

Foster-Based Adoptions: The Next Generation of Foster Programs

<http://www.aspcapro.org/webinar/2014-10-29/foster-based-adoptions>



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Today's Topics

- Set up a foster program structure
- Use volunteer case managers
- Select animals for foster
- Run a foster-based adoption process



Fostering @ Seattle Animal Shelter

- Three Programs: Dogs, Cats, Critters
- 700 adoption animals per year (40% of all adoption animals)
- Small percentage come back to SAS
- Significantly higher length of stay
- Program started in 1998; dedicated staff hired in 2014



Typical *New* Foster Parent

- Super well meaning
- Ready to take on “the hard case”
- Really want to succeed
- Work full-time
- Have family obligations
- Have limited funds
- Have cats/dogs of their own
- Live in a condo or apartment



And What We Expect

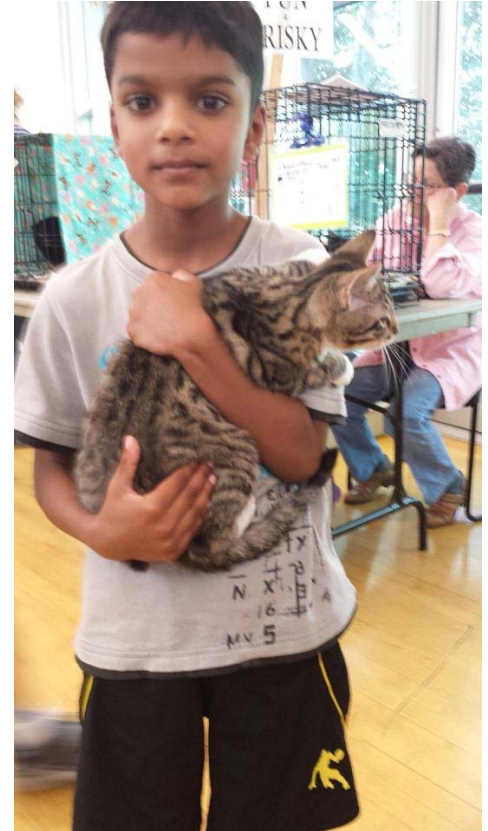
- Trainer
- Behaviorist
- Vet
- Stay-at-home pet parent
- Marketing
- Sales and Advertising
- Professional Photography
- Fundraising
- Writer
- Counselor



The Structure of Success

1) Define Expectations

- Keep foster until adopted
- Respond to adopters within 1 day
- Call the vet hotline with questions
- Respond to shelter staff and volunteers within 1 day
- Attend adoption events



The Structure of Success

- 2) Provide the necessary resources
- Vet care, training, marketing, toys, baby gates, food, transport, advertising, play space, and more

FOSTER FURRIDAY!

 <p>MUSHU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loyal• Sweet• Great listener!	 <p>SALEM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• True companion• Squeaker• Well-mannered
 <p>PIXEL & NOUSHKA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shy• Active• Curious	 <p>PUMA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Snuggler• Playful• Window percher

To learn more about adopting these animals, click the links in the caption or visit www.seattleanimalshelter.org.

