The HSUS Helps You Prevent Suffering

by Lisa Morris

Animal workers' overriding concern is to reduce and ultimately prevent animal suffering -- an admirable goal, but one that sometimes may seem difficult to accomplish.

It seems easier to reduce animal suffering: Help just one homeless or abused animal, and suffering is reduced. Prevention of suffering is the true challenge, however, and for years, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has widely assisted local animal-welfare and -control groups with preventing animal suffering and with solving community animal problems.

The HSUS realizes organizations that document their successes and have a forward approach to solving animal problems (as opposed to complaining about their problems) are eventually relied upon as community resources. Local officials and the public respect such groups because they are made up of professionals who solve problems which are usually emotional and politically sensitive. Such public trust and respect only evolves after much hard work, planning, and program accountability by these organizations.

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Barn Cats Must Not Be Neglected

Anyone who has visited farms or stables perhaps has witnessed scrappy cats and kittens inhabiting these buildings. Unfortunately, it seems that a barn cat is expected to survive on the rodents it is supposed to catch, and perhaps a bowl of milk (although in many barns or stables there is no milk available).

It is no wonder that many humane societies refuse to adopt out cats or kittens as mousers. Whenever possible, humane societies should try to encourage farmers and stable owners to respect cats by

1. providing dry cat food (which can be dispensed in a small, self-feeder up on a shelf that the cats can reach). Several studies have proven that well-fed cats are just as good as mousers as are hungry cats;
2. providing water in an accessible container. In the winter, a plastic container that will break out the ice should be used for frequent refills;
3. sterilizing all barn cats. Since neuter operations cost less than spays, how about a "herd" of neutered males? They will stay home and attend to the business of mousing. Studies have also shown that male cats are as effective as mousers as are females;
4. inoculating barn cats to prevent the sweep of an epidemic that will wipe out the entire population. Most large-animal veterinarians in rural areas will administer cat inoculations when making visits if asked to do so in advance.

The barn cat deserves respect from the owner it serves!
A small, rural humane society recently confirmed that every dog and cat it adopted out in 1983 has been sterilized, after its board and staff began a routine review and update of its procedures and realized the need for a strict adoption program and sterilization requirement.

The Walworth County Humane Society Inc. (Route 3, Delavan, WI 53115) discovered in early 1981 that more than half of the animals it adopted out in 1980 had not been spayed or neutered despite a requirement that the new owners have their pets sterilized, according to Dani Brellenthin, president of the organization. After only three out of every 10 adopters who had not sent the procedures and realized the need for a strict adoption program and sterilization requirement that the new owners have their pets sterilized, according to Dani Brellenthin, president of the organization.

The society's board of directors and staff agreed that it was not sufficient to simply find new homes for pets which might remain unsterilized and, therefore, might produce unwanted litters. After consulting with an attorney about a more comprehensive sterilization requirement, the group introduced its first adoption application and developed a better record-keeping system in 1981.

In late 1981, a second, more comprehensive and informative adoption application was introduced, but the fact that prospective adopters were not always truthful when filling out the application caused continual animal problems. At times, staff members sensed that something was wrong about a pet application but lacked the time or a system to determine the problem.

In 1982 the society began requiring 24 hours to verify the information on all adoption applications. A third version of the adoption application was introduced, and the new waiting period allowed staff members to uncover past or potential problems with prospective adopters, further protecting the animals in their care.

Staff members eliminated most of the stress they've experienced dealing with angry, rejected applicants by introducing a "Dear Prospective Adopter" letter. Given to every adoption applicant, it explains the society's adoption procedure and lists typical reasons for approval or rejection of an application. Now, prospective pet owners are fully informed of the humane society's adoption objectives before they fill out the application.

A fourth adoption application is currently in use and has improved record keeping. It consists of a separate, colored application for dogs and for cats and allows space at the bottom to record information from interviews with applicants.

"By taking the time and making an effort to ascertain prospective adopters' attitudes toward pet ownership, we are not so good, not creating, animal problems," said Brellenthin. "Our board and staff is committed to the fact that just finding homes for animals does not guarantee a successful adoption program." ●

An attractive flier that simply explains the need for animal euthanasia and spay/neuter programs would be useful in shelter waiting rooms and if passed out to community residents.

