



## The 100,000 lives campaign

- “Prevent incidents of harm” compared to pre-campaign baseline
- 6 key evidence-based tested initiatives
- Volunteered 100 hospitals
- Early adopters
- A peer-to-peer support group for health care improvement
- Staff of 75 ☺

**122,300 lives saved in 18 months**



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## Chico City Library, 2012



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## We have a thousand!



p.s. between you all, you committed to 1,305 fewer cats dying in your shelters over the next six months than in the first six months of 2012. That's 7 fewer cats a day on average. Imagine if we could export that success to every shelter in North America, how much happier a time 2014 would be for cats.

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## A few months later...

### Animal Welfare Organizations Converge on Nashville for Animal Care Expo 2013

World's largest animal care conference and tradeshow  
opens at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention  
Center on May 8

This year's Expo will begin with an inspiring Welcome Session presentation by Dan Heath, co-author of *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*. Heath will explore why some big changes happen easily while many small changes prove impossible, revealing a simple, 3-part framework that will help animal welfare organizations continue their quest for change.

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Coincidence? I think not!!!

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## Plenary session



Photo from: <https://bigcatslittlecats.wordpress.com/>

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## Why not go big?



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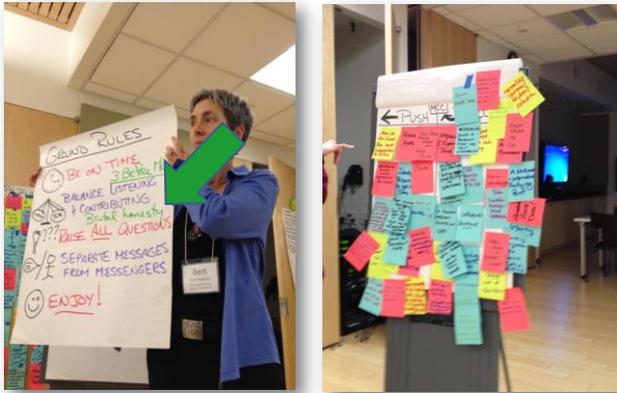
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## “Design Storm”



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## Thank you!!!



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# The Million Cat Challenge

- Shelter based initiative
  - Plus supporting organizations!
- 5 key initiatives
- Voluntary participation
- Share challenges, solutions and success
- 5 year increase in lives saved compared to baseline 2012




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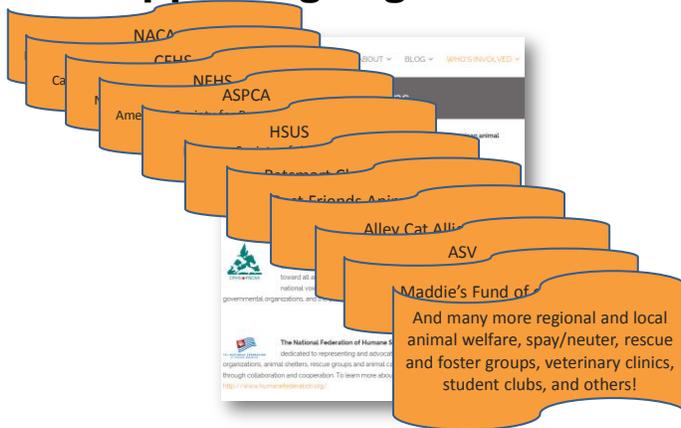
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# Supporting organizations




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- ✓ Balancing intake, shelter care and outcomes
- ✓ Evidence based
- ✓ Proven in a variety of contexts
- ✓ Variable resource requirements
- ✓ Can be implemented in part, gradually or all at once; singly, in sequence or in conjunction

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## The Big Five




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## Alternatives to Intake




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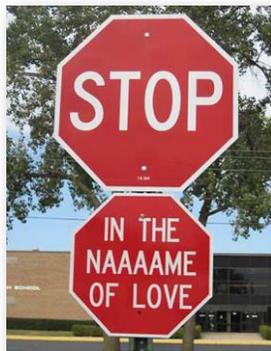
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## Alternatives to intake