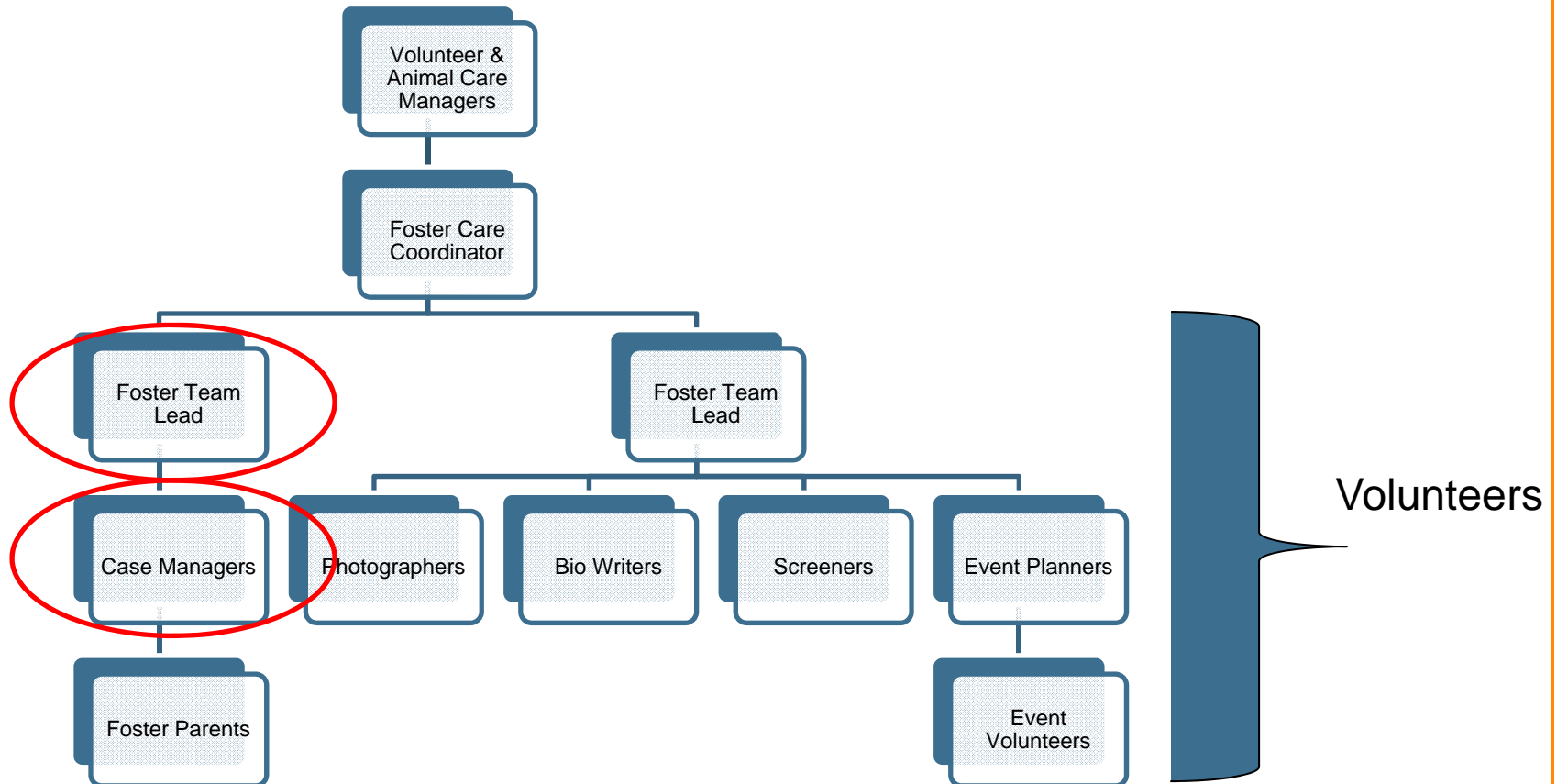
 **SEATTLE animal shelter**

9.26.14



The Structure of Success

3) Support the foster parent



Case Managers

Q: How do you track all the foster animals?

A: Volunteer Case Managers

- Experienced Foster Parents
- Specific Skills
- Helping Hand
- NOT Staff
- Can see around corners

4) Listen & Ask questions

5) Encourage



Why Do Foster Adoptions?



Choosing the Right Animals

Cold hard fact:
Adopters want instant gratification.



Choosing the Right Animals

Assuming space isn't an issue...



