



# How to Conduct an Empty the Shelter Event that Works!



# Who Are We?



**Corey Price, Irving Animal Services**

- I manage a municipal animal services department.
- I have been labeled a “Pollyanna.” This has helped me stay positive in this field for 20+ years.
- I **still** have not found a magic wand, so I have to find creative ways to impact the lives of animals.

# Who Are We?



**Meribeth Sloan**, Communications,  
City of Irving

- **Media** TV news reporter
- **Corporate** Marketing and Communications
- **Advertising Agency** Account Executive
- **Government** Communications

# Before We Get Started

## Type in the chat:

Who are you?

- Management/Leadership
- Front Line Staff
- Volunteer

## Poll:

Have you ever participated in an adoption event that left your adoption kennels empty?

> Click the Raise Hand button on right column if YES





# What We'll Cover

## What, Why, Who, When, Where, How

- Marketing and Communications Planning
- Operational Planning



# Clear the Shelter: The Story



# What is Empty the Shelter?





# Why?

## This is about more than adopting out animals

- Opportunity: 61% of dogs and cats are not acquired from shelters/rescues ([aspca.org](http://aspca.org))
- Promotion increases adoption rate year round
- Positive shelter awareness
- Gain valuable supporters and volunteers
- Priceless media coverage you never dreamed possible
- Build partnerships with other local organizations and sponsors



# Who?

- Nonprofit organizations
- Government/municipal shelters
- Volunteers!
- Vendors and other supporters
- **Media** – more on this later...



# When?

- Highest number of adoptable animals
- Dominate local event calendar
- No media conflicts
- **Once a year** – too often and people will tune out





# Where?

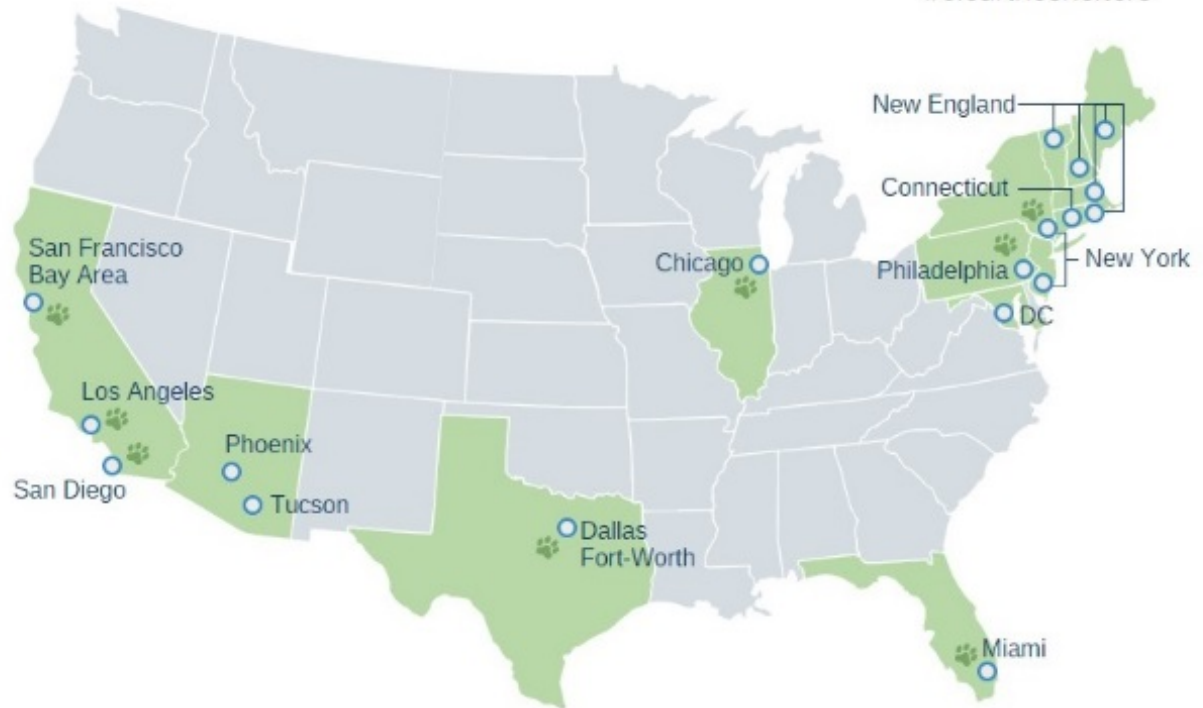
## Clear the Shelters

August 15, 2015

#cleartheshelters

Natalie Morales hosts *Clear the Shelters*

Watch your NBC Stations starting August 22nd. Thousands of you responded to the call to *Clear the Shelters*, giving many animals loving homes. Now, join us for the year's most inspiring stories of rescue and adoption. We'll take you to cities across the country as people meet their new family members, including the journey eight puppies took over hundreds of miles to find new homes. *Clear the Shelters* also examines how social media is transforming the world of animal adoption. And celebrities Cecily Strong, Sherri Shepherd, Bellamy Young and Denise Richards share their personal stories. [Click here to find out where \*Clear the Shelters\* will be airing near you.](#)



