



Back Where They Belong

***The Crucial Role of Return to Home
in Reducing Shelter Crowding and
Euthanasia Today***

Kate Hurley, DVM - Director
Koret Shelter Medicine Program
At the University of California, Davis

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



Let's Talk About

- Why we are here
- What a stray animal is
- How it feels
- How many don't go home
- Vacuums
- How we can get animals back home
- What's next



WHY are we here?



What is a stray animal?

- It is an animal that almost certainly already has a home.



What is your individual WHY?



Lost a pet? How did it feel?

How did you feel when you lost your pet? (1 word - repeating a word already entered will make that word bigger in our WordCloud)

👍 0

Nobody has responded yet.
Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at pollev.com/app



<https://tinyurl.com/Learniverse>

How did it feel when you got your pet back?

How did you feel when you got your lost pet back? (1 word - repeating a word already entered will make that word bigger in our WordCloud)

👍 0

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Shelter Industry Systems WHY

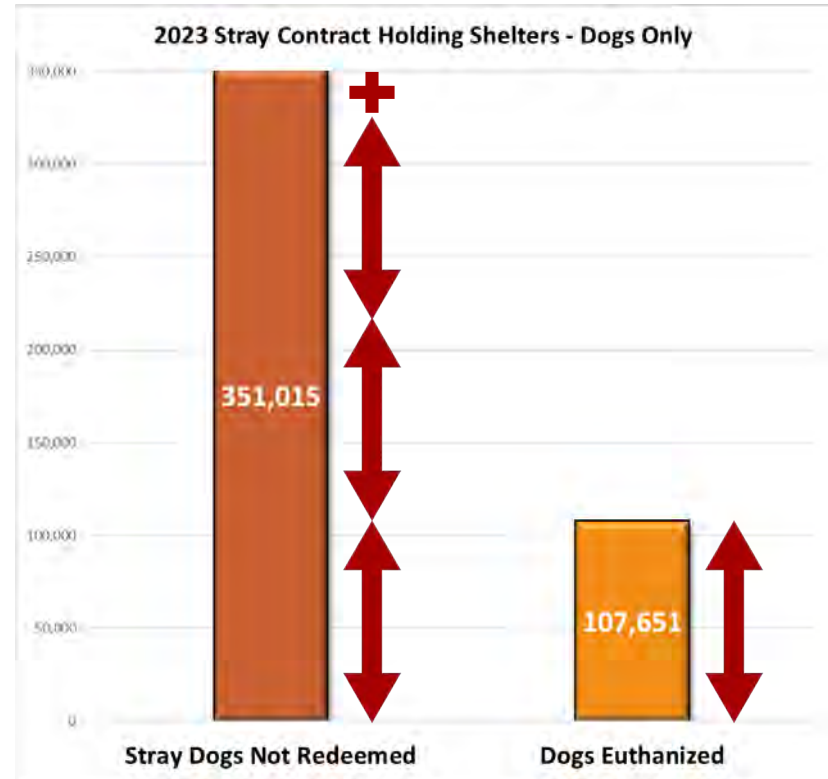
2023 Data from Shelter Animals Count (SAC) (For shelters with stray intake contracts only.)

- Stray Dogs impounded = 543,265
- Stray Dogs RTO'ed = 192,000
 - 35% RTO rate for strays
- **Strays not RTO'ed = 351,015 (65%)**
- Dogs Euthanized (all intakes) = 108,651 (13%)



Shelter Industry Systems WHY

- Decreasing *the number of strays not RTO* by just one third would more than equal the total number of dogs euthanized each year.



How big is your opportunity?

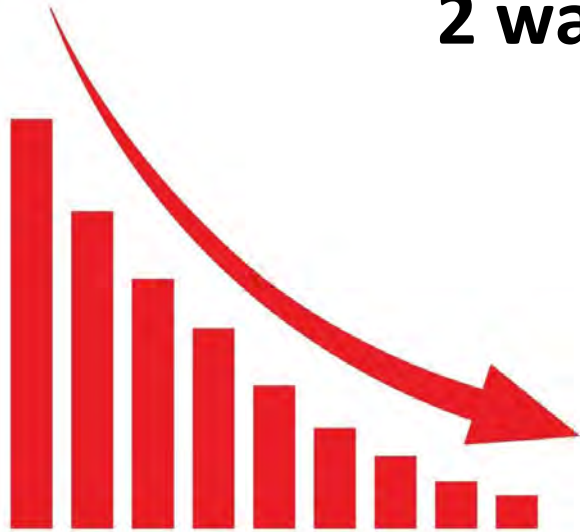
What is your number of unreturned strays?

