Finding, Fostering, and Keeping Volunteers

By Jacalin Leslie, Volunteer Manager, Wisconsin Humane Society

I just want to help all those poor dogs and cats. You know, I've always loved animals.” This certainly sounds familiar! Every volunteer coordinator has heard this statement countless times. Clearly, a comment like this suggests the basics needed for a good humane society volunteer. But how can you stimulate this person to obtain successful results for your agency and for him or her?

The volunteer program of the Wisconsin Humane Society (WHS, 4151 N. Humboldt Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53212) was developed in 1975 and has undergone significant restructuring during the past several years. As the manager of this program, I believe our volunteer corps has developed into a group dedicated to animal protection.
The Program and the Jobs

The program’s mission statement provides a concise view of our volunteers’ work: “The volunteer program is an extension of the Humane Society’s services to the community and commitment to animal welfare. Through various activities, the volunteers are dedicated to assisting animals, enhancing public perception of the Humane Society, and perpetuating the volunteer program.” This mission statement, in combination with the structure and management of the program, provides a solid foundation for what we feel is a successful and growing program.

At WHS, volunteers work in six program areas: the Lost Pet Program, Registry of Homes (registers families looking for a specific breed), Adoption Counseling, Foster Homes, Visiting Companions (volunteers take their own pets to visiting homes, day-care centers, etc.), Membership Relations (volunteers work to keep the volunteer program running smoothly), and Community Relations (volunteers speak to organizations, help with community displays, or participate in other outreach efforts).

Finding and Selecting Volunteers

With six programs to coordinate, I obviously spend a great deal of time recruiting volunteers. Public service announcements, printed in local newspapers and broadcast on local radio stations, are very helpful in publicizing our need for volunteers. But the best results I get are with the “Volunteers Wanted” columns in local papers; many times I’ve received 50-60 phone calls following a listing in these columns.

Of course, WHS wants to properly place its volunteers. That’s why I meet with each prospective volunteer and try to learn more about the applicant by asking several open-ended questions. After the interview, I know what skills the person has, the extent of the time commitment he or she is willing to make, and which program(s) would give him or her the greatest satisfaction.

I then discuss the available program(s). If a program has drawbacks, I feel I must be open about them. For example, our Foster Home volunteers love taking care of puppies and kittens for five to six weeks, but the animals must be returned to the Society when they are no longer adoptable. This can be very hard on the volunteers because they get quite attached to the animals. So I warn prospective volunteers about the “Volunteers Wanted” columns.

Finding a listing in these columns.

Training, Evaluation, and Recognition

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After discussing both the plusses and minuses of each available program, we make a placement decision and the volunteer receives a job description. This method of interviewing new volunteers before assigning positions assures me that they are fully prepared for the responsibility that lies ahead.

Scheduling To Fit Everyone’s Needs

WHS offers long-term, short-term, and flex-time assignments to volunteers. Long-term assignments require a one-year commitment of two to four hours work per week. Short-term assignments allow volunteers to become involved in specific projects that have defined starting and finishing times. Flex-time refers to the freedom of the volunteer to come to the shelter at his or her convenience. Many of our flex-time volunteers help our development department with addressing and stuffing envelopes, phone-a-thons, and special events.

These three time frames allow new volunteers to feel comfortable in making time commitments they will be able to handle. They also help retain volunteers, and some volunteers even find they can give more time to the organization than they first thought. From the start, the new volunteer is encouraged to decide what volunteering options are right for him or her. When placing and scheduling volunteers, remember that what motivates them to stay is using their capabilities and giving them satisfaction in what they’re doing.

Training, Evaluation, and Recognition

At WHS, all new volunteers must attend an orientation session introducing them to the volunteer program. Although a volunteer may be involved in only one program, it is essential that he or she be aware of the entire organization. Therefore, all prospective volunteers are given a tour of the facility before beginning training specific to their jobs.

Each volunteer program area has one or more training sessions. Some of the programs provide hands-on training, while others provide group training. Each training program is specialized, enabling all new volunteers to feel comfortable when beginning their assignments. The supervisor of each program periodically checks on the progress of each volunteer; this reinforcement, I believe, motivates volunteers and strengthens their dedication.

