

# The No Kill Advocate

*A No Kill nation is within our reach*

*Issue #1 2007*

## The Nation's Best Director

*Charlottesville, VA animal control director receives the No Kill Advocacy Center's Director of the Year award for 2006*

**S**usanne Kogut has been named the nation's Animal Shelter Director of the Year for 2006. Under her tenacious leadership, Charlottesville, VA finished the year saving 92 percent of all dogs and cats, regardless of whether they were classified as "adoptable" or "unadoptable," were cute and cuddly or old and infirm, friendly, feral, or any other categories shelters often use to sweep animals under the rug. Not Kogut. Under her care, 92 percent of all incoming animals were saved.

In April 2005, Kogut—an attorney who did not have prior experience running an animal shelter—took over as head of the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA, an agency which contracts for animal control sheltering in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Historically, the Charlottesville SPCA was the subject of relentless public criticism for what many in the rescue community saw as poor customer service, inadequate care of animals, and unnecessary killing. By hiring a new director who embraced the No Kill paradigm, they finished 2005, Kogut's first year, saving 87 percent of dogs and 67 percent of cats.

Overall, five million dogs and cats are killed annually in U.S. shelters. Most



*Susanne Kogut, the nation's best animal shelter director in 2006 has achieved success at the most important job a shelter has—saving lives.*

directors are killing 60-70 percent of cats and roughly half of all dogs. But Kogut isn't like most directors. She embodies the spirit of No Kill which is always demanding and achieving improvement. And in 2006, she achieved more by saving 92 percent overall, better than any other community in the nation.

***Animal Shelter Director of the Year award criteria.*** What does it take to be named the nation's best by the only national organization dedicated to a No Kill nation and staffed by experts who have achieved No Kill success themselves? Nathan J. Winograd, the director of the No Kill Advocacy Center, explains:

*While other national groups give awards to shelter leaders even in the face of killing the majority of animals in their care or failing to put in place progressive programs like Trap-Neuter-Return for feral cats, the No Kill Advocacy Center's award has one major criteria: success at the most important job a shelter has—saving*

---

*"Congratulations Susanne. And thank you for further proving what a shelter can accomplish when it truly dedicates itself to the No Kill endeavor."*

---

*lives. Since Directors who continue to kill the bulk of the animals can only be classified as "failing," they are not eligible to receive recognition. We do not reward failure. And because Kogut saved 92 percent of all animals at an open door animal control shelter in the South, the simple fact is that she has virtually no equal nationwide. This year's choice was one of the easiest decisions we have had to make.*

***Do you have what it takes to work with the nation's best?*** Susanne Kogut wants you! The Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA seeks a highly motivated, upbeat, enthusiastic individual to lead its volunteer efforts. Ready for a challenge? Have a passion to save homeless animals? Join the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA, a No Kill open admission facility saving thousands of animals each year. Send resume and cover letter to: Susanne Kogut, Executive Director at [director@caszca.org](mailto:director@caszca.org).

## **NHS Takes a Bold Leap**

By a unanimous decree from the Board of Directors, the Nevada Humane Society (NHS) embraced the U.S. No Kill Declaration ([www.nokilldeclaration.org](http://www.nokilldeclaration.org)), turned to the director of the No Kill Advocacy Center for help, and hired Bonney Brown as their new executive director.



**"**Any animal, any time." That is the new policy for Washoe County, both at animal control and the private Nevada Humane Society for working with legitimate private rescue groups who want to take animals into their lifesaving adoption programs, thanks to a directive from NHS' new executive director, Bonney Brown.

In the past, NHS made it difficult and in some cases impossible for rescue groups to save animals otherwise facing death. "It makes absolutely no sense for a shelter to deny any animal to a rescue group or to put up bureaucratic barriers to do so," said Brown. "Because there is no shortage of animals needing to be saved, rescue groups can now take any animal, any time, including highly adoptable puppies and kittens."

These groups can help save pure breeds and mixed breeds. They return feral cats to their habitats, and provide kittens and puppies with a much needed second chance. They alleviate overcrowding, provide medical and behavior rehabilitation, and reduce costs to taxpayers. They are, in short, the difference between success and failure, life and death.

