

## Shelter Math and Population Planning: Real life shelter stories

---

**Sandra Newbury, DVM**

**Animal Rescue League of Boston**

Melissa Tanguay, Assistant Manager, Boston Branch

**San Francisco SPCA**

Dr. Jennifer Scarlett, Co-President

**Hillsborough County Animal Services**

Dr. Isabelle Reese, Staff Veterinarian  
Dennis McCollough, Operations Director



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

### From the ASV *Guidelines for Standards of Care*

---

- “Population management describes an active process of planning, on-going daily evaluation, and response to changing conditions as an organization cares for multiple animals.
- Effective population management requires a plan for intentionally managing each animal’s shelter stay that takes into consideration the organization’s ability to provide care that meets the recommendations outlined in this document.”



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Biscuit



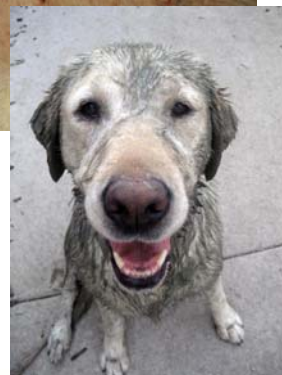
- Underage and alone
  - Susceptibility
  - Socialization
  - High potential for adoption
  - Likelihood of disease?
- Stray holding in foster care
- Supportive care while in foster
- Returned for neuter/ microchip / exam
- Adopted from foster



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Daisy Mae

- Skin disease on intake
- Good likelihood of placement
  - Dynamic personality
  - High community live release rate
- Prompt diagnostics
  - Minimal in shelter care days
  - Balanced resource investment
- Prolonged treatment in foster care
  - Good quality of life
- Adoption from (into) the foster home
  - Pet promoted increased adoptions



### From the ASV *Guidelines for Standards of Care*

---

- Average or median length of stay is (also) a key factor contributing to the number of animals present in the shelter each day, which in turn affects the ability to provide adequate care.



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

### Effect of LOS

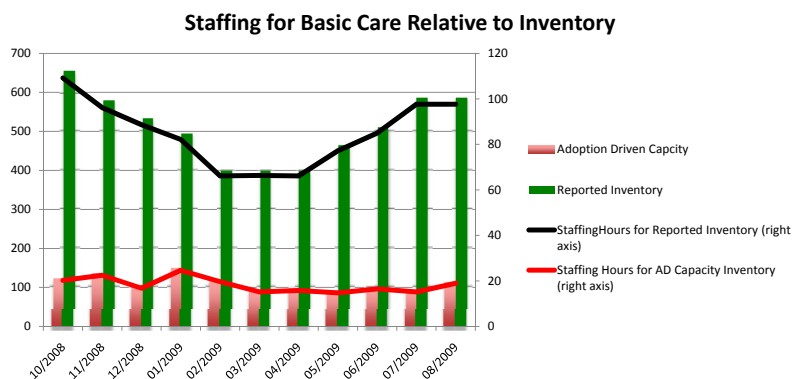
---

Average Daily Intake	Average LOS	Average Daily Population
10	5	50
10	10	100
10	20	200



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Capacity for Care



Time for care \* Number of animals needing care = Capacity requirements



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Adoption Driven Capacity

Adult Cat Adoptions	Target Average LOS	Monthly care days	Recommended adoption population
60	10 days	600	20 cats
		60 cats * 10 days = 600 care days	600 days each month / 30 days each month = 20 cats each day



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Adoption driven capacity

Adult Cat Adoptions	Target Average LOS	Monthly care days	Recommended adoption population
60	10 days	600	20 cats
		60 cats * 10 days = 600 care days	600 days each month / 30 days each month = 20 cats each day

Adoptions	Average LOS	Monthly care days	Adoption population
60	20 days	1200	40 cats
	1200/60=20	40 cats * 30 days = 1200 care days	



## Daily Rounds

- Inspection of all animals must be performed daily in order to routinely evaluate and monitor adequacy of capacity and to identify needs for housing, care, or service