As Volunteer Coordinator, I have learned that you need to keep volunteers motivated. To help with this, I send out a yearly evaluation form to volunteers to encourage new ideas and suggestions for their programs. Each supervisor sets up a meeting with me to discuss the evaluations submitted by volunteers and to set goals for the next year. When volunteers have a voice in their programs, they know they are included in the decision-making process.

I also hold annual meetings for each program area to initiate responses from the volunteers on how they feel their program is progressing. At these times, the program supervisors and I make an effort to educate the volunteers, updating them on new trends and techniques. Aside from the sharing of ideas and suggestions, these meetings allow for “social” time during which volunteers who normally may not meet can get to know one another.

Recognition of staff and volunteers is also very important. The program supervisors and I write personal thank-you notes to volunteers who exceed the requirements of their jobs. And each
**Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and awards complete with strolling violinist. One-year ceremony.** WHS recognizes its volunteers with a dinner. Our dinner is formal, a sit-down affair, complete with strolling violinist. One-year ceremony. WHS recognizes its volunteers with a dinner.

**Countering Conflicts**

In addition to the many rewards a volunteer program can provide, there are some negative aspects as well. One avoidable problem is that of friction between staff and volunteers. Volunteers join an organization primarily because they want to help the animals. Most volunteers are animal lovers, donating their time and energy to help however they can. At times though, the staff may not be so eager to have the volunteers’ help. Staff may fear for the security of their jobs. Conversely, volunteers may feel that because staff are paid, they don’t care as much for the animals as the volunteers do. Sometimes, volunteers’ emotions can cloud their judgment about animals, causing staff friction or making staff feel that the volunteers are interfering. If volunteers observe the staff too closely or second-guess staff decisions, staff members can feel alienated. Because of these varying staff/volunteer interactions, the source of the problem, not to mention the solution, can be difficult to pinpoint.

One means of preventing and correcting staff/volunteer problems is through having well structured programs. WHS is led by an Executive Director, who oversees managers for each of the Society’s seven departments. These managers work with assistant managers to help with daily operations; in all, the Society employs about 60 full-time staff.

The volunteer program has a similar structure. There is a volunteer manager, who directs the supervisors of each program. In turn, the program supervisors guide the volunteers to carry out the assigned tasks. In each structure, there is a clear and detailed policy regarding the delegation of responsibility and handling of personnel problems at the staff or volunteer level. When a problem arises or a task needs completion, the “chain of command” is evident to all. This type of structure helps alleviate stress on both staff and volunteers. The WHS is a large humane society, but a similarly structured program will work for any size group. Whether a group has 60 employees or six, there can be a supervisor who works with paid staff and a supervisor who oversees the volunteers. And even a small society can offer different program areas and scheduling options to people donating their time. After all, many humane organizations are run almost exclusively by volunteers. If their work is viewed as part of the business and not an “extra” and the activities and management methods are structured accordingly, the program as a whole can run smoothly and efficiently.

Above all, as our mission statement says, “the volunteer program is an extension of the Humane Society.” The volunteer program is an extension of the Humane Society. The program serves to improve the plight of companion animals on a daily basis. But, as Earth Day sought to remind us all, you can wear many other hats that enhance your ability to help animals.

**Working for Animals is a Full-time Job**

By Ann Church, HSUS Coordinator, State Legislation

In the past month, Earth Day 1990 raised awareness of the environmental problems facing our planet and encouraged all of us to make personal lifestyle choices that don’t hurt the environment and the animals in it. The work at your local humane society or animal control facility, you strive to improve the plight of companion animals on a daily basis. But, as Earth Day sought to remind us all, you can wear many other hats that enhance your ability to help animals.

You, your society’s members, and all the other citizens in your community are also consumers, taxpayers, club members, parents, television viewers, etc. Through each of these roles, you can work to end animal suffering; chances are good that you already use your clout as a humane advocate to help animals through these associations.

**As a Consumer**.

By encouraging others to do the same, whether through your agency’s newsletter or other means, you’ll foster an even greater voice for animals.

