

# Creating Adoption Processes that Truly Support Saving Lives



# Your Presenter



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# This presentation will cover:

- NHS & community statistics
- Our approach to adoptions
- Key elements of successful adoptions
- Our adoption process
- Engaging people
- Questions



## Past and Future Webinars:

Recording:

True Cost and Value of Pet Adoptions

May 22:

Marketing Pet Adoptions for Dramatic  
Increases





**Every pet was neutered,  
vaccinated and  
microchipped before  
adoption.**

## Pet Adoptions

- 2006: 4,990 (pre-no-kill initiative)
- 2007: 8,030 up 61%  
3,040 more adoptions
- 2008: 8,635 up 7%  
605 more adoptions
- 2009: 9,184 up 6%  
549 more adoptions
- 2010: 9,668 up 5%  
484 more adoptions
- 2011: 9,340 down 3%  
328 fewer adoptions (admissions down 3%)
- 2012: 8,816 down 5%  
524 fewer adoptions (admissions down 8%)

## Decreased animals losing their lives in Washoe County shelters

2007: 52% decrease

2,700 fewer dogs & cats lost their lives in 2007 than 2006.

2008: 10% decrease

2009: 27% decrease

2010: 12% decrease

2011: no change

2012: 16% decrease







## Incoming Dog & Cats

Year	Owner	Transfer
2006	5,667	1,303
2007	5,258	3,188
2008	4,809	3,750
2009	4,945	4,469
2010	4,853	5,237
2011	4,760	5,070
2012	3,709	5,323

**2012 Countywide Dog & Cat Admissions: 15,752**

## Shelter Admissions

Washoe County: 37  
dogs & cats per 1,000  
people

National average: 14  
dogs & cats per 1,000  
people

(Source: Animal People Newspaper)





## Countywide Save Rate

(NHS and WCRAS combined)

2007: Dogs 92% Cats 78%

2008: Dogs 90% Cats 83%

2009: Dogs 90% Cats 89%

2010: Dogs 91% Cats 91%

2011: Dogs 91% Cats 91%

2012: Dogs 92% Cats 92%

National Average 2009:

- 58% (Source: Maddie's Fund)



## Animal Deaths in Shelters per Thousand People

Washoe County 2012:  
2.9 animals per 1,000  
residents

National Average 2009:  
7.8 animals per 1,000  
residents (Source: Maddie's Fund)

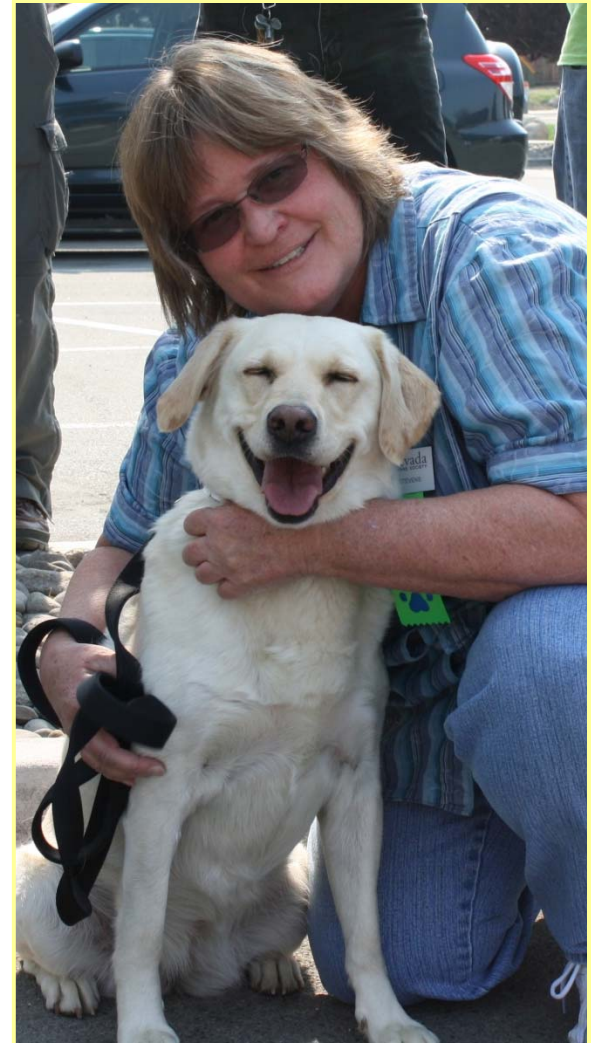




**What do  
you see as  
key to  
successful  
adoptions?**

# Keys to NHS Adoption Success

1. Removing barriers to adoption while still protecting pets
2. Doing same-day adoptions
3. Emphasizing customer service
4. Encouraging people to touch the animals