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Animal Rescue League of Boston Boston, MA

---



Association of Shelter Veterinarians



Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters

## Population Management

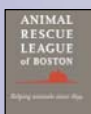
---

*Capacity to provide humane care has limits for every organization, just as it does in private homes.*

*Effective population management requires a plan for intentionally managing each animal's shelter stay that takes into consideration the organization's ability to provide care.*



Association of Shelter Veterinarians



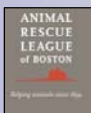
## Facility Design and Environment

*Poor cat housing is one of the greatest shortcomings observed in shelters and has a substantially negative impact on both health and well-being.*

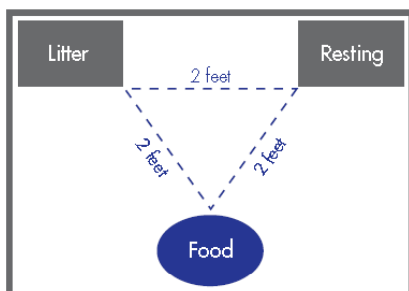
Primary enclosures must provide sufficient space to allow each animal, regardless of species, to make normal postural adjustments, e.g., to turn freely and to easily stand, sit, stretch, move their head, without touching the top of the enclosure, lie in a comfortable position with limbs extended, move about and assume a comfortable posture for feeding, drinking, urinating and defecating (AAEP 2004; CFA 2009; Hansen 2000; King County 2009; Kulpa-Eddy 2005; New Zealand 1993).



Association of Shelter Veterinarians




## Facility Design and Environment



Separation between food, urination and defecation, and resting areas should be maximized. A primary enclosure must allow animals to sit, sleep and eat away from areas of their enclosures where they defecate and urinate.



Association of Shelter Veterinarians




ANIMAL  
RESCUE  
LEAGUE  
of BOSTON  
Helping animals since 1896

*Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*

## Population Management + Facility Design + Behavioral Health and Mental Well-being

Length of stay has a dramatic effect on the experience and needs of animals in shelter care. The type of care and enrichment provided to sheltered animals must be appropriate to the length of stay (Patronek 2001). Average or median length of stay is also a key factor contributing to the number of animals present in the shelter each day, which in turn affects the ability to provide adequate care. For example,


2002, 2005). Even short-term housing must meet the minimum behavioral needs of animals, providing separate areas for urination/defecation, feeding and resting and sufficient space to stand and walk several steps, and sit or lie at full body length.



ANIMAL  
RESCUE  
LEAGUE  
of BOSTON  
Helping animals since 1896

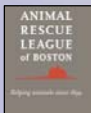
## One Shelter's Experience

- Medium sized urban shelter ~2300 cats per year, stray and owned
- Facility built in the 1950's, not a boutique environment
- Challenges: relatively high stress levels for cats, felt crowded, long length of stay for cats, more cats in adoption than being adopted, backed up cats in holding
- 10 full time shelter staff including managers, 1 full time veterinarian and 1 full time CVT
- Wanted to decrease length of stay, lower daily population to decrease stress and improve care
- Goal in at least maintaining the same intake and adoption numbers and avoiding any increase in euthanasia.



Association of Shelter Veterinarians



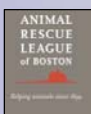


## Gradual Implementation of Adoption-Driven Capacity

- Statistical evaluation of data, daily capacity and outcomes
- No drastic immediate changes
- Made gradual change and monitored data
- Fast track for cats
- Feline rounds implemented
- “Foster parents on deck” system
- Housing change once the above changes reduced daily population sufficiently without impacting euthanasia or intake



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

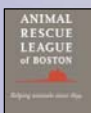


## Fast Track

- Fast track – moving highly adoptable cats through faster to decrease average length of stay of all cats
- Fast track cats
  - kittens all year
  - healthy young adults in slower months
- Implemented via timing of veterinary exam
- No changes for slow track cats