- Behavior (jumpy-mouthy, reactive, stressed, fearful, litterbox)
- Medical
- Age

Behavior Cases

Special Considerations:

- Foster Parent abilities
- Training Resources
- Acceptance of failure
- Insurance
- Direct access to Managers
- Length of stay



*Don't start your foster program
with these cases.*

Foster-Based Adoptions

Advertising:

Petfinder/Web

- Amazing Pictures
- GREAT write-up
- Video: Cindy



Cindy



Foster-Based Adoptions

Out in the Community:



Keeping the Spotlight on Fosters

Change the conversation:

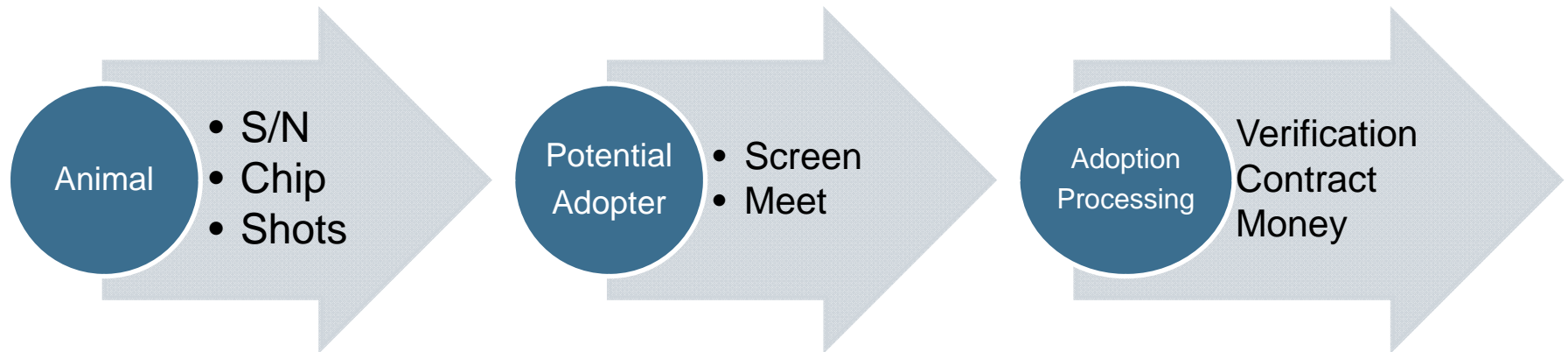


- At the shelter
 - Bulletin Boards
 - Staff Priority
 - Volunteer Reminders

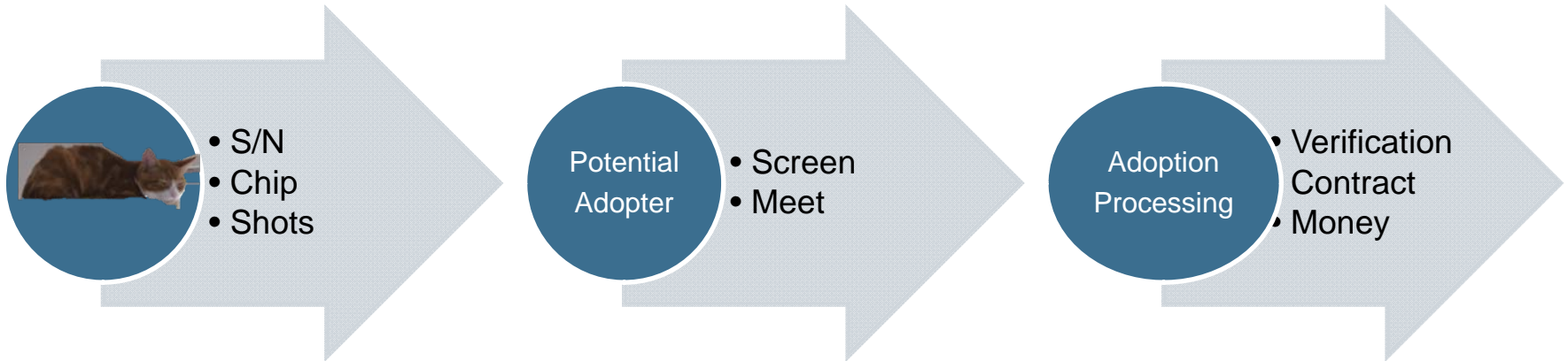


Talk about & CELEBRATE!

