UNTIL THERE ARE NONE, ADOPT ONE!
A Campaign for Animal Shelters

Inside:
• Attracting More Adopters
• Improving Your Shelter’s Appeal
• Evaluating and Presenting Shelter Animals

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For too long, the public has taken a one-way street to the animal shelter. Many people enter the shelter with their arms full of unwanted dogs and cats. Too few come in to look for a lifelong companion. That’s exactly why The Humane Society of the United States has developed the “Until There Are None, Adopt One!” campaign. “Adopt One” is meant to help your shelter dismantle that “one way” sign. In conjunction with you and your colleagues across the country, we hope to turn the tide in favor of unwanted animals, and make homeless animals the next big consumer issue. We want to persuade more people to visit the animal shelter first when they make the decision to get a companion.

Anyone who knows The HSUS knows that we’re the last organization to issue blanket indictments of animal shelters for being the caretakers—and humane executioners—of throwaway pets. As HSUS President John Hoyt has said, “In my book, those who operate the local animal shelters of this country are the saints of this movement, rarely heralded, frequently maligned, but always accepting the responsibility and the failure of all of us to have altered this ritual of death called euthanasia we have brought to their door.”

Indeed, we have developed “Adopt One” campaign to enhance the good work you already do for animals. Simply put, the information in this issue and the materials we are developing for the campaign are designed to help you increase adoptions—without sacrificing the quality of the homes and people to whom you adopt out your animals.

All the materials have been created for you: an ad for your newsletter and local newspapers; a poster to be displayed in local shopping centers, veterinarians’ offices, grooming shops, and public libraries; an educational “Adopt One” brochure; and eight information sheets ideal for photocopying and handing out to your adopters. Additional materials are in the works.

Our goals are your goals. We want to inform the public that we have quality animals who can be wonderful, lifelong companions if given the chance by caring owners. We want to convince more responsible people to give shelter animals that chance. We want to help more people select the right dog or cat to be part of their family for the life of the pet.

Please let us know of your success, through your shelter’s own “Adopt One” campaign, in finding lifelong homes for more of your animals.

—Phyllis Wright, HSUS Senior Consultant

Until There Are None, Adopt One!

By Geoffery L. Handy

You’ve seen and heard the dire statistics countless times. Millions of dogs and cats must be humanely destroyed each year for lack of good homes. Worse, you’ve also felt the statistics. You’ve watched the animals in their cages and runs, each one unique, beautiful, alive, deserving. You’ve stared into so many soulful eyes. You’ve seen animal after animal leave the shelter through the back door.

You’ve made your own personal commitment and are doing your own individual part. You know the problem. And you know the solutions.

Yet every day you’re at the shelter helping unwanted animals, someone in your community is getting a new companion from some other place. Maybe she lives down the street, across town, or on the other side of the county. It doesn’t matter. What matters is that even though your shelter personnel have known for years: Most people do not get their animal after animal leave the shelter into the world, and eliminate the problem as supply diminishes to meet demand. Promoting responsible pet ownership and animal sterilization—whether through legislation, education, or financial incentives—is indeed the best long-term solution to pet overpopulation. Shelters could promote adoptions till doomsday and never hope to end the killing.

But when a scant 14 percent of all new pet owners obtain their companions from their local storehouses of homeless animals, there’s a problem. Sadly, for whatever reasons, the vast majority of prospective pet owners are missing the connection between animal euthanasia and their decision about where to get a new pet.

That is the challenge for animal shelters. Let responsible people know that there are healthy, loving animals at your shelter waiting for good homes, and persuade more of them to adopt one.

Behind New Pet Owners’ Decisions

Certainly, it’s difficult for many shelter personnel to understand why an individual might pay $200, $300, even $500 to a pet store or breeder when they could adopt from a shelter for well under $100. After you endured a few hours putting animals down, in fact, it’s hard to ac-cept that new pet owners support breeding operations at all.

Prospective pet owners stay away from the shelter for a variety of reasons:

• Ignorance of the surplus animal problem. Every shelter should assume that any people can walk into a shelter and know about pet overpopulation. Think for a minute. How did you first become aware of the numbers of surplus animals and the necessity of euthanasia? Most of us learn when we begin working in this field. Then there are those few people who may know about the homeless animal problem but just don’t think it’s their problem.

• Unfamiliarity with the animal shelter. Many people may not know there is a shelter in their community or that it is a good source for companion animals.

• Misconceptions about the animal shelter. How many people do you...
Until there are none, adopt one! I can think of no better way to begin to turn destruction into reduction, defeat into victory, and death into life. Until there are none, adopt one!
—HSUS President John A. Hoyt, announcing the HSUS "Adopt One" campaign

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Ruth Vedra, president of the SPCA of Northeastern North Carolina (Elizabeth City, N.C.), holds up a feline beneficiary of the agency's adoption promotions. SPCA staff created the "Adopt One" sign for permanent display at the shelter last September.

know who don't like going to the shelter because "it's too depressing," and who may not even know what your shelter is about! Others may have visited a shelter in the past that was filthy, had rude or unhelpful staff, provided an unpleasant adoption experience, or adopted out a sick animal.

- Impulse Buying and Impulse Accepting. We know that impulse buying helps many pet stores stay in business. Impulse accepting is when a friend, whose cat just had a litter, invites a family over for dinner and the family leaves with a kitten three hours later. These families probably would not have thought to get a pet otherwise, and therefore wouldn't have gone to an animal shelter anyway. They are, however, largely responsible for the high number of dogs and cats at the shelter in the one- to two-year-old range—surrendered after they "just didn't work out."

- Perceived quality of animals. Any animal's inherent value has nothing to do with pedigree. Overcoming the myth that purebreds make better pets—or that mutts, mongrels, and "second-hand" animals make bad pets—is one of shelters' most difficult challenges. Even when people know about the surplus animal problem, and even after they are told about puppy mills, some still insist on going to a pet shop and getting an animal "with papers."

The New Consumer Issue
Some of these obstacles shelters can hope to overcome very easily—many preconceived notions about shelters and shelter animals are so deeply rooted in the American psyche that they are taking decades to change. But other problems may have more achievable solutions—perhaps something as basic as correcting a shelter's lack of visibility in the community.

Shelters can bring in more people, simply by recognizing pet owners as consumers and operating accordingly. "During the past few years this country has witnessed the power of the consumer in bringing about change," said HSUS President John A. Hoyt in his announcement of the "Adopt One" campaign last April. "In numerous areas it has been the force of public opinion, and especially the resolve of massive numbers of individual buyers, that has produced profound results one would not have dreamed possible."

Just as pet overpopulation is largely a consumer issue, so shelters must more than ever begin to operate like businesses. They have to become marketers. They have to emphasize advertising, in name recognition, bring more people through their doors, maintain an attractive facility, stress customer service, and present a quality "product."