Here are just a few suggestions:

As a Consumer. Let your buying power do the talking. For example, if you patronize a department store that sells fur coats or ivory, when paying your bill, insert a note along with your check explaining your objections. Make it clear that while you shop in the store out of convenience, you plan to take much of your business elsewhere. If a store you frequent does not sell objectionable items, tell them of your appreciation. Use your consumer clout to let businesses know what you do and don’t want. For example, ask local grocers if they carry humanely raised beef, or if the eggs they sell are from battery-caged chickens.

As a Taxpayer. If you learn that inhumane activities are scheduled on public property or with tax dollars, speak out. Don’t let town officials sponsor an Easter event where baby animals are awarded as prizes. Protest loudly if rodeos or horse- or dog-pulling contests are to be held on local fairgrounds.

As an Organization Member. If you belong to a community organization, work to ensure that the group’s activities don’t encourage animal exploitation. For example, if your church group, garden club, or women’s club plans to attend a rodeo, circus, or racetrack, object loudly. Speak out if any of your civic groups, such as chambers of commerce, propose to hold donkey basketball games or invite traveling animal exhibits to town as a means to raise funds. Make members aware of the cruelties inherent in such events, and explain that their participation sends wrong signals about their feelings regarding animals.

As a Parent. Object if your child’s school allows live animals to be used in science projects, sponsors a class trip to a circus, or awards gold-fish or other animals as prizes at school festiv
ties. Make sure fund-raising efforts do not include fur coat raffles, donkey basketball games, or rodeos. Attend parent-teacher association meetings and discuss the need to teach children about kindness to all living creatures.

As a Television Viewer. Keep the addresses of advertisers who use nonhuman actors, such as talking animals or actors dressed as animals. By encouraging others to do the same, whether through your agency’s newsletter or other means, you’ll foster an even greater voice for animals.

**Most community members don’t realize the cruelty of games like donkey basketball. It’s up to you.**
Helping Adopters Acclimate the Older Canine to a New Home

By Sharon Pflaumer

It is true that successfully placing an older dog in an adoptive home is more difficult than placing a puppy. But these older pets may make perfect companions for many types of people, and their potential for adoption should not be diminished because they aren’t still “wet behind the ears.” Older dogs boast many attributes that their younger counterparts cannot. They are less destructive, more graceful, and are often housebroken and neutered. They may be partially trained to simple commands and better able to stay alone during the day while their owners are at work. Adopters should be aware of these good qualities, although they should also consider the extra requirements and special considerations of canine seniors.

Shelter personnel need to be aware that adoption is harder on the older dog. The dog must be carefully evaluated to see that it is capable of enduring the stress accompanying the change of owner and circumstances. It is rare that a dog over eight years of age will be able to settle into a new home even with the best of owners. In many cases, humane euthanasia is kinder than subjecting the old dog to the turmoil of the shelter and adoption process.

Who is Suited for an Older Dog?

Older dogs are less active and more prone to sleeping than young pups. While many mellow with age, some, due to painful ailments, may become cranky. A senior dog is more easily threatened, and may snap or become aggressive under such circumstances. Given these characteristics, an older dog isn’t the ideal choice for families with young children or a marathoner seeking a beach-running companion.

But for a single person, a couple with older children or no children at all, or anyone who enjoys a quiet lifestyle, the senior dog may be the perfect addition. So be sure to match the senior’s personality and activity level to his new “pack.”

Commitment is the most important characteristic to look for in a prospective owner. Dogs of any age sense when they have two paws in the door and two out. Lack of commitment makes any senior who has already lost a family more insecure, and this makes adjustment difficult.

What a Prospective Owner Should Know

Anyone considering adopting a senior dog should know of the higher medical costs usually associated with caring for older pets and be willing and able to cope with these costs. The importance of regular veterinary check-ups can’t be overstated, since the secret to good senior health is prevention. Medical conditions should be treated while they are manageable, not when they’ve reached a critical stage. Emphasize the need for a thorough exam every six months. This should include a urinalysis, stool exam, and blood count. At home, during grooming sessions, owners should check for any growths or abnormalities.

Also make adopters aware of the extra time and expense generated by increased grooming demands. A senior requires more frequent brushing and baths, as he is less able to clean himself. Lower activity levels necessitate more frequent nail trimming.

Strenuous activity should be avoided with an older dog. Lots of short walks are better than infrequent, long ones. And a senior should have a cushion to lie on for his old bones.