How does it relate to the gap between what you're able to do and what you wish you could do?

Decrease Stray Intake Increase RTH Outcomes

How Do We Decrease the # NOT RTO?

2 ways to do this....



Decrease Stray Intakes



Increase RTO Outcomes

How Do We Increase RTH for Dogs?

2 ways to do this....



Day 1

A bar chart with 10 bars of decreasing height from left to right. A red arrow curves downwards from the top left to the bottom right, pointing towards the end of the chart.

Decrease Stray Intakes



Day 2

A bar chart with 10 bars of increasing height from left to right. A green arrow curves upwards from the bottom left to the top right, pointing towards the end of the chart.

Increase RTH Outcomes

A Basic Principle: The Vacuum Effect

- **Removing animals** from habitat, homes, neighborhoods or communities without changing anything at the point of origin, **will chronically destabilize homes and populations**
- Every animal returned builds a bridge to the community and holds a spot in the community.



The Vacuum Principle at Work in the Real World (why removal doesn't work)

TECH HEALTH ENVIRONMENT SPACE HUMANS PHYSICS NATURE VIDEO POLITICS & POLICY



Culling Feral Cats Actually Increases Their Numbers, New Study Finds

Killing them only makes them stronger.

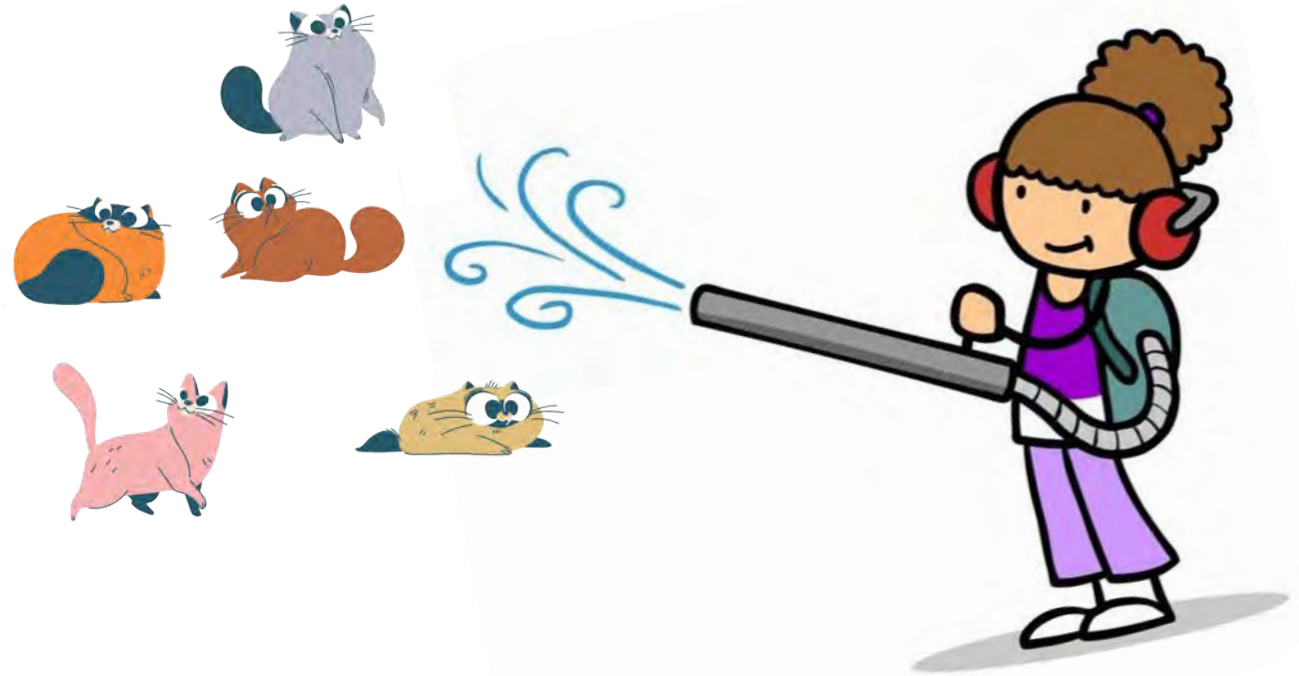
BEC CREW 8 APR 2015

A new study has found that trapping and culling might not be the best solution to Australia's feral cat problem - the practice can actually cause an increase in their numbers.