- For ferals when RTF/TNR is not an option for the shelter?
- For healthy stray or owned cats when admission would result in over-crowding or euthanasia?
- For underage kittens when foster care is not available?
- For any cat that would be better served through another organization or by staying where it is
- When legally/contractually permitted




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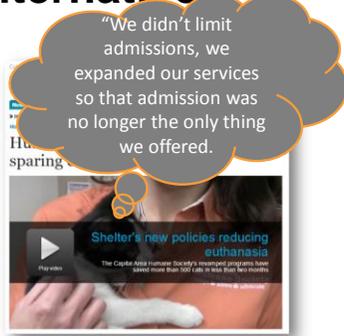
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## Providing Alternatives

- From simple referral and education to material assistance:
  - Lost and found
  - Humane co-existence
  - Resources for keeping
  - Help with rehoming
  - Foster by finder
- Spay/neuter/vaccine very often helps
- Whatever you do, let other organizations know



<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2014/11/10/humane-societys-new-policy-spare-cats.html>

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## Alternatives to intake is NOT:

- NOT: refusing admission to sick, injured, orphaned, high-risk, dangerous or abused cats
- NOT: just leaving the public to fend for themselves
- NOT: foisting the problem onto another organization
- NOT: all or nothing




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## So how's that working out for you?

- What was the HARDEST THING about implementation?
- What was the BIGGEST SURPRISE?
- What ONE PEARL of wisdom would you like to share with other shelters?
- ~ 20 shelter directors and managers from all types of shelters answered




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## Hardest thing

“

**Dealing with the people who pushed back** on the idea of our policy changes. It's really hard for staff when people threatened to "take care" of the problem themselves, or told us we were heartless, or said that was the dumbest thing they have ever heard, or screamed that they were tax payers and what are they paying us for!

Tracy Mohr, Chico City Animal Services, Chico, CA

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## What was the hardest thing about implementation?

“

Getting past the attitudes of **staff and others in the department** who think "**It won't work.**" Educating your team and getting their buy-in is critical.

Brigid Wasson, The Path Ahead Shelter Consulting, Cloverdale, CA

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## Hardest thing

“

**The leap of faith I had to take.** I considered myself to be an old school animal control director. But I knew what I was doing was not getting us anywhere and no matter what I did I couldn't fix it.

Betty Cochran, Clovis Animal Services, Clovis, CA

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### What was the biggest surprise?

“  
What surprised me was **how well the public received the change**, especially in light of the staff concerns about the public. Most people were happy to hear that the shelter wanted to work with the community on long term solutions.  
Brigid Wasson, The Path Ahead Shelter Consulting, Cloverdale, CA

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### Biggest Surprise

“  
The biggest surprise was how many **people really understood**, and even told us what the new policies were as they walked in the door.  
Tracy Mohr, Chico City Animal Services, Chico, CA

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### What one pearl of wisdom would you offer?

“  
My biggest pearl of wisdom is: **just do it!** Don't hesitate, don't waffle, don't ask. Set your policies and stick with them.  
Brigid Wasson, The Path Ahead Shelter Consulting, Cloverdale, CA

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## Pearl of Wisdom



Make sure to **inform your area partners** about your plans. Don't ask for permission per se, but share the information. I learned this the very hard way.

Gina Knepp, Front Street Shelter, City of Sacramento

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## Pearl of Wisdom



Take the time to explain it but **tell it like it is gospel** and that's just the way it is, most people appreciate that and surprisingly don't fight it.

Gina Knepp, Front Street Shelter, City of Sacramento

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So for the other hard headed animal control folks like myself I hope they will take the leap and know while I don't think it is perfect (since we can't TNR right now) I am very thankful to have been a part of the movement that has saved thousands of lives AND lightened the burden placed on our souls and that of our staff that have had to euthanize these cats all these years.

Betty Cochran, Clovis Animal Services, Clovis, CA

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## Managed Admission

“Scheduling intake of cats to match the shelter’s ability to ensure humane care and safe movement to the appropriate outcome for every cat.”