- Any big city, suburb or small town
- At your own shelter
- People will learn where you are and who you are

- [ClearTheShelters.com](http://ClearTheShelters.com)

TOTAL PETS ADOPTED

19142

IRVING  
TEXAS

ASPCA  
ASPCApro.org

# How: Media

## Devise a plan and ask

- Animals sell
- Viewers, readers and listeners.
- Staff loves it





# Media Partner: Who Should I Approach?



## Considerations

- Existing relationships
- NBC

## Small markets

- Local Newspaper/Radio
- Grassroots marketing

## Medium

- TV and social media for sure – images say it all!



# What's in it for them?

- **Access**
  - facilities, information, data
- **Exposure**
  - coverage area
- **Impact**
  - Event allowed NBC to unite and organize all of its assets to focus on solving one problem that will made the world a better place
- **Sales opportunity**



[Overstock.com](https://www.overstock.com)

# Develop a Unified Plan

## Messaging:

Happy and upbeat

2014: Find Your Perfect Pet Match

2015: Dreams Come True

## Campaign Offer:

Adoption Fees Waived

\*other fees may apply



# Collateral

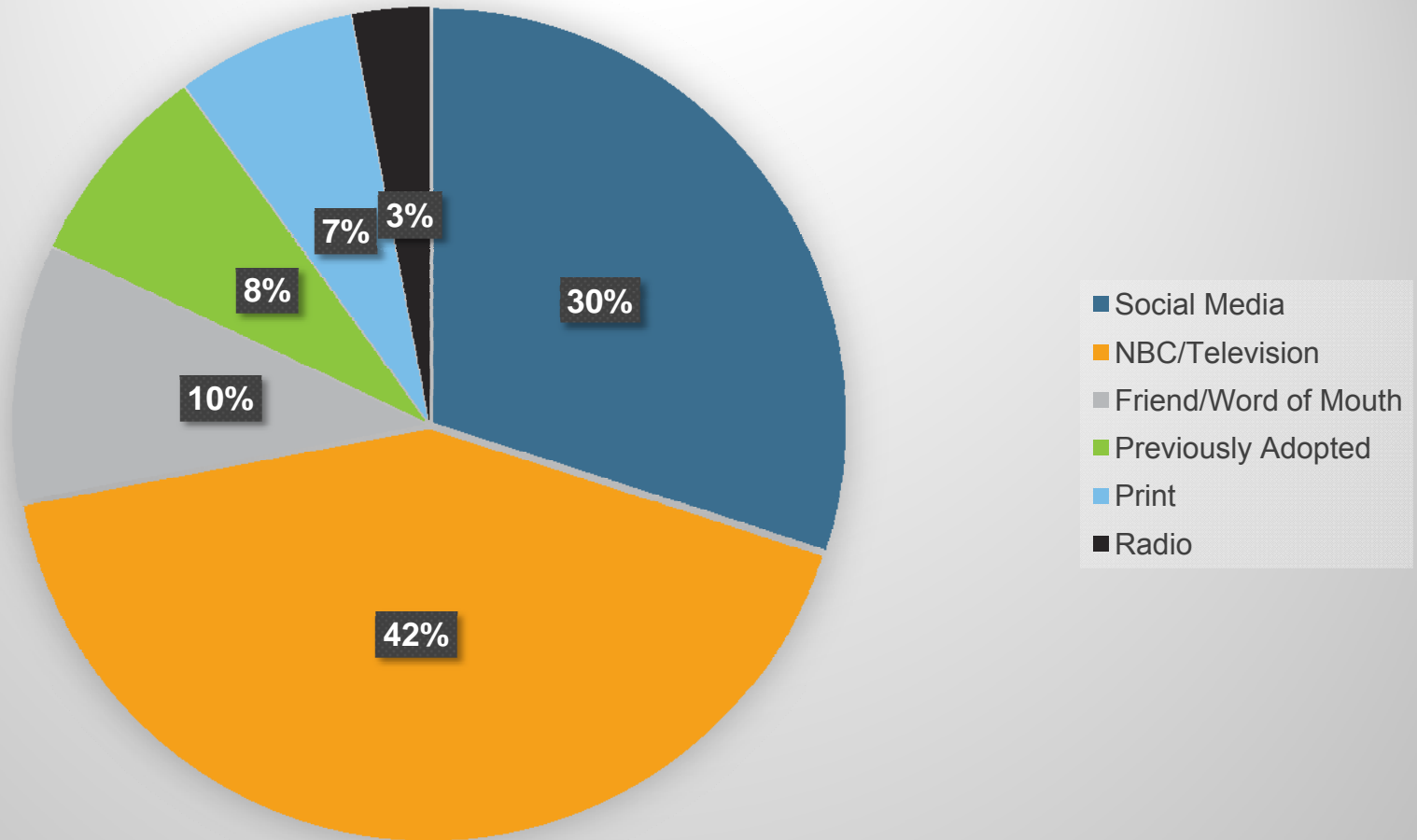
## Team Effort

- Logo (NBC)
- Press release (Irving)
- Poster (customize w/ shelter logo) (Ft. Worth)
- SM messaging (Irving)
- Hashtags:
  - #perfectpetmatch
  - #cleartheshelters
- Video spots: 30, 15 seconds (NBC)
- Website:
  - [cleartheshelters.org](http://cleartheshelters.org) (SPCA)
  - [cleartheshelters.com](http://cleartheshelters.com) (NBC)
- Volunteer t-shirts (Ft. Worth)
- Spokespeople (Weatherford, HSNT)



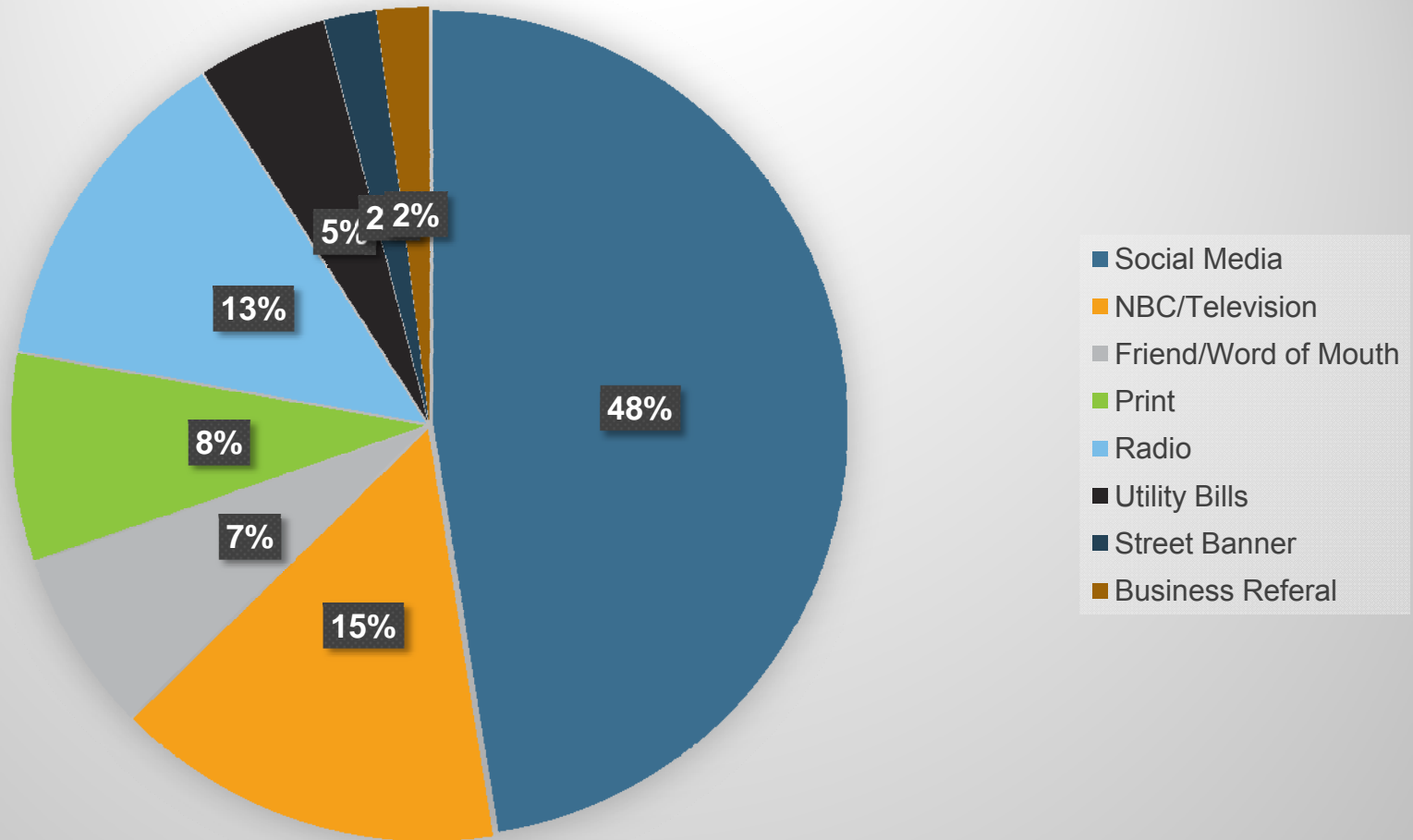
# Irving Survey Says...