And yet, while doing all of this, shelters must not forget that what they are "selling" is not a product at all. It is a living, breathing, sentient animal who feels pain, requires commitment, deserves companionship, and has the potential to reproduce. Above all, shelters must remain faithful to the mandate that their animals must go only to responsible, lifelong homes. In a sentence, they must exercise their right to reject certain customers.

Shelters can increase the numbers of shelter animals finding good homes. They can maintain their adoption standards and the quality of their placements. Animal shelters can accomplish both of these things simply by striving to expand their pool of adoption applicants. They must help more prospective pet owners make that vital connection between their search for a companion and the fact that shelters are overflowing with homeless, adoptable animals.

That is the bottom line. The "Adopt One" campaign, in conjunction with the dedication and action of each individual animal shelter, is intended to help responsible, prospective pet owners make the choice to adopt a shelter animal.

Beyond the Yellow Pages
There are as many ways to reach public awareness of shelters as there are varieties of mixed breed dogs. The most basic forms of advertisement—sizeable yellow pages ads with simple maps, directional signs, community bulletin boards, and billboards—are a good and necessary start, but most shelters have found that increasing their adoption rate substantially without compromising their standards requires much more effort.

If the shelter is to establish and maintain local awareness of its adoption services, use of the media is invaluable. The easiest way to ensure effective media coverage is to pay for it by creating a specific publicity budget. Energetic and imaginative shelters, however, have found that much can be done despite a shortage of funds. In fact, achieving free or low-cost media exposure is possible for virtually any public or private shelter.

Broadcast public service announcements (PSAs) are the easiest and cheapest advertising route to increased adoptions. Commercial radio and television stations are no longer required to meet a quota of PSAs in order to maintain their licenses, but there is usually little difficulty in obtaining some free air

Susan Hawley and Cindy Stoll of the York County SPCA (York, Pa.) present some 30 adoptable animals each week on "Meet the Pets." Filmed at the shelter, it's been the top-rated show on Cable-4 York four straight years.

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The ultimate goal, however, says Marc Paulhus, HSUS vice president for companion animals, "is to obtain prime-time coverage, and to do this you will need to persuade the station program directors to make your cause theirs."

Paulhus suggests that shelter staff meet with the PSA directors of several radio stations ("country, classical, adult contemporary, or talk radio formats are usually the most appropriate outlets for adoption PSAs because they appeal to an adult audience") and, armed with enthusiastic and compelling materials, convince them of the desperate

DOES THE PUBLIC KNOW YOUR SHELTER EXISTS?
It's a question you should ask yourself before setting out to increase the number of responsible, prospective pet owners who walk through your shelter's doors.

Unfortunately, for virtually every shelter, the answer of many would-be pet owners is "no," so they look elsewhere for a companion. Even many people who have heard of the local shelter too often view it purely as an imprisonment facility, not as a place to adopt a lifelong friend.

Clearly, many shelters need to achieve a higher profile in their communities. But as Kate Rindy, an associate with the HSUS Companion Animals section, points out, "Simply increasing adoption is invaluable. The easiest way to ensure effective media coverage is to pay for it by creating a specific publicity budget. Energetic and imaginative shelters, however, have found that much can be done despite a shortage of funds. In fact, achieving free or low-cost media exposure is possible for virtually any public or private shelter.

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need for the campaign's success.

Each radio station will require a PSA script. Shelters can easily write their own scripts and will need to update them around the message. "When several stations are participating," says Paulhus, "or when the announcements will be running for several months, shelters need to avoid saturating the audience with the same PSAs." By all means, they should repeat the same slogans, such as "Get a pal for life!" or "Until there are none, adopt one." But they will need to maintain the listeners' interest by varying the messages monthly, or even weekly, and from station to station.

This variation can be achieved by changing the focus. The emphasis can be changed, for example, from the general "adopt a pet" to the more specific "adopt a dog" or "adopt a cat," from adopting young animals to adopting mature animals (whose personalities are more predictable and who may better suit families with kids), or from mentioning the availability of purebreds to emphasizing the uniqueness of mixed breeds.

The shelter's appeals might also be enhanced by the inclusion of some statistical information on pet ownership population. Agencies could cite statistics compiled locally or national stats found in The HSUS's "Be a P.A.L.---Prevent A Litter" and Bell Atlantic Yellow Pages. Shelters may also want to add a tag line to advertising PSAs such as "Come see us and fill out an application today" as a subtle hint that only responsible potential adopters need apply.

For television PSAs, the most valuable hours of air-time are the evening prime-time hours of 6 to 11:00 pm, and the target group for shelters is age 25 to 65. Television stations will require either the shelter's own PSA scripts (to be produced for free by the station) or video PSAs developed for the shelter by an independent company.

If the shelter wishes to develop its own video PSA, it will need to produce a high-quality 1" master or 3/4" videotape. A local advertising agency may do this pro bono (meaning the company will waive its fee). "We're careful about which businesses we ask to sponsor us," says society president Mae West, "but those we choose to solicit are aware of the great publicity the ad can give them and usually take us up on the offer." In addition to sponsoring advertising, retail companies may also agree to publicize a shelter or a specific adoption promotion in their own ads or in their stores.

A challenging but highly rewarding tactic is to capture the attention of local reporters. Shelter staff can invite reporters on tours, get to know them, and share with them the work of the shelter and its role in the community. Once a shelter has established a rapport with a local journalist or two, they are more likely to cover any events the shelter holds. Also, if an adoptable animal with an interesting or tragic story comes in to the shelter, reporters should be notified.

Any positive mention of the shelter in an otherwise tragic story is sure to gain the admiration of a caring public, not to mention immediate adoption candidates for the animal.

Mitternight also suggests positive association with a local celebrity such as a mayor or television weather forecaster. If the shelter can persuade such a person to become an adoption spokesperson, it can more readily gain publicity in the local media.

Working Within the Community
Shelters, as part of the community and should operate as such. At every opportunity, shelters should invite community groups such as the local Junior League or Kiwanis Club to tour the shelter. Adoptions, like the shelter itself, will benefit from an educated and supportive public.

The involvement of local veterinarians in shelter activities can be helpful as well. Increasingly, veterinarians are working with animal shelters to further animal protection endeavors, most notably through cooperative spay/neuter programs. Harnessing the persuasive power that veterinarians have with the pet-owning public can be a boon to your long-term efforts. Persuading vets to display shelter brochures or hang up posters that promote shelter adoptions will help encourage more pet owners to adopt their next companion.

Increasing Adoption Fees
So you want to be creative, you want to express your urgency, and you want to place more animals into lifelong homes, but you just don't have enough money, and free or sponsored publicity just isn't giving your shelter enough exposure.

Paulhus suggests a potential solution: evaluate your adoption fees, and think about raising them slightly to bring in funds for extra advertising and staff time.

"Most shelters' adoption fees are a bargain when compared to the costs of vetting, " says Paulhus, "especially when the fees include the cost of a spay or neuter surgery, and other services. Indeed, your shelter may already be subsidizing these services to some extent. Once prospective owners are attracted to the shelter to adopt an animal, an adoption fee that's $5 or $10 higher to cover the cost of advertising shouldn't cause them to go elsewhere."