Help Adopters Foster Good Behavior in Seniors

Any dog who doesn’t behave properly won’t stay adopted for long. Therefore, you must offer assistance in behavior training to adopters. Make the senior’s complete behavior and medical history available to the new owner whenever possible, and emphasize that problems needn’t follow the senior to his new home.

A new owner who adheres to the following four steps, which are based on recommendations in William E. Campbell’s Owner’s Guide to Better Behavior In Dogs and Cats, may avoid problems of house soiling, whining, barking, and destructiveness:

Do not make a fuss over the senior if he is anxious during the ride home. Do maintain a comfortable temperature in the car and avoid hard stops and starts.

Give the dog a drink of water upon arrival at home and immediately take him to his toilet area. Keep in mind that the dog may try to escape when he goes outside in an attempt to find his old home. Supervise the older dog when he goes out.
and keep him on a leash or in a fenced area. After "performing," he should be praised. Following each feeding and several times in between, the dog should be taken to his toilet area and kept on a leash or in a fenced area. The dog should be taken to his toilet area and praised after eliminating.

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Incontinent with age have conditions that are cor­rectable or can be improved with medication.

Allow the senior to sniff and explore his new en­vironment free of interference. Remove breakables from low tables ahead of time.

Let the new senior sleep in a room with some­one. This eliminates night-long crying. It also minimizes emotional stress, for which seniors have a low tolerance.

Once the dog is home and settled, obedience classes would be a good idea. They can help in solving “Who’s the boss?” conflicts and instill trust and confidence in the older dog and the pet owners. Have a list of reputable obedience instruc­tors on hand to give out.

**What To Feed Older Pets**

Whenever possible, provide new adopters with a three- or four-day supply of food. This should be mixed with the senior’s new ration over several days to avoid digestive upset. A senior should be fed twice daily, as this is easier on digestion. Because a senior is less active, he should be fed less to avoid weight gain. Emphasize the im­portance of avoiding the tablescrap/treats habit.

Since he must eat smaller quantities, it is imperva­tive that the older dog be fed quality food. A vitamin supplement is a good idea, too. One way to counteract inactivity is to add a second dog (a puppy of the same breed or mix and of the op­posite sex). It is critical, however, that the second dog be introduced properly.

**How To Help When Older Dogs Develop Problems**

When a senior dog develops behavior problems, first advise the owners to see a veterinarian. When an older dog with no history of behavior problems suddenly develops them, a medical con­dition is probably the cause. For example, a cranky senior may be suffering from a painful condition such as arthritis. Dispositions and behavior improve markedly with treatment.

Also have the owners look at environmental fac­tors. An aggressive senior may be reacting to in­tolerable stress levels. Tumultuous occasions such as holiday gatherings should be avoided. A senior should be kept away from small, screaming, and/or running children and battery-operated toys. Change may also be a source of problems. Has a beloved son or daughter gone away to college? Has there been an addition to the family such as a new spouse? Or a move to a new house? Often adjustment may be eased with extra attention in the form of more short walks, games of fetch, and obedience training.

It may sound like adopting and acclimating a senior dog takes a lot of effort. It does! But as you know, being a responsible pet owner, whether the pet is a senior or a puppy, is a job not to be taken lightly. You can greatly help in making the task easier on both the adopter and the dog. First and foremost, make sure adoption is the best thing to do for the animal.

The pet owner who is willing to take on the challenge of owning an older dog can reap a reward of steadfast love and devotion that is incomparable.
clearly, mailings to current donors are the real revenue-generating force in a direct-mail program. And it would be wonderful if we could mail to the highest return per letter mailed.

An acquisition program is the fuel that feeds new donors to your contributor base. An acquisition program is necessary to maintain donor levels and, more importantly, provide the growth your organization needs to fund its programs and services.

Program Reaches Untagged Pets

ear Gloria,

We're so glad that Buster is safely back home! Enclosed is an identification tag for him to wear that can be traced 24 hours a day. We'd also like to recommend that Buster be neutered. Neutering reduces roaming, risk of cancer, and the serious puppy overpopulation problem in our area.