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## Managed Admission

- Any form of regulating intake to match resources:
  - Closing night drop boxes
  - Limiting field pickups
  - Restricting intake hours or days
  - Creating waiting lists
  - Scheduling appointments
- WHEN, plus or minus WHO
- Combine with alternatives to intake resources



[http://animalhumanenm.org/pets/about/managed\\_admissions.php](http://animalhumanenm.org/pets/about/managed_admissions.php)

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<http://main.fatcatart.com/blog/schastlivogo-konca-sveta/>

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## Hardest Thing

“

**Convincing staff and volunteers** that the animals are going to be OK and will actually benefit from the changes. Some of the **concepts are a bit counterintuitive** and certainly much different philosophies than we've followed before.

Kathie Johnson, Animal Humane Society, Minneapolis, MN

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## Hardest Thing

“

The hardest part of implementation was **making the decision**. I can't tell you how much I resisted not opening our doors to all cats, every minute of every day. We had a case of panleukopenia that killed dozens of cats that put me over the edge and convinced me that killing by overcrowding was not part of our mission.

Barbara Carr, SPCA serving Erie County, Tonawanda, NY

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## What was the biggest surprise?

“

**How easy** it was, and **how fast** my population of cats went down, as a result!! I had a garage full of cats stacked on top of each other...all being treated for URI...and within a month, my garage was empty, and the URI in the shelter was under control.

Lori Brizius, Harbor Humane, West Olive, MI

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## Biggest Surprise

“

The big surprise was that **the public "got it" a lot quicker than we did.** They instantly understood the life-saving nature of managed admissions.

Barbara Carr, SPCA serving Erie County, Tonawanda, NY

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## Biggest Surprise

“

**The world didn't end.** No one freaked out and no one got angry. But then again, it's hard to argue with our results.

Rachel Finney, Capital Area Humane Society, Columbus, Ohio

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## Pearl of Wisdom

“

**Communicate with staff and volunteers** throughout the process. **They are your biggest advocates** so when they are on board and understand the why's, it's easier for them to talk with customers and friends about the changes and how they benefit the animals.

Kathie Johnson, Animal Humane Society, Minneapolis, MN

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## Pearl of Wisdom

“

Encourage staff members to **be flexible** and use good judgment. **There will always be animals that should be taken in without an appointment** due to immediate need or extenuating circumstances: err on the side of the animal's best interest.

Sharon Harvey, Cleveland Animal Protective League, Cleveland, OH

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## Pearl of Wisdom

“

Our recommendation is to implement change quickly and **be willing to make mistakes, learn and adjust.** We only wish we had implemented sweeping changes years earlier.

Dr. Steven Hanson, Arizona Humane Society, Phoenix, AZ

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## What one pearl of wisdom would you offer?

“

**DO NOT BE AFRAID TO OFFER THESE LIFE SAVING METHODS TO YOUR COUNTY/COMMUNITY!!** It will not only surprise you, but give you great hope when you realize that once you educate your County administrators and/or community on the benefits of these methods, they will more than likely see it in a positive way.

Lori Brizius, Harbor Humane, West Olive, MI

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## Length of Stay

- Identify and stay within your optimal number to maximize adoptions
- Reduce stress and keep cats healthy to minimize length of stay
- Present cats well so they fly out the door
- Manage admissions and turn up the outflow as needed *and possible* to keep the balance



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## Capacity for Care is NOT:

- NOT: Euthanizing more cats
- NOT: Time limits
- NOT: Dependent on changing anything about intake or outcome policies
- NOT: all or nothing



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## What was the hardest thing about implementation?

“  
**Time and energy** were my biggest worries. Was this program going to slow us down and make more paperwork? Was it **just an idea pushed through by academia** but with no working purpose in a Shelter environment?  
Erin Mullen, Prince Edward Island Humane Society, PEI, Canada

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## Biggest Surprise

“

Our **staff and volunteers have more time** to spend with the cats and they are thriving because of that...some **cats that I would have never thought would get adopted are getting adopted** and at a fast rate.

Kristi Brooks, Cat Adoption Team, Portland, OR

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## Biggest Surprise

“

Our **length of stay plummeted**. Right now we only have 3 cats over 90 days and that is a record! This week last year we had 27 cats over 90 days. That is a huge difference!