Why Euthanize Animals? was produced by the Companion Animals Section of The Humane Society of the United States. The flier is designed to help local animal organizations with the difficult task of explaining to an often unsympathetic and uninformed public the need for animal euthanasia and sterilization.

"Because of our growing membership, we recently found it necessary to computerize in order to regain control," said Lewis. "The humane society's membership program prints the complete membership monthly, updates donation and membership totals, prints a monthly renewal sheet, prints labels for sending renewal forms, and prints approximately 2,000 labels for a monthly newsletter.

The organization recently began using a customized program for adoption referrals in place of its time-consuming manual card-referral system. "Matching requests from prospective adopters to animals in the card system often meant it took over twenty minutes to go through all the cards looking for one match," said Lewis. "With the new computer Adoption/Referral Program, a specific type of animal can be located in seconds. This results in finding more homes for animals, which reduces the number of animals dumped beside the highway or otherwise abandoned by people who tire of waiting for space at the society's shelter. At the time the group computerized, over 800 cats and kittens and over 400 dogs and puppies were listed on cards, awaiting entry into the shelter. The Adoption/Referral Program consists of a program disk and two data storage disks: one for cats and one for dogs. Easy for a novice to operate, said Lewis, the program disk can be inserted into drive A, the data disk into drive B. Then, simply by turning on the computer, the program automatically begins. After typing the date, one can enter or retrieve information, make adoption assignments, and more, and each step of the program allows the operator to change his or her mind.

There are three different categories of information that can be entered: people with animals awaiting adoption; people wanting to...
adopt a specific type of animal; animals currently within the shelter that are available for adoption. The following information can be recorded for each category:

- a person's first and last names
- home and business telephone numbers
- animal breed/dri
tised, both pure and mixed
- animal sizes, "small," "medium," or "large"
- animal ages
- whether or not an animal is housebroken or litter trained
- two lines of animal description such as color, habits, temperament, and more

The computer can "find" information that has been entered in several ways, using any combination of the standard formula. For example, Lewis said one can locate all female poodles that are housebroken, or just all female poodles, or just all housebroken dogs.

An added feature is the computer's ability to match animals and people without the presence of a computer operator. Turned on in the morning, for example, the computer provides in just two hours a complete matching for any animal that is ready for adoption within the shelter or within the home of a donor. It also provides a printed list from which to call and inform potential adopters that the type of animal they are seeking is available.

Lewis said the same program maintains all the shelter's animal adoption records, including a donor's name, address, and telephone numbers; the type of animal; its inoculation records, heartworm testing, spay/neuter history, identification tattoo number, rabies tag number, medication history, and age; and the adopter's name, address, and telephone numbers.

Although the Adoption/Referral Program was customized according to the Humane Society of Charlotte's specific needs, Lewis suggested that other animal shelters interested in a similar program should contact IRC Inc., P.O. Box 220443, Charlotte, NC 28222.

A Pennsylvania kennel manager has pinpointed a suspected but unconfirmed link between the use of some commercial flea control products and the deaths of several dogs, based on a review of her accurate, yearly records. Her experience exemplifies the importance of maintaining detailed shelter records.

Marion Damroth, who runs The Home of Frosted Sunshine in Shermans Dale, Pa., to raise and breed golden retrievers recently received her kennel records and journal entries back through 1981 and beyond to determine the cause of the recent death of one retriever, previous deaths of two other dogs, and previous unexplained illnesses among others. Although her findings are speculative, her thorough records have led her to believe the animals died or became ill after they were routinely, over the course of several weeks, bathed with a flea shampoo, each given a flea collar, and returned to kennels several hours after flea bombs were set off inside the enclosures. Various symptoms of illness were subsequently noted in the animals including blood in the urine, lack of coordination, vomiting, and physical collapse.

