

Agenda

- Benefits of free pet adoptions
- Why people have concerns
- What research tells us
- Real-life experiences
- Tips and tools to get started



**...shelters and rescue groups who do free adoptions know that the "free" part is a marketing strategy, not a hand-out." - Christie Keith - Christie Keith - Christie Keith, from her blog "Dogged" - Christie Keith, from her blog "Dogged













Why People Have Concerns



Why People Have Concerns

- · Well-being of animal
- Owner retention
- Health/General care
- Revenue from adoption fees
- Value of animals and the adopted pet
- Public image of the shelter or rescue organization



What Research Tells Us

- Well-being of pet
 - 1. Research tells us that there is no correlation between what someone pays for a pet and how much they love and value them.
 - 2. Nearly everyone in rescue has adopted a pet that they have not paid for and still loved them.



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"If you trust in your adoption policies and procedures, the price you charge for adoption is irrelevant." — Dane County Humane Society "...our adoption standards are exactly the same as they always are. We still turn people away if we do not feel that they meet our expectations or if we don't feel like it's a good match...Nothing changes for us, except that we don't receive an adoption donation." — Second Chance Animal Rescue



What Research Tells Us

Conclusions:

- 1. No significant differences between two groups → attachment level was the same whether or not an adoption
- 2. Fee-waived adoptions create an opportunity to positively affect cats in shelters by finding more homes.
- 3. Free adoptions reduce cat population.





What Research Tells Us

OUTCOME OF PETS ADOPTED DURING A WAIVED-FEE ADOPTION EVENT: MADDIE'S MATCHMAKER ADOPTATHON

S. L. MacArthur, J. K. Levy, P. A. Dingman, S. J. Tucker Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL USA.

 $Abstract: \underline{shelter medicine.vet med.ufl.edu/files/2012/06/Abstract_MacArthur_Adoptathon.pdf}$

- Survey of 1,928 pet adopters (57% responded)
- Pet and owner characteristics and pet lifestyle were compared between adopters who still had their pets and those who did not 6-12 months post adoption.
 - 95% of cats and 93% of dogs were still in the home



What Research Tells Us

Conclusions:

- 1. The vast majority of pets adopted remained in the hom (95% of cats, 93% of dogs).
- 2. Owners of both retained and non-retained pets reporte high attachment and integrated pets into their homes.
- 3. 74 % of cats and 87% of dogs had been to a veterinarian
- 4. Free adoption promotions may increase adoptions with compromising quality of life.



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What Research Tells Us



- Survey of 344 adopters who participated in a one of six feewaived events held at the Edmonton Humane Society (EHS).
- Directly compares 138 non fee-waived adopters to 206 feewaived adopters at the same shelter during the same time period.

Information: www.aspcapro.org/resource/saving-lives-adoption-programs/saving-power-fee-waived-adoptions

What Research Tells Us

Conclusions:

- 1. No difference in post-adoption veterinary care received.
- Fee-waived cats were just as likely to remain in their homes as non fee-waived cats.
- 3. 80% "strongly agree" that EHS considers cats to be valuable and that they would adopt from EHS again.
- 4. 87% of fee-waived cats adopters considered length of stay in selection (compared to 13% of regular adopters)
- Fee-waived adopters much more likely to make a donation to EHS than non fee-waived adopters.



What Research Tells Us



- Online survey of adopters who participated in Maddie's[®] Pet Adoption Days in 2013.
- Adopters asked about:
 - Adopted pet
 - Organization adopted from
 - The event in general
- 357 total surveys, representing 71 organizations.

nformation:

www.maddiesfund.org/Maddies_Institute/Surveys/Adopter_Survey_2013



What Research Tells Us

Conclusions:

- 51% attended the adoption event as opposed to another time because the adoption fee was waived.
- 2. 80% rated their adoption experience as "outstanding."
- 3. 33% of the respondents reported this was their first time ever adopting a pet from a shelter or rescue group.
- 4. 82% reported this was their first time adopting from that particular organization .
- 5. 97% said they would return to the same group to adopt another pet in the future.
- 99% would recommend adopting a shelter pet to their friends, family, co-workers and neighbors.



