



Our Mission:

We are committed to saving lives and reducing suffering of homeless dogs and cats through education, advancement of knowledge and shelter outreach.

Program Staff:

- Dr. Jan Scarlett, Program Director
- Dr. Elizabeth Berliner, Director of Clinical Programs
- Ms. Anne Marie McPartlin, LVT, Teaching Support Specialist
- Mrs. Amanda Grace, MS, Program Coordinator
- Ms. Sue Honig, MS, Computer Technician

Shelter Medicine Interns:

- Dr. Erin Henry
- Dr. Natalie Lowry

Contact Information:

Shelter Medicine Program
Cornell University
College of Veterinary Medicine
SI-066 Schurman Hall
Ithaca NY 14853

(607) 253-3349

sheltermedicine@cornell.edu

Shelter Watch



Volume 3, Issue 1

January 7, 2013

From the Director's Desk

Happy New Year Everyone!!!

It does not seem possible that we are writing a January 2013 Newsletter, when it seems like just a couple of months ago, we wrote a January 2012 issue. We hope that you all had an awesome year in 2012!

We have some very good news to share with everyone. Dr. Berliner is a new Diplomate of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners. For those of you who aren't familiar with clinical academic titles, this is akin to being a boarded surgeon, or boarded ophthalmologist. It is the highest credentialing one can obtain in a clinical specialty. Dr. Berliner's specialty is feline and canine medicine. Please join us in congratulating her on this prestigious accomplishment!

We've talked about goal-setting in the past, but it is such an important part of animal sheltering that we have devoted this issue to the topic. This includes setting and monitoring progress towards the healthiest individuals and population possible within your shelter. There are numerous guides to goal-setting. One we recommend has been widely adopted in the business world. It uses the acronym S.M.A.R.T to define the attributes of Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-based goals (Google SMART goals for more information). The objective is to set goals that are clear and easily understood. This sounds pretty basic, I know, but it is sometimes challenging to put into writing or describe goals that everyone understands; and understanding is a first critical step towards achieving shelter goals. Another crucial step is developing a plan to achieve those goals. This is where many

shelters falter, as the demands and craziness of everyday sheltering minimizes the time and energy that are necessary to develop and monitor important goals.

That is not to suggest that shelters do not set goals. They frequently have goals in relation to fund-raising or program development, for example. Shelters less frequently, however, set *specific* goals relating to the health and welfare of their animals, and they rarely set aside regular time to monitor progress towards these important goals. These goals can take many forms. We have addressed enrichment, staff education, and disease reduction-related goals in this issue, but there are many more depending on the issues that are present in your shelter. We urge you strongly (in the coming weeks) to carve out quality time to sit with other staff members and draft some S.M.A.R.T. health and welfare oriented goals for the coming year. At the same time, plan future meetings to review regularly progress towards those goals. At those meetings you can celebrate your successes, or refine your efforts to enhance the likelihood of success when you fail to meet goals. We believe that organizations that get into the habit of meeting to set and discuss progress towards common health goals are more likely to realize improvement in the welfare of their animals. After all, isn't that what we are fundamentally all about?

Jan M. Scarlett, DVM, PhD



“Please remember, if a dog does not interact with the toy, it does not count as enrichment!”



Canine Enrichment: Dr. Natalie Lowry

Mental health is an integral component of any animal shelter wellness program. As a result, all animal shelters should incorporate a basic canine enrichment plan into their daily routine. Ultimately, happy animals are adoptable animals that help to inspire a more fulfilled work and volunteer force. Enrichment is especially important for facilities that have lengthy adoption periods and for certain animals that may be longer-term residents. Canine enrichment can be seen in different forms depending on individual facility resources. Popular enrichment strategies are detailed below, some of which require more resources to implement than others.

Scent of the Day: Provides olfactory stimulation by spraying essential oils or sprinkling cooking spices into the dogs’ environment. Different scents should be used throughout the week to keep things interesting. Animal pheromones are also available for purchase, but often at a higher cost. In addition to indoor enrichment, meat juice, urine, and other scents can be used to create “scent trails” for dogs to follow outside.

