

Lester C. Howick Animal Shelter of Washington County News

Fall 2014

From the Director's Desk

The myth: The sole purpose of the Washington County Animal Shelter is to help the animals of Washington County; at least that is what most residents think. According to this myth, the shelter only exists for the animals.

Actually, the shelter plays a dual role in Washington County. We certainly are here to help the animals in Washington County and we do so with loving hearts. But another primary function of the shelter is to provide a service to County Citizens. That service to the County Citizens is to help them with animal related issues. There are two ways an animal comes to the shelter. The first is by owner surrender; the second is by Animal Control. Every animal entering the shelter is a direct result of a County Citizen surrendering the animal or a result of a call made to Animal Control by a County Citizen. We help the animals and the County Citizens!

Animal shelters, and the staff employed by shelters, come under fire quite often. You are "doing too much" or "not doing enough" are common comments we hear about the shelter. Working for a shelter is a very tough job and any staff member of a shelter, no matter which shelter it is, should be commended. My staff at Washington County Animal Shelter is compassionate, loving and dedicated to ensuring all the animals are well cared for and loved while they are in our facility. I am very proud of my staff. Each of them goes above and beyond to provide the best possible care for the animals.

The next time you see a shelter staff member, please tell them thank you!

Please spay or neuter your dog or cat to help us reduce the number of unwanted animals. Please be sure your animal is wearing an identification tag or is microchipped so that if they get lost and are brought to the shelter we can contact you and get your animal home ASAP. Remember, your animal cannot tell us your address or phone number. It is up to us as responsible owners to prevent our animals from straying and to provide proper identification should our animal stray.

Angela Ledgerwood
Shelter Director



Washington County Judge Marilyn Edwards

County Judge Comments

The dedicated staff at the Washington County Animal Shelter has accomplished a great deal in two short years. We have been accepted into PetSmart Charities' Rescue Waggin' Program, received an Iam's Corporate sponsorship, and received grant funding for our partnership with the Humane Society of the Ozarks to begin a Trap Neuter and Release program for the many feral cats in the County area that we serve. Through these programs and monthly adoption specials, we have kept the euthanasia rate for adoptable animals below 3% and we will strive to reduce that to 0%.

The Shelter staff has confronted many challenges but they have met each challenge head on and the Shelter has become better and stronger because of those challenges. We need more volunteers and more foster homes. We encourage more folks to participate in our programs. We need *you*. Please come by the Shelter located in the County's South Campus on Clydesdale Drive. Meet the staff and the animals that are eager to give you faithful love and affection.

Judge Edwards

Who Needs a Vet?

Well, as a matter of fact, animal shelters need veterinarians for many reasons. The top six reasons fit into the categories of information, faster adoptions, education and teaching, surgery and rabies, tracking and interpreting stats, and public spay/neuter. Veterinarians have not always been included on the forefront of sheltering homeless animals. Shelter medicine is a relatively new term in the veterinary world. The first formal class on shelter medicine was offered in 1999, at Cornell University with a few handouts. In 2008 some official textbooks began to be published, and the Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) published standards of care for animal shelters. Shelter Medicine has recently been approved as a board certified specialty field. This is great news for shelters. As more information and experience is gathered from shelters around the world, specialized care that focuses specifically on shelter animals is developed. Once again, science brings reason and good practices to any discipline.

So what is it the benefit for an animal shelter to have a staff veterinarian?

1. **Information:** Veterinarians bring a wealth of information to the table - in animal husbandry (daily care and needs of the animals), infectious disease management, expert witness in animal cruelty cases, and behavior counseling.
2. **Adoptions:** The staff vet is essential in helping guide animals safely and with limited disease through the shelter, from arrival to placement in their forever homes, as quickly as possible. Healthy dogs and cats are adopted faster. For those with health issues, it is essential to manage the population within the humane capacity of the shelter.
Often, shelters are at capacity. An opportunity to achieve a more humane approach is through a foster network – volunteers within the local community that give temporary care to the most vulnerable. Foster networks are absolutely critical to the survival of animals that are sick, very young or very old, or with behavior issues that arrive at a full shelter. To have a chance, such animals need a place to grow or recover so they too can find their adoptive family. A caring foster home can meet the time, treatment and needs for a homeless pet to be readied for adoption. Often a commitment of 1-3 weeks is enough to transition an animal from ‘unadoptable’ to ‘adoptable’.
3. **Education & Teaching:** A veterinarian aids shelter employees and foster families as they nurse sick animals back to health, give proper care to the young until of an adoptable age, comfort and peace to a senior dog, or good handling technique when dealing with animals with poor behavior including aggression, lethargy, insecurity, anxiety, hyperactivity and obedience among others. Programs at any shelter will benefit from the medical advice and perspective of the veterinarian.
4. **Surgery/Vaccination:** By State law, all shelter animals must be spayed/neutered and vaccinated for rabies before adoption. A staff veterinarian provides timely spay/neuter surgery and rabies vaccination. Other vaccinations, as well as, medically necessary and elective surgeries are available. Once again, this helps move dogs and cats quickly through the shelter. We take good care of all our animals, but long term sheltering isn't ideal for any animal.
5. **Tracking and Interpreting Stats:** Veterinarians can dispel many myths with good solid science-understanding the causes of diseases, interpreting test results, and guiding successful treatments. Also the vet can track disease trends and keep stats to help project future needs.
6. **Public spay/neuter:** A veterinarian on staff allows the shelter to offer much a needed spay and neuter program which is high quality/low cost to the public in financial need. This is essential to reduce intake over the years, by reducing unplanned pregnancies.