Association of Shelter Veterinarians



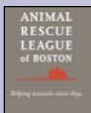
## Foster On Deck

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Name	Phone	Email	Level	Bottle kittens	Orphan kittens	Mom & litter	Adult cats	Shy cats	Date Restrictions
2				Green		X				
3				Green		X				After May 9th
4				Green		X	X			After May 20th
5				Blue	X	X	X			
6				Green	X	X				Away last weekend in May
7				Green	X	X				
8				Green	X		X	X		
9				Blue		X	X	X	X	
10				Green		X	X	X	X	
11				Blue	X	X	X	X	X	
12				Green		X				Away May 25 - June 2
13				Blue	X	X	X	X	X	Bottle Feeders in Summer
14				Blue		X	X	X	X	
15				Green	X	X	X	X	X	After June 19
16				Green	X	X	X			

- Foster parents recruited proactively
- Online list to let them know who is UP next
- Level system
- “A litter a day” goal
- Most kittens now leave for foster in 1-2 days



Association of Shelter Veterinarians



## Foster Program Goals

- **General goals:**
  - Place animals in foster within 1-2 days of arrival
  - Revise “tiers” for the foster parents (who fosters what)
  - Create “on deck” list for foster parents using Google docs so everyone knows who is next in line and what they are available to take with the hopes of better evaluating what animals are admitted to the shelter
  - Contact foster parents to see who would like to stay active
  - Revise web content to reflect changes in program
- **Recruitment goals**
- **Training goals**
- **Medical goals**
- **Foster parent appreciation goals**

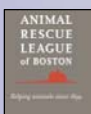


Association of Shelter Veterinarians

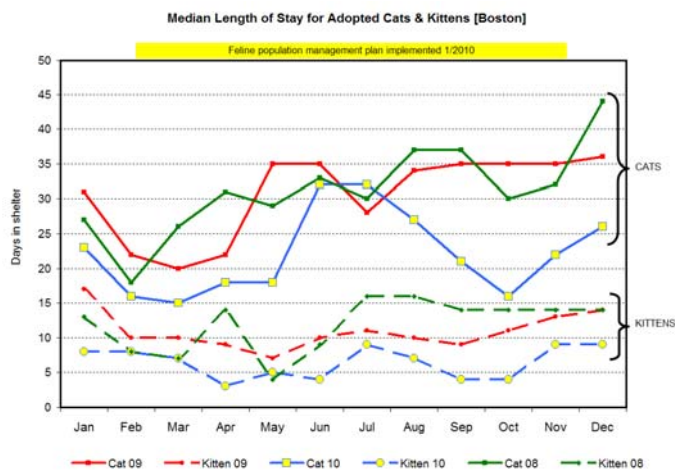
Glad to hear that we're becoming famous. :) Jessica, our **shelter tech**, has always picked out which cats to do **wellness exams on each day**. She used to pick pretty much **by date of intake**, but now any **fast track cats get priority** in their exams. She is also the one selecting who is fast track at any given time as she's usually most familiar with the population as a whole. Slow track cats still primarily get looked at per date of intake, although **behavior and/or concern regarding underlying medical disease often impact timing of their exams** as well.

We have a move-up board that we put names of cats on after we look at them and volunteers or staff move them from their holding cage into adoption. We designate whether a cat is fast or slow track on the board, and **any fast track cats should always be moved up prior to slow track cats**. This **tends to balance out cage space** pretty well so we haven't designated cages at this point (although I think it's something we should consider for next year, as the system wasn't always perfectly smooth.)

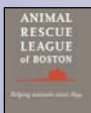
We've found that generally slow track cats aren't actually waiting any longer than they were before for their exams as the whole process of prioritizing fast track cats expedites things. Their exams tend to go so much quicker that we can get more exams done total per day.