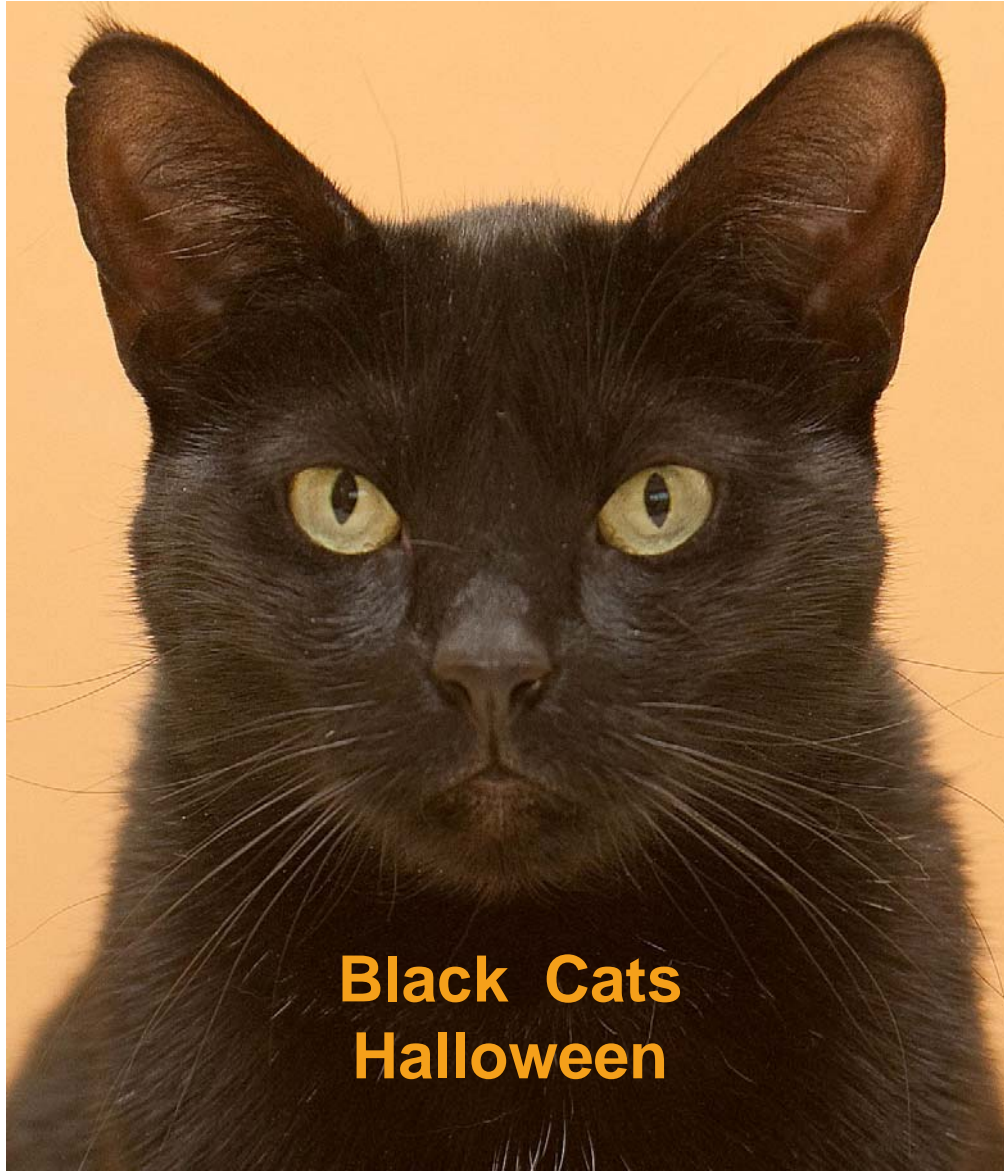
# Keys to NHS Adoption Success

**Create and Adjust**

# Keys to NHS Adoption Success

Look for ways to  
make it work





## Black Cats Halloween





**Are you perfect?**



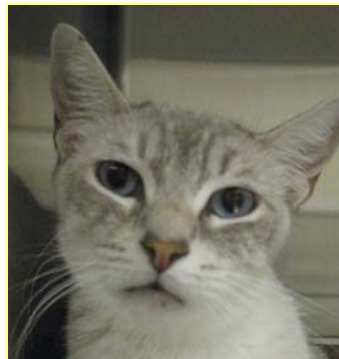
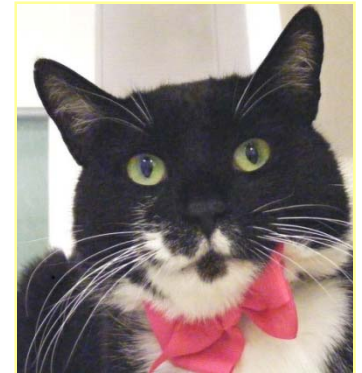
**What are the alternatives?**

# What are the Keys to Adoption Success?

## New Study: *Keeping Pets in Homes*

Dr. Patricia Olsen for AHA and PetSmart Charities

**10% of adoptions fail within 6 months**





# Other info about pet adoption from the study:

## People most likely to retain pets:

- Owner is college grad
- Pet sleeps on bed
- Visited a veterinarian
- Person did not regard commitment, health or behavior as key to their decision-making.