## Clear the Shelters



# Weatherford Survey Says...

## Clear the Shelters





# Preparing for the Negative People

- “It will attract bad adopters and dog fighters.”
- “We didn’t participate because we are interested in quality, not quantity.”
- “These animals will just be dumped or returned when the family gets tired of them.”
- “We can’t afford to reduce/waive the adoption fee.”
- “It’s only for shelters that euthanize.”



# Plan for Vendors and Sponsors

## Big vs. Smaller Sponsors

### Overstock.com/Home Again

- Name on all collateral  
– they own it.

### Smaller sponsors

- Signage, recognition at shelter
- Collateral in goodie bags, etc.

**Patrol:** there are hijackers





# Reporting Data

**All shelters agreed to report:**

- **Estimated available animals** going into event.
- **Total animals adopted**
- **Total adoption returns** 30 days after event day
- **Available animals remaining** in shelter when event was over

We used a spreadsheet in Google Docs for all to access.



# How: Adoption Prep

- Spay/neuter
- Vaccines
- Medical testing
- Behavior testing
- Plan ahead for animals coming off stray hold



# How: Paperwork Prep

- Adoption folders
- Medical and behavior history
- Tips for adopters
- Vendor items

**Do as much of this as possible before event day!**



# How: Crowd Control

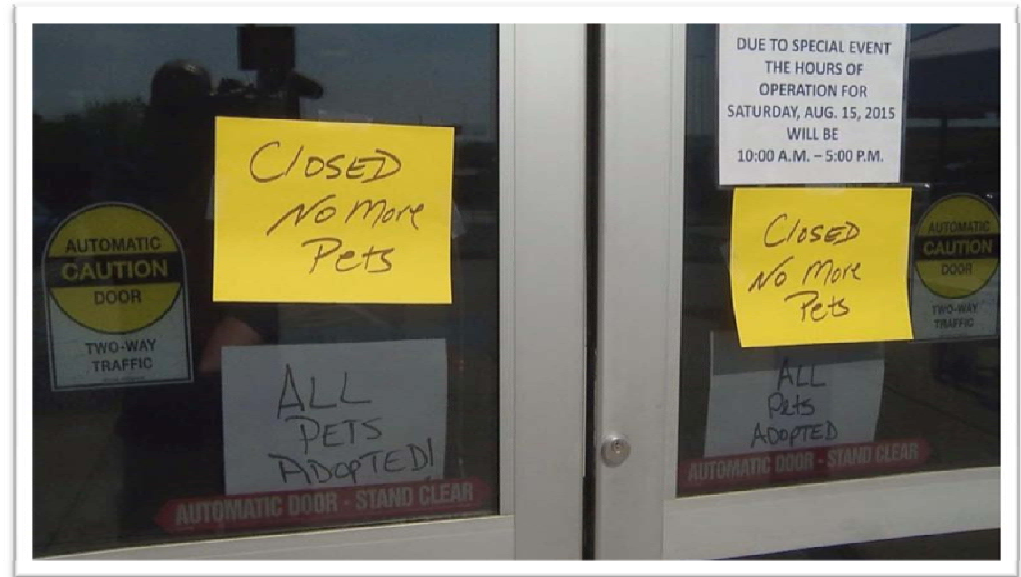
- Volunteer training and assignments
- Adopter or group numbers
- Parking and Signs
- Traffic – police officers
- Extra adoption stations
- Food/water
- Vendors and activities





# How: A Few Other Things

- **Ask for donations**
- **“I’m Adopted” signs**
- **Plan ahead** for more animals!
- **Online map** showing all participating shelters
- **After Action Review** to determine what worked and what didn’t.



# Things That We Are Still Working On

- Transferring animals between shelters
- More activities and vendors
- Sharing photos and success stories after the event
- Strategize marketing plan & dollars based on survey results & NBC's plan
- Sponsors for adoption prep costs and event t-shirts
- More swag, goodies for adopters
- Preparing for media blitz 2 weeks before event



# Clear the Shelters 2015



# Questions?

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