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Florida County Confronts Rabies

A humane society and a county animal-control department are jointly confronting a recent rabies outbreak that forced a county-wide quarantine after 17 raccoons and a pet cat were confirmed rabid. The society believes its observations during this crisis may help other groups that are concerned about the spread of rabies.

During the past four months, Orange County, Fla., and other central Florida counties have experienced a rabies outbreak, according to Frank R. Andrews, executive director of The Orlando Humane Society Inc. (616 Barry Street, Orlando, FL 32808). Andrews believes use of humane live traps to catch suspected rabid animals does not target those that are sick and may actually present the community with a false sense of security. Andrews has concluded that sick animals are not likely to seek food or other bait inside a trap. Suzanne Jenkins, veterinary epidemiologist for the Federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC), assigned to the Virginia Department of Health, agrees. Jenkins said, "Loss of appetite is one of the first symptoms of animal rabies."

To date, Orange County animal officers have caught 237 raccoons, which were euthanized to be tested for rabies. Live traps caught 189 of them; only one was diagnosed "rabies positive," and this animal required several tests because the disease was in a very early stage and, therefore, difficult to detect. The remaining 189 raccoons that were euthanized represent 80 percent of those trapped. Sixteen other rabid raccoons were trapped by animal-control or police officers because they showed behavior consistent with rabies such as a staggering gait, extreme lethargy, or unprovoked aggressiveness. Despite Andrews' observations, several neighboring counties are employing traps to catch suspected rabid animals and to determine the extent of the outbreak in their areas.

Andrews also noted that fewer cats than dogs receive rabies shots despite many owners' attitude that cats should be allowed to stray outdoors where they may likely contract rabies. Low-cost rabies clinics have been held at several locations in the county, and more pets were vaccinated -- 2300 to be exact -- but they were mainly dogs.

According to the CDC, the incidence of rabies in cats has surpassed that in dogs. Andrews believes the problem is that cat owners largely remain uneducated about the danger of rabies, since the cost of a rabies shot does not seem to be prohibitive. The ten-day observation period for animals that have bitten people is not sufficient for animal-to-animal bites. The young rabid cat found in the county probably was attacked by a raccoon, said Andrews. Although promptly taken to a veterinarian for treatment of its wounds, two months passed before the cat was positively identified as rabid. In the meantime, veterinary personnel and other people were exposed to the sick animal, forcing them to undergo post-exposure treatment.

Fortunately, Orlando Humane Society workers and Orange County animal workers previously vaccinated a suspect raccoon. According to Jenkins, if an animal that is bitten by another animal has a current rabies vaccination, it must receive a booster shot and be confined for three months. If the bitten animal does not have a current vaccination, it must be immediately euthanized or be kept in isolation for six months until it is determined the animal doesn't have rabies.

Shelter Sense Is Still a Bargain....

In April, the price for a one-year subscription (10 issues) of Shelter Sense will be increased from $5 to $8. This is the first increase in the subscription rate since shelter Sense was first published in April 1978!

Shelter Sense, now 16 pages long, continues to be a bargain you won't want to miss. And, starting in April, when you subscribe for two years, you'll get the second year for half the price!
New Jersey animal-control officer is boosting his community's image of animal workers while promoting responsible pet ownership.

Norman Billings, animal-control officer for the East Windsor Animal Control Bureau in New Jersey (Police Headquarters, 80 One Mile Road, East Windsor, NJ 08520) for the past nine years, recently made headlines on two occasions.

In September, an apartment building fire left several families homeless. Officer Billings was summoned when a local police officer saw a dog run from the burning building. Risking smoke inhalation, Billings and the building manager searched the apartments for animals. One dog and four cats were saved, including two cats that belong to a resident who did not want Billings to enter his apartment. One of the four cats died despite efforts to save it.

Last spring, Billings awarded 22 certificates to pet owners he saw being kind to their pets and/or obeying animal ordinances. Billings also gave them cents-off coupons for pet food, which he arranged to do with the cooperation of several pet food manufacturers. Over 400 coupons were distributed, and Billings hopes to expand the program in 1985.