Who Needs a Vet? (cont.)

As a veterinarian, I am committed to educating myself through many venues – conferences: No More Homeless Pets (2013 Jacksonville, FL) and American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Shelter Medicine (2014 Cornell University); *Maddie's Shelter* webcasts; all the latest shelter medicine textbooks; an online Veterinary Information Network (VIN) that veterinarians blog about shelter medicine specialty; shelter vet list-serve yahoo groups; and visiting with other shelters and veterinarians near and far. I see much hope for the future.

The saddest and most frustrating part of sheltering is “not having room at the Inn”. We have few isolation wards and limited staff to provide the care necessary for some of the more treatable diseases. One of the nuances of our shelter is the utilization of trustees from the local detention centers for much of our daily care. There is a high level of turnover and staff/volunteer/trustee retraining is a daily affair. I have been most impressed with the Shelter Director and staff who routinely exhibit positive attitudes and an openness to implement ideals and practices that will save lives. Currently, the only way to enhance the process is to get more community involvement. Would you consider volunteering or offering to foster an animal?

So, who needs a vet? The shelter! – The veterinarian is quite necessary to operate a modern, efficient, and humane shelter.

I want to especially thank all the wonderful foster families who have cared for the homeless pets who arrived here to a full shelter or who needed some treatment or extra attention. I also want to thank several local veterinary clinics that have offered discounted services, time, boarding, and free meds to our shelter animal: Family Pets Veterinary Care, Country Vet Clinic, Wedington Animal Hospital, West Fork Veterinary Clinic, Best Friends Animal Hospital and Pet Protection Clinic. I appreciate your support. And finally, I appreciate all our local veterinarians who will provide years of care to our adopted doggies and kitties. Because, your family pet needs a vet too!

Best wishes to all,

Susan R. Connelly DVM

The Washington County Spay/Neuter Program

The Washington County Spay/Neuter Program makes spay/neuter surgeries available for pets of qualifying residents.

- 1) The program is for dogs and cats only.
- 2) The applicant must live in Washington County. Residents of Fayetteville or Springdale must use their city's programs.
- 3) Proof of income. Family income cannot exceed the HUD income limits.
- 4) Applicant must complete an application form for each animal.
- 5) Applicants are required to pay a \$10.00 non-refundable fee per application.
- 6) A current certificate of vaccination for rabies signed by a licensed veterinarian is required by Arkansas Law. If you cannot present a certificate, an additional \$10.00 non-refundable fee will be paid by the pet owner to the Animal Shelter for the animal to be vaccinated and a certificate issued.
- 7) Make an appointment.

Contact the Lester C. Howick Animal Shelter of Washington for information: (479) 695-3450.

The Rescue Waggin'!



Earlier this year, the Shelter became a participant in PetSmart Charities® Rescue Waggin'® program. This national transport program saves lives by transporting dogs and puppies from overpopulated areas to animal shelters elsewhere in the United States where adoptable dogs and puppies are in demand.

Every few weeks, a Rescue Waggin' vehicle stops by our shelter to pick up dogs and puppies for a life-saving ride to a new shelter where they will have a better chance at finding new homes. These destination shelters have more adopters and are able to find homes for pets more quickly. We take care of vaccinations as well as behavior and health exams before the trip. The destination shelter provides the pets' spay/neuter surgeries before placing them up for adoption.

To date, our shelter has sent 154 dogs and puppies to shelters and new homes in Minnesota and in Chicago.

Through our participation in the Rescue Waggin' program, our shelter will be eligible for "capacity-building grants" to help with operations, adoptions, and the expansion of spay/neuter services as well as the overall improvement of our shelter facilities.

Since 2004, the Rescue Waggin' program has saved more than 75,000 dogs and puppies. The Rescue Waggin' program operates under professionally developed industry standards for humane transport. Shelters applying to this program must meet rigorous standards of care.

The Washington County Animal Shelter is proud to be a part of PetSmart Charities® Rescue Waggin'® Program!

Maybe someday we will be on the receiving end of the Rescue Waggin' program. How joyful that would be!

Thank You Animal League!

A big thank you goes to the Animal League of Washington County for the new adoption vests that our dogs have been wearing. Also, the ALWC and its pilot Bill, helped us ship Sylva to Austin, Texas, where she was welcomed by her new owner, Terry, in Austin, TX.



Vicious Dogs

A vicious dog is legally defined as a dog that attacks, bites another animal or person, or puts a person in fear of attack. It is not defined as a Pit Bull. Pit Bulls (or their real name, Staffordshire Terriers) were bred as family dogs and have always been good family dogs. It was not until the early 1900s that these dogs were used for fighting. Pit Bulls were trained to fight other dogs in the ring (pit), not people. The dog's owner or handler was in the ring with the dog as it fought. A dog that attacked a person was not allowed to fight.