## People most likely to return pets:

- Resident of small town
- Person cited commitment, health and behavior as important to their decision-making

## No difference:

- First-time pet owner or previous owner
- Pet's gender
- Type of shelter
- State of residence
- Researched pet adoption or made a rash decision to adopt

# What are the Keys to Adoption Success?

- Reasonable expectations of the pet
- Bond with the pet
- Effective follow-up support



# Deal Breakers?

- Same-day “impulse” adoptions?
- Home visit?
- Landlord check?
- Cats going outdoors?
- Declawing?
- Pets living outdoors?
- Person works long hours?
- Fenced yard?
- Senior adopting younger pet?

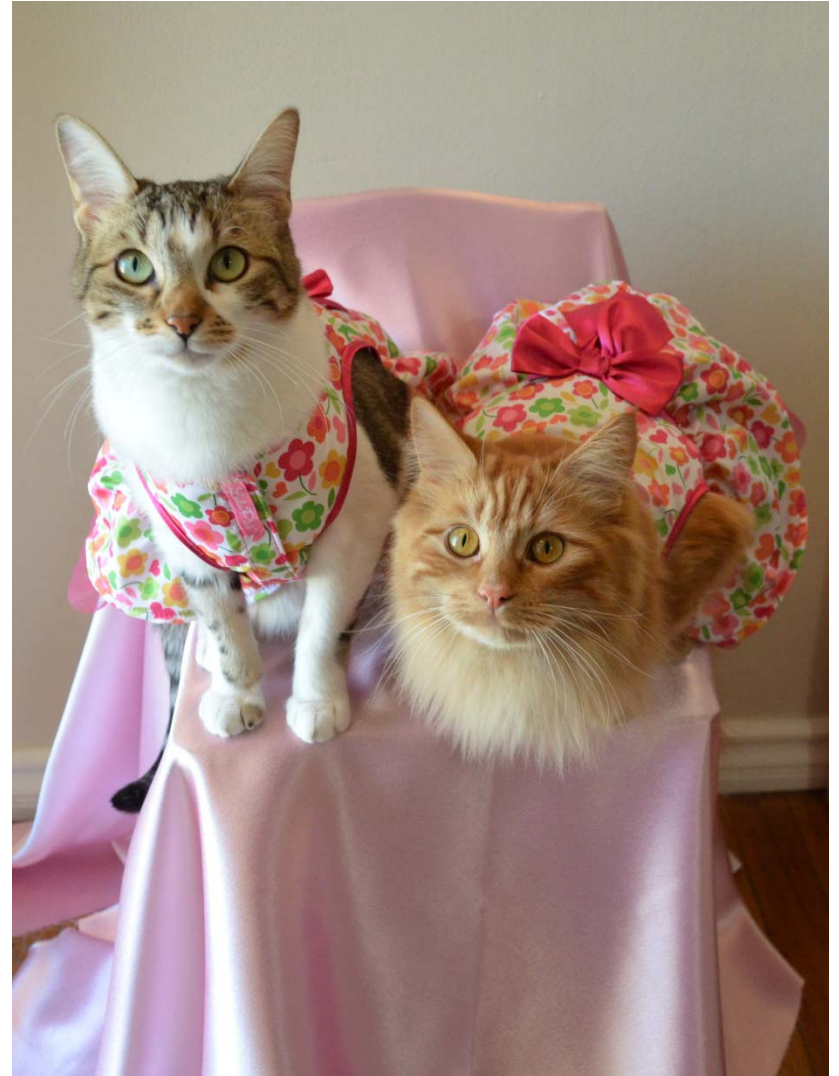




# Failure?

How do you handle. . .