Cats may become sick and possibly die after they drink water from toilet bowls that contain commercial cleansers released when the toilet is flushed, according to Jane Harris of New Jersey. Harris recently wrote The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) to say she overheard a woman in a grocery store explain that her toilet bowl cleanser killed her cat. Harris also warned The HSUS that pet sleeping and eating areas may be dangerous to animals if disinfected with household products containing coal tar, wood tar (including pine oil), and chemicals such as carbolic acid and cresol.

The HSUS emphasizes that household cleansers, paints, shoe polish, antifreeze, and other products that contain chemicals must be stored away from pets at all times. Better to be safe than sorry!

Some young people are learning to work with animals and the public in a new SPCA program that includes classroom- and on-the-job training and requires part-time work during the school year.

The Care Cadets are 12- and 13-year-old boys and girls who began training at the Louisiana SPCA (1319 Japonica Street, New Orleans, LA 70117) last June.
the SPCA. From September through May, they will spend three months each in the organization's pet-adoption, pet-therapy, and zoo-education programs. They will also work on three fund-raisers, including a January/February membership drive, and they will assist with other fund-raisers and events.

Care Cadets wear uniforms and must commit themselves to the program and to the animals or be dismissed. "They make a real contribution to our organization and to the animals," said Gould.

It is not surprising to discover that most organizations striving to meet these objectives encounter the same "roadblocks." Most typical of these, even for groups that already perform well, is a lack of accountability and documentation. For example, an organization cannot satisfy the standard for a comprehensive education program simply by saying "We have a good program and are always busy visiting schools." That organization must show The HSUS what its education program is: Is there a monthly report that reflects the program activity? What audiences does the program address (children, young adults, civic groups, etc.)? Are there program goals and objectives? Is there an ongoing evaluation system to determine whether or not program goals are being met? Is there a plan for the future? When an organization fails to educate its community, it does not do all it can to prevent animal suffering.

The same holds true for other programs such as cruelty investigation, animal rescue, shelter management, or adoption. Another roadblock, for example, is this: Simply finding new homes for sheltered animals does not prevent animal suffering unless an organization enforces a spay/neuter requirement. The HSUS wants your objective to be to place animals in loving, lasting homes and to reduce the current tragic pet overpopulation.

One's first reaction may be that many of The HSUS' standards are "paper" requirements that may take an organization away from its daily work of helping animals. Just the opposite is true! Underlying each standard is the firm belief that all local animal groups can overcome the seemingly overwhelming daily problems they face by learning to organize staff and records and by planning for the future. Only through documenting what has been accomplished, what the successes and failures have been, and the direction in which an organization wishes to go, can that organization ever succeed at solving its community animal problems. Such solutions inevitably result in prevention of animal suffering.

There are many tangible benefits from analysis, planning, and documented success. The HSUS believes they include

- an on-going self-evaluation process, fostered by providing an organization with an outside on-site evaluation in the context of nationally developed standards.
- recognition for achievements made not only by organizations but by dedicated, hard-working staff members and volunteers. Such recognition for demanding work and for success is often overdue!
- an excellent tool for fund raising by private animal-welfare groups, because an organization is more credible if it is subject to outside scrutiny. For animal-control organizations, such recognition is important for contract and budget negotiations.
- increased "networking" among animal organizations and an aid in joint problem solving. The HSUS' experience has shown that it shares the same problems as some other organizations, and by working together, solutions are easier to find.

The HSUS is always ready and willing to help animal organizations reach their goal of preventing animal suffering. It can provide the formula -- "Look to the future. Plan for success. Analyze." -- and it can share its wide expertise and vast information. In the final analysis, however, the actual prevention of animal suffering.

Humane Society Reaches for the Top

The Heartland Humane Society (S.W. Airport Road, Corvallis, OR 97330) is one of many animal organizations that has improved its operation through planning and determination, to the benefit of the animals it serves.

Formerly known as the Benton Humane Society, the group, headed by Lori Murphy, president, and Margaret Melvin, executive director, has expanded its educational program in accordance with HSUS standards by developing written outlines and materials and by defining educational objectives for area school children, teachers, and the community.