When the Douglas County shelter, during Adopt-a-Dog month, reduced the price of adoptions, they found that most people chose to pay the full price anyway.

"Promotion of adoptions can almost pay for itself independence of raising fees," says Paulhus, "because for every adoption above your shelter's usual number, there will be extra money in the fund to offset the cost of the promotion. That's how advertising works."
Making Your Shelter Appeal To Prospective Pet Owners

By M. Kathleen Prevost

What we are, and to a great extent what we look like, determine other people’s feelings, actions, and reactions toward us. This is no less true for physical facilities like animal shelters than it is for individuals. The sights, smells, sounds, and information that “package” your animal shelter’s message say as much about you as do your stated goals and mission. People remember what you do, not what you say.

For many adopters, the only contact they’ll ever have with your shelter is the time they spend selecting and applying for a companion animal. How your facility looks and feels will determine how they judge your agency. Over the long haul, adopters’ positive or negative experiences will have a large impact on your shelter’s overall success. It’s so depressing?” Most shelters simply don’t have the resources to “walk” every adopter through the entire process. But if they haven’t already done so, they can turn into a fun, educational experience—(remind the Tacoma-Pierce County [Wa.] Humane Society Station a helpful staffer or volunteer to guide adopters and give them basic information.)

Streamlining the Adoption Process

Once potential adopters have found the animal shelter to visit, they can be told by many agencies to “go back and look at the animals, and if you find one you like, come up and fill out a form.” This, during the adoption interview, they proceed to tell the person that they chose the wrong animal.

Most shelters simply don’t have the resources to “walk” every adopter through the entire process. But if they haven’t already done so, they can turn into a fun, educational experience—(remind the Tacoma-Pierce County [Wa.] Humane Society Station a helpful staffer or volunteer to guide adopters and give them basic information.)

Don’t let adopters know the rules of the road just when they begin to play. If you can’t pre-counsel or if you can’t station a helpful staff member to visit the kennel area on a busy Saturday, at least provide them with a self-guided shelter tour and adoption checklist.

Provide separate areas for adoption, stray, and isolation animals. If that is not possible, color code the cages or floors to identify the status of sick or injured animals should be kept in an area away from adoption traffic. Present your “special” animals—older, less attractive, or “hard to adopt” ones—first. Don’t let folks see the puppies until they’ve had a chance to see that nice, five-year-old spayed female terrier! Special, non-coercive signs can add an icing on the cake.

Although they cost money and require much time and effort to prepare, signs can instantly promote a pleasant view of your shelter, so can attractive, style-consistent, professional-looking colony cages, two animals per cage should be the maximum. Sick or injured animals should be free of grammatical errors and feature a graphic image that your agency really has its act together.

Signs of the Times

Don’t let the simplicity of signs fool you; their power can be substantial. Important adoption information can instantly communicate an image that your agency really has its act together.

Signs can be everywhere, and—like information packets and/or clipboards—can save staff from answering the same questions over and over again. Information “wall” in the shelter reception area can educate adopters and others alike. Large shelters can route traffic via signs in the lobby area, separating potential adopters from lost-and-founds and surrenderers. Directional and informational signs can help in “he kennels and catteries.

All signs should be easy to read, be free of grammatical errors and misspelling, and feature a graphic component such as a logo or illustration. Show you have a sense of humor. Instead of “Don’t touch the animals,” try “Please don’t feed your fingers to the puppies.”

The Sweet Smell (And Look) of Success

Your shelter must not only be clean, it must smell clean. Odor is the number one customer turn-off. Clean doesn’t mean antiseptic; a pleasant, unobtrusive deodorizer really helps create a better environment. There is no excuse for a smelly kennel. If your shelter smells bad, change your cleaning procedures or your products.

Make your shelter pleasant to the eyes. Create a fun environment through the special use of light—try desk lamps, skylights, or track lighting. Use live plants to create a natural environment. Paint the place—two coats of fresh paint can do wonders—and maintain a regular painting schedule. Use bright colors for office areas and dirt resistant colors for the kennels and catteries.

Think mauve, cranberry, cobalt, sunflower, and plum—not gray, green, yellow, and white. Also consider providing piped-in classical music—it will not only be enjoyed by the animals, but by the people and staff as well.

People Power

Finally, don’t forget that your staff’s attitude will make or break the shelter experience for every potential adopter as they visit, including the person whose application is rejected. Develop a customer service policy and stick to it! Remember that compassion shouldn’t depend on the number of legs a custo mer has.

Another make-or-break consideration is the number of staff you provide to help with the adoption process. Before you institute adoption promotions, make sure you have enough adoption counselors and/or volunteers to meet the increased shelter traffic. Few things anger people more than visiting the shelter on a precious Saturday and having to wait an extra hour just to meet with an adoption counselor.

Every shelter can be clean, odor-free, pleasant, and educational. A few gallons of paint, some new signs, a grounds cleanup, and, most importantly, a well-trained, informative, friendly staff aren’t expensive. Making your shelter the place people choose to visit for their animal services needs, including the place to adopt a new companion, just takes new ideas and commitment.

The use of Plexiglas helps the Denver Dumb Friends League (Co.) display animals in a more attractive manner than they could using traditional metal caging.
TRANSFORMING SHELTER ANIMALS INTO ADOPTABLE PETS

By Linda M. Reider

You’ve probably come across people who feel that shelter animals are more of a “risk” than animals from private pet shops, or friends. That belief developed over the years largely because of pounds and shelters that presented animals who were dirty, matted, or smelly; who growled, snapped, or hissed at interested adopters; or who were just plain unhealthy. Let’s face it: Shelters, unlike breeders or pet shops, deal in pets of widely varying backgrounds. But shelters can work to dispel the notion that previously owned animals make riskier companions. What it takes is trained staff who can implement a consistent, reliable screening process that makes risk-taking a thing of the past. Let’s see how.

Step One: Temperament Testing

For any agency, an investment in training its staff to properly evaluate the temperament of dogs and cats is a good one. Not every stray or unwanted pet is temperamentally sound. Even one publicized case of an adopted pet biting a new owner can damage a shelter’s reputation and leave it open to a costly lawsuit. Many veterinarians and professional behavior counselors can teach shelter personnel about the basics of animal aggression, the different kinds of animal bites, and the effects of cruelty on animal victims. Kennel staff, for example, should be able to recognize the common signs of aggressiveness. On the other side of the coin, they should also be aware of the effects the shelter environment has on the behavior of many animals.

Every shelter’s policy should read, “No animal known to have bitten a person in the past will be placed for adoption.” For animals with unknown temperaments, written behavioral records should be maintained on each animal selected for adoption. A careful screening process will help protect adopters, and, in the case of a negligence suit, your shelter.