Pit Bulls are at their best as working dogs and are eager to please their owners. In history the Pit Bull was the first dog to be decorated by the United States Armed Forces in WWI. President Theodore Roosevelt, Helen Keller and Laura Ingalls Wilder all owned Pit Bulls. The Pit Bull was nicknamed the "nanny dog" because of its companionship with children. The Little Rascals' dog, Petey, was a Pit Bull.

Dogs that kill chickens or chase livestock are not killing for the taste of blood. They are killing for one of two reasons: they are hungry and looking for food, or they are chasing an animal as a game, nothing more. Unfortunately, most of the time the end result is injury or death for the dog or its "prey".

One breed is not more vicious than another. Viciousness is a learned behavior taught to the dogs by ignorant and irresponsible people. In my experience as an Animal Control Officer, I have learned it is not the Pit Bulls I have to watch for; and not every dog that kills something is necessarily a vicious dog.

Lori Hodges, Animal Control Officer
Washington County Sheriff's Office

Feral Cat TNR Project

The Lester C. Howick Animal Shelter of Washington County and the Humane Society of the Ozarks are very excited to announce their collaboration in an exciting new Feral Cat TNR (Trap, Neuter & Release) Project! Through the support of County Judge Marilyn Edwards and funding from PetSmart Charities and the ASPCA, we are able to offer a new life-saving program for the feral cats under the jurisdiction of the Washington County Animal Shelter.

Previously, these feral cats would have been considered unadoptable because of their extreme fear of people which causes them to reject human attention, and makes them unsuitable for home environments and thus these cats would be euthanized. However, this new TNR Project gives us a better solution. We are now able to spay/neuter and vaccinate these cats and return them to their original location (if possible) or relocate them to pre-designated homes that have agreed to take barn cats. Barn cats will now have a second chance at life while helping you control rats, mice, and other pests attracted to the stored feed. We have saved over 30 cats so far this year with this program and have many more scheduled to participate. If you would like to find out how to take part in our TNR Program, please contact the Humane Society of the Ozarks at (479) 444-7387 or tnr@hsozarks.com.

For more information on this project call the Washington County Animal Shelter at (479) 695-3450 or the Humane Society of the Ozarks at (479) 444-7387.

Odelia's Story

Odelia, a German Shepherd female, came to the shelter as a stray brought in by Washington County Animal Control. She was underweight and it appeared that she had recently been nursing puppies. Her coat was a mess. She was covered in ticks and she appeared to be very unhealthy. She did have a great appetite and was very friendly. The staff quickly learned that Odelia (the name we gave her) loved to play with a tennis ball and a Frisbee.

A few days after her arrival a family came to the shelter looking specifically for a German Shepherd. The son fell in love with Odelia on the spot and spent hours getting to know her. Dr. Connelly believed that Odelia needed care and good groceries before the spay surgery could be performed. Odelia needed to stay at the shelter under the doctor's care until she gained some weight. The boy loved her and could not stand to be away from his new friend and came to visit her twice a week to spend an hour or two working with her.

As Odelia slowly began to gain weight, Dr. Connelly felt that something still was not right with her so she ran a blood test on Odelia. The test was positive for Ehrlichia, a tick borne disease. This diagnosis would prolong her stay at the shelter but young man was not deterred in the least. He still made his visits, playing ball and teaching her some basic commands. Once the treatment of Ehrlichia was underway and she started to gain weight, the spay surgery was performed.

Finally, after several long weeks she went to her new home with her devoted friend. The adopters live within walking distance of the shelter. One afternoon while the boy was playing with her in the back yard, he failed to completely latch the back gate. Odelia got out and made her way back to the shelter.

Odelia visited for a while. We think she was thanking us for her new life and reporting that her new family was good loving people. She was thanking the people that took her in, loved her and nursed her back to health. We called the kind people and they came and got her. We hope they will visit us again and feel confident they will secure the gate.



Adoptions





Lester C. Howick Animal Shelter
Of Washington County
801 West Clydesdale
Fayetteville AR 72704

Calendar of Events

- “Empty the Shelter” Event, September 6, 2014, at the Washington County Animal Shelter.
- Farmer’s Market, September 13 and every other Saturday through October, at the Fayetteville Square.
- “Pet Appreciation Week” Event, September 20, 9am-3pm, Tractor Supply of Farmington, Highway 62, Farmington.
- “Co-op Canine Adoption Days” Event, October 4, 2014, at Ozarks Electric Cooperative, Wedington Drive, Fayetteville.
- “Logan’s Roadhouse Fundraiser,” October 7, 2014, at Logan’s Roadhouse, Fayetteville.
- Pet Wellness, November 8, 10am-2pm, at Washington County Sheriff’s Building, East Wing, 1155 Clydesdale Drive, Fayetteville
- “Subaru Share the Love” Event, December 6, 10am-1pm, at Adventure Subaru, Henbest Drive, Fayetteville.