So why do some shelters still refuse or limit rescue group access to animals on death row?

In the 1990s, the nation's largest animal welfare organization was still telling shelters not to transfer animals to rescue groups citing vague concerns like "transport stress," "cherry picking," and "need for shelter animal diversity"—concepts that would be ludicrous, if the end result weren't so disturbing (i.e., an animal's needless death.)



*Kittens and puppies, dogs and cats, and critters of all shapes and sizes get a second chance under the Nevada Humane Society's bold new policy for working with legitimate rescue groups: "any animal, any time."*

And while this national agency has since changed its tune, they still suggest formal training, "home" visits and other obstacles to partnering with rescue groups. These hurdles are premised on a historical distrust of the No Kill rescue community and result in animals being killed.

In an environment of 5,000,000 animals killed in shelters nationally, there is hardly a shortage of "adoptable" animals and if a rescue group is willing to take custody and care of the animal, rare is the circumstance in which they should be denied.

Rescue groups can be a shelter's best customers and should be treated as such. Many shelters with outdated rescue policies have lost the support

of these groups, which increases costs and reduces the number of animals who are saved. And no one should tolerate that.

While that policy change occurred on Brown's first day of taking the helm, it wasn't the only one. A series of programmatic changes included tough new protocols for taking an animal's life, eliminating the automatic killing of animals for treatable conditions such as ringworm, and eliminating under-performing staff. In ten days on the job, ten people were terminated, resigned or quit under Brown's command.

***Do you have what it takes to work with a progressive shelter working to create a No Kill community?***

The Nevada Humane Society wants you! The NHS is looking for innovative and dynamic individuals who bring skills, enthusiasm, and accountability to animal sheltering. The following positions are now open:

- **Shelter veterinarian** for high volume spay/neuter, animal care and rehabilitation, and shelter medicine rotations.
- **Licensed veterinary technician** for spay/neuter clinic, vaccination clinic, and shelter medicine rotation.
- **Community programs manager** to oversee rescue transfers, volunteer and foster care efforts, offsite adoptions, and more.
- **Director of operations** to manage all aspects of the shelter.

Please do not contact NHS directly. For more information or to apply, contact Nathan Winograd at [winograd@nokillsolutions.com](mailto:winograd@nokillsolutions.com).

---

## No Kill Success in 2006

**T**he No Kill Advocacy Center announces No Kill success in 2006.

*Philadelphia, PA.* In 2004, a series of articles in the Philadelphia Daily News depicted the Philadelphia Animal Care and Control Association (PACCA) as a "house of horrors." At the time, almost 9 out of 10 animals who entered the shelter were killed, arguably one of the worst lifesaving records in the United States. In 2005, the City of Philadelphia asked No Kill Advocacy Center director Nathan J. Winograd to do a complete assessment of shelter operations and make recommendations to improve program and service delivery with a goal of creating a No Kill Philadelphia.

Since the implementation of the recommendations, PACCA has announced that the save rate for dogs and cats is the highest in the city's history. Less dogs and cats are being killed in Philadelphia than ever before, with 65% of all cats currently being saved.

*Charlottesville, VA.* Until April 2005, the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA, an open door animal control shelter in the South, was the target of criticism for what some in the rescue community saw as unnecessary killing. In 2005, all that changed. A new director embraced our philosophy and programs, asked us to help train their staff and make recommendations on policies. Only one year later, the agency finished the year saving 92% of all dogs and cats, a level of success unmatched by any other community in the nation.



*The municipal Philadelphia Animal Care & Control Association is now the safest shelter to be a Pit Bull in Philadelphia thanks to its progressive outlook and lifesaving programs.*

*Rancho Cucamonga, CA.* Before taking over operations of its own shelter, the City of Rancho Cucamonga, CA animal control contractor was the subject of mounting criticism for how animals were cared for and how many were killed at the animal shelter. The No Kill Advocacy Center's director was hired to help lead the transition. Since taking over operations, deaths for dogs and cats are at all time lows. Of particular note, for the same period as 2005, the save rate for dogs has increased to 81%, the save rate for cats has increased to 57%, and the save rate for other animals (rabbits, hamsters, gerbils, etc.) has increased from a paltry 27% to 70%.