Give our low-cost neuter clinic a call. They'll be glad to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Humane Society of Huron Valley

In 1988, the Humane Society of Huron Valley (HSHV, 3100 Cherry Hill Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48105) reunited 873 lost animals with their owners. Of course, these animals all received identification tags before leaving the premises. But a unique new program, developed in December 1988 by Linda Reider, HSHV director of community education, reaches the even greater number of missing animals that are found by their owners without ever passing through the shelter. Through the "Home To Stay" program, letters like the one above are mailed to owners of recently-found untagged dogs and cats. Enclosed in every letter is an identification tag.

The information needed for the letters is contained in the lost pet reports that have been cancelled by owners who have found their missing pets away from the shelter. Reider explains: "The lost pet reports provide us with the owner's name, address, and phone numbers; the pet's name, age, sex (including sterilization status), breed, and color; and whether the pet was wearing an HSHV tag when lost. We then send a card and tag out for every single animal that doesn't have one of our tags."

"As of December 1989," Reider reports, "we've mailed out tags for 559 dogs and 326 cats. The materials cost of each mailing is about 85 cents. Each mailing includes a handwritten notecard and stamped envelope, a stainless steel tag and S-hook, a return donation envelope, and a card with the spay/neuter clinic's phone number if the pet is unsterilized. Although we don't specifically ask for a donation in return for the tag, the returned envelopes and donations enabled the program to realize a first-year net profit of $406. 'Home To Stay' is provided by two volunteers who each spend a couple of hours a week writing cards at home and recording the tagging information in our permanent tag books at the shelter."

Vet Helps Clients, Animal Shelters

In Madras, Oregon, has found a way to bring something positive out of the painful reality of euthanizing pets. Rather than collecting a fee for his service, Dr. Mark McFarland asks clients to make donations to a local animal shelter or humane society in the names of their pets. The clinic suggests a donation of $15, and asks recipient agencies to send thank-you notes, which they are glad to do.

Cindy Severance administers the program and says they've "had nothing but good comments about it. The clients feel that they're contributing to the community and that it gives their pet a chance to help other pets."

Dr. McFarland explains that "euthanizing pets is not how I want to make my living. Euthanasia is a painful thing. This is one of my ways of dealing with it and making it a little easier for the clients. It tends to bring something positive out of the situation." In addition to his donation program, Dr. McFarland also works with local humane groups to provide free pet exams.

More and more pets are being tagged in the HSHV's "Home to Stay" program.

Help Update HSUS Publication

If you are not and your organization has a spay/neuter program or clinic, we would appreciate receiving a letter or other materials providing the following information: organization name, address, and phone number; number of animals handled at the shelter for each year of the clinic's or program's operation; number of animals altered through the program; fees charged for surgeries; any other information that may be helpful; and the name of a person to contact for more information.

Please send the above information to Kate Rindy, The HSUS, 5430 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 100, Bethesda, MD 20814. All organizations included in the revised booklet will receive a complimentary copy. We appreciate your response.

Music Students Practice for Pets

It would seem difficult to devise a fund-raiser that makes money, requires little manpower, and greatly benefits your community's children in the process. But such a fund-raiser became reality last September when some 150 piano students practiced for a two-week period and raised over $2,700 for the Kitsap Humane Society (9187 Dickey Rd., NW, Silverdale, WA 98383).

Called "Practice for Pets," this unusual program was the brain child of Sandra Cummings, a shelter volunteer and active member of the Kitsap chapter of the Washington State Music Teachers Association (MTA).

Working through the MTA, Cummings persuaded about 20 of the chapter's members—all private piano teachers—to ask their students to collect pledges for each hour they practiced during a two-week period. The results of the program were remarkable.
The humane society received a handsome check while promoting shelter awareness. The music teachers discovered an unusual way to motivate their students.

And the students improved their piano-playing abilities while helping homeless animals and learning about one of their community’s vital organizations. “The idea really got many of the students highly motivated,” said Cummings. “Most children have a real love for animals. The program just seemed to touch their hearts.”

For more information and sample program forms, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to her at 455 Conifer Dr., NE, Bremerton, WA 98310. [J

Recognize Your Volunteers

M any shelters don’t know where they would be without the committed volunteers they rely on to keep things running smoothly. If you feel that way about your volunteers, it may be a nice idea to reward their hard work with thoughtful gifts of recognition.