Sound of the Day: Slow-tempo classical music, nature sounds, household noises, and talk radio are popular choice sounds played in kennels and runs. Selections should be alternated daily to avoid “tuning out.” Additionally, the dogs should also be provided intervals of silence, especially during dark hours. Portable sound systems can be used in lieu of overhead speakers, but should never be placed on top of kennels or cages, particularly made of metal, to avoid stressful vibrations.

Toy of the Day: Provide a different toy each day to dogs. Toys should be disinfected/laundered between animals. A tracking system is helpful to determine preferred toys versus any undesired items, which can then be eliminated from the rotation. Please remember, if a dog does not interact with the toy, it does not count as enrichment!

Food Games: Feeding can be combined with enrichment in many different ways. Hiding food throughout enclosures such as paper bags, boxes, and treat dispensers are just a few ideas. Other stimulating methods such as freezing kibbles or treats inside of ice cubes are also popular enrichment strategies. Food used as enrichment may comprise some or all of the dog’s diet. If the entire daily diet is provided through enrichment-type activities, it should be done in conjunction with a diet plan to ensure sufficient caloric intake.

Hanging with Humans: With this enrichment strategy, dogs spend “down time” with people in two main ways. First, the dog comes to you. In this way, the dog is brought from its kennel and placed into an office area or other quiet environment to spend a few hours in the company of people. Second, you go to the dog. You could read, write, or perform another quiet solo activity in the dog’s run or room. These two strategies allow dogs the opportunity to spend relaxing time with humans, when they themselves are not the focus.

Incorporating some or all of these techniques into a shelter program has the potential to greatly improve the mental well-being of its residents. But, too much enrichment may also be a bad thing. Select shelters base their enrichment programs on exercise, which could include taking dogs for multiple long walks each day. This strategy may be counterproductive on several fronts. First, time that a dog spends walking with staff and volunteers is time away from the public eye, which could hinder adoption efforts. Second, multiple long walks each day sets the dog up for an exercise-intensive routine, which a large proportion of adoptive homes will not be able to match, thus making the transition to an adoptive home more difficult. Third, if outdoor activity becomes the primary source of enrichment, the dog may become hyper-excitable, leading to poor cage presentation, again potentially complicating adoptions.

Shelter Cat Enrichment: 5 tips to make your cat population healthier and happier in the New Year:

Dr. Erin Henry

Cat enrichment within animal shelters is a goal every shelter should strive for in the New Year. Enrichment can be anything that stimulates the senses and can be easily achieved at an inexpensive cost—you just have to be creative. (No, that does not include barking dogs as a source of enrichment!)

1) Give them some vertical space

Whether, in communal housing or stainless steel cages, vertical space can be achieved with little to no money. In community housing, try plastic patio furniture with a blanket on it, or affix milk crates to the wall at varying heights. In stainless steel cages, look into installing a shelf or providing a Kuranda bed. If those are too costly, consider a sturdy cardboard box with a blanket over it.

2) Give them the option to hide

Cats are much happier if they can choose whether or not they can be seen. This is especially important when a cat is first admitted into a shelter. A simple solution could be a cardboard box, which is also versatile and could be used for perching as well. Other options could range from a towel that partially covers the cage-front, to installing new cat condominiums that come with hiding compartments.

3) Give them a variety of toys and incorporate food.

Many think that food toys are used for dog enrichment, but let's not forget about the kitties! Try hiding some of their food (or treats) in a Kong. If you are on a budget, a small box or plastic container with holes in it will allow the kibbles to fit through nicely. This works especially well for those shelter cats that are food motivated. (I know you all have at least one of those!)

Many cats love toys because they provide sensory stimulation. This could include cardboard scratching pads attached to cage

fronts, or shower hanger rings linked together that are also attached to the front of the cage. It could be as simple as a repurposed household item such as a rolled up paper ball, or even an old plastic film roll filled with rice. If your shelter is on a budget, try adding a pinch of catnip, or an interesting odor to the toy as well.

4) Give them human interaction

Most cats enjoy the company of people. Just a few minutes of calm, loving human interaction daily can ease their stress levels. This could include grooming, petting, or play time!