By thoroughly integrating principles of accountability into shelter operations, there have been tremendous lifesaving gains. Each of these communities show what a shelter can achieve when it adopts the No Kill philosophy of accountability, moves beyond the traditional excuses for killing, and implements the programs and services which have been proven to save lives.

While the work in these communities is not yet finished and homeless animals remain at risk, as more lifesaving elements of the No Kill equation are implemented, homeless animals in these communities can now optimistically look to the future—a future that promises them a new beginning, instead of the end of the line.

*How did they do it?* By embracing the programs and services of the No Kill Advocacy Center's No Kill Equation! For more information, go to [www.nokillsolutions.com/pdf/equation.pdf](http://www.nokillsolutions.com/pdf/equation.pdf).

## Vote for No Pet Left Behind

*Reader's Digest is holding an election to determine who it will name as its Hero of the Year. Cast your vote for Nathan and the animals as Reader's Digest Hero of the Year, by going to [www.rd.com](http://www.rd.com) and clicking on "People" and then "Everyday Heroes."*

**"M**illions of healthy animals are killed every year in shelters; Nathan Winograd wants that number reduced to zero." —From *No Pet Left Behind* by Janet Kinosian in the November 2006 issue of Reader's Digest.



Because of his ground-breaking work, Reader's Digest magazine called our director, Nathan J. Winograd, a hero in its November 2006 issue. You can read it online by going to [www.rd.com](http://www.rd.com)

and clicking on "People" and then "Everyday Heroes."

For more information, go to [www.nokilladvocacycenter.org](http://www.nokilladvocacycenter.org) and click on "What's New."

## The No Kill Equation

**T**wo decades ago, the concept of a No Kill community was little more than a dream. Today the humane movement is poised to make it a reality—to meet the challenge of building a truly humane society. And the first step is a decision, a commitment to reject killing as the primary shelter population management tool. No Kill starts as an act of will. The next step involves putting in place the infrastructure to save lives.

Following a commitment to No Kill is the need for accountability. Accountability means having clear definitions, a lifesaving plan, and charting successes and failures. Clear protocols should be established, and staff properly trained to ensure that each and every animal is given a fair evaluation and a chance for placement or treatment. But accountability also allows, indeed requires, flexibility. Too many shelters lose sight of this principle, staying rigid with shelter protocols, believing these are engraved in stone. They are not. Protocols are important because they ensure accountability from staff. But protocols without flexibility can have the opposite effect: stifling innovation, causing lives to be needlessly lost, and allowing shelter employees who fail to save lives to hide behind a paper trail. The decision to end an animal's life is an extremely serious one, and should always be treated as such. No matter

---

how many animals a shelter kills, each and every animal is an individual, and each deserves individual consideration.

And finally, to meet the challenge that No Kill entails, shelter leadership needs to get the community excited, to energize people for the task at hand. By working with people, implementing lifesaving programs, and treating each life as precious, a shelter can transform a community.

The mandatory programs and services include:

### I. Feral Cat TNR Program

Many animal control agencies in communities throughout the United States are embracing Trap, Neuter, Return programs (TNR) to improve animal welfare, reduce death rates, and meet obligations to public welfare and neighborhood tranquility demanded by governments. In San Francisco, for example, the program was very successful, resulting in less impounds, less killing and reduced public complaints. In Tompkins County, an agreement with county officials and the rabies control division of the health department provided for TNR as an acceptable complaint, nuisance and rabies abatement procedure. In specific cases, the health department paid the Tompkins County SPCA to perform TNR.

### II. High-Volume, Low-Cost Spay/Neuter

Spay/neuter is the cornerstone of a successful lifesaving effort. Low cost, high volume spay/neuter will quickly lead to fewer animals entering the shelter system, allowing more resources to be allocated toward saving lives.