Step Two: Health Evaluation

When many people think of shelter animals as a risk, they quite often have the vision of a beloved pet dying a premature death due to disease. Shelters certainly can’t guarantee the health of every animal who leaves their doors, just as veterinarians can’t. But shelter staff should be able to identify the vast majority of ill and injured pets and separate them in an isolation area away from animals up for adoption, or foster them in individual homes. Animal care staff members can be trained to give each incoming animal a general health examination. The exam should include everything from sexing to basic TPR (temperature, pulse, and respiration) checks to eyes, ears, nose, mouth, coat, body, and stool checks.

Dogs over six months of age should be tested for heartworm. Cats selected for adoption should be tested for feline leukemia (FeLV) and, if feasible, feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV). Your agency’s veterinarian or veterinary consultant should determine a safe flea-control, worming, and vaccination schedule for adopted animals. Cytotoxic vaccines against common vaccinations given shelter animals are the 5-in-1 vaccine (distemper/parvo-virus/leptospirosis/adenovirus/parainfluenza) for dogs and the 3-in-1 vaccine (rhinotracheitis/calici/panleukopenia) for cats. Optional additional vaccines that are available include corona and bordatella for dogs, and feline leukemia for cats.

Step Three: Physical Appearance

Washing and grooming animals up for adoption should be a staple of any shelter’s operation. It’s worth examining, but don’t worry. A “too tough” image can be improved without compromising essential adoption standards.

Many of today’s potential pet parents are surely asking themselves, “Whatever happened to the days when you could stroll into a dimly lit dog pound, point out the dog of your choice, slap down a couple bucks, and be home with a new dog in time for supper?” In fact, it’s today’s person who wants to bring home a four-legged friend from a responsible humane shelter will be forced to think very carefully about their intentions. We who work in animal shelters know that some folks resent this. They feel that owning a dog or cat is an American right, spelled out in the constitution right after the about “bearing arms.”

Now more than ever, the American public is being asked to adopt pets from shelters rather than buy animals from profit-making businesses. But many humane shelters are being attacked for their strict adoption policies and procedures. Critics argue that the real reason so many animals are being euthanized is not the overpopulation problem, but that the shelter is not adopting out enough animals. Shelters are accused of being too demanding, sometimes pompous, and even callous in their approach to turning down an adoption, even when euthanasia is inevitable.

It is still going to take some time for people to get used to the idea that pet ownership is a privilege, not a right. In the meantime, however, it may be prudent for shelters to conduct an adoption self-examination if the public has expressed discontent.

Is it possible that in an effort to place animals in only truly quality homes, you have become slightly regimented, possessive of the animals, or inflexible with the public? Have you gone a tad overboard in the expectations department? Is the public being alienated? It’s worth examining, but don’t worry. A “too tough” image can be improved without compromising essential adoption standards.

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Have you been (to the animal shelter) lately? It's a whole new ballgame. Twelve years ago we walked in, picked out a puppy, wrote a check for $15, and left. In the late summer of 1991, we went to the shelter, picked out two kittens, said, "We'll take those home today," and were told, "You'll take those home three days from now, after we've checked you out." —Washington Post columnist Jonathan Yardley

parenting for better or for worse, and that they are basically caring people able to handle the monumental task of parenting—emotionally, spiritually, and financially. The agency is far less concerned with the details of daily parenting skills. The parents are not required to pass a "parenting test," but instead receive on-the-job training. They're encouraged to seek advice or assistance from the agency as needed.

Identify with Adopters

During the course of many shelter visits, I have had the opportunity to observe numerous adoption procedures and review adoption paperwork. It's often been helpful to view these adoption sessions from the adopter's perspective. In many instances, the experience appeared to leave the prospective adopter somewhat less than satisfied. This is not surprising. Finding out if someone possesses the three C's—commitment, compassion, and capability—is no easy task, for the prospective adopter must not only accept closing the adoption application process non-intimidating, less of a "you'll only get an animal if you measure up" scenario, and more like "let's see if we can work out something that will be suitable for you, your lifestyle, and the animal.

Obviously, you have to ask people questions in one way or another; adoption questionnaires continue to be very useful tools. If you require that the applicant fill out a written questionnaire, use the answers on the questionnaire as a springboard for discussion. If the questionnaire is completed verbally, engage the person in conversation first and weave the routine questions in as opportunities arise, instead of grinding through the questionnaire like a pre-flight check list. You can also learn much more about the applicant while putting him or her at ease.

The Three C's

What we really need to know about an adoption applicant can be boiled down to three criteria, which I'll call the three "C's": 1) commitment to the life and needs of the animal, to being (or becoming) a responsible pet owner; 2) willingness to make adjustments when trouble arises; 2) compassion, and a desire for mutual companionship instead of utility (e.g., mouser, guard dog, yard ornament); and 3) capability of providing the essentials of a healthy, happy life for the animal (adequate finances, time, appropriate living quarters, etc.).

Finding out if someone possesses the three C's requires a sincere and friendly attempt to get to know the applicant through pleasant conversation in a private environment. The interviewer must set aside any negative feelings about humans in general. The human came to your shelter instead of a pet store or backyard breeder, and needs help in making an intelligent decision about an important and personal part of his or her life. You need to accept that this person may not fit into your mold of a perfect pet owner in terms of their knowledge of animals or even past experiences. But if they are harboring those three C's somewhere inside, you can help them become a better or more knowledgeable pet owner.

You can also help them enjoy a wonderful relationship with an animal (maybe for the first time) by offering solutions to past problems and guiding them to the most appropriate choices. By showing a sincere interest in helping them, you can turn a "Me. I'll go somewhere else and get a dog!" into a "Mr. Gee, I didn't realize how pleasant-life could be with a sterilized dog, or even a "Ms. I'm glad they talked to me about waiting until the kids are older.

Inevitably, some adoptions don't work out. The parents may have decided that they don't have much flexibility (sterilization, for example). However, completely rigid standards with no exceptions can cause ill-will and the loss of some basically sound adoptions. On the down side, flexibility may require that you make a stronger commitment to adoption follow-ups. Home visits may be required, before or after an adoption in some circumstances.

Naturally, you will still have to tell some people no. However, if you do it with respect and honesty, those people can leave the shelter with their egos intact and their "feathers smooth." And maybe, just maybe, they will have learned something about themselves and your shelter's objectives that will have a positive effect on them.

At a time when people in the humane movement are being criticized for being excessively pro-animal and anti-human, it might well be to take a close look at the way people who are interested in sharing their lives with a shelter animal are being treated. Are you providing the public with pets with the best possible chance of being successful, friendly pet counseling, and matchmaking? Does the imaginary welcome mat on your shelter's doorstep say "Thanks for coming to our shelter, how may we help you?" or does it say "Go ahead, make my day!"? Regardless of whether your shelter has a Mr. Rogers or a Clint Eastwood style of human relations, you can be sure it affects public perception, attitude, and, ultimately, your agency's overall success.
The humane society really cared who adopted this dog.

Anonymous, from 1991 member survey by the Humane Society of Huron Valley, Michigan, in response to a question about the society’s adoption process.

