

## No Kill Equation - Comprehensive Adoption Programs (a “get them out” element)

A lot of people think we have a pet overpopulation problem. We do not. We may have too many animals in a shelter, but that does not mean that there are too many animals in the community. When we compare the number of shelter animals needing a new home each year compared to the number of people living in the community who will be looking for a new pet, we see that there are more than enough homes “out there” for these animals. This is primarily an issue of marketing. People have this mistaken idea that shelter animals are damaged or broken (an idea which is reinforced by the fact that so many are destroyed) and so they get animals from other sources. Many people don’t realize that not all shelter animals get put up for adoption. Some people won’t go to the shelter to adopt because they know what happens there and they just find the whole process too depressing.

Comprehensive Adoption Programs are a huge part of getting animals out of the shelter. Huge. When a shelter has a “come to us” approach, is only open hours when people are at work (and children are in school) and does not market animals in creative ways, adoptions will always fall short of what they could be. Comprehensive programs include creative adoption promotion programs (Pets for Patriots, Seniors for Seniors, Two-Fer Adoptions, Five Dollar Fridays, Back In Black Days, Half off for Halftime, Home for the Holidays, etc.), include taking animals to the public by hosting off-site adoption events and using mobile adoption vehicles and by making adoption at the shelter easier through family friendly hours. Shelter animals are cared for 7 days a week. When a shelter is open at least 6 days a week, on holidays and during hours when people can get to the shelter, it makes the process immeasurably easier. This is not a matter of the shelter being open more hours. It is about the shelter being open different hours so people can get there. It is also a matter of the shelter being seen as an inviting place of life-saving, staffed by energetic and friendly people who provide excellent customer service. People will always be more willing to adopt an animal from a location where the culture and the vibe are helpful and upbeat.

It has been said that “we could be a no kill nation today if only the animals and the potential adopters were better introduced.” That happens through Comprehensive Adoption Programs.