In the 1970s, the City of Los Angeles was the first to provide municipally funded spaying and neutering for low-income pet owners in the United States. A city study found that for every dollar it was investing in the program, Los Angeles taxpayers were saving \$10 in animal control costs due to reductions in animal intakes and fewer field calls. Indeed, Los Angeles shelters were taking in half the number of animals after just the first decade of the program and killing rates in the city dropped to the lowest third per capita in the United States. This result is consistent with results in San Francisco and elsewhere. Research shows that investment in programs balancing animal “care” and “control” can provide not only immediate public health and public relations benefits but also long-term



financial savings to a jurisdiction. According to the International City/County Management Association, “An effective animal control program not only saves cities and counties on present costs—by protecting citizens from dangerous dogs, for example—but also helps reduce the costs of animal control in the future. A city that impounds and euthanizes 4,000 animals in 2001... but does not promote spaying and neutering will probably still euthanize at least 4,000 animals a year in 2010. A city that... [institutes a subsidized spay/neuter program] will likely euthanize significantly fewer animals in 2010 and save on a host of other animal-related costs as well.”

### III. Rescue Groups

An adoption or transfer to a rescue group frees up scarce cage and kennel space, reduces expenses for feeding, cleaning, killing and carcass disposal, and improves a community’s rate of lifesaving. Getting an animal out of the shelter and into an appropriate placement is important and rescue groups, as a general rule, can screen adopters as well or better than many shelters. In an environment of

5,000,000 dogs and cats killed in shelters annually, there will rarely be a shortage of adoptable animals and if a rescue group is willing to take custody and care of the animal, rare is the circumstance in which they should be denied.

### IV. Foster Care

Foster care is crucial to No Kill. Without it, saving lives is compromised. It is a low cost, and often no cost, way of increasing a shelter’s capacity, improving public relations, increasing a shelter’s public image, rehabilitating sick and injured or behaviorally challenged animals, and saving lives.

At some point in time, nearly every animal shelter feels the pinch of not having enough space. A volunteer foster program can be an ideal low-cost way to greatly increase the number of lives a shelter can save while at the same time providing an opportunity for community members to volunteer. Not only does a foster program maximize the number of animals rescued, it allows an organization to care for animals who would be difficult to care for in a shelter environment—orphaned or feral kittens, sick or injured animals, or dogs needing one-on-one behavior rehabilitation. For animals who may need a break from the shelter environment, foster care provides a comfortable home setting that keeps animals happy and healthy.

### V. Comprehensive Adoption Programs

Adoptions are vital to an agency’s lifesaving mission. The quantity and quality of shelter adoptions is in shelter management’s hands, making lifesaving a direct function of shelter policies and practice.

---

As one commentator put it, “if each pet lives 10 years, on average, and the number of homes grows at the same rate that homes are lost through deaths and other attrition, then replacement homes would become available each year for more than twice as many dogs and slightly more cats than enter shelters. Since the inventory of pet-owning homes is growing, not just holding even, adoption could in theory replace all population control killing right now—if the animals and potential adopters were better introduced.”

In fact, studies show people get their dogs from shelters only 15% of the time overall, and less than 10% of the time for cats. If shelters better promoted their animals and had adoption programs responsive to the needs of the community, they could increase the number of homes available and replace population control killing with adoptions. In other words, shelter killing is more a function of market share, than “public irresponsibility.” Contrary to conventional wisdom, shelters can adopt their way out of killing.

#### VI. Pet Retention

While some of the reasons animals are surrendered to shelters are unavoidable, others can be prevented—but only if shelters are willing to work with people to help them solve their problems. Saving all healthy and treatable pets requires communities to develop innovative strategies for keeping people and their companion animals together. And the more a community sees its shelter(s) as a place to turn for advice and assistance, the easier this job will be.

Animal control agencies can maintain “libraries” of pet care and behavior

fact sheets in the shelter and on a website. Articles in local papers, radio and television spots all provide opportunities to feature topics like solving litterbox avoidance and excessive barking. Other pet retention programs include free in-home dog behavior problem-solving by volunteers, low-cost dog training, pet friendly rental programs, dog walker referrals, and pet behavior classes.

#### VII. Medical and Behavior Rehabilitation

A shelter begins helping treatable animals by closely analyzing statistics. How many animals entering a shelter are treatable? What types of injuries and illnesses are most common? The answers to these questions will determine what types of rehabilitation programs are needed and how to effectively allocate resources. For example, one community may have many underage kittens in its shelters. Another may have substantial numbers of cats with upper respiratory infections, or dogs with kennel cough. Yet another may find that a large portion of treatables are dogs with behavior problems. Each will need a different lifesaving program.