What Research Tells Us

Conclusions:

- 7. 25% chose their adoptive organization because they knew the pet they wanted was there.
- 8. 79% indicated that they feel a "very strong attachment" toward their new pet.
- 9. 98% reported that their pet has adjusted to his or her new home.





What Research Tells Us





Real-Life Experiences

"Our initial fear of attracting unqualified homes... was quickly alleviated... the population of adopters that we did attract were folks that first and foremost wanted to give a homeless animal a great home."

— Humane Society of Silicon Valley



Real-Life Experiences

"...FREE was not a scary thing."

– Community Concern for Cats

"As a result of the success we have experienced with Maddie's, we have incorporated "free" adoption events at our facility throughout the year and have been able to find wonderful homes for our animals."

— Valley Humane Society



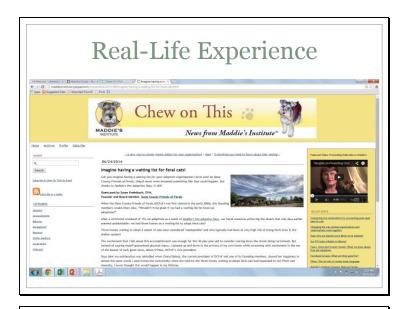
Real-Life Experiences

"I can say without hesitation or exception, ...[our] experience with fee waived adoptions has been nothing short of extraordinary... Our return rate beats national averages... These events help spotlight and place tough to adopt animals... one of the many strategies used in forging our little slice of Northern Nevada into a no-kill community... the adoption price makes zero difference in quality of homes, waiving fees just increases the quantity."

Nevada Humane Society



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Tips and Tools to Get Started

Guides:

- Maddie's Pet Adoption Days
 - 1. Free Adoptions: Do They Really Work? www.adopt.maddiesfund.org/mediaandpr/about-free-adoptions/
 - Helpful Videos From Veteran Organizations www.adopt.maddiesfund.org/for-shelters/helpful-videos
 Neveda Namurae Society, Washer County, NY





Tips and Tools to Get Started

Guides:

- ASPCA
 - 1. Tips for Free Adult Cat Promotions www.aspcapro.org/resource/saving-lives-adoption-programs-adoption-marketing/tips-free-adult-cat-promotions
 - Getting Started With Fee-Waived www.aspcapro.org/getting-started-fee-waived
 - Data collection for fee-waived cat adoption promotions

http://aspcapro.org/resource/saving-lives-adoption-marketing-adoption-program/data-collection-fee-waived-cat-adoption







Tips and Tools to Get Started Marketing Resources Social Media for Pet Adoption and Adoption Events www.maddiesfund.org/Maddies Institute/Webcasts/Social Media for Adoptions Using Social Media to Maximize Turnout for Maddie's Pet Adoption Days www.maddiesfund.org/Maddies Institute/Webcasts/Social Media for Adoption D ays Social Media for Pet Adoption and Adoption Events Social Media for Pet Adoption Events

Take Home Messages

Free adoptions are a psychological marketing tool that enables us to fulfill our mission by:

- 1. Adopting a larger number of animals.
- 2. Highlighting adoptions of special populations of animals.
- 3. Increasing foot traffic to the shelter facility and/or adoption events.
- 4. Raising awareness of shelter animals.
- 5. Attracting positive media attention.
- 6. Promoting collaboration among shelter and rescue organizations.



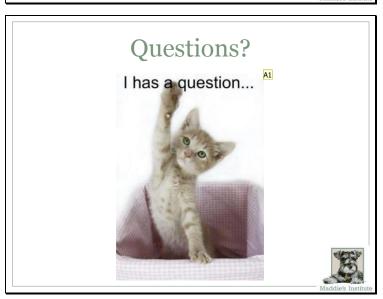
Take Home Messages

Free adoptions save two lives:

- 1. The animal being adopted
- 2. The animal who now has a space at the shelter







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