And although the culling did what it was supposed to - initially lowered the feral cat population - the researchers found that soon after, the population not only replenished itself within 12 months, but actually ended up increasing.

"In the areas that I had tried to reduce cat numbers, I recorded an increase in cat numbers. I actually had more cats running around on those sites than beforehand," [Lazenby told Salleh at the ABC](#). "We recorded a 75 to 211 percent increase in the minimum number of feral cats known to be alive in the culled areas."

And...It Works in Reverse Too!



And...It Works in Reverse Too!



A partnership of Maddie's Fund®, UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program, and Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program at the University of Florida

[ABOUT](#) [WHO'S INVOLVED](#) [RESOURCES](#) [GET INVOLVED](#)

BECAUSE EVERY CAT COUNTS.

MILLION CAT CHALLENGE IS A JOINT PROJECT OF
MADDIE'S SHELTER MEDICINE PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA &
UC DAVIS KORET SHELTER MEDICINE PROGRAM, SPONSORED BY MADDIE'S FUND



“ The Million Cat Challenge thanks Maddie's Fund for their generous sponsorship and their dedication to saving the lives of our nation's cats ”

Lives Saved*
3,715,860

And...It's Not JUST a Cat Thing

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NEWS // LOCAL

Study finds most loose dogs on San Antonio streets have owners

By Vincent T. Davis, Staff writer
Nov 27, 2019



Animal Care Officer Robert Lopez makes initial contact with a stray dog and her four puppies discovered on Quinteria Road while making his rounds on the Southwest Side in December 2017. A new study conducted this year shows that up to 96 percent of the dogs loose on the streets of San Antonio actually belong to somebody.

Marvin Pflaffer / San Antonio Express-News

Animal Care Services officials are rethinking the way they tackle the problem of dogs running loose in San Antonio streets after a comprehensive study showed most of the animals have owners and aren't strays.

"I was shocked when the results came back," said ACS Assistant Director Shannon Sims. "That's a significant issue."

According to the 2019 report, there are about 35,000 roaming dogs in the city, but 87 percent to 96 percent of those are owned.

According to the 2019 report, there are about 35,000 roaming dogs in the city, but **87% to 96% of those are owned.**



Remember - Return to Home Begins Close to Home

People Want to Help Lost Pets Get Back Home. Here's How to Help Them Do Just That.

PUBLISHED ON
July 18, 2022

SOCIAL MEDIA
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Key insights from the new world of lost pet reunification by our guest bloggers Gina Knepp, Kristen Hassen, and Arin Greenwood

Here are some statistics about lost and found pets that may surprise you, and should guide everyone's lost pet reunification efforts:

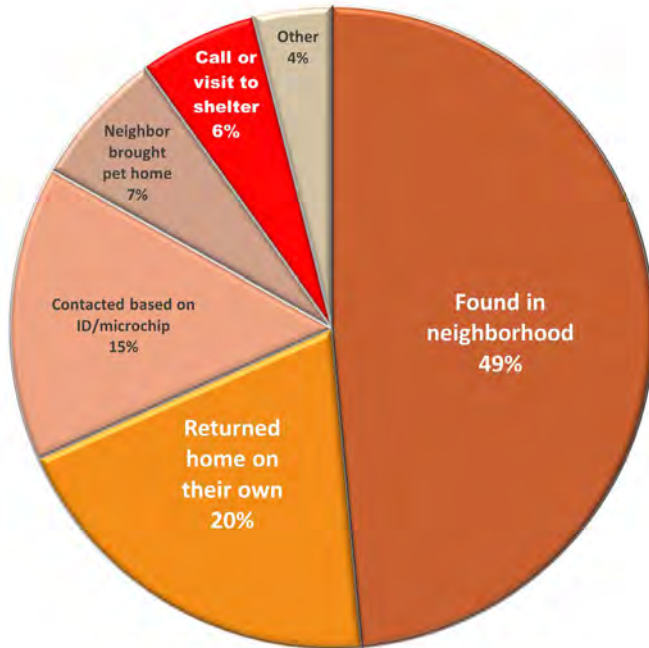
- 47 to 65% of pets who enter shelters are lost or stray.
- Only 20 to 25% of pets who enter shelters are owner surrenders.
- **70% of lost dogs that were reunited with their owners in a recent study were found less than one mile from their homes.**
- 9 out of 10 shelters we interviewed said they do not have even one full-time staff position dedicated to getting lost pets home and even fewer have volunteer roles aimed at lost pet reunification.
- When the Human Animal Support Services data team surveyed lost pet finders, 37% of people who showed up in an animal shelter intake lobby with a found pet said they would be willing to hold the pet and try to help get them home. 57% of finders said they had not taken any measures to get the pet home before bringing it to the animal shelter.
- In the first city to pilot a program asking people to hold found pets for two days and try to get them home, 77% of people who were asked to help said yes. 65% of those people were able to reunite the pets with their owners without the animals ever coming to the shelter. Of the reunited pets, 71% were medium or large dogs.