## Impact on Length of Stay



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

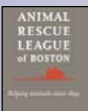


## Cat Housing Upgrade!

- Approx. \$250/cage
- First holding room completed in October 2010
- Difficulty in alterations due to fiberglass caging with non-parallel sides
- Sent cages out to a fiberglass specialist for modification
- Eventually completed an entire ward, more planned



Association of Shelter Veterinarians



## Monitoring for Positive (or adverse) Effects

	Cumulative YTD as of 12/31/10		
	Cat	Dog	Kitten
Beginning on hand - 12/31/09	139	44	22
Intake*	2379	1228	2203
Pct Increase in Intake vs 09	2.9%	0.7%	-17.6%
<b>Available</b>	<b>2518</b>	<b>1272</b>	<b>2225</b>
Euthanised**	570	104	224
<b>Percent Euthanised</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>10.1%</b>
Died	8	1	51
<b>Available for Placement</b>	<b>1940</b>	<b>1167</b>	<b>1950</b>
Outcome***	1851	1104	1915
<b>Percent Placed to date</b>	<b>73.5%</b>	<b>86.8%</b>	<b>86.1%</b>
Pct Increase in placement vs 09	5.4%	2.3%	2.9%
<b>Balance</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>35</b>
Ending on hand - 12/31/10	125	41	13
<b>Pct placed+remaining live</b>	<b>78.5%</b>	<b>90.0%</b>	<b>86.7%</b>



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## San Francisco SPCA San Francisco, CA



SAN FRANCISCO  
**SPCA** Hor

### PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Index
- Youth Programs
- Dog Training
- Cat Behavior Resources
- Open Door
- Spay Neuter Clinic
- Foster Care
- Feral Fix
- Working Cats
- SIDO Program
- Re-homing
- Animal Assisted Therapy
- Hearing Dog Program
- Pet Loss Support
- Police Horse Retirement Ranch
- The Academy for Dog Trainers

- **Found homes for over 4,000 cats and dogs last year.**

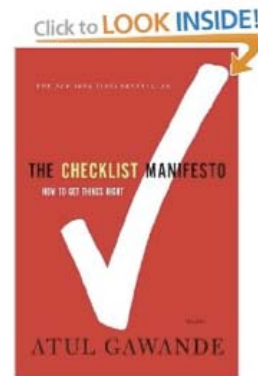
- Primary intake from San Francisco Animal Care and Control through a pact
- Some direct owner surrendered intake
- Community per capita intake is low
- Some transfer intake from other communities



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Problems Identified

- Large daily population of cats
  - Commonly over 400 each day
  - Many special needs
  - Extended stays
- Many healthy kittens were becoming ill with URI after returning from foster care
  - Large numbers each day requiring care and treatment
  - Extended stays
- No treatment protocols
- Many kittens were housed in small cages
- Staff felt stretched beyond capacity



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## “Every animal needs a plan!”

- Be mindful of patterns and processes that would speed flow
  - Identify bottlenecks
- Eliminate unproductive waiting time
  - Allow more time for those who really need it
  - Increase opportunities for treatment
- Provide adequate / excellent housing to each cat



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Foster Program

- Vibrant foster program
- Many young kittens going out to foster and returning at adoption
- Surge for foster animals each Sunday with kittens going up for adoption on Monday mornings

Guess what we changed?



## Foster Fridays!

- Surgery clinic days for foster kittens switched to Friday (or Thursday)
- Increased spay / neuter capacity
- Kittens adopted quickly
- Fewer kittens in the shelter each day
- Better quality housing
- Very little shelter acquired disease in foster returns



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Capacity for Care

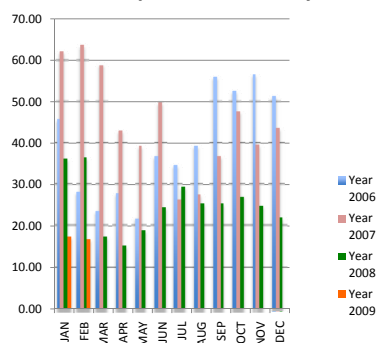
- Maintained daily population at about 180 cats instead of over 400
  - Based on adoption driven capacity
- Started when population was low, then maintained by decreased LOS
  - Veterinarian works with intake coordinators
  - Daily evaluation
  - Intake driven by adoptions
  - Pact creates some level of uncontrolled intake
- Decreased the numbers available for adoption at one time