These can include creating a fund dedicated solely to medical and



---

behavioral rehabilitation. Such a fund lets the public direct their donations and allows a shelter to demonstrate what they are doing to help treatables. In addition, the shelter can establish relationships to have local veterinarians come to the shelter to do rotations. These veterinarians can supplement the work of a staff veterinarian and veterinary technicians and help diagnose animals, give vaccinations, and administer medication and treatment.

A relationship with a veterinary college can allow veterinary students to volunteer at the shelter on a regular basis, providing the students with real life on-the-job training, while shelter animals receive high-quality care under the direction of the veterinary college faculty. Finally, it is impossible to overstate the importance of a foster program for underaged kittens and puppies, undersocialized animals, and those recovering from medical treatment.

### VIII. Public Relations/Community Involvement

Rebuilding a relationship with the community starts with redefining oneself as a "pet rescue" agency. The community must see improvement at the shelter, and improvements in the area of lifesaving. Public contact with the agency must include good customer service, more adoptions, and tangible commitments to give the shelter the tools it needs to do the job humanely. Public contact, however, is not necessarily a face-to-face encounter. The public has contact with an agency by reading about it in the newspaper, seeing volunteers adopting animals at a local shopping mall, or hearing the Executive Director promoting spay/neuter on the radio. It means public relations and community

education.

The importance of good public relations cannot be overstated. Good, consistent public relations are the key to getting more money, more volunteers, more adoptions, and more community goodwill. Indeed, if lifesaving is considered the destination, public relations are the vehicle which will get a shelter there. Without it, the shelter will always be struggling with animals, finances, and community recognition.

Increasing adoptions, maximizing donations, recruiting volunteers and partnering with community agencies comes down to one thing: increasing the shelter's exposure. And that means consistent marketing and public relations. Public relations and marketing are the foundation of all a shelter's activities and their success. To do all these things well, the shelter must be in the public eye.

Indeed, a survey of more than 200 animal control agencies, conducted by a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania College of Veterinary Medicine, found that "community engagement" was one of the key factors in those agencies who have managed to reduce killing and increase lifesaving. One agency noted that "public buy-in is crucial for long-term improvements" placing primary importance on "the need to view community outreach and public engagement as integral to the agency's overall purpose and programs rather than simply as an add-on accomplished with a few public service announcements..."

### IX. Volunteers

Volunteers are a dedicated "army of compassion" and the backbone of a

---

successful No Kill effort. There is never enough staff, never enough dollars to hire more staff, and always more needs than paid human resources. That is where volunteers come in and make the difference between success and failure and, for the animals, life and death.

In San Francisco, a community of approximately 800,000 people, volunteers spend over 110,000 hours at the shelter each year. Assuming the prevailing hourly wage, payroll taxes and benefits, it would cost the San Francisco SPCA over \$1 million dollars annually to provide those services. In Tompkins County, a community of about 100,000 people, volunteers spend over 12,500 hours walking dogs, grooming cats, helping with adoptions, and doing routine but necessary office work, at a cost savings of approximately \$85,000 if the SPCA were to pay for those services at the entry level hourly rate.

The purpose of a volunteer program is to help a shelter help the animals. It is crucial to have procedures and goals in mind as part of the program. In Tompkins County, for example, the agency required all dogs available for adoption to get out of kennel socialization four times per day. This could not be accomplished by staff alone and therefore volunteers were recruited, trained and scheduled for specific shifts that would allow the agency to meet those goals. It became quickly apparent that having volunteers come in whenever they wanted did not serve those goals and so all volunteers were given instructions and a specific schedule.

#### **X. A Compassionate Director**

The final element of the No Kill equation is the most important of all,

without which all other elements are thwarted—a hard working, compassionate animal control or shelter director not content to regurgitate tired clichés or hide behind the myth of “too many animals, not enough homes.” Unfortunately, this one is also oftentimes the hardest one to demand and find.