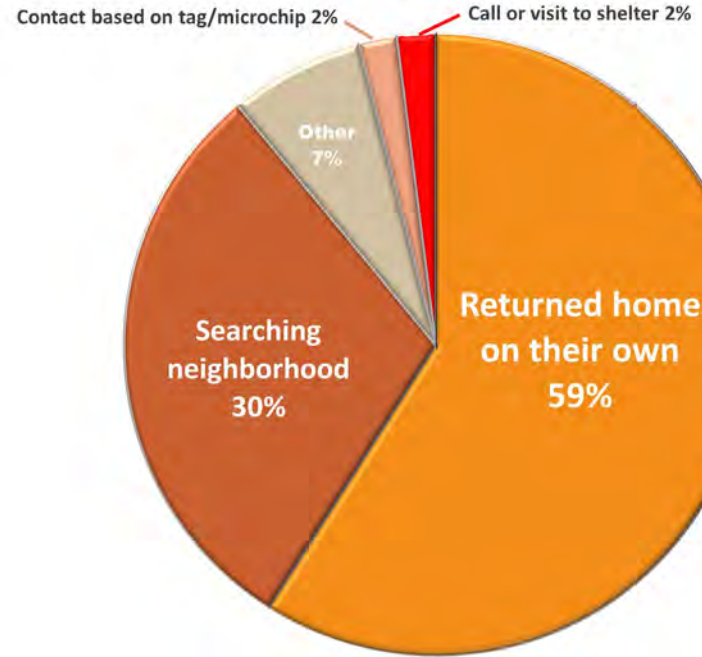
“70% of lost dogs that were reunited with their owners in a recent study were found less than one mile from their homes.”

Return to Home Begins Close to Home

DOGS



CATS



And That Was 12 Years Ago - BSM (Before Social Media)