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

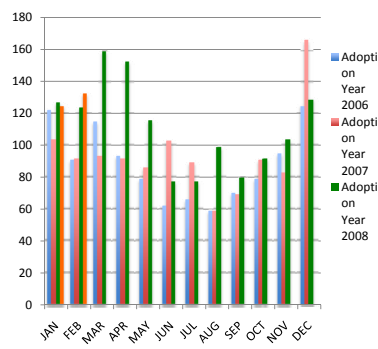
## Results

**Feline Average Length of Stay to Adoption: Adults only**



Decreased average LOS

**Adult Cat Adoptions**



Increased adoptions (intake)



Association of Shelter Veterinarians



## Results

- Increased capacity for care
- Increased life saving capacity
- Increased ability to treat special conditions
  - Hyperthyroidism
  - Injuries
- All cats get condos or double sided cages
- Happier staff
- Special opportunities
  - The 49ers



## Hillsborough County Animal Services Tampa, Florida



- Open Admission County Shelter
- **21,782 impounds in last 12 months**
- Adoption: Open Access



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Animal Services County-Wide Responsibility



- Human Population  $\approx$  1.26 million
- Dog & Cat Population  $\approx$  610,000
- Jurisdiction-Entire County  $\approx$  1,072 Sq/Miles



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Animal Services Anti-Cruelty/Dog Fighting



**Casper when recued by Animal Services**



**Casper Now**

- 93 arrests - CY10, 116 arrests - CY09, 122 arrests - CY08 for animal cruelty/dog fighting
- Issued civil citations for 10,158 violations of the Animal Ordinance in last 12 months



Association of Shelter Veterinarians



## Problems Identified

- High intake compared to live release
- Low adoption numbers
- Limited number of animals offered to the public in the designated adoption area
- Internal conflict about life and death decisions and high level of stress
- Euthanasia of many highly adoptable animals with treatable conditions



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Objectives of “Open Access” Plan:

---

- Offer visibility to most animals (exceptions: investigations and quarantines)
- Let the public (citizens and rescue groups) select what they think is adoptable
- Lower stress level among staff and volunteers



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

---

## What did we change?



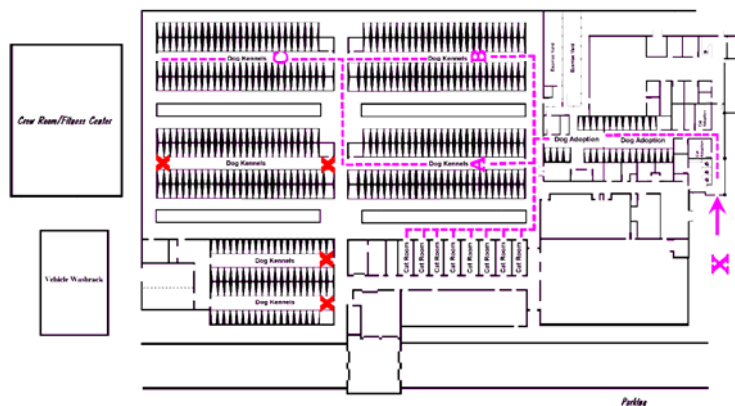
Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Decrease of OS Hours



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## OPEN SELECTION: INCREASED VISIBILITY



