can have as many as 30 back issues to pass out to teachers, parents, and children. Write KIND Sample/Shelter Sense, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

Please indicate the number of back issues you want and whether you want them all to be the same issue or a mix of several issues.

HUMANE MESSAGE -- Everett Animal Shelter (2930 36th St., Everett, WA 98201) posted this sign near the shelter entrance to explain the important reasons for impounding dogs. Shelter employees also assisted with a series of articles in an area newspaper that frankly discussed the problem of pet overpopulation. Director Jacqueline Hughes reports that the number of animals having to be euthanized dropped significantly after the articles appeared, indicating the importance of public education on the surplus animal problem.
The City of Greensboro, NC, is now enforcing its "dogs running at large" ordinance by giving tickets to the dog owners. The violator pays the city's collection division just as he or she would pay a parking ticket. The fines are $10 for the first offense, $15 for the second offense and $20 for the third and any additional violations.

If the ticket is not paid within 14 days, the violator may be issued a criminal summons. The dog does not have to be caught or impounded for the ticket to be issued. The Greensboro Record reports that dogs are the cause of most complaints made to police and city hall.

Seal Beach, CA, has passed an ordinance prohibiting cats from trespassing on private property without the property owner's permission. (The city has required cats to be licensed for several years.) The city responds to complaints, impounding the offending cat if it is still there when the officer arrives. The cat owner can be fined $25.

Reportedly, the ordinance has resulted in a good bit of joking, including a commendation message from a group calling itself "Friends of Mice." But many other cities have made serious inquiries about the ordinance.

Town officials in Wayland, MA, threatened to publish the names of persons owing overdue dog license fees. The threat worked -- nearly half the offenders paid up almost immediately, according to The Washington Post.

The County of San Diego Department of Animal Control has each adoptable animal checked by a staff veterinarian for any health, behavior or personality problems. Animals in the adoption kennels are observed daily for any new symptoms.

Now adopters are given certificates for examination of the pets by private veterinarians within ten days. If a medical problem develops within that time, the county will exchange the animal.
Sometimes with the dog sitting in an abnormal position and its abdominal muscles appearing taut. Placing pressure on the abdomen can cause the animal to cry out. The early stages of lead poisoning show intermittent vomiting and fits of barking and running.

Shelters should alert new adopters and all pet owners to this danger. . . .

The USDA Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will hold their Fifth Annual Animal Control Training Program September 6 and 7 at the Ramada Inn in Champaign, IL. For complete details, write Cooperative Extension Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 256 Large Animal Clinic, Urbana, IL 61801, or telephone (217) 333-2097. . . .

Alachua County (FL) Humane Society, Inc., reports that the county sheriff and Gainesville city police have a system with the county veterinary association to take care of injured animals. Officers will pick up an injured animal reported by a citizen and take the animal to the veterinarian on emergency call at the time. The animal will be treated, and the owner located. If no owner is found, the animal will be taken to the shelter.

The society also reports that the officers are issuing citations to owners of free-roaming pet dogs, rather than impounding the animals. (Alachua County Humane Society, Inc., Box 14108, University Station, Gainesville, FL 32604).

Finally, SHELTER SENSE would like to say “thank you for caring” to Angelo Cicconetti, dog warden in Lake County, OH. The Bucks County (PA) SPCA received a dog with an Ohio license and eventually got in touch with Cicconetti in the search for the owner.

Through telephone calls and personal visits, Cicconetti learned that the dog’s owners had moved to Bucks County. He contacted them there, and they claimed the dog from the SPCA in a happy reunion.

SPCA Manager Anne Irwin wrote a Lake County newspaper to commend Cicconetti, saying, “. . . efforts such as his will go a long way to give Animal Control work the respect and appreciation it deserves." SHELTER SENSE agrees.

POSITION WANTED - professional humane worker desires executive or management position with growing, progressive organization. Credentials include: state licensed humane investigator with four years experience in humane law enforcement, investigation and court procedures; MS in animal science; eight years personnel management and public relations experience, including management of large Midwest facility, Board of Directors of a county-wide humane society, public appearances, teaching and media experience. Also experienced in fundraising, promotion and writing of humane animal control legislation. Resume and references on request. Lesley R. Zegart, 404 W. Illinois St., Urbana, IL 61801.

Checking for pet tattoos

Many pet owners have tattooed their pets and registered them with the various pet registries around the country. For this reason, your shelter procedure for unidentified animals should include a check for tattoos. Look over the entire animal, particularly the inside flanks and around the ears.

Last year, one Irish setter about to be utilized for research was reunited with its owner because of its tattoo and listing with the National Dog Registry of Carmel, NY. NDR cites many such cases. The dog had been given away, then picked up by a shelter and eventually turned over to the research facility. NDR tattoos use the owner's Social Security number; be aware, however, that the Social Security Administration has no connection with the program and has no responsibility for locating pet owners.