Social Media/Apps
Facebook

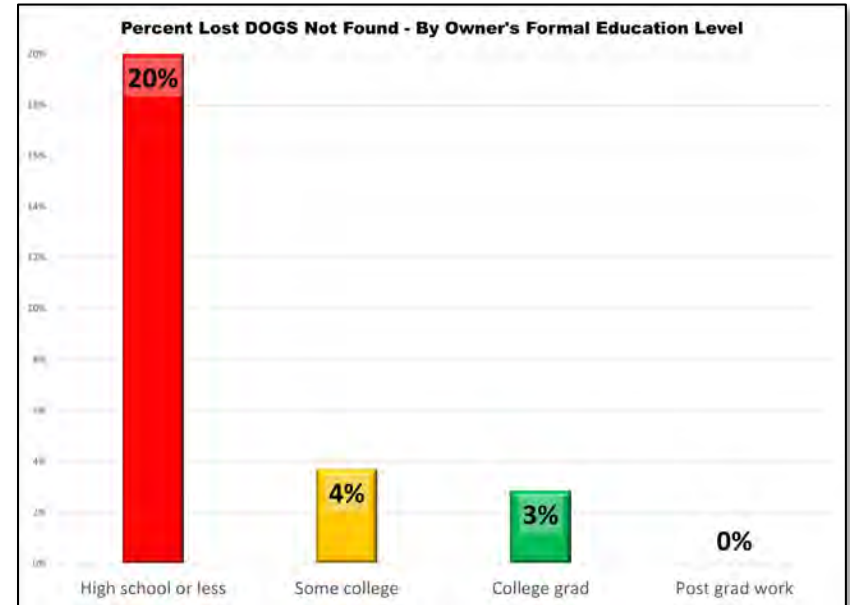
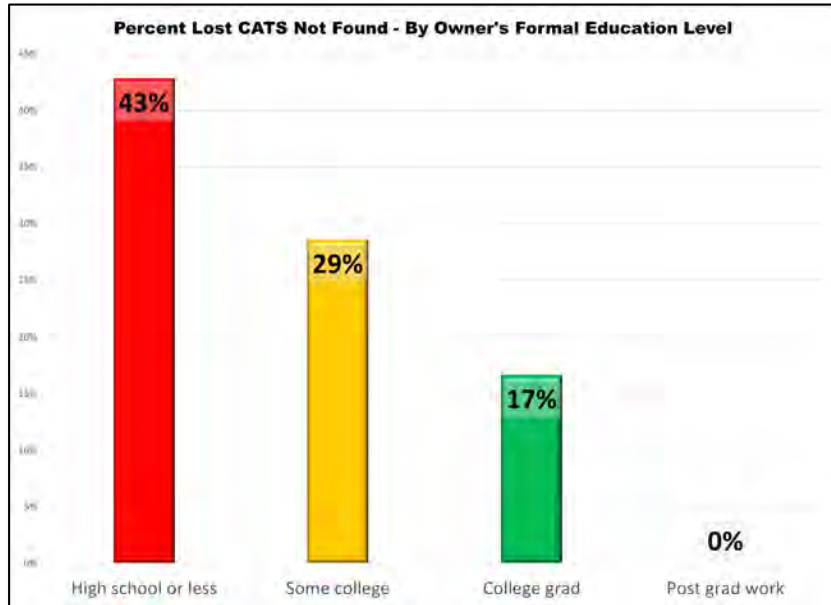
Websites, Lists and Found Platforms
List

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

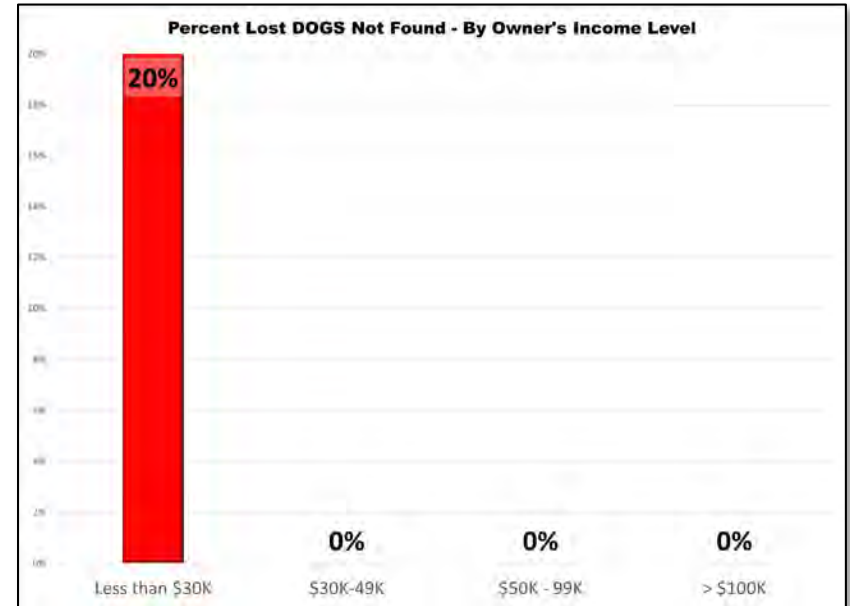
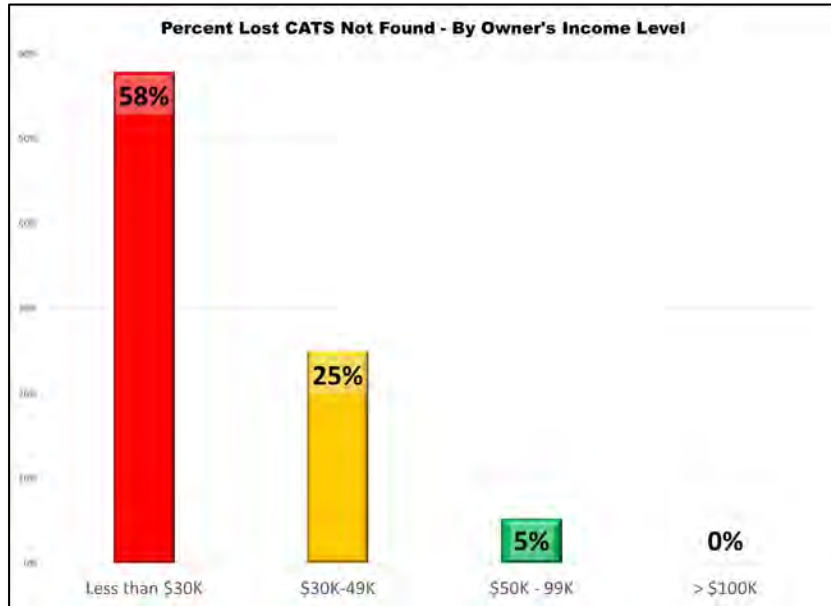
Society