The Volunteer Division of the California Association of Hospitals and Health Systems can send you a brochure that features a complete line of gifts and recognition products specifically designed for volunteers.

Produced for National Volunteer Week (held in April), the reasonably priced gifts range from plaques to napkins to travel alarm clocks. Most products carry one of the 1990 dual themes of “Volunteers—Always By Your Side” or “Take Time to Volunteer.” Quantities are limited.

For a free copy of the brochure, contact CAHHS Volunteer Division, P.O. Box 1442, Sacramento, CA 95812-1442; (916) 443-7401, ext. 368.

New Tags Identify Pets in a ‘Jiffy’

W e all know how important pet ID tags are, but no matter how often you remind them, some pet owners just won’t comply. It is up to animal protection agencies to help make this simple practice as widespread as possible. A new tag product, JiffyTags, can help.

JiffyTags are instant pet IDs that are light, strong, durable, and waterproof. The great advantage of these tags is that they can be made up on the spot to put on pets leaving your agency or to distribute as part of your lost-and-found pets program. Each tag comes with a paper insert for writing down the pet owner’s name, address, and phone number. Once the information is recorded, the insert is sealed between two layers of lightweight plastic. The tag comes complete with reinforced eyelet and stainless steel ring to attach it to the pet’s collar. You don’t need any tools, glue, or special materials or equipment.

A free Jiffy Tag sample is available to you upon request. Prices for bulk orders of the tags are as follows: 100 tags—$40; 1,000—$350; 10,000—$3,000. Tags cost 50¢ each for quantities of less than 100. To obtain a free sample or to order tags, call Animal Care Equipment & Services toll-free at 1 (800) 338-ACES. In California, call (714) 338–1791.

Videos Make Education Easy

T wo new videos offer animal protection organizations quality tools to use in educating both children and adults in their communities.

A Day at the Dog Races chronicles the story of the greyhound racing industry and, through its objective focus, reveals many of the problems inherent in it. As you may be aware, The HSUS is strongly opposed to greyhound racing. This video can help viewers understand why.

Viewers are exposed to greyhound industry spokesmen via interviews with a kennel owner and the former chairman of the Massachusetts Racing Commission. The humane concerns are voiced by HSUS Investigator Bob Baker and Hugh Geoghegan, Director of the Greyhound Rescue Association. Viewers learn of concerns over excessive breeding of racing animals, inhumane euthanasia methods, cruel training practices, and the poor quality of life for racing dogs.

This 15-minute video is appropriate for showing at meetings of community groups or in high school classrooms. Tapes come in 3/4” for $99.95 or 1/2” VHS size for $49.95. Add $2.00 to cover postage for each order and send to “Dog Races,” c/o Damon Meharg, 36 Robinwood Ave., #B, Jamaica Plains, MA 02130.

Hands of Love is a charming 15-minute VHS video suitable for teaching early elementary-age children about responsible pet ownership. Proper feeding, grooming, veterinary care, and the importance of spaying and neutering pet cats and dogs are covered. Hands of Love would be a great way to introduce very young children to humane concepts and is available FREE to any group involved in humane education. Request your copy on agency letterhead from Kinship with All Life Foundation, 15652 Briarcliff St., Westminster, CA 92683.

“Cathy” Poster Promotes Adoptions

C athy Guisewite, creator of the enormously popular cartoon strip “Cathy,” has joined with the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) for a public service advertising campaign. A poster she designed, captioned, “I found the love of my life at the animal shelter,” reminds potential pet owners that instead of purchasing a dog or a cat from a pet store or breeder, they should adopt one from a local animal shelter.

Cathy’s fans were first introduced to her dog Electra when the famous cartoon character...
New Shelter Sense Reproducibles

Shelter Sense has compiled 18 of the best Reproducibles we could find in one easy-to-use booklet designed to help you get educational messages and agency awareness out into your communities. These camera-ready, copyright-free messages are perfect for newspaper PSAs, posters, leaflets, or your own newsletter. Covering everything from responsible adoptions to the importance of spaying and neutering pets, these Reproducibles are professionally designed and written and ready to go to work for you. We think you’ll find this booklet a valuable addition to your library.