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

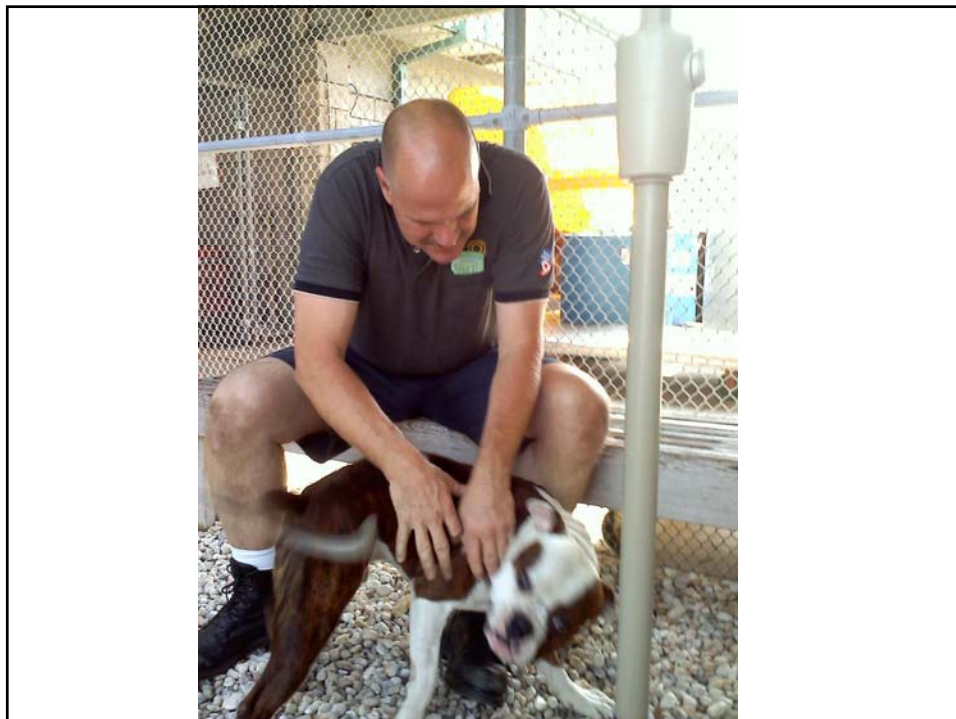
## Impound Procedures

Impound form for a dog, showing details like name, breed, and date. The form is titled "Impound Form" and includes fields for "Name", "Breed", "Color", "Sex", "Age", "Weight", "Height", "Microchip", "Vaccinations", and "Remarks". A small photo of the dog is attached to the form.

Impound form for a dog, showing details like name, breed, and date. The form is titled "Impound Form" and includes fields for "Name", "Breed", "Color", "Sex", "Age", "Weight", "Height", "Microchip", "Vaccinations", and "Remarks". A small photo of the dog is attached to the form.



Association of Shelter Veterinarians



## Transition Program



- Volunteers commit to adopt an animal from their home
- Shelter extensions!
- Shared responsibility
- Better understanding from the volunteers



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Who Has First Priority?

- Citizens
- HCAS employees (after 2 business days)
- Proactive adoption partners
- Reactive adoption partners
- PBA or Volunteer training program
- Transition program



Association of Shelter Veterinarians



## HART

### (Humane And Responsible Team)

- HART is composed of 2 employees of the following sections:
  - Shelter, Field, Veterinary Services and Volunteer Section.
- The manager of each section designates which employees will serve in the HART.
- The daily HART walks will require one representative from each section but scheduled HART meetings will require two representatives of each section.
- If a section has no representative for a daily walk, the section foregoes the walks but will support the HART decisions for that day.
- Vet services will have a third back-up for rescue purposes.
- The HART decisions are final.



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

### Example of a Note in Chameleon for a Dog that Has Been Selected by a Citizen

- Report: Due Out By Animal Type (7 days ahead)

AA

4-16-11 1st app Joe Osborne has visited will adopted 813-900-2496..pep124

4/21/11 - spoke with Osborne and will pick up Friday. 217cw

AA

04-18-11 Adoption w/u completed 216jc

(Note: dog was impounded on 4/14/11)



Association of Shelter Veterinarians



## IS IT WORKING?



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Intake	27,113	29,124	28,631	31,260	32,678	34,945	33,074	31,879	30,423	25,778	21,935
Euthanasia	22,309	24,834	24,500	26,910	27,833	30,444	28,457	26,226	23,543	18,607	15,185
Adoptions	2,521	2,249	2,152	2,561	3,028	2,980	2,983	4,298	5,531	6,527	5,209
L.R.R.	17.72%	14.73%	14.43%	13.92%	14.83%	12.88%	13.96%	17.73%	22.61%	27.82%	30.77%