TIPS FOR SMOOTHER, MORE SUCCESSFUL ADOPTIONS

1. Prepare a friendly information sheet on adoptions at your shelter. This will help people feel as though everyone is being treated equally, and allow them to plan their time when they are ready. Point out that they will be required to sign a legal contract.
2. Find out if the potential adopter is “just looking,” and has some questions, or whether they are ready to spend some time for the actual adoption process; this can save your staff a great deal of time.
3. Provide a comfortable, private place for the interview. Keep distractions and interruptions to a minimum.
4. Make the interview a conversation, not an interrogation.
5. Decide on an opening line for your interviews, something you feel comfortable saying to get things started off on the right foot.
6. Ask questions that will get people to share feelings and experiences, and not just cut and dried facts. Say, “Tell me about the other pets you’ve lived with,” instead of, “Do you have a fenced-in yard?”
7. Share personal experiences now and then when applicable. It will ease any tensions, and show them that people can learn and improve as pet owners. When you reveal information about yourself, they will be more likely to do the same.
8. Let the interviewee talk without too much interruption. Be careful not to let your face or actions indicate that you are disturbed by what you are hearing; the speaker will become defensive and withhold further information.
9. Listen closely to the interviewee. Much can be learned about their personal qualities, and you can ask follow-up questions easily.
10. Don’t be afraid to slow people down. People who are bent on taking an animal home immediately may require a closer look.
11. Remember that you have not lost control of adoptions. At Animal Fair, “All adoptions are ad-

Put away stereotypes and treat every potential adopter with the same fairness, honesty, respect, and compassion.

Ask them to review a certain video, or take home a pamphlet and give some more thought to whether this is really the best time to get a pet. You haven’t said no, you just want to avoid unpleasant mistakes for the family and the animal.
12. To try to educate the applicant about good pet ownership without being condescending or pushy.
13. Offer to help the applicant become a better pet owner, e.g.,

“We have information about a better way to handle a chronic digger. Would you be interested in hearing about it?”

14. Show people how they will benefit from the adoption standards, e.g., “Having to return an animal to the shelter would be a very unpleasant experience for you and your kids. We want to help you avoid that.”
15. Examine your tone of voice and the way you ask the questions. Record an interview sometime and ask yourself how you would have felt had you been on the opposite side of the table.
16. Try to make people feel comfortable enough with you that they would return or ask for help with problems.
17. Never refer a denied applicant to a pet shop, the classifieds, or another shelter. If you have to deny an adoption, be honest but polite about the reasons. You want to show the person that you are concerned about any animal who may be adopted or purchased.
18. Make sure your adoption contract does not ask people to accept unacceptable terms. Would you sign a contract that included one of the following clauses (taken from actual adoption contracts)?
1. If the previous owner of a stray comes forward within 30 days after the adoption, the new owner may have to give up the pet.
2. The family could be liable for any other expenses incurred by anyone involved in resolving a breach of contract problem.
3. The owner is required to reimburse the society for a specified amount of money if the animal is ever lost, killed, or dies before its normal life expectancy is reached.

HUMANE SOCIETIES, PET STORES WORK TOGETHER TO INCREASE ADOPTIONS

By Katherine Matthews, adapted and updated from Columbus Monthly, Jan. 1990

I wanted to be part of the solution, instead of part of the problem,” says Paul Chakroff, stroking the head of a squirming brown pup-

py at Animal Fair Pet Center in Colum-

bus, Ohio. Along with four assorted kittens, who sleep in furry heaps in pens a few feet away, the puppy is from the Capital Area Humane Society and a participant in an unusual adoption program. Chakroff, owner of the shop, offers his customers the option of adopt-

ing a humane society animal right out of his store.

After purchasing Animal Fair in November of 1987, Chakroff decided to discontinue the sale of purebred puppies and kittens. “That side of the business had always disturbed me,” he said. Yet Chakroff missed having the animals in the store, since customers enjoy seeing the kittens and puppies. His solution was to approach the humane society and volunteer space and staff to adoptable cats and dogs.

“We were delighted,” says Gerri Bain, executive director of the Capital Area Humane Society. Indeed, Animal Fair’s participation is a boon to the society, whose far south side location is inconvenient to north-end residents. In operation since April 1988, the Animal Fair Adoption Option has placed over 2,500 animals. In fact, from January 1 through October 31, 1991, the pet store accounted for a whopping 37 percent of the society’s adoptions, with an average 115 per month. “Our problem has been to keep up with demand,” says Chakroff.

Significantly, the society has not lost control of adoptions. At Animal Fair, “All adoptions are ad-

ministered exactly as they are here (at the shelter),” says Bain, including an interview with the potential adopter.

Animal Fair takes no commission, sending the adoption fees directly to the society, which in turn delivers the animals and provides all food and bedding. Humane society volunteers frequently spend morning and evening hours helping clean

Paul Chakroff moved Animal Fair to a larger location in 1990, and constructed a special room in the store capable of displaying some 20 humane society animals.
I had just walked out of the shelter I was inspecting when I noticed a man in the parking lot putting a dog into the trunk of his car. I approached him just as he was gently clos­ing the trunk, and asked him as politely as I could what he was doing. Turns out he had just adopted the pup, and the poor animal reeled so badly that his new owner didn’t want to risk smelling up the inside of his car. So I went back to the shelter manager and asked her, “If you treat animals like dirtballs, how do you expect your adopters to do any better?”

—Phyllis Wright, HSUS Senior Consultant

and feed the animals. To keep up with the program’s exponential growth, the society actually assigned a paid counselor to help with Animal Fair adoptions Fridays through Sundays. Chakroff and three Animal Fair staffers are trained to handle adoptions as well.

For Animal Fair, says Chakroff, the benefits of the program are either direct, in the form of good will and interest in the store, or direct, from sale of supplies and food bought in conjunction with the adoption. Chakroff is the first to admit that he lost money the first year with the program’s exponential growth. “For Animal Fair, says Chakroff, since then, his increased food and sales profits have more than made up the difference. “To people with an ideological interest, I would like to say it could be done and done successfully.”

Pet Product News, a pet industry trade publication, profiled the program in its August 1991 edition. As a result, Chakroff received 30 inquiries from other pet store owners.

The selling point, says Bain, is not only that this cooperative program is a marketing success, but it’s also a moral success for the animals.

Two Similar Programs

Although the most far-reaching, the Capital Area Humane Society—Animal Fair program is not the only one of its kind. Retford, a pet supply boutique, displayed animals for the Animal Fair program.

Washington (D.C.) Humane Society for years before relocating to Bethesda, Maryland, earlier this year. That store, along with three other pet supply stores and a pet store in the Washington, D.C., area, displayed animals for the Montgomery County (MD) Humane Society (MCHS). The Animal Protection Society (APS) of Orange County, North Carolina, also has animals displayed by a local pet store. During October 1991, the first month of its cooperative program with Dubey’s Pet World, APS adopted out 22 animals through the store—about half the animals transported there. “All the animals taken to Dubey’s had already used up their time at the shelter,” noted APS director Pat Sanford.

