Back Where They Belong

Focusing on Return to Home in the Field

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Maddie's® Million Pet Challenge
UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program

The Public's Perspective

- Field services' role in the public's eye

- May be their primary contact with your shelter and services

- Vital to unify sheltering and field services

RTH Culture in the Field

- What happens in the field impacts everybody

- The value of RTH Culture in the Field

- Remember, in most cases RTH is a best option – especially in the field

- How can we increase RTH in the field

Return to Home Goals

- Generally the preferred solution for lost pets

- Most are found very close to home

- 70% found within 1 mile of home

42% of all dogs go under 400 ft (average city block)

http://tinyurl.com/D1B2Resources
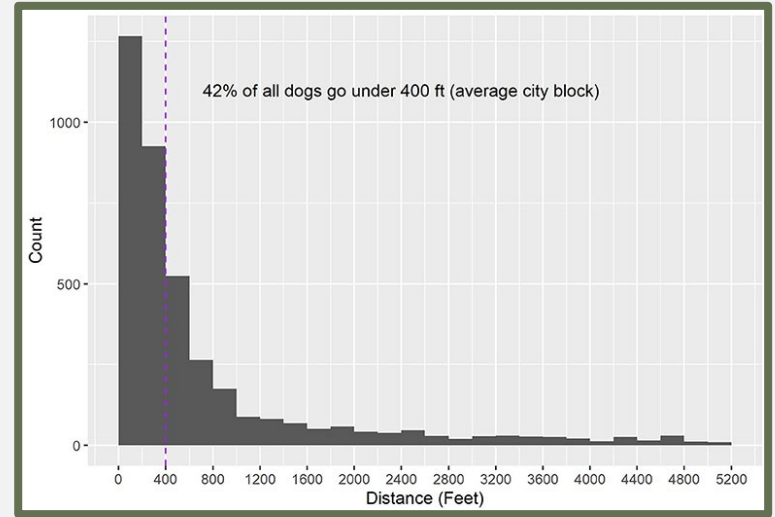
Trip to Shelter

- Should be last resort

- Crowding – mental, emotional and physical impacts

- Other options often better for everyone

- Less likely to be returned to owner just due to trip to shelter

- Many don't understand the shelter system

Field RTH

- Better for pet

- Better for owner

- Better for shelter

- Better for the community

- Time and cost savings

Policies and Practices

- Clear protocols/policies that prioritize RTH

- Expectations to follow steps

- Starts with assessing animal

- Prioritize RTH if no other concerns

ID Check and Follow-up

- Check for collar/ID

- Scan for chip

- Use chip lookup/shelter databases

- Trucks must have scanners

- Follow-up on info found ASAP (in the field)

Follow Found Protocols

- Good picture and description

- Upload to platforms

- Upload to shelter

- Do this ASAP

- Let folks know you have the pet even while you're still in the field.

- Have protocols for who posts which animals and where

- Have a sense of urgency

Check out the
"Leverage Social Media, Other Internet Resources and Volunteers to Supercharge RTH" session
on Day 2 of this event.

Work the Neighborhood

- Once listed/posted – work the neighborhood

- Walk around neighborhood

- Walk pet around if behaviorally okay

- Have business cards

- Perform door-to-door check ins

- Door hangers/flyers – with info on how to reclaim the found pet

- Success may depend on community relations

- Build those relationships to improve RTH in the Field success

Animal Services Role

- Build trust and relationships

- Move from punitive "dog catcher" image to community partner

- Field services – public face of your agency

- Build relationships – stop and talk

- Engage the community – carry resources, fun items for kids/people

- Move away from punitive role to trust and providing services/solutions

- Partner with the community

From Punishment to Support

- Citations DO NOT:
    - Mend fences (literally or figuratively)
    - Spay/neuter animals
    - Help owners with their pets
- Citations DO:
    - Create roadblocks to RTO
- Citations don't prevent people from having pets (they'll just get another pet)
- Most people want to do the right thing for their pet
- They may just need resources or information
- Help animal owners instead of focusing on punishing them

Complicated Relationships

- Some community members (especially of unhouse, marginalized, undocumented communities) have complicated relationships with authority figures.

- Paramilitary appearance and attitude – often hurts relations with community

- May also inadvertently encourage a punitive mindset

- "Police-like" uniforms can do more harm than good in animal services

- Work to create a community-centric animal services

Ice Cream Truck Aspirations

- One easy change – our vehicles.

- Historically looked like law enforcement

- Can improve community relations

- Portray agency as support, resources to help pet owners.

- Ice cream truck thoughts

Community Focus

- Community focused animal services is an opportunity

- Increase your engagement with the community

- Goal – authentic and lasting relationships

- Increase how many animals can go home and stay there

How are you doing?

- Track and analyze data

- Justify resources and policy changes

- PetCo Love Lost Workbok

http://tinyurl.com/D1B2Resources

How are you doing?

- HASS RTH Benchmarking Tool is a great resource.

http://tinyurl.com/D1B2Resources

Help is Available

- HASS Playbook

http://tinyurl.com/D1B2Resources

How to Use the HASS Playbook

Utilize the HASS Playbook and self-assessments in one of three ways:

1. Complete a self-assessment for each of our five main Playbook sections: Foundations, Pet Support Services, Lost Pet Reunification, Supported Self-Rehoming, and Intake-to-Placement. The self-assessment results will provide a customized outline with guides to help create new or improve existing programs based on your responses.

2. Complete a self-assessment for our five main Playbook categories and receive a complete PDF for each Playbook section, in addition to customized results.

3. Want to download all of our guides? Access the complete HASS Playbook below.

DOWNLOAD THE PLAYBOOK

Foundations

Create a foundation for sustainable programming within your organization.

TAKE THE ASSESSMENT →

Pet Support Services

Community services identified or developed by a shelter to assist pets and people in need.

TAKE THE ASSESSMENT →

Lost Pet Reunification

Shelter services that prioritize reuniting pets with their families.

TAKE THE ASSESSMENT →

Supported Self-Rehoming

Programs that enable the community to participate in the process of finding new homes for their pets without having to enter a shelter.

TAKE THE ASSESSMENT →

Intake-to-Placement

Process of taking in animals in need and identifying or placing them in the best environment available.

TAKE THE ASSESSMENT →

Thank You!

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Resources & References

1. HASS Playbook

2. HASS Benchmarking Tool

3. PetCo Love Lost

4. "More Than a Furry Companion: The Ripple Effect of Companion Animals on Neighborhood Interactions and Sense of Community"

5. "Punishment to Support: The Need to Align Animal Control Enforcement with the Human Social Justice Movement"

http://tinyurl.com/D1B2Resources