Foster-Based Adoptions



The Cat/Critter Process

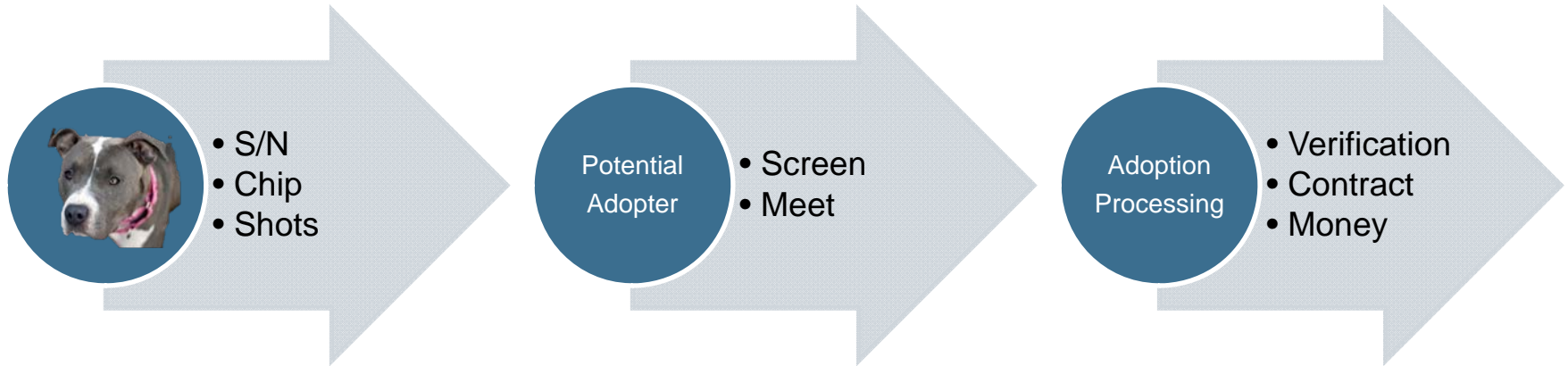


- Process for Medical

1. Adopter leaves VM
2. Phone screen by volunteer
3. Volunteer passes approved PA to FP
4. FP & cat/kitten meet PA
5. LOVE

1. FP sends PA to shelter with “Approved” form
2. Staff checks database
3. Staff processes adoption

The Dog Process



1. Adopter submits application
2. Phone/Database screen by staff
3. Staff passes approved PA to FP
4. FP & dog meet PA
5. LOVE

1. FP sends PA to shelter with “Approved” form
2. Staff processes adoption

Key to Adoptions: Screening, Matching, Promos

Screening

- Finding a good fit
- Trust adopters
- Short process

Matching

- Application better suited for another

Promotions

- The “Foster Fail”



Meet and Greets

Cats and Critters

- Shelter is always available
- Foster parent gets to choose
- Events are an option

Dogs

- Same as above
- Events aren't very successful (most dogs are behavior cases)
- Dog-dog greet always supervised (shelter or off-site)



Legal Concerns

Cash-handling Choices

- Have adopters come to shelter
- Case managers/FP with cc terminal (or Square)
- Online or via phone