Now, over 90 percent of the animals adopted out by the humane society are spayed or neutered. In addition, the society has been instrumental in developing a low-cost spay/neuter program in which area veterinarians participate and in establishing differential licensing for dogs.

"The Heartland Humane Society should be congratulated for the increased impact it has had on the community and for the increase in membership as a result of its hard work and dedication," said HSUS West Coast Regional Director Charlene Brenchon. Lisa Morris of The HSUS said, "The Heartland Humane Society has made great strides in helping to solve the pet overpopulation problem in its area. We look forward to watching it grow further in the coming years."
suffering comes after local organizations do their own hard work and commit themselves to that goal. Further, each HSUS regional office serves you by tracking legislation, animal abuse, personnel developments, and organizations' successes within its respective region. You can assist your regional office by informing it about regional animal events and problems as they occur.

If your organization would like HSUS assistance with expanding and improving its animal programs, write The Humane Society of the United States, Companion Animals Section, 2100 L St. N.W., Wash., DC 20037, to discuss a possible on-site evaluation. A set of HSUS guidelines for animal-shelter policies, pet adoptions, a humane education program, and cruelty investigation is available for $1. Send a check or money order in U.S. funds to the above address, and indicate AC4002 on your order.

REPRODUCIBLE
A continuing feature to provide animal-control agencies and humane societies with material that will help educate the public on community animal control and responsible pet ownership.

You Love This Puppy Today.... Will You Love It Years From Now?

Becoming a pet owner is a big responsibility. Your dog or cat will depend on you to help it be a happy, healthy member of your family. Are you prepared to give it the companionship, veterinary care, food, and shelter it deserves?

Here are some points to consider:

* Never let your dog or cat stray outdoors. Always walk it on a leash or carry it in a pet carrier. Don't neglect an indoor pet, however. Take a dog for regular walks outdoors. Provide a litter box and play time for cats.

* Give your pet a comfortable collar and an identification tag so that if you should accidently lose your pet, you can find it.

* Make certain your cat or dog receives regular veterinary care, including all necessary shots. Rabies shots will prevent your pet from dying of this deadly disease.

* Have your female dog or cat spayed and the male neutered. The operation will not change your pet’s personality. Instead, it will reduce the tragic pet overpopulation and will be healthier for your pet. It is the responsible thing to do.

Years from now, you will be glad you were a responsible pet owner, and so will your pet!
In the December/January Shelter Sense, I reminded readers about the expert training in animal control and sheltering at The HSUS Animal Control Academy. Five 1985 Academy sessions offer training in enforcement, animal health, public relations, shelter management, and more. Graduates receive college credit, make new friends, and have the opportunity to share ideas and concerns with colleagues.

Did you know that The HSUS also sponsors regional workshops each spring, which closely focus on local animal issues and laws to help animal professionals solve regional problems?

When planning your 1985 schedule, don't forget to include time to attend a regional workshop. As each workshop nears, the Companion Animals Section will mail a brochure and a registration form to you to fill out and return. Nevertheless, if you would like further information about our workshops, contact The HSUS office for your region, listed below with workshop dates and locations:

**March 14-16**
Wichita Falls, Texas
Gulf States Region
(Ark., La., Okla., Texas)

**Contact**
William Meade III, director
HSUS Gulf States Regional Office
6262 Weber Road, Suite 305
Corpus Christi, TX 78413
(512) 854-3142

**March 29-30**
Huntington, W. Va.
Great Lakes Region
(Ohio, Ind., Mich., W. Va.)

**Sandy Rowland, director**
HSUS Great Lakes Regional Office
735 Haskins Street
Bowling Green, OH 43402-1696
(419) 352-5141

**May 2-4**
Point Pleasant, N.J.
Mid-Atlantic Region
(Del., N.J., N.Y., Penn.)

**Nina Austenberg, director**
HSUS Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
Lamington Road
Bedminster, NJ 07921
(201) 234-2260

**May 9-11**
Orlando, Fla.
Southeast Region
(Fla., Ga., N.C., S.C.)

**Marc Paulhus, director**
Southeast Regional Office
325 John Knox Road
Bldg. E, Suite 203
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(904) 386-3435