This exclusive time-saving book, Shelter Sense Reproducibles, is yours for only $3. Send check or money order to The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

Because of reader requests, Shelter Sense is resuming its monthly listing of job openings for humane organizations and animal control departments.

Advertisements are free and must be submitted on your organization’s letterhead no later than the 25th of the second month before the issue in which you want your ad to appear. For example, ads for the August 1990 issue must be in by June 25. Please limit announcements to 50 words (including address). Sorry, Shelter Sense cannot print “position wanted” ads.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. Growing humane society in Southeastern Vermont seeks take-charge executive director to lead them into 21st century with a new shelter and expanded services. Candidate must have knowledge of cruelty investigation, shelter management, non-profit administration, and public relations. Compensation is negotiable. Send resume and salary requirements to Steven Helius, Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 204, Brattleboro, VT 05302.

ASSOCIATE VETERINARIAN. Well-equipped small animal hospital located in Macon, GA, needs a full-time associate veterinarian. New or recent graduate is welcome. Send resume along with salary expectations to Humane Services of Middle Georgia, Inc., P.O. Box 6560, Macon, GA 31208-6560.

SHELTER MANAGER. Humane society in Maryland with a 63-year history is currently accepting applications for a full-time manager. Candidate must have experience in animal welfare, management, public relations, and fiscal planning. Salary is negotiable and benefits are included. Please send resumes to HSBC, 1406 Fidelity Building, Baltimore, MD 21201.

REPRODUCIBLE. This message can be clipped out and reproduced in quantity by your local printer for distribution at schools, shopping centers, libraries, and other community locations. You can also purchase advertising space for it in your local newspaper or use it in your organization’s newsletter.

How to Write a Letter to the Editor

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Dear Editor:

Writing a letter to the editor is one of the easiest and most fundamental and effective options you have to voice your outrage, concerns, or opinions about any issue. Through such a letter, you have the power to educate and influence thousands of readers. Unfortunately, what newspapers and magazines decide to print is up to them. To increase your chances of seeing your letter in print, follow these tips:

* Be brief and to the point. Newspapers have limited space. Your letter will have a better chance of getting printed if it’s succinct and the main point is in the first paragraph. And choose what words you have to say, but don’t be demanding or threatening.

* Be prompt in writing. Commenting on an article that appeared three weeks ago will ensure that your thoughts are still fresh and will make the letter more meaningful for readers. If your letter will be delayed, please send it on the editorial page.

* Don’t abuse the letters to the editor opportunity. Choose the items you respond to with care. If you flood the editorial office with too many letters, the editor is likely to take you for granted and ignore the one letter that really says it all.

* Finally, sign and date your letter. An anonymous letter won’t make its way into the newspaper.

By following these suggestions, you may soon be reading your own words on the publication’s editorial page, and making a difference in your community.

Sincerely,

Community Member
Help Make Keeping Pets Easier

By Phyllis Wright, HSUS Vice President, Companion Animals

We all know that the spring and summer months bring more animals to the shelter. However, this is also a time when you can begin programs in your community that will help people keep their animals and provide better care for them.

Among other reasons, people surrender animals because they just don't know what to do when behavior problems begin or when seasonal pests like fleas show up. Rather than work through the problems, some pet owners give up and relinquish their animals. Help, advice, and programs from your group that make it easier to deal with the problems may make the difference in a person's keeping a pet.

Plan a couple of evening meetings a month and have a veterinarian advise pet owners on warm weather care for animals (such as dealing with skin problems or heat exposure). Or invite an obedience trainer to work with the dogs adopted from your shelter. This, of course, is also the perfect time to offer a dog wash and distribute information on getting rid of fleas and ticks.

Place fliers or post bulletins in your local library, recreation center, or park to get information to the public about special summer activities and concerns. Use all the resources in your community to help people understand the needs of pets and show them how to be more responsible pet owners. Let's all work together to prevent the useless death of surrendered animals. Help pet owners understand that there is a better way.

To make protecting pets a little easier, we will send you a package of 50 “Hot Car” fliers FREE if you ask for them on your agency letterhead. Just send your requests to The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.