And...sometimes the most marginalized communities suffer the most harm.



And...sometimes the most marginalized communities suffer the most harm.



What barriers to returning home are lowered if the animal doesn't have to come in to the shelter?



Share your
answers in
the chat!



Thank You!

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Resources for This Keynote

<http://tinyurl.com/D1B1Resources>



Enjoy the Event!

Full Schedule

Wednesday, February 21: Before (and instead of!) the Shelter

Day One Schedule

Note: times listed are Pacific (PT).

- **9 a.m.** – Event kickoff
- **9:10 a.m.** – **Keynote** – Dr. Kate Hurley, UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program

Block 1 9:35 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

- **9:40 a.m.** – **Contracts, Jurisdictions, Fees and Local Ordinance Considerations to Promote Return to Home** – Cole Wakefield, Good Shepherd Humane Society
- **10:10 a.m.** – **Getting Cats Back Where They Belong** – Laura Lampley, Pasadena Humane Society
- **10:40 a.m.** – **Using Technology to Improve Your Lost and Found Systems** – Elkie Wills, San Diego Humane Society
- **11:10 a.m.** – Panel discussion and Q&A with speakers and guests

Block 2 11:45 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

- **11:45 a.m.** – **Focusing on Return to Home in the Field** – Vincent Medley, Human Animal Support Services (HASS)
- **12:15 p.m.** – **Empowering Dispatch With Training, Support and Resources for the Public** – Michelle George, Companions and Animals for Reform and Equity (CARE)
- **12:30 p.m.** – **Working With Finders to Help Get Animals Back Where They Belong** – Mike Wheeler, Cabot Animal Support Services
- **12:45 p.m.** – **Shelter Outreach and Support Programs to Get and Keep Animals Where They Belong** – Christine Kim, My Dog is My Home
- **1:15 p.m.** – Panel discussion and Q&A with speakers and guests

Wednesday, February 28: At the Shelter

Day Two Schedule

Note: times listed are Pacific (PT).

- **9 a.m.** – Event kickoff
- **9:10 a.m.** – **Keynote** – Dr. Kate Hurley, UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program

Block 1 9:35 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

- **9:40 a.m.** – **Focusing on Return to Home at the Shelter to Get More Animals Back Where They Belong** – Shyanne Schull, Washoe County Animal Services
- **10:10 a.m.** – **Easy Shelter Website Changes to Increase Return to Home** – Tori Fugate, KC Pet Project
- **10:40 a.m.** – **Making It Easy for Owners to Find and Redeem Lost Pets: Tech Tips and Communication Strategies** – Bobby Mann and Mia Navedo-Williams, Humane Rescue Alliance
- **11:10 a.m.** – Panel discussion and Q&A with speakers and guests

Block 2 11:45 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

- **11:45 a.m.** – **Getting Pets Home with Better Approaches to On-Pet IDs and ID/Microchip Tracing** – Nina Stively, Loudoun County Animal Services
- **12:15 p.m.** – **Leveraging Social Media, Other Internet Resources and Volunteers to Supercharge Return to Home** – Jordan Frey and Caroline Malcolm, San Diego Humane Society
- **12:30 p.m.** – **Removing Barriers to Get More Animals Back Where They Belong** – Akisha Townsend Eaton, Companions and Animals for Reform and Equity (CARE)
- **1:15 p.m.** – Panel discussion and Q&A with speakers and guests
- **1:50 p.m.** – Event closing and **What Found Feels Like** contest winners announced

For more info visit: www.sheltersummit.com