Both MCHS and APS handle the adoptions at the animal shelter, and require a 24-hour holding period to discourage impulse adoptions.

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Adopting a Dog? MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE!

There's one problem with adopting a dog from an animal shelter: the pets you can choose from vary in size, shape, color, age, and temperament. So when you visit your local shelter, you're likely to find a dog that matches your lifestyle and wants. If you live alone in a small, three-bedroom apartment, for instance, adopting a large, active retriever mix might not be the best choice. Conversely, if you're a family of four and are looking for a companion to match your active family lifestyle, such an animal may be the perfect choice. A dog's size, energy requirements, friendly disposition, and compatibility with children should all figure into your decision.

Learn About Different Breeds and Mixes

So how do you know what kinds of dogs will have the qualities you're looking for? The best way to find out is to learn about various breeds, visit with animals at the shelter, and speak with an adoption counselor for guidance.

Dogs fall into one of two categories: purebred or mixed breeds. Most animal shelters have plenty of both. The only significant difference between the two is that purebreds, because their parents and other ancestors are all members of the same breed, generally conform to a specific “breed standard.” This means that if you adopt a puppy who is a purebred, you have a good chance of knowing how big he'll get when he's older and what general physical and behavioral characteristics he's likely to have.

Of course, the size, appearance, and temperament of mixed breed dogs can be predicted as well. After all, mixed breeds are simply combinations of different breeds. So if you can recognize the ancestry of a particular mixed breed puppy, you have a good chance of knowing how he'll turn out, too.

Mixed breeds offer several other advantages. When you adopt a mixed breed, you have the benefit of getting the combined traits of two or more different breeds in one animal. You also get a dog who's likely to be free of genetic defects common to certain purebred breeds. Mixed breed dogs are often considered the most “natural” dog. When you adopt a mixed breed, you adopt a totally unique companion.

Adopting a Cat? MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE!

You may have heard the saying, “You own a dog, you love a cat.” It's true that cats value their independence a bit more than their canine counterparts. But if you've ever been around cats before, you already know they actually crave and require love and companionship.

Cats make wonderful pets. Because they're less demanding, you can better adapt to a variety of lifestyles and living spaces. Every cat is a true individual, though, so it's important to take the time to choose a four-footed friend wisely. Choose a cat's personality, age, and appearance, as well as the kinds of pets you already have at home, are all things you should keep in mind when making your selection.

Choose a Cat for Life

Every cat in the shelter can provide you with boundless love and companionship, and every cat deserves a lifelong home. Most cats will soon learn to accept each other, and some may quite possibly become the best of buddies. Some dogs simply won't tolerate the presence of a cat, but by carefully introducing them, most problems can be solved.

Be Responsible!

Regardless of the cat you choose, you'll want to start being a responsible pet owner right away. The easiest way to do that is to keep your cat indoors with you from the very beginning. If you don't let your new friend outside, he'll never miss it, and will have a much better chance of still being around to sit on your lap a few years from now.

The other big mistake of responsible cat owner is having your female cat spayed or your male cat neutered. Spaying or neutering will ensure that your cat never adds to the millions of animals born each year who never find a good home. It'll also help him or her live a longer, healthier life.

Adopt a Cat for Life

Finally, remember that you're making a commitment to love and care for your new pet for his or her lifetime—which could mean 10, 15, even 20 years. So choose your new pal carefully and be a responsible pet owner. In so doing, you'll know how wonderful sharing your home with a cat can be.
TAKE A SECOND LOOK! Consider Adopting an Adult Cat or Dog

We know what you're thinking, Those puppies and kittens are so cute, they're almost impossible to pass up. When you see those playful balls of fluff with their soulful eyes, how can you choose to adopt a mature animal instead? But please give us a few moments of your time. Give us a chance to convince you to adopt an older pet instead. We guarantee you won't be sorry!

Be a Lifesaver

Why do you come to an animal shelter to adopt your pet? Most likely, one of the reasons was to save an animal's life. And that's exactly what you are doing when you adopt an adult. The old saying, “It’s raining cats and dogs” is an understatement—it’s more like a torrential downpour. Nearly eight million animals are humanely killed in animal shelters each year. Sadly, adult mixed breed animals are usually first in line to meet this needless fate. Why? Because they are less likely to be adopted.

Mixed breeds and kittens are as deserving of good homes as adult animals. But an older, more mature animal might be the pet who’s right for you—and he could be one, two, five, or even ten years old!

So lift up those feet and walk past the puppy and kitten rooms. Go have a look at the adult animals. After all, puppies and kittens are as deserving of good homes as adult animals. And an older, more mature animal might be the pet who’s right for you—and he could be one, two, five, or even ten years old!

A Second Chance

New Tricks!

The adage that you can’t teach an old dog (or cat, for that matter) new tricks is hogwash. Adult animals are often easier to train than younger pets. After all, they’ve lived a little and are wiser—just like their owners. And many have been previously owned and may have a storehouse of tricks they are waiting to share with their new family.

A Second Chance

Wish you knew the animal was right for you, but you were a bit hesitant? New Tricks! You might not be able to come into a store and try a hat on, but when you adopt an adult, you can try wearing the “hat” on your new pet, and see if he does what you do now! No doubt you’re excited and looking forward to forging a lifelong friendship with your new buddy. But try to keep in mind the confusion he is feeling right now. Whatever his past history, coming home with you is a new experience. He is likely to be a little disoriented, wondering where he is and why he is there.

Take your time. The key to helping your new pet make a successful adjustment to your home is being prepared and being patient. You can take anywhere from two to two months for you and your pet to adjust to each other.

The following tips can help ensure a smooth transition:

Supplies. Prepare the things your dog will need in advance. You’ll need a collar and leash, food and water bowls, and a litter pan. And don’t forget to order an identification tag right away.

Welcome Home. Try to arrange the arrival of your new dog for a weekend or when you can be home for a few days. Get to know each other and spend some quality time together. Don’t forget the pecony factor—make sure you don’t neglect other pets and people in your household!

Health Care. Animal shelters take in animals with widely varying backgrounds, some of whom have not been vaccinated. Inevitably, despite the best efforts of shelter workers, some animals can get sick and may occasionally go home with adopted animals. If you already have dogs or cats at home, make sure they are up-to-date on their shots and in good general health before introducing your new pet dog.

Take your new dog to the veterinarian within a week after adoption. There, he will receive a health check and any necessary vaccinations he may need. If your dog has not been spayed or neutered, make that appointment! There are already far too many homeless puppies and dogs; don’t let your new pet add to the problem. Most likely, the shelter will require that you have your pet spayed or neutered anyway. If you need more information about why it is so important to spay or neuter your dog, please ask at the shelter.