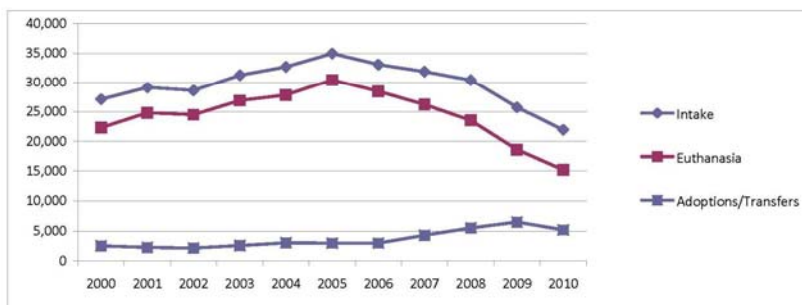
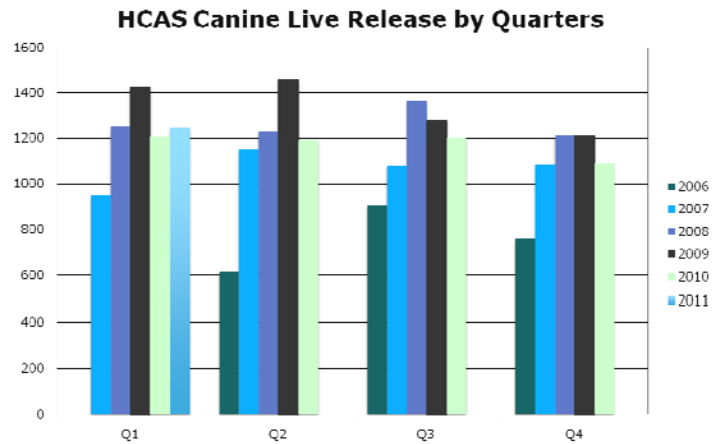


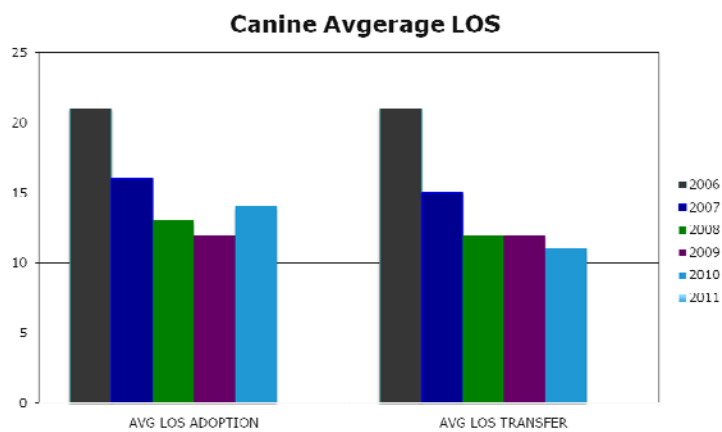
Chart courtesy of The Humane Society Of Tampa Bay

## Canine Live Release



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Shorter Stays



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Happier Staff



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Higher Fruits!



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Next?

- In house adopt-a-thons
- Ordinance changes
  - Surgery or Vet exam after day 3
  - “Feral Freedom”
- Will reopen on Mondays



[roesei@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:roesei@hillsboroughcounty.org)

[mcculloughd@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:mcculloughd@hillsboroughcounty.org)



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

## Questions For Anyone?



Association of Shelter Veterinarians

Thanks For All You Do!



Association of Shelter Veterinarians



[www.ASPCApro.org/asv](http://www.ASPCApro.org/asv)

- Register for additional webinars in the series
  - Links to webinar recordings
- Download presentation, slides and bonus materials

*Next Webinar in Series:*  
**Standards for Sanitation: What, Why and How?**  
Thursday, May 26