



Maddie's® Pet Rescue Project in Dane County

Project Summary

July 2008 thru June 2015

I. Project Overview

Our Mission

To achieve and maintain an adoption guarantee community in Dane/Rock County for all healthy and treatable shelter dogs and cats and to promote partnership and mutual respect among project collaborative members and the veterinary community.

We accomplished our mission by:

- 1) Increasing Adoptions
- 2) Reducing Euthanasia
- 3) Sustaining Revenue

Coalition Members

Dane County Humane Society – Lead Agency, Traditional Shelter (DCHS)

Dane County Friends of Ferals – Adoption Guarantee organization (DCFOF)

Shelter from the Storm – through December 2012

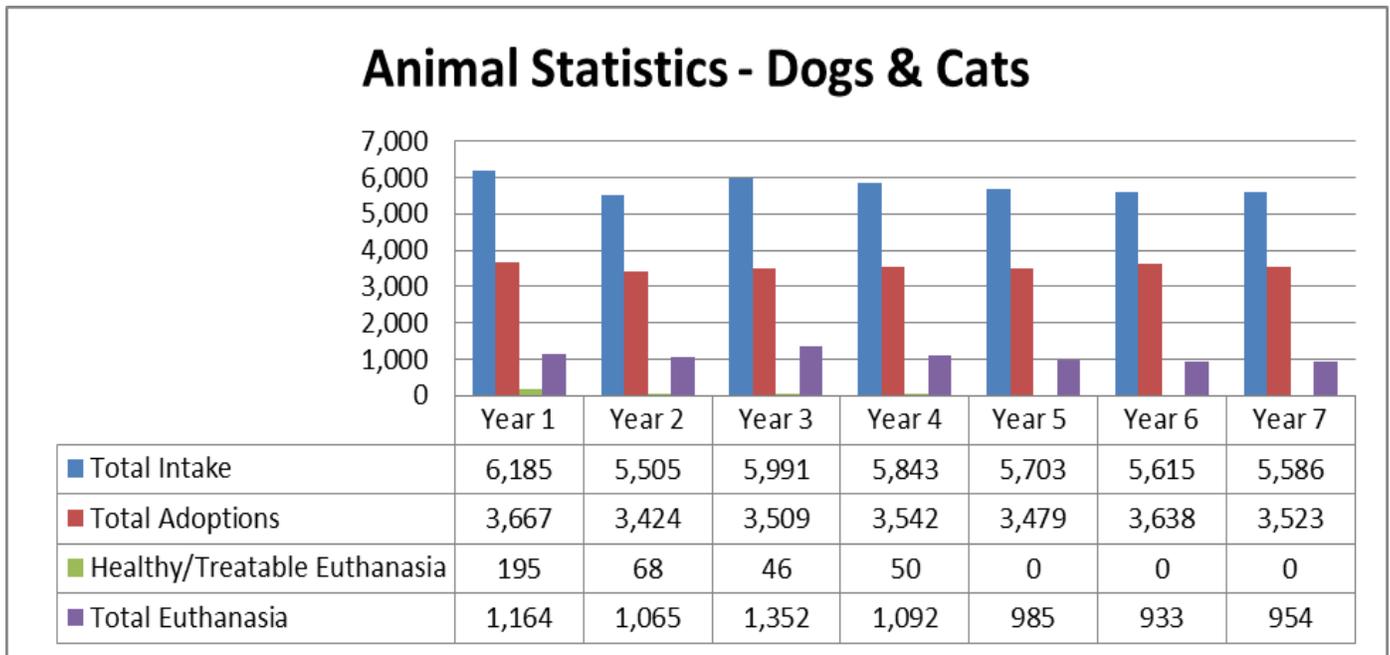
Heartland Farm Sanctuary – July 2010 through December 2011

Project Goals

- Provide an adoption guarantee for all healthy dogs and cats beginning day 1 of the project (July 1 2008)
- Reduce treatable deaths by increasing numbers each year to achieve adoption guarantee for all treatable dogs and cats beginning day 1 of Year 5 (July 1 2012)
- To achieve the goals we work collaboratively to ensure that all animals receive the best care and to educate the Dane County and surrounding communities about our organizational goals, programs and services.

What we wanted to accomplish

The Maddie's® Pet Rescue Project in Dane County, WI was a seven year collaborative effort to end the euthanasia of healthy and treatable shelter animals. We intended to meet this goal by implementing new programs and services to decrease the number of animals brought to our shelters, decrease the number of animals euthanized, and increase the number of animals adopted or sent to long term rescue organizations.



We wanted to develop educational materials and community outreach events that would give community members the tools and encouragement to keep the animals they had committed to caring for. We examined the reasons that people surrender or abandon their animals and found that a great many are due to insufficient funds to care for the animal or behavior problems with the animals.

