

Lester C. Howick Animal Shelter of Washington County News

Spring 2015



COUNTY JUDGE COMMENTS Marilyn Edwards

Spring time is fast approaching and this means puppy and kitten season is upon the animal shelter. Limited space can pose a huge problem for the Shelter during this time; however, there are many resources available to help animal owners prevent unwanted litters. Washington County's Low Cost Spay/Neuter Program is available to county residents who live outside the city limits of Fayetteville and Springdale and whose annual family incomes do not exceed the current HUD low income requirements. Other programs available to residents include vouchers that can be applied for from the Humane Society of the Ozarks to help with the surgery cost, and there is discounted spay/neutering offered by Spay Arkansas for those that do not qualify for other low cost programs. Please help the Shelter by doing your part to help control the pet population.

I am also very pleased to announce that the Washington County Animal Shelter recently received the **2015 Healthy Hounds Award** from PetSmart Charities®. This "excellence in animal health" award was presented during the 11th Annual Rescue Waggin' Summit held recently in Nashville, Tennessee. PetSmart Charities® stated that the Shelter has "provided high-quality care to its residents and has consistently achieved excellent post-transport reports." They also stated that, "this organization understands daily cleaning, quarantine and isolation concepts and stays on top of illness issues." Last year, Washington County sent 258 dogs and puppies on the Rescue Waggin and 60 so far this year. Thank you PetSmart Charities® and congratulations to the Animal Shelter!



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK Angela Ledgerwood

Warmer weather, flowers in bloom, and more outside activities mean spring is here. What it also means is that kitty and puppy season is coming to the Shelter. One dog or cat becomes 6 or 7 more in a matter of weeks causing the Shelter to be overrun with animals and not enough space or resources to care for them. This kind of influx causes immeasurable strain on already over-worked Shelter staff. Every worker at the Shelter goes home physically and mentally exhausted from trying to give humane care to all the animals but knowing what fate awaits many of them. Many animal owners can bring litters of unwanted animals to the Shelter and walk away kidding themselves that every animal there will find a good home OR not really caring what happens because their problem is solved. The Shelter's problem is just beginning!

Puppies and kittens are easy to adopt from a shelter but **THINK**: Every time a puppy or kitten gets adopted an adult dog or cat gets overlooked and it is rare that every animal in a litter gets adopted.

There is a long list of reasons to spay or neuter your pet but number one on that list must be to prevent unwanted litters.

Never forget the animals that are overlooked.

Please help the Shelter by spaying and neutering your pets. Together we can save countless lives!





VETERINARIAN'S VIEW

Dr. Susan R. Connelly, DVM

One Pet at a Time

In the shelter world we constantly have to make the most of the limited resources given us. Many factors are taken into consideration in deciding the best way to utilize our funding. As a shelter veterinarian, at the top of my list is humane care, prevention of zoonotic (spread to people) disease, and controlling the population of dogs and cats without homes. Humane care is aimed at providing a healthy, comfortable environment for our wards, so that we can place healthy, behaviorally sound animals into responsible homes. We also want reclaimed animals (those which escaped or got lost) to go home healthy hoping to prevent spread of parasites and requiring micro-chipping to assure these animals can be swiftly reunited to their homes in the future if they wander again.

Almost our entire budget is used for vaccinating, deworming, flea and tick prevention and testing for heartworm disease in dogs, and feline leukemia and FIV in cats and micro-chipping all adopted animals. All of these tests and necessary treatments are done at intake. This is called the 'golden hour' of sheltering, and is hands down the most important step to creating a safe, healthy environment for all animals in the shelter. Those coming in are treated, while those awaiting adoption are prevented from exposure to communicable diseases and parasites. This single step contributes tremendously to the prevention of intestinal parasites and disease spread. All animals are rabies vaccinated before leaving the shelter and micro-chipped. Our efforts to reunite animals and their owners would be 100 percent easier if all animals were micro-chipped. We highly encourage micro-chipping.

On the comfortable side of things, we are providing the lifestyle that dogs need with a very limiting environment -living in a cage or run. We can offer consistent exercise times, human interaction, interesting and varied toys/chews, a blanket or bed and a calm environment- calming music, rewarding/encouraging quietness and settling behavior and for our kitties a box to hide in or perch up on. Offering our animals some control and choices in their world makes a huge difference in the stress they feel. Stress must be minimized to prevent susceptibility to disease.