House Rules. Work out your dog-care regimen in advance among the human members of your household. Who will walk the dog first thing in the morning? Who will feed him at night? Will Fido be allowed on the couch, or won’t he? Where will he be rest at night? Are there any rooms in the house that are off-limits?

Training and Discipline. Dogs need order. Remember, they are pack animals, so make yourself the “pack leader.” Let your pet know from the start who is the boss. When you catch him doing something he shouldn’t, don’t lose your cool. Stay calm, and let him know immediately, in a cool and disapproving voice, that he was bad. Reward him with praise when he does well, too. Sign up for a local dog obedience class, and you’ll learn what a joy it is to have a well-trained dog.

WHAT NEXT? Bringing Your New Dog Home

S o you’ve taken the plunge and adopted a dog of your own. Congratulations! But what do you do now? No doubt you’re excited and looking forward to forging a lifelong friendship with your new buddy. But try to keep in mind the confusion he is feeling right now. Whatever his past history, coming home with you is a new experience. He is likely to be a little disoriented, wondering where he is and why he is there.

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Housebreaking. Assume your new dog is not housebroken, and work from there. Read over the housebreaking information given to you at the time of adoption. Be consistent, and maintain a routine! A little extra effort on your part to come home straight from work each day will pay off in easier, faster housebreaking.

Crating. A crate may look to you like the canine equivalent of a jail cell, but to your dog, who instinctively likes to den, it’s a room of its own. It makes housebreaking and training easier and saves your dog from the headache of being yanked at unnecessarily for problem behavior. Of course, you won’t want to crate your dog all day or all night, or he will consider it a jail cell. Just a few, regular hours a day (but no more than four hours at a time) should be sufficient. The crate should not contain wire where collar or paws can get caught, and should be roomy enough to allow your dog to stand up, turn around, and sit comfortably in normal posture.

If you still can’t face the idea of a crate, at the very least consider some sort of confinement to a dogproofed part of your home. A portion of the kitchen or family room can serve the purpose very well (baby gates work perfectly).

Let the Games Begin. Dogs need an active life. That means you should plan plenty of exercise and game time for your pet. Enjoy jogging or Frisbee! You can bet your dog will, too. If running around the park is too energetic for your taste, try throwing a ball or a stick, or just going for a long walk together. When you take a drive in the country or visit family and friends, bring your dog and a leash along!

A Friend for Life

Finally, be reasonable in your expectations. Life with your dog is a different experience for your new companion, so give him time to adjust. You’ll soon find out that your new dog is a friend for life. No one will ever greet you with as much enthusiasm or provide you with as much unqualified love and loyalty as your dog will. Be patient, and you will be amply rewarded.
WHAT NEXT? Bringing Your New Cat Home

Congratulations! You are the proud new owner of a cat. You are no doubt looking forward to years of happy companionship. But what do you do now? The first thing you should know about your new pet is that most cats hate to travel. After the ride home from the veterinarian, don't leave him loose in your car where he might panic or make him sniff all your belongings and investigate all the hiding places. You should make sure they are up-to-date on their shots—including feline leukemia—and in good general health before introducing your new cat. Your new cat will become accustomed to that area for the first few days. Let him sniff around, but don't let him leave his litter box. Let your new pet become acquainted with the area in small increments, perhaps one room or a small room away from the main foot traffic, and give him the companionship he seeks, and he will be content.

A cat varies in terms of how demanding they are as pets, so let's guide you to the level of attention he wants, whether it's his hand for petting or your lap for sitting. Provide him with the necessary creature comforts and give him the companionship he seeks, and he will be content.

The following is a mini-primer of cats' requirements for a happy life:

Cleanliness. Your new cat will create a clean environment and a clean body. Cats are naturally fastidious and most will instinctively use a litter box; for some, you may need to place the cat in the box and make little scratching motions with your hand around the idea. Make sure the box is placed in a location with a premium on cleanliness that you should clean the box daily or several times a week. Cats also value privacy, so provide a box in a convenient but concealed spot.

Most cats will spend hours grooming themselves, having their own ideas about how to do things. Even so, most cats can be taught to obey some simple rules like not scratching the couch, eating plants, or jumping up on the kitchen counter. With repeated, gentle, and consistent training, your cat will learn. Yelling at your cat never works! Instead, positively reward him and provide him with alternative choices. A good scratching post—coupled with the handy squirt gun for the kitchen counter—will be as rewarding for you as it is for the dog.

Training your dog takes time and patience. A one-time surgery, a lifetime benefit.

House Rules. Provide your cat with some ‘basic training’ to help him get along in your home. It's true that cats usually have their own ideas about how to do things. Even so, most cats can be taught to obey some simple rules like not scratching the couch, eating plants, or jumping up on the kitchen counter. With repeated, gentle, and consistent training, your cat will learn. Yelling at your cat never works! Instead, positively reward him and provide him with alternative choices. A good scratching post—coupled with the handy squirt gun for the kitchen counter—will be as rewarding for you as it is for the dog.

Exercise Restraint. A valid license and ID tag are important, but no excuse for letting your dog be a menace to your neighbors. A dog who roams the neighborhood, chases cars, bicycles, and joggers, soils the neighbor's yard, knocks over trash cans, or causes trouble at your house isn't worth owning. Your dog must be under control. Remember that you are responsible for any damage, accidents, and bites caused by your companion. A dog who is securely fenced in by his owner is much less likely to get into trouble.

Enjoy Your Rewards. Now that you've made certain all the basic provisions are attended to, you can relax and enjoy your new pet. It may take a couple of weeks for him to adjust to life with you. But before you know it, you'll be curling up on the couch together, watching TV like old pals, and you won't want to think how your life was like without him.

Room for Fun. Finally, provide your cat with an interesting indoor environment. Cats love to play and will appreciate simple and inexpensive toys. Ping-pong balls and paper plates offer endless hours of fun. A nice, comfortable perch by a window can become your cat's very own retirement and relaxation center.

BE A RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNER!

Take another look at the headline above. It just could have been written for your dog. Or, “be good to your neighbors.” After all, that’s what being a responsible dog owner really means!

Keep Your Dog Healthy

Let’s start with the basics: food and water, shelter, exercise, training, and veterinary care. The food and water you choose for your pet are very important. How can you make sure they are up-to-date on their shots—including feline leukemia—and in good general health before introducing your new cat? Take your new cat to the veterinarian within a week after adoption. There, he will receive a health check and any needed vaccinations. If your cat has not been spayed or neutered, make that appointment! There are already far too many unwanted kittens and cats; don’t let your new pet add to the problem. Most cats can be taught to obey some simple rules like not scratching the couch, eating plants, or jumping up on the kitchen counter. With repeated, gentle, and consistent training, your cat will learn. Yelling at your cat never works! Instead, positively reward him and provide him with alternative choices. A good scratching post—coupled with the handy squirt gun for the kitchen counter—will be as rewarding for you as it is for the dog.