DCHS began several community outreach programs designed to help decrease animals coming to the shelter. Our "Help Keep Pets in Their Homes" program has collected and distributed more than 150,000 pounds of pet food and cat litter to Dane County food pantries. Started in December 2011, during a point of very hard economic times across the nation, DCHS and the Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin partnered with other organizations to collect pet supplies to be made available for families utilizing food pantries.

Additionally, DCHS received grant funding from the ASPCA to begin hosting Community Dog Day events. There have been five events held since February 2012. The Community Dog Day provides essential veterinary care for dogs and education for dog owners in underserved neighborhoods in Dane County based on survey information from owner surrendered animals. Cost of vet care, vaccines, and pet supplies and training has shown to be a major factor in owners choosing to surrender an animal. Via this event, participants receive a free veterinary exam, vaccines, ID tags, educational materials, and pet supplies. At this time, owners can also make appointments for low cost spay/neuter services via the shelter. We strongly believe that the attendees walked away with a better understanding of what local shelter services are available to them, as well as a better understanding of how to keep their pets healthy, happy, and safe in their homes.

For the Dane County Coalition, adoption guarantee means that every healthy and treatable cat or dog that comes into the shelter will be saved. We met this goal in April 2012, 2 months before our targeted deadline, and have remained adoption guarantee since. Although our combined save rate is not quite to 90%, we are moving closer toward this goal each year. There continue to be a number of animals coming into the shelter with numerous health and behavioral conditions which take a great deal of time and resources to treat. The collaborative continues to work together and with other area resources to increase our ability to handle these really tough cases. DCHS has developed several enrichment programs and adoption promotions for both cats and dogs. These help to ensure that all animals remain active and emotional secure during their shelter stay. In 2011, DCHS tried an innovative adoption promotion called "Cats with Colds." At the time our population of cats with upper respiratory infection was very high. We knew that most of the cats would recover quickly in a home environment, while shelter life often leads to more serious illness conditions. Rather than risk difficult euthanasia decisions, DCHS offered to waive adoption fees and provide adopters with medicines and treatment protocols for these cats. The public stepped up and had no problems taking over the care for these loving animals. DCHS received national recognition when Maddie's Fund® and The Humane Society of the United States featured our program in their publications. This promotion has continued to be successful when our URI population gets high. If URI treatment is going well, these cats are often made available for regular adoption and sent home with medication.

Another successful treatment program saving hundreds of lives is our Maddie's® Felines in Treatment program. Ringworm treatment began at DCHS in 2003 inside a pink trailer with help from dedicated staff and volunteers. Since opening in October 2010, over 400 felines have been treated for dermatophyte in our Maddie's Felines in Treatment Center. Although most of the animals in care are DCHS felines, we often have animals from other organizations in our treatment program. Daily care, treatment, and socialization are primarily completed by a core set of very dedicated DCHS volunteers. We have had many opportunities to highlight this successful program to help bring in donations to support the care of our FIT cats. We even started a new animal sponsorship program specific to our FIT cats. Every \$100 sponsorship helps to offset the cost of treatment while the donor receives weekly email updates of how treatment is progressing, pictures, and a graduation announcement once treatment is completed.

Shelter life can be extremely stressful for animals. Volunteers and staff at our shelters have worked hard to develop enrichment activities to teach the animals that they are in a loving and safe environment. When enrichment activities are not enough, we utilize foster homes when possible. For our canines, we provide enrichment such as physical exercise, quiet time, feeding enrichment and behavior modification. The quiet time is provided by volunteers who sit in the kennels with the pups in need, petting and quietly talking to them. The dogs are either had-fed by volunteers or given meals using puzzle toys or via feeding Kong toys. Behavior modification exercises are implemented by trained interns and volunteers to help with mouthy, guarding, and aggressive behaviors. For the cats, we provide hiding spots within their kennels and feed them some canned cat food which ensures that the cats are completely hydrated and getting proper nutrients. DCHS also implemented a "Cats In Need" program where staff and trained volunteers spend individual time with a stressed, shy, or scared cat to help them socialize.

DCFOF implemented several new protocols over the last years of the project as well. In April 2015, DCFOF hired their first full time Director. This position oversees all shelter daily operations, manages staff and volunteers, and works with the Board of Directors on long term financial planning. DCFOF launched a new website in January of 2016. This site provides a more user friendly interface for potential adopters to view animals and the public to make donations.

In the summer of 2015, DCFOF updated their adoption application procedures and policies to be more "adoption-friendly", removing barriers to adoption. DCFOF now completes same day adoptions, sending cats to their new homes faster. Adoptions for DCFOF have increased and length of stay has shortened as a result of these changes. Additionally, portals have been installed into the intake room cages so that incoming cats can have access to double cages when space allows. DCFOF is in the process of re-vamping their foster program, and have a new volunteer foster coordinator. This spring, foster parent training events will be implemented to help increase the number of foster homes that the organization maintains.