We are also looking to decrease the numbers of unplanned litters. One survey of dog and cat households, showed 56% of 154 dog litters and 68% of 317 cat litters were unplanned, with the majority of those owners reporting that they did not know the female had been in heat. We offer public spay/neuter to those in income brackets that might need help getting this done in time. The motto, "Spay by 5" meaning 5 months applies especially for any pet that can escape or roam, which includes the vast majority of our pets. More animals die due to euthanasia in the U.S. than any disease, so preventing unwanted litters is saving more lives than any other medical procedure or advice. Multiple studies have been published demonstrating safety of spay/neuter in puppies and kittens as young as 7 weeks of age. There are many studies showing benefits to spay/neuter preventing some

cancers and infections, i.e. mammary cancer, ovarian and uterine tumors, pyometra, testicular cancer, non-cancer prostate disease and also increasing lifespan.

There are many studies out recently that give conflicting information and more studies needed to prove if there truly are any reasons to postpone spay/ neuter. When reading these research papers there are many variables to consider like the number of animals in the studies, age of the animals, the age of the animals when spayed/neutered, breed predisposed diseases, effect of disease incidence due to increased lifespan of animals, and other variables that can affect results. The only notable concern is in the large and giant breed dogs and a predisposition to ACL injury in the knee joint with an incidence of 1.8 percent in the general population, although this is surgically correctable. I am not convinced that the results of the studies show convincing reasons to allow many accidental litters to flood our shelters and communities and create so many more problems with behavior issues, disease spread, safety issues to the community, suffering and homelessness.

From where I stand, more animals come into the shelter than people coming in to find pets. I am so very thankful to the Pet Smart Charities Rescue Wagon program. This has saved us and our dogs allowing us to spend more time and effort with sick and diseased animals that present to the shelter. This program has high standards and we work double-time to provide these high standards.

My dream is that no animal should stay in the shelter past two weeks. It doesn't always work that way, but no animal should live in a cage or run for prolonged periods of time. They need a yard, a house, walks and people time. All of which we can't fully provide. We do all that we can to give them choices, space and time out of the cage but we have obvious limitations – more animals than people to provide time.

This surplus of homeless pets can only be curbed with responsible pet ownership to include spaying or neutering animals before they can accidentally escape and reproduce. In the meantime the surplus of homeless pets creates dogs and cats with behavioral issues and in danger of being hit by cars, or carriers of disease (heartworms, intestinal parasites, and rabies) that can harm themselves and others in the community.

If everyone dewormed their dogs and cats, gave heartworm prevention and vaccinated their pets in a timely manner, we could theoretically eradicate these parasites and diseases. That would be amazing! WOW!

The point is that this is a community effort between shelters, rescues, veterinarian practitioners; spay/neuter clinics, animal welfare organizations, pet owners and concerned citizens. All of these groups and individuals are working together to provide for the welfare of these homeless pets, to prevent unwanted litters and to keep the animals in our community healthy. We all want to enjoy the many benefits these four-legged fur-babies bring to our lives! Please spread the word to 'Spay by 5' and microchip your pets.



ANIMAL CONTROL

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

HAPPYTAILS

By GIL

Gilbert Bloyd, Volunteer

To many people spring time means flowers blooming, days getting longer, and the smell of fresh air. But for animal control officers, shelter workers, and rescue groups, spring time is the busiest time of the year and can often be a very sad time.

Over 50% of a year's calls to Washington County Animal Control occur in the spring. Officers in 2015 will respond to about 950 calls between April and July. A majority of these calls concern stray and abandoned dogs and cats. Of these 950 calls, 75% will involve new born puppies and kittens.

It is estimated by national animal concerns organizations that 2.4 million dogs and cats are euthanized in shelters each year. The main reason for this high euthanasia rate is simple: there are not enough homes for them all. Puppy mills and backyard breeders contribute to the problem but the main reason for animal overpopulation is the lack of education concerning the necessity of spaying and neutering pets. Some people allow their animal to have litter after litter, and assume that every animal will find a home. Many do not.