It would be tragic if a beloved pet were euthanized at your shelter because you neglected to check for tattoos. You may also wish to find out if your state or municipality requires that tattooed animals be held for specific periods of time. Generally, there are holding requirements for animals with licenses.

Unfortunately, there is no national clearinghouse for pet registration information. The national registries The HSUS has been able to contact are listed here; if you receive a tattooed animal, contact these organizations:

National Dog Registry, 277 Stebbins Road, Carmel, NY 10512 (914)227-4485 (tattoo is owner's Social Security number).

Ident-A-Pet, Inc., 608 South Ave., Garwood, NJ 07027 (800) 526-4251 toll-free (tattoo numbers begin with "X").

National Animal Identification Center, 661 S. Canal St., Natchez, MS 39120 (800)647-6761 toll-free (tattoo is "M" with owner's Social Security number).

Canine Bureau of Identification, 17 Battery Place, New York, NY 10004 (212)269-1200.

Purina Dog ID Program, PO Box 1468, St. Louis, MO 63188.

Pet Finders, 3924 Carpenter Ct., Studio City, CA 91604 (213)980-4606 (use both tattoos and tags; tattoo is "P" plus 1-4 digit numbers).

WANTED - veterinarian to perform services for Kent County Animal Shelter Spay and Neuter Clinic on a contract fee basis. Income is based on 50% of all surgeries. Working hours are flexible. For further information, call (616)774-3524 and ask for Mr. Richard James (Kent County Personnel, Grand Rapids, MI 49503).

WANTED - animal control officer for humane society in Maryland. Background in animal control or related animal welfare agency. Salary commensurate with experience ($10K plus). Available August 1. Send resume to Mrs. Tina Medved, Talbot County Humane Society, Route 2, Box 733D, Easton, MD 21601.
kind of work as would some students. Remember, too, that housewives have a wealth of managerial experience gained from scheduling family activities and working within budgets. Young people from Scout groups and schools can be recruited to provide companionship, exercise, and socialization for the sheltered animals.

Word-of-mouth recruitment can be very effective (and inexpensive). Your shelter staff members can ask their spouses, friends, and acquaintances for names of potential volunteers. You should also get in touch with any volunteer action centers in your area -- look in your telephone directory.

A national volunteer leader said recently, "The most effective recruiter is a happy volunteer."

When you have interviewed your volunteers and have carefully matched them to specific jobs, there are several things you can do to enhance their work -- which will in turn make them more valuable to you.

Volunteers have certain requirements to do their work:

- Access to rest rooms, lunch rooms, parking;
- Orientation to the job (handbooks, meeting with staff); opportunities to do jobs related to their interests;
- If resources allow, reimbursement for expenses, arrangements for transportation or child care;
- A clear understanding of what volunteers are responsible for in relation to what the paid staff is responsible for;
- Social contacts.

However, studies show that employees generally place a high value on job interest and on getting credit for what they do -- more than they value pay. Volunteers have the same concerns, indicating that a volunteer program should also include:

- Opportunities for volunteers to plan their own programs in addition to doing the work;
- Evaluation of their performance;
- Job changes for variety and learning;
- Job expansion as their experience grows;
- Access to information and materials to improve their work;
- Recognition.

Recognition can be in the form of awards or certificates or an event such as a luncheon or picnic for volunteers. You can write letters of commendation to the volunteer's employer or family. One group gives T-shirts with the name of the group and "volunteer" printed on the front. Another program director gives each volunteer a house plant she has raised herself.

Volunteer recognition should acknowledge that some volunteers do more work than others while rewarding everyone for caring enough to do something. Whatever method of recognition you choose, the most important factor is taking a real interest in the individual volunteer and his or her success at the assigned task. Simply remembering to say "good morning" to your volunteers each day can show them you are interested.

Remember also that a frequent turnover of volunteers is not necessarily bad. If your volunteers are moving into paid or volunteer positions of greater responsibility, then your total program should benefit. The important measure is how much progress is being made, not how long a volunteer is staying in a particular job.

As paid staff members, you are the core of your organization's programs. You can enhance your effectiveness by taking advantage of volunteers to carry out programs you may not otherwise be able to implement.

But you must be prepared to supervise your volunteers efficiently and sensitively. By making them feel a vital part of your organization, your cooperative efforts can yield good results.

(number please!

Pretend you are a private citizen and that you have an animal-related problem. If you turned to your local telephone directory to find help, where would you look? Would you look under "A" for animals or animal control? "F" for humane society? Would you check the listings for your local government for a heading such as "Dog Licenses"?

In order to take advantage of the services your society or agency offers, the public must be able to find you. For example, if you are listed in the directory as Smith County Humane Society, you should also have a second listing as Humane Society of Smith County. The fee the telephone company will charge you for a second listing varies around the country; in Washington, DC, it is only 30¢ a month.