Finally, you’ll want to help your pet stay healthy through good nutrition and sound veterinary care. Good health care means that pets stay up-to-date on shots and have any illnesses or injuries promptly treated. If you don’t yet know your local veterinarian, go with your cat to check with the shelter or ask a pet-owning friend for a referral.

A one-time surgery, a lifetime benefit.

“A one-time surgery, a lifetime benefit.” Spaying and neutering are also important for the dog, regardless of whether he was spayed or neutered. A dog who is spayed and neutered is the single most important step you can take to be a responsible dog owner. To spay your female dog is to have her ovaries and uterus surgically removed. A neutered male dog is spayed. He's no longer at risk for prostate cancer and prostate disorders. Neutered pets are also less likely to bite, run away, or get into fights. To top it all off, dogs who are spayed or neutered not only live longer and healthier lives but are also more likely to become more affectionate companions.

Spaying or neutering is a one-time surgery with a one-time cost. But both procedures offer a lifetime of benefits. When it comes right down to it, if you can’t afford to have your dog spayed or neutered, then you can’t afford to have a dog.

Obedy the Law, Protect Your Pet

No matter how much you and your dog owners are, there’s always the chance their companion may become lost. And if that happens, a dog who’s not protected by a license, collar, and identification tag may be plucked out of luck. Don’t make the mistake too many pet owners make. License your dog and put an ID tag on him before a problem occurs.

First of all, an up-to-date license and rabies tag are required by law in most cities and counties. The shelter will have more information about local laws, which you can obtain tags, and where you can have your pet vaccinated for rabies. Secondly, a collar and tag are a lost dog’s ticket home. The tags should include the license number, your address, and daytime and evening telephone numbers.

A valid license and ID tag are important, but no excuse for letting your dog be a menace to your neighborhood. A dog who roams the neighborhood, chases cars, bicycles, and joggers, soils the neighbor’s yard, knocks over trash cans, or causes trouble at your house isn’t worth owning. Your dog must be under control. Remember that you are responsible for any damage, accidents, and bites caused by your companion. A dog who is securely fenced in by his owner is much less likely to get into trouble.

A Lifetime Commitment

You’ll undoubtedly fall in love with your new companion right away, but don’t forget that he’ll be with you for the rest of his life. Dogs who are tied out in the backyard for long periods of time, crated inside all day while their owners are at work, or exercised only at their owner’s convenience are dogs who are being neglected and who are more likely to develop serious behavioral problems.

A pet is yours to love and care for from the day he arrives until the day he dies. It’s up to you to provide him with a “lifetime guarantee.” So be good to your dog, and be good to your neighbors. If you follow the rules of responsible pet ownership, you’ll be rewarded with the many joys of having a dog by your side.
BE A RESPONSIBLE CAT OWNER!

You're probably thinking, "How hard can it be? Cats can take care of themselves." But think again. Living with a cat may not involve much work, but it doesn't mean a total hands-off policy, either.

Being a responsible cat owner can be as simple as keeping your cat indoors, providing him with companionship, having him or her spayed or neutered, keeping a collar and ID tag on the cat, and meeting his basic needs of food, water, and veterinary care.

Keep Your Cat Indoors

When most people hear the words "animal nuisance," they tend to think of dogs. But cats are often just as bad. When allowed to roam, they can get into garbage cans, defecate in flower beds and sandboxes, cause traffic accidents, and contribute to pet overpopulation. In addition, they can have a devastating effect on local wildlife—killing dozens, even hundreds, of songbirds and small mammals every year.

Of course, the most important reason to keep your cat inside is for his own safety. Unlike dogs, cats don't need much space to exercise and a litter box will meet those "other" needs just fine. In other words, cats don't need to go out and face disease, cat fights, dog fights, poisons, parasites, cruel people, and the biggest cat-killer of all, traffic.

Cats who live indoors from the start will never have the urge to roam around outside. Even cats who've previously been indoor/outdoor pets can be trained to accept being inside all the time.

Keeping cats happy inside is simply a matter of creating a healthy and stimulating indoor environment. Some good ideas are giving your cat toys that feel furry or feathery to chew on, adopting another animal into the world. That's significant indeed when you consider the fact that nearly eight million dogs and cats have to be humanely destroyed each year for lack of good homes.

Spaying and neutering are also better for your pet. Spaying eliminates the possibility of uterine or ovarian cancer and greatly reduces the incidence of breast cancer, particularly when your cat is spayed before her first estrous cycle. Neutering reduces the incidence of prostate cancer and prostate disorders. Neutered cats are also less likely to spray and mark territory, and spayed cats will no longer go through annoying heat cycles. To top it all off, in addition to living longer, healthier lives, cats who are spayed or neutered make better, more affectionate companions.

Spaying or neutering is a one-time surgery with a one-time cost. But both procedures offer a lifetime of benefits. When it comes right down to it, if you can't afford to have your cat spayed or neutered, then you can't afford to have a cat.

Collar and Tag Your Cat

No matter how careful cat owners are, there's always the chance their companion may slip out the door and become lost. If that happened to your cat, would he be protected by a collar and identification tag?

An ID tag is a lost cat's ticket home. The tag should include your address as well as daytime and evening telephone numbers. It should be attached to a collar of the breakaway variety so that the cat can escape if the collar becomes snagged. The shelter should have more information about where you can obtain a cat collar and tag.

Keep Your Cat Healthy

Cats, like their canine counterparts, require basic care to stay healthy and happy.

A regular, nutritionally balanced diet is as important for your cat as it is for you. Shelter personnel or your own veterinarian can guide you in choosing an adequate feeding program.

If you don't yet have a veterinarian, it's a good idea to establish a rapport with one soon after you adopt a cat. The shelter may provide a list of local vets, or you can ask a pet-owning friend for a referral. Keep your feline companion up-to-date on his shots, and maintain a periodic examination schedule.

A Lifetime Commitment

Beyond those essentials, the rest should come naturally, and you can look forward to many years of companionship with your four-legged friend. Remember that a pet is your responsibility to love and care for from the day he arrives until the day he dies. It's up to you to provide him with a "lifetime guarantee."
"ADOPT ONE" CAMPAIGN ORDER FORM

Use this handy order form to obtain copies of the poster, brochure, and special issue of Shelter Sense—all created for your shelter's own "Until There Are None, Adopt One" campaign.

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<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Choose a Pal for Life&quot; Brochure</td>
<td>$.25 each, 25/$3.50, 100/$10.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Choose a Pal for Life&quot; Poster</td>
<td>$2.00 each, $1.50 each/3–5, $1.00 each/6+</td>
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<td>Special &quot;Adopt One&quot; Shelter Sense</td>
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Make checks payable to The Humane Society of the United States. Do not send cash in the mail. Allow four to six weeks for delivery. We ship UPS; please include street address. Enclose payment with this order and mail to: The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L St., N.W., Washington, DC 20037. All orders must be prepaid and will be filled while supplies last.

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Name
Address
City
State
Zip
Daytime telephone

The Humane Society of the United States
2100 L Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20037

Address Correction Requested