

No Kill Equation - Volunteers
(both "keep them out" and "get them out" element)

Volunteers have been described as dedicated “army of compassion” and the backbone of a 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 make the difference between success and failure and, for the animals, life and death.

When a shelter makes optimum use of volunteers for a variety of tasks, they help implement the other elements of the no kill equation and they can do so with a nominal time investment provided there are many volunteers. Volunteers can help with feral cat TNR programs by trapping and releasing cats, they can help with pet retention programs by manning an Animal Help Desk or helping out with owner-surrender counseling, they can help at off-site adoption events, they can help facilitate a foster program, they can socialize dogs and cats by walking dogs or just spending time with the cats and they can help with neo-natal puppies and kittens who need regular bottle feeding until they are old enough to consume solid food. The ways in which volunteers can help are only limited by the scope of our creativity and our imagination.

Rescue groups and no kill shelters rely heavily on volunteers. There are some people willing to volunteer at municipal shelters which destroy savable animals, but many people will not simply because they don't want to be complicit in the killing. The great news is that once a community announces its intention to become a no kill community, volunteers have been known to literally "come out of the woodwork." People are much more apt to volunteer their time at a shelter when they do not worry that healthy and treatable animals are at risk.

Almost every community has incredible and untapped resources in terms of potential volunteers: retirees, students, soldiers, people who cannot work for some reason but are otherwise fully able to perform very helpful tasks. And, of course, really busy people who love animals and just want to help save them and make our community safer for them.