In the fall of 2015 DCFOF stopped doing ringworm cultures on every cat at intake, and instead complete woods lamp exam on every cat, and only culture those cats that appear suspect. This has significantly shortened the length of time cats need to spend isolated in cages. Cats move more quickly into the free roaming well room, and this especially lowers the stress level for the feral and frightened cats that are waiting for rural homes. DCFOF is also using Pet Point for all of our medical records, making them more easily accessible and transferable.

Here is how we are going to maintain and keep going

Thanks to the Maddie’s Pet Rescue Project in Dane County, our coalition members received \$626, 306.70 in funding to help them achieve their life saving goals.

Total Subsidies	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total to Organization
DCFOF	\$58,249.95	\$47,658.00	\$44,240.00	\$62,568.00	\$101,528.00	\$314,243.95
DCHS	\$23,594.40	\$18,424.00	\$13,920.00	\$14,832.00	\$11,026.00	\$81,796.40
SFTS	\$79,858.35	\$70,500.00	\$36,480.00	\$33,048.00	\$5,220.00	\$225,106.35
HFS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,080.00	\$1,080.00	\$0.00	\$5,160.00
Total	\$161,702.70	\$136,582.00	\$98,720.00	\$111,528.00	\$117,774.00	\$626,306.70

DCFOF has utilized a portion of their subsidy funds to increase their shelter paid staff to include a shelter manager and veterinarian. Since Year 5, DCFOF have used some of their reserves to support the care of their animals while focusing board and volunteer resources on developing long term fundraising goals and strategies. DCHS has also utilized the funds to continue providing extended medical and behavioral care for treatable/manageable animals.

Throughout the project we have made it a priority to have at least 2-3 joint adoption events each year. There is a great deal more planning involved in hosting these events, but the outcome is very worthwhile. Since 2009 the coalition has hosted Catapalooza, a weekend devoted to promoting adoptions of our cats and kittens. This August event is timed to showcase felines when our population is the highest. Due to the northern US climate, kitten birth season is generally May/June so animals become available in August. We have had a number of promotions and themes to entice the public to adopt including discounted and waived adoption fees. We have tried numerous joint fundraising events which just have not been very successful. We believe it is confusing to supporters and our time and efforts are better purposed toward joint adoption events and partnership through our transfer program.

The Dane County Coalition has been honored to participate in Maddie’s Pet Adoption Days for the past 3 years. Each year, potential adopters have lined up in the wee morning hours to find their new best friend.

Combined we have found new homes for 1,253 animals and earned \$976,500 to help our organizations continue saving lives. Our staff and volunteers look forward to this event each year and we hope to continue participating in the future.

Over the past 7 years, we have grown a transport program between our shelters that ensures all animal have the best care, enrichment, and opportunity to find a new home. Transfers are primarily of fractious and semi fractious cats from DCHS to DCFOF. DCFOF has foster homes that specialize in socialization. Since the beginning of the project, we have transferred 1,838 cats between organizations. Going forward, DCHS and DCFOF will continue working together to transfer animals between organizations so they receive the best care possible.

Both DCHS and DCFOF are pursuing a number of fundraising events and programs to ensure long-term stability for the future of our organizations. DCFOF have added a development director position to aid their board and volunteers in growing their fundraising efforts. DCFOF is in the process of implementing a name change to one that is a better match their organizations mission of helping both outdoor and indoor cats. Once the name changing process is underway DCFOF will implement a marketing and development plan to the public.

DCHS has included sustainability goals in their 3 year strategic plan currently being developed. DCHS is committing to a more donor centric focus on fundraising efforts. The plan is to develop a more relationship-oriented model of fundraising which will emphasize transformational giving over transactional fundraising.

DCHS is also expanding its existing legacy society of planned giving and working to engage new sources for philanthropic support. Additionally, efforts are underway to focus grant seeking toward foundations that support capacity-building. Lastly, DCHS is working with internal staff and volunteers to create a culture of philanthropy which will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of our mission and strategies. This will help improve communications between departments and help to ensure exceptional customer and donor experiences in all interactions thus leading to continued support from our community.

The support of Maddie's Fund is continually recognized at all adoption and collaborative events. We continue to recognize and promote our partnerships on our organizational websites which include links to the Maddie's Fund website. DCFOF is creating table runners with the Maddie's Fund logo and DCHS has permanent signage within the main shelter in appreciation of Maddie's Fund. We continue to distribute information about Maddie's Fund including the Maddie's Tail Wag to visitors and when we go out into the community.

Without the support of Maddie's Fund, the Maddie's Pet Rescue Project in Dane County would not have been possible. We owe our success to them, the collaboration of our organizations, numerous shelter staff and volunteers, and the community of Dane County and south central Wisconsin. We are so lucky to have a community that supports pet adoption and rescue. We look forward to continued success and feel confident that we can remain an adoption guarantee community.