Surrender Prevention in Los Angeles

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LOS ANGELEES CITY OVERVIEW

Demographics
- Population 3.9 million, 470 square miles
- Median household income: $46,148
- Mean house price: $628,240
- 38% of residents foreign born
- 48% Hispanic, 11% Asian, 9% Black
- >50% speak other than English at home

Animal Sheltering
- 6 shelters run by municipal agency
- 55K intake in ’13 (down from 62K in ‘11)
- 11K owner surrender in ‘13 (~20%)
- 14K euth’d in ‘13 (down from 23K in ‘11)
- 82.7% positive “noses out” for dogs in ‘13
- 59.5% positive “noses out” for cats in ‘13
AREAS OF HIGH POVERTY GENERATE MORE INTAKE AND EUTHANASIA

SURRENDER INTERVENTION PROGRAM LAUNCHED
APRIL 2013 AT SOUTH LA SHELTER

History & Goals
• Lori and DDR have been providing services to needy pet owners for over a decade
• Pilot to scale up to full time at the South Los Angeles shelter to reduce owner surrender
• Goal to avoid 400 shelter intakes in 2013
• Goal to learn if we can successfully support families to keep pets in homes

Program Structure
• DDR operates program in close partnership with Los Angeles Animal Services
• Found Animals is the primary funder
• 1 full time employee stationed at shelter, supplemented with volunteers
• Wide variety of support services offered to pet owners on the brink
DATA SHOWS DESIRE TO KEEP PETS, NEED FOR SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Outcome of Interceptions

- Kept Pet: 75%
- Shelter: 18%
- Rescue: 7%

Source: Based on first 544 animals intercepted
OVER 2,000 PETS SERVED IN 2013

2,041 PETS PREVENTED FROM ENTERING THE SOUTH LA SHELTER

1,789 DOGS
241 CATS
11 RABBITS

Spay/Neuter, 48%
Pet not allowed in housing, 14%
Too Expensive, 19%
Humane Euthanasia for Senior Pets, 7%
Behavioral, 7%
Mange, 1%
Pet needs to be rescued/rehomed, 4%
POVERTY IS BY FAR THE MOST COMMON REASON SOUTH LA PET OWNERS CONSIDER SURRENDER

Yesterday at the Shelter Intervention Program, Amanda helped a family with a 7 year old pit bull that had a serious infection on his tail. It's not that the family were neglectful, they could not raise enough money to pay for vet care. We always ask the dog owner, "What part can you pay?" His reply, $15 which paid for the exam. DDR paid $150 and possibly more later if the tail needs to be amputated. Next time you walk through a shelter and if your shelter is anything like ours, you will see row upon row of dogs who are identified as pit bulls, please wonder, how many of these dogs could have been prevented from entering the shelter had someone counseled them and paid for services. We can all do what we can, no matter how small that act is, to prevent more pets from dying at all shelters just to make space for more pets.

Solavina had been at the shelter for 2 weeks after being picked up as a stray. Her owner was out of town and she somehow managed to escape from her caretaker. Fortunately for Solavina, her microchip made it possible for her to be reunited with her owner. The South LA Animal Shelter Intervention Program also played a strong role in this joyous reunion, as her owner who is on a fixed income was only able to pay $175.00 of the $344.00 impound fees. The intervention program was there to help pay the difference and Solavina was free to go home with her mom and Bella and Alonzo. One more dog out of the shelter and back to her loving home.
SIMILAR PROGRAM LAUNCHED AT NORTH CENTRAL SHELTER EARLY 2014

• Inspired by the success of Lori’s program at South LA
• Operated by long time shelter volunteer
• Staffed part time
• Partnership with shelter, primarily funded by Found Animals
DIFFERENT SET OF NEEDS AT NORTH CENTRAL
60 Animals Served Through April

Services Needed

- Mange: 3%
- Euthanize: 15%
- Too Expensive: 10%
- Behavioral: 12%
- Housing: 18%
- Rehomed: 14%
- Redemption: 5%
- Medical: 3%
- Spay/Neuter: 3%

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BOTH PROGRAMS HAVE USED SOCIAL MEDIA TO GENERATE PRESS AND DONATIONS!
LESSONS LEARNED AND TIPS FOR SUCCESS

• Collect and analyze data on owner surrenders in your community
• Get your partnerships and resource network in place before you start serving clients
• Have language skills that match your client population
• Train staff to have non-judgmental conversations with clients
• Recruit staff who live in and understand the service area
• Collect data on all of your requests for assistance, services provided, and money spent
• Regularly analyze data from your program and the shelter to see what’s working (or not) and spot trends
• Adjust your program based on your data and results
• Use social media to tell your story, educate, and fundraise
A FUNDERS PERSPECTIVE

How funders think:
• Want to support successful projects
• Less likely to fund new organizations without a proven track record
• Need to see that you understand your community issues and have the passion and skills to run a successful program
  – People skills, Financial Management, Program Operations

Suggestions:
• Start small on your own
• Demonstrate an understanding of your community and skills to run a successful program
• Collect data that makes a case for the need and impact in your community

Registration is now open at:

www.spayneuterconference.com

• 22 veterinary sessions and 2 wet labs
• 20 operation sessions presented by leaders in spay/neuter