Kristi Brooks, Cat Adoption Team, Portland, OR

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**The biggest surprise was going from isolation being full all the time...**



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## Removing Adoption Barriers

“Expand the pool of adopters by removing barriers to adoption such as price, process or location.”



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## Removing Adoption Barriers

- People want cats and we have lots of them!
- Only 1 in 4 cats are adopted from a shelter
- We cannot control if people will get cats . . . but we can control
  - If cats are neutered
  - If cats are vaccinated
  - If cats come with education
  - If cats come with a shelter safety net



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## What Are We Waiting For?

- New studies blow away old concepts for finding good adopters
  - High adoption fees
  - Landlord permission
  - Holiday adoptions
  - Black cats at Halloween
  - Previous vet care
  - References
  - Home checks
  - Pets as gifts



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## Removing Barriers is NOT:

- NOT: Reckless
  - Replace applications with conversations
  - Help future cat owners be good ones
  - Embrace the public's instinct to adopt from shelters
- NOT: Replacing quality with quantity
- NOT: All or nothing



**Hundreds of dogs and cats find homes at latest Mega Adoption Event**  
 Mon, Dec 22, 2014 @ 5:03 pm  
 Jacksonville's latest Mega Adoption Event in Jacksonville, held Friday through Sunday, found new homes for 845 dogs and cats.

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## Barriers? No More!




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## What was the hardest thing about implementation?

“

It is very important to us that our staff be well aware of why we are implementing new systems. Communicating this messaging and providing training to 130 team members takes time.

Carly Scholten, The Animal Foundation, Las Vegas, NV

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### What was the biggest surprise?

“  
I think the biggest surprise for the staff was the **lack of complaint and confusion** from patrons. Not only did patrons not complain, but **they were happy** to hear about the improvements we are making.  
Carly Scholten, The Animal Foundation, Las Vegas, NV

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### What one pearl of wisdom would you share?

“  
**Go for it!** If thoughtfully implemented, it should be well worth every challenge. Also, if possible, involve your volunteers early on so they are in the loop on coming changes.  
Carly Scholten, The Animal Foundation, Las Vegas, NV

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### Return-to-Field

“Sterilize, vaccinate, and return healthy un-owned shelter cats to the location of origin as an alternative to euthanasia.”



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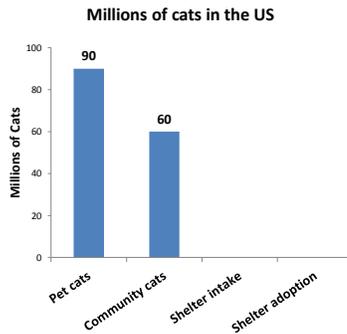
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## Return to Field

- Targets **healthy** cats brought to shelter
- **Returns** cats to where they were thriving
- Relieves shelter crowding




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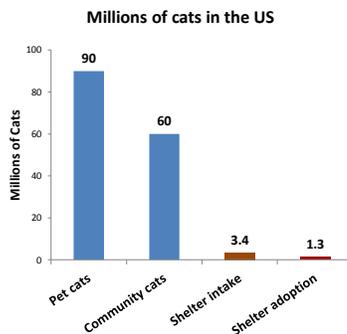
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## Return to Field

- Targets **healthy** cats brought to shelter
- **Returns** cats to where they were thriving
- Relieves shelter crowding
- **Addresses impracticality of sheltering all cats**




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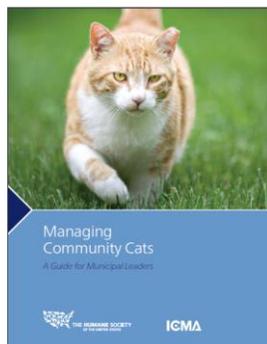
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## Return to Field is NOT:

- NOT: Relocation of cats
- NOT: Abandonment
- NOT: Turning away sick and injured cats
- NOT: Giving up on placing socialized cats in homes
- NOT: All or nothing



<http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/all-topics/cats/managing-community-cats.html>