But it is clear—as better than a decade of success in San Francisco, Tompkins County, and now elsewhere demonstrates—that No Kill is simply not achievable without rigorous implementation of each and every one of these programs and services. It is up to us in the humane movement to demand them of our local shelters, and no longer to settle for illusory excuses and smokescreens shelters often put up in order to avoid implementing them.



## No Kill Sheltering



**V**olume III, Issue Number 1 (1st Quarter 2007) of *No Kill Sheltering* has been mailed to subscribers. *No Kill Sheltering* is only available to members of the No Kill Advocacy Center.

In this issue, we look at the “Best of No Kill Sheltering” including:

- **Defining No Kill.** There is only one legitimate definition of what constitutes a No Kill shelter or community.
- **Adopting your Way to No Kill.** Not only can shelters adopt their way out of killing, they should.
- **The No Kill Equation.** The mandatory programs and services necessary for saving lives.
- **There Ought Not to be a Law.** Legislation is not the answer to saving lives. In fact, most often it has the opposite results.

- **A Call for Regime Change.** It is time to replace most of the nation’s shelter directors for killing animals entrusted to their care and thus failing to do the job they were hired to do.
- **A Call to Ban the Gas Chamber.** Gas killing of shelter animals is cruel and should never be used.
- **Stoking the Fires of Hate.** How the animal welfare movement is failing Pit Bulls.
- **Temperament Testing in the Age of No Kill.** A new look at how shelters mislead the public into thinking the animals they are killing are “unadoptable.”
- **Waiting so Long for so Little.** HSUS offers the feral cat community too little, too late and a TNR policy that comes with strings attached.
- **Betrayal at Asilomar.** The nation’s self-proclaimed leaders have fashioned a national shelter strategy that legitimizes killing and perpetuates the status quo.
- **Do Feral Cats Have a right to Live?** A model national standard for feral cats.
- **The U.S. No Kill Declaration.** Our manifesto for the rights of shelter animals and demands for a No Kill nation.

*No Kill Sheltering* magazine offers no kill philosophy, strategies for growing membership, increasing adoptions and more—all from a No Kill perspective.

For more information or to subscribe, go to [www.nokilladvocacycenter.org](http://www.nokilladvocacycenter.org) and click on “No Kill Newsletter.” No Kill Sheltering can also be sent to your local shelter.

---

## A No Kill Nation

**A** *National Tragedy.* This year, roughly 5,000,000 dogs and cats will be put to death in our nation's animal shelters. Their only "crime" is that they have no human address. Others may be sick or injured, but they could be saved with little effort. Unfortunately, they, too, will be killed. And still others are feral cats who should never enter shelters in the first place. But there is another way.

*A Reason for Hope.* In the last decade, several progressive shelters have put into place a bold series of lifesaving programs and services which have dramatically reduced the death rate in their communities. The resulting success proves that there is a formula for lifesaving, and that if we are to achieve a No Kill nation, it is incumbent upon shelters nationwide to embrace the programs and services which have been proven to save lives.

The No Kill Advocacy Center is the nation's first organization dedicated solely to the promotion of a No Kill nation. And it is the only national animal welfare agency that is staffed by people who have actually worked in and created a No Kill community.

*Join the Crusade.* But the challenges we face are great. From entrenched bureaucrats who are content with the status quo, to uncaring shelter directors hostile to calls for reform; from agencies mired in the failed philosophies of the past to those who have internalized a culture of defeatism—the roadblocks to No Kill are substantial, but not insurmountable.



We have a choice. We can fully, completely and without reservation embrace No Kill as our future. Or we can continue to legitimize the two-prong strategy of failure: adopt a few and kill the rest. It is a choice which history has thrown upon us. And a challenge that the No Kill Advocacy Center is ready to take on.

Your tax deductible contribution will help us hasten the day when animals find in their shelter a new beginning—instead of the end of the line. Working together, we can build an alternative consensus to traditional sheltering models—one which is oriented toward promoting and preserving life. An alternative which seeks to create a future where every animal will be respected and cherished, and where every individual life will be protected and revered.

**No Kill Advocacy Center**  
P.O. Box 74926  
San Clemente, CA 92673

Or make a secure online donation at  
[www.nokilladvocacycenter.org](http://www.nokilladvocacycenter.org).