Insurance

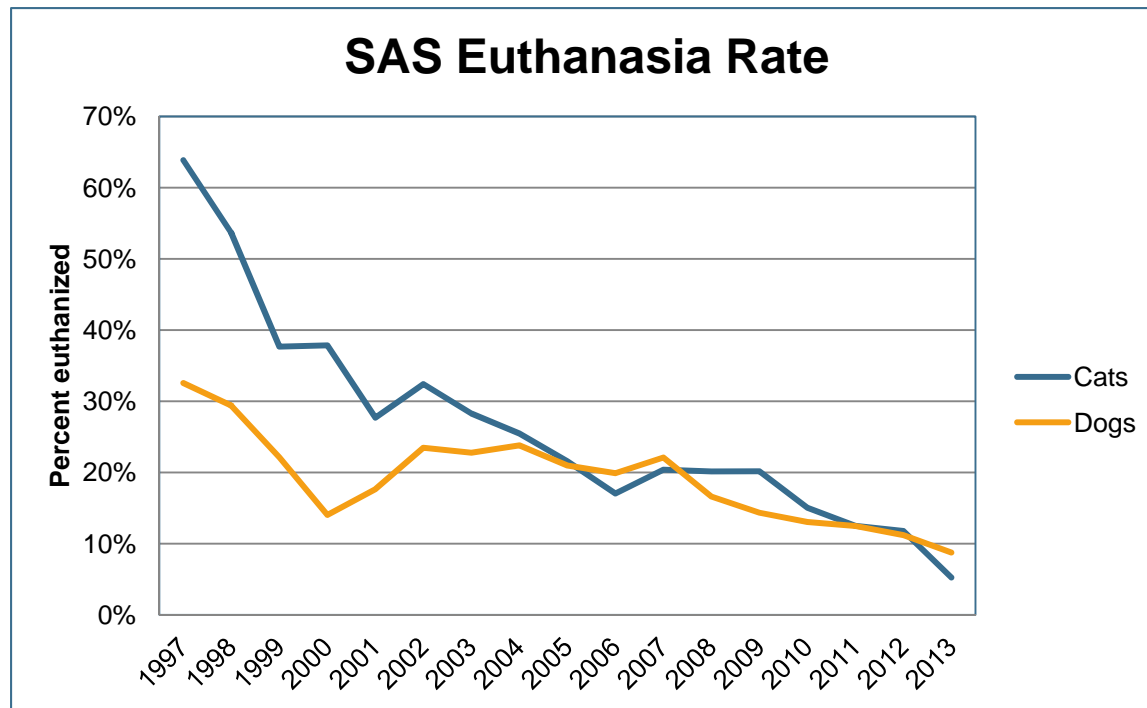
- We carry [volunteer insurance](#) on all FPs due to our state's definition

Loss of control

- Contracts
- Communications – direct line to staff and managers
- More lives saved

Staff/Management Buy-In

- Always start small and successful
- Don't "convert" your program. Instead, modify slowly based on capacity
- Celebrate your success



Foster Parent Buy-in

If new program, set expectations early.

If existing program:

- Seek out the right foster parents to partner with
- Test the water with moderate cases
- Celebrate the success
- As others see success, they will want to join
- Find a place for short-term fosters to participate

Q: How do 100% foster-based rescues fit into this new model without becoming obsolete, but instead adding value to the new trend?

A: In Seattle, here is what we see:

- GA Peaches Puppy Rescue – Transporting puppies into the area and adopting to high-quality homes.
- Furry Faces – Owner support
- Bullseye Pit Bull Rescue – Behavior Cases and Shelter Programs
- AARF – The tough or “special interest” cases

Adoptions from Foster

Support Structure +
Case Managers +
Adoption Process =
More Happy Endings



Additional Resources

Recruitment and Retention Webinars:

[Volunteer Management 101](#)

[Volunteer Management 201](#)

[Recruiting and Keeping Equine Volunteers](#)

Foster Resources from SAS:

[Cat Foster Manual](#)

[Dog Foster Manual](#)

[Dog Foster Description/Application](#)

[Additional Resources](#) (Templates and Samples!)

Questions?



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Let's Talk About the Next Generation of Foster Programs

Wednesday, November 5, 3-4 pm ET

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<http://www.aspcapro.org/webinar/2014-11-05/talk-foster-programs>