- Adoption returns?
- Giving pet to someone else?
- Declining an adoption?



# How do we measure success?



- Communitywide save rate
- Length of stay in the shelter
- Adoption return rate
- Shelter's reputation

# NHS Adoption Process



- **Setting adoption goals**
- **Preparing pets for adoption: vet care, behavior evaluation for dogs**
- **Training staff: adoption matching, policies, process, customer service**



# NHS Adoption Process

- Dialogue-based matching
- Adoption application
- Discussion (checklist)
- Possible additional steps
- Make people feel good about adopting



*Adoption forms will be made available through [ASPCapro.org](http://ASPCapro.org).*

# NHS Adoption Process

- Follow up



## Animal Help Desk Caseworker Handbook

Version 1.0  
July 28, 2007



... Bringing animals and people together!

*Posted on [ASPCApro.org](http://ASPCApro.org)*

# NHS Adoption Process

## Fees

### Standard Adoption Fees

Seniors for Seniors: Person 55+ dog/cat 6+...	FREE
Cats, Adults.....	\$50
Cats 10 yrs or older.....	\$10
Kittens under 4 mos.....	\$60
Dogs, Most Adults.....	\$50
Dogs 10 yrs or older.....	\$25
Small & highly-desirable dogs.....	\$50 to \$150 (Individually Priced)
Puppies under 4 mos.....	\$100 to \$150 (Individually Priced)

All dogs, cats, puppies and kittens are spayed or neutered, vaccinated and microchipped. These services are included in the adoption fee. Our actual cost per animal averages \$240.

Higher rates for highly-desirable dogs help fund the care of those dogs who need a longer stay at the shelter.



# Engaging People

## Staff

- Hiring the right people
- Training: Clear expectations
- Ongoing feedback
- Consequences

## Volunteers

- Training: Clear expectations
- Ongoing feedback
- Consequences

## Public

- Marketing
- Great customer service



# Engaging People

## Change Management

- Share the objective/goal
- Seek input and use it
- Provide information, explain why

## Possible discussion topics:

- What makes you feel most receptive to what someone else is saying?
- What causes you to shut down?
- How do you learn best?
- What do you see that needs improvement?



# Customer Service

- Why is it so important?
- Who is the customer?
- Provide information, explain why

## Possible discussion topics:

- Discuss our own past behavior
- How did you learn to do better?
- What would happen if we. . .







**Meet Our Cat Adoption Queen:  
Sammy AKA “Grandma”**

# Grandma's Top Tips



1. Have a good time; laughter puts people at ease.

2. Be outgoing. Greet everyone with a smile & friendly remark.



# Grandma's Top Tips



**3. Find out what they are looking for in a pet & introduce them to specific animals.**

**4. Be sure they get to know the cat's personality before they take the cat home.**

# Grandma's Top Tips


5. Make people feel good about their decision with positive comments about the pet.





# Get the Word Out and the People In

*Adopt a Mardi Gras Star  
at Nevada Humane Society*



*February 21—March 1*  
Special Adoption Fee:  
\$25 for “Star” dogs, cats, and rabbits  
Come in and vote for the Mardi Gras King and Queen

*February 28 at 11 a.m.*  
Mardi Gras pet parade through  
the shelter!

Shelter Hours:  
Sunday—Friday: 11 am—6:30 pm  
Saturday: 10 am - 6:30 pm

2825 Longley Lane, Reno • 775-856-2000 • [www.nevadahumanesociety.org](http://www.nevadahumanesociety.org)



## Aggressive Promotion



Pet adoption  
should be one of  
life's truly  
**GREAT**  
experiences!



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A no-kill shelter creating a no-kill community.

# Related ASPCApro Webinars

[aspcapro.org/webinars](http://aspcapro.org/webinars)

Creating Adoption Processes that Truly Support Saving Lives (recording)

Marketing to Dramatically Increase and Sustain Adoptions (May 22)