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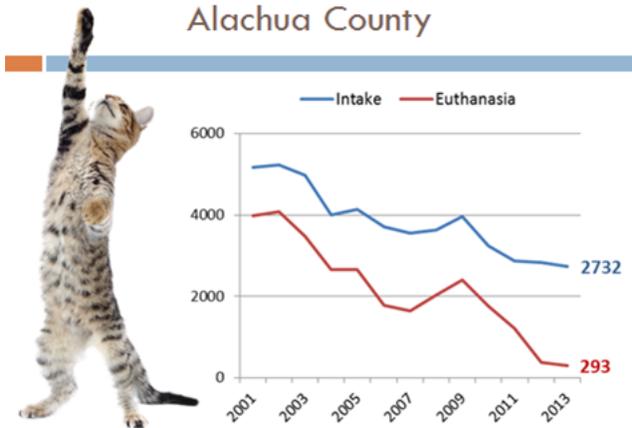
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## Sweeping Change!



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### Alachua County



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### Animal Foundation pursuing new strategy to avoid euthanasia of stray cats



A member of the feral cat colony at the closed White Sands Motel on Friday, July 25, 2014.

### What was the hardest thing about implementation?



**Convincing ourselves to try something new** and relatively unproven (2009). We suspected it would be much more difficult than what it was; thus, we thoroughly planned our strategy and research, which made the path to implementation much less difficult than expected.

Joe Elmore, Charleston Animal Society, Charleston, SC

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### Hardest Thing



Getting past some of the **old stereotypes or myths** about the caretakers and the whole TNR/return-to-field concept; not only from politicians and decisions makers but also staff, the public, media, etc.

Scott Trebatoski, Pet Resources Division, Tampa, FL

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### What was the biggest surprise?



How quickly results can be achieved if you **“go all in”** with the program and add targeted spay/neuter programs for high impact areas.

Scott Trebatoski, Pet Resources Division, Tampa, FL

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## Biggest Surprise

“

The large number of willing participants that brought free-roaming cats in to the shelter to surrender/euthanize and then **chose to have them returned** after sterilization once they were educated about the new & free SNR option.

Alex Munoz, Miami-Dade Animal Services, Miami, FL

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## What one pearl of wisdom would you share?

“

Just **Do It!**

Alex Munoz, Miami-Dade Animal Services, Miami, FL

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## Pearl of Wisdom

“

Take the **leap of faith** and go big – don't dabble, go all-in.

Scott Trebatoski, Pet Resources Division, Tampa, FL

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“Once we fully implemented our return-to-field program, the only real regret we had was that we didn't start it sooner. It has opened new horizons for us, and helped us see that more is possible. We no longer justify taking a healthy cat's life, we defend saving it.”

Jon Cicirelli, Director, San Jose Animal Care and Services

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## Who can join the challenge?

- Physical shelter facility
- Working with one or more of the 5 key initiatives to:
  - Reduce euthanasia
  - Increase live release
  - Provide capacity for care
- All shelters can access the resources – just let us know!



Register today at <http://www.millioncatchallenge.org/shelter-registration-form/>!

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- Shelters report baseline 2012 and current calendar year estimates at enrollment:
  - Live intake
  - Euthanasia
  - Live release
- Numbers, not rates
- Actual data for prior year and new estimate collected at start of each year of participation (by March)
- WE do the math
  - Euthanasia ↓
  - Live release ↑
  - One number, whichever is higher
  - No double counting
- No individual shelter data made public
- **1 CAT COUNTS**

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## Not a shelter?



Become a Supporter or Sponsor

Every cat counts – and so does every supporter of the Million Cat Challenge! Become a supporting organization and help us reach our challenge goals.

<http://www.millioncatchallenge.org/become-a-partner-or-sponsor/>

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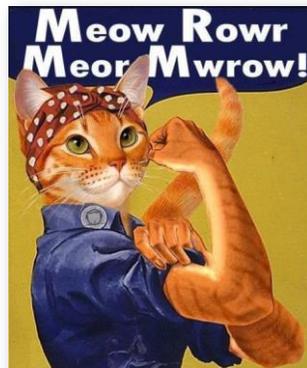
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## What else can you do?

- Let your local shelter know about the challenge – and ask what would help them most
  - Time?
  - Donations?
  - Material support?
  - Partner group?
- Support efforts to keep cats out of shelters
- Sign up for our newsletter, follow us on facebook, and tell your friends
- Support the MCC!