The animals that produce these litters have no choice but the animals' owners do. Being a responsible animal owner is more than just providing food, water and shelter. It is also about providing vet care including spaying and neutering.

Be responsible. Spay or Neuter your animal.

🐾 Little Bit is an 8 year old Corgi/Chow mix who was surrendered to the shelter. She had been picked on all her life by the other family dog and was very scared around bigger dogs. Through the patience and loving care of the shelter workers, she began to show her true personality. Little Bit loves belly rubs and being close to people. She was adopted from the shelter and is the only dog in the home, and she is a very happy girl!



🐾 As an adoption counselor at the County Animal Shelter, I sometimes have to ask some tough questions. Recently, I asked a potential adopter why she thought her family could give a dog a good home. She replied that a picture is worth a thousand words, and then showed me her cat. All I could say was, "Looks like a good home to me!"



A STORY OF LENNON AND KEELY'S FUND

Our Foster Failure and the Fund that Saved His Life



By Madison Seyfried, Shelter Staff

The Shelter Staff sometimes keeps a dog in the front lobby behind the desk so that it will get more public exposure. I first met Lennon when he was accidentally brought behind the front desk. This Labrador retriever mix was not supposed to be there because he had heartworm disease, and was not available for adoption. We did not get to interact long, but Lennon made a lasting impression on me. Never had I met such an intelligent and kind dog. Unfortunately, Lennon's future was not bright because heartworm disease is very expensive to treat. The Shelter does not have the funding or the staffing to treat the disease. Just as my hope was fading, we explored the possibility of getting him help through Keely's Fund.

Keely's Fund assists pets in need in Northwest Arkansas. In order for Lennon to get the treatment, a foster home was required. After convincing my fiancé, we volunteered to house Lennon and take him to get his treatments. We thought Lennon would be staying with us for just a couple weeks, but we soon learned the treatments would take about four months.

My love for Lennon was obvious, and it did not take long for my fiancé to fall in love with him, too. We no longer call him our foster dog. His is our FOREVER dog. After completing the adoption my fiancé said, "I am really thankful for Keely's Fund because it gave Lennon a second chance." The heartworm treatment is not easy, but it well worth the difficulty in the long run. Lennon is so smart and loving and it is difficult to imagine life without him. What is clear though is that without Keely's Fund to help save his life, I probably would never have had the opportunity to find out just how wonderful he is.

🐾 Keely's Fund is a 501(c)(3) organization. You can help save the lives of other pets by donating to Keely's Fund at Crossover Veterinary Clinic in Springdale. If you have donated, THANK YOU! It is donations just like yours that saved our Lennon's life. To learn more about Keely's Fund visit www.keelysfund.org



A huge thank you to the lady residents at the Arkansas Department of Community Corrections in Fayetteville who donated hand crocheted cat and dog mats to the Animal Shelter. These mats were made from recycled materials such as old bread sacks and other plastic bags.



Please don't litter...



Spay and neuter your critter!

🐾 SOME HAPPY ADOPTERS 🐾





CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- April 4 – Fayettechill Animal Adoption Drive (County Animal Shelter)
- April 18 – Fayetteville Farmers Market (Downtown Square)
- April 27 – NWA Naturals Baseball Game (Springdale)
- April 29 – NWA Naturals Baseball Game (Springdale)
- May 2 – Humane Society of the Ozarks Dogwood Walk (Gully Park, Fayetteville)
- May 2 – NWA Largest Yard Sale Festival (County Fairgrounds, Fayetteville)
- May 16 – Fayetteville Farmers Market (Downtown Square)
- May 20 – NWA Naturals Baseball Game (Springdale)
- May 22 – NWA Naturals Baseball Game (Springdale)
- May 30 – Fayetteville Farmers Market (Downtown Square)
- June 13 – Fayetteville Farmers Market (Downtown Square)
- June 13 – Johnson Festival Day (City of Johnson)
- June 14 – NWA Naturals Baseball Game (Springdale)
- June 27 – Fayetteville Farmers Market (Downtown Square)
- TBA – Core Brewing & Distilling Company Event (Springdale)
- TBA – Logan’s Roadhouse Fundraiser (Fayetteville)