Municipal animal control agencies should be listed under the headings the citizen would logically look for -- for example, "dog licensing," "animal control," "rabies control," "pound," and "shelter."

In one Midwestern city, dog licensing is handled by the Sanitation Department. But the citizen seeking dog licensing information could hardly be expected to know that the Sanitation Department is the correct department to call.
The Yellow Pages directory is organized in alphabetized categories. Your society or agency should be listed under "Animals." Also, your adoption program should be listed under "Pets" along with the pet shops in your community. The rate for a regular one-line listing will vary; in Maryland, it is $1.40 a month.

A Yellow Pages display advertisement is more expensive, but it can help you inform your community that you can help with animal problems and that you have attractive animals for adoption. Again, rates vary; in Virginia, a ½" advertisement, one-column wide is $15.00 a month.

Your local telephone company office can assist you in making the best use of the telephone directory to reach the public. With a little imagination and a few extra dollars, you can ensure that the citizens you would like to serve will be able to find you.

A researcher with The Menninger Foundation in Topeka, KS, has asked The HSUS for information on animal cruelty. Dr. Alan R. Felthous, who is studying cruelty to animals as part of human behavior, is seeking statistics on the number of cats deliberately injured or tortured versus the number of dogs.

If you would like to assist in this study, take a moment to answer the questions below (answer on this page or use a separate sheet) and send your replies to SHELTER SENSE, Felthous Study, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037. Please include your organization name, address and telephone number.

1) How many cases of deliberate cruelty to cats and dogs do you handle each month? _______

2) On the average, how many cases involve cats? dogs? ________ both? ________

3) How many cruelty cases involve children? _______

4) In cases of cruelty by children, do more incidents involve cats? ________ More dogs? ________ About the same? ________

5) Do you know of cases in your community where a person convicted of a violent crime has also had a history of cruelty to animals? If so, give year of incident and describe briefly: ___________________________________________ ________

Dr. Felthous and other researchers have examined the connection between three specific acts in childhood -- cruelty to animals, firesetting and bedwetting -- and dangerously aggressive behavior in later life. His work indicates there is a significant relationship warranting further study.

The message above can be clipped out and reproduced in quantity by your local printer, for you to distribute at schools, shopping centers, libraries and other community locations. Remember to add your organization's name, address, and telephone number in the space by typing, typesetting or affixing your group letterhead. You can also purchase advertising space in your local newspapers for the reproducible or use it in your organization's newsletter or magazine.

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IS THERE A COLD NOSE IN YOUR FUTURE?

A lot of you love animals, but don't own pets yet.

That's probably because you know that owning a pet means investing time and money in its care.

You know that cute kittens must have their litter boxes cleaned regularly, must have shots each year, and must be groomed.

And that cuddly puppies must be trained and walked regularly and licensed — and forgiven for muddy paws now and then.

We know you wouldn't own a pet unless you knew you could give it the best of care. We just want you to know that when you are ready, call us...

... we have lots of beautiful puppies and kittens waiting for responsible homes.

Prepared by The Humane Society of the United States for animal welfare groups and animal control agencies.
Depending on you

by Phyllis Wright

There is nothing more cute than a cuddly kitten or a wide-eyed clumsy puppy. There is nothing more heartbreaking than a shelter full of these animals without homes.

Spring and summer have triggered the internal clocks of cats and dogs to start a new breeding season. If your shelter is typical this time of year, you have an abundance of attractive animals who deserve good homes.

But these animals cannot be given to any and all takers. Their new owners must accept responsibility for their care, feeding and companionship for their whole lives.

To find that kind of owner, you will have to walk a fine line. You need to promote your shelter as the source of attractive, healthy animals -- but you must also screen prospective owners carefully to ensure to the highest degree possible that the animals will be permanently placed in responsible homes.

Some prospective owners may be turned down in this process, and that will have to be done tactfully with a complete explanation of why it happened. Many of the animals you have will have to be destroyed -- and I do not need to tell you that this is the hardest reality the shelter worker has to face.

But this busy season does provide a great opportunity for public education about animal ownership. For example, the Michigan Humane Society printed their adoption policies on the back of the HSUS flyer "Checklist for Potential Pet Owners."

Prospective owners are reminded of the various responsibilities of pet care in the checklist, then turn the flyer over to read about the specific policies of the MHS. (One hundred copies of the HSUS flyer are available to you free, if you request them on your letterhead stationery.)

Your program for this season, then, should include public education, good care in the shelter to ensure that your animals are healthy, and careful screening and follow-up for adoptions (including making sure new pets are sterilized).

Although you may be discouraged by the numbers of animals coming into your care, you can help them. And they are depending on you.