<http://www.millioncatchallenge.org/make-a-donation/>

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## One last pearl of wisdom

“  
 It's so cliché, but **DON'T GIVE UP!** If your organization TNR's 1 cat a month, that's 12 fewer cats a year out there having or making kittens. If you can hang in there, you'll gain momentum and attention, get more funding and donations, recruit dedicated volunteers, and in the long run **make a huge difference in the life of thousands of cats.**”

[www.neighborhoodcatadvocates.org](http://www.neighborhoodcatadvocates.org)

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# CAN WE COUNT YOU IN?



The Million Cat Challenge is made possible by an educational grant from Maddie's Fund



“The patients whose lives we save...can never be known . Our contribution will be what did not happen to them. And, though they are unknown, we will know that mothers and fathers are at graduations and weddings they would have missed, and that grandchildren will know grandparents they might never have known, and holidays will be taken, and work completed, and books read, and symphonies heard, and gardens tended that, without our work, would have been only beds of weeds.

Heath, Chip; Heath, Dan (2010-02-10). Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard (p. 22). Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.  
<http://www.ihl.org/Engage/Initiatives/Completed/5MillionLivesCampaign/Pages/default.aspx>

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## Bonus Quote Slides Below



## Pearl of Wisdom

“

**Make sure everyone is on board** with your changes. This includes your governing body, staff, volunteers, veterinarians, and other animal welfare groups in your community....have lots of educational material to share to get as much buy-in from everyone so that **when there is some pushback from the public, there is a unified front.**

Tracy Mohr, Chico City Animal Services, Chico, CA

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## Pearl of Wisdom

“

I did not make the change very public. Citizens didn't know until they called or showed up at the shelter. That way we **dealt with it on a very personal basis.**

Betty Cochran, Clovis Animal Services, Clovis, CA

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## Pearl of Wisdom

“

I think **one thing that helped us the most was the timing.** We implemented our practice on December 1, 2013. In our area that meant low numbers coming into the shelter which gave staff the time to feel comfortable with the issue before they had to deal with it in bigger numbers.

Betty Cochran, Clovis Animal Services, Clovis, CA

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## Hardest Thing

“

Our team was very concerned our **shift to complete transparency** could result in substantial public outcry when they learned we could not place some pets including aggressive or severely sick pets.

Dr. Steven Hanson, Arizona Humane Society, Phoenix, AZ

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## Biggest Surprise

“

We found that although staff had concerns **our team quickly embraced our new process** and felt reduced stress knowing that everything possible was being done to avoid euthanasia while keeping or placing pets in loving homes.

Dr. Steven Hanson, Arizona Humane Society, Phoenix, AZ

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## Biggest Surprise

“

**Pet owners have welcomed our behavior and medical evaluations** because of the resulting sincere conversation surrounding options and resources. As a result both intake and euthanasia have dropped substantially.

Dr. Steven Hanson, Arizona Humane Society, Phoenix, AZ

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## Pearl of Wisdom

“  
**Be your own biggest critic.** It's hard to point fingers at an agency who is asking better results of themselves.  
Rachel Finney, Capital Area Humane Society, Columbus, Ohio

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## Hardest Thing

“  
The hardest part was **getting everyone's buy-in** before starting. **Staff, including myself, was worried** that we would go through all of that work and then just have to shut the portals when the busy season came.  
Kristi Brooks, Cat Adoption Team, Portland, OR

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## Hardest Thing

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One of the hardest parts was the **perception by the staff, volunteers and the public that we weren't helping cats.** When we started saying no we can't take every cat in and then **people saw empty kennels** (before they were portalized) people thought we just didn't want to help the cats.  
Kim Monteith, British Columbia SPCA, Vancouver, BC

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## Pearl of Wisdom



If you feel overwhelmed or that the task you are taking on is too much, **ask for help**. Ask others in the field, ask your coworkers, and ask your volunteers for help. The group is capable of accomplishing some amazing things from just one good idea.

Laura Birdsall, Humane Society Silicon Valley, Milpitas, CA

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