5) Give healthy cats time outside of their cages, especially kitties in standard-sized stainless steel cages.

Giving your shelter residents time out of their cages, allows them to stretch their legs and have a change of scenery. This provides enrichment to all of their senses and is especially important for those living in the shelter longer than two weeks. Allowing them time away from their cage, gives them both mental and physical exercise.

These are just a few simple ideas to bring out your creativity. Now, get out there and start enriching the lives of your shelter cats!



“Enrichment can be anything that stimulates the senses and can be easily achieved at an inexpensive cost— you just have to be creative.”



New Year To Do's: Ms. Anne Marie McPartlin, LVT

Remember the 'to do' list that inevitably gets buried under a stack of papers, or thrown in a drawer at the far end of the shelter? Meanwhile, kittens keep appearing at the front door! Now may be a good time in the New Year to take a breath and catch up on all of those important jobs that have been neglected over the past year. Cleaning and organizing a year's worth of accumulation can not only be daunting, but can significantly interfere with disinfection protocols. Along with general clean-up, here are some helpful tips that can be added to the list:

Equipment maintenance: Keeps things running smoothly and may also prevent larger, more expensive problems in the future. Anesthetic vaporizers require annual calibration and air ventilation filters need to be replaced. Changing batteries in smaller equipment like otoscopes, pulse oximeters, or smoke detectors can alleviate malfunctions.

Protocol Review: Reviewing and updating shelter protocols such as intake, isolation, disinfection, and medical protocols should be addressed to ensure everyone is on the same page.

Computer Software System: Learning or relearning the shelter's computer software system may be terrifying for those of us who are technically challenged. Review

updates, or watch webinars on new aspects of your software program to make yourself and your shelter more technically savvy. Furthermore, what better tool than a searchable database to discern whether the current protocols are working!

Know your state's resources and laws: Weeding through the "expired" or "donated" drug cabinet is a formidable task, as well as, a current hot topic on shelter medicine message boards. All shelters interpret resources and laws differently from state to state. For more information on New York State pharmaceuticals in the Veterinary Practice Act visit: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/vetmed/vetpg.htm>

Update the "veterinarian on record": Updating the shelter's "veterinarian on record" with medical supply companies is legally required. Veterinarians are transient beings in the shelter medicine field, so it is important, especially when ordering drugs, to keep the licensed veterinarian current.

Get out that dustpan and broom and go crazy!



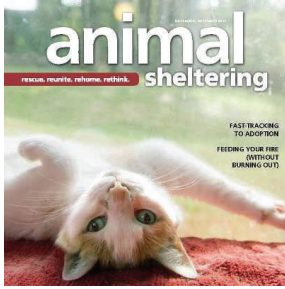
“Reviewing and updating shelter protocols such as intake, isolation, disinfection, and medical protocols should be addressed to ensure everyone is on the same page.”

Continuing Education Opportunities for Shelter Staff: Elizabeth Berliner, DVM

This month our focus is on setting goals for your shelter and for individual members of your team. One of the most valuable commitments you can make in the next year is to increase the training and education of your shelter staff. There are many opportunities for continuing education in shelter medicine and management, which are at absolutely no cost and available on-line. I have

decided to highlight some easily accessible low or no cost opportunities. Although there are many more, these “Top 5” will get you started regardless of the size of your shelter, or the budget you have for training.





“There are many opportunities for continuing education in shelter medicine and management, which are at absolutely no cost and available on-line.”



MADDIE'S INSTITUTE

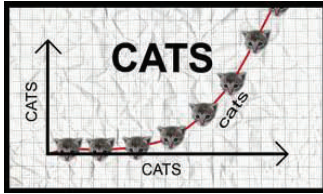
Resources	Insight	Web Link
Animal Sheltering magazine, a publication of HSUS	This publication is available in a print version and on-line. I would encourage you to order the print version and leave it in your break room, or at your desk for all employees to read. It contains practical wisdom from professionals in the field.	http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/
ASPCA Professional	This site offers many great resources and free webinars that range from medical topics to management. Every person in your shelter can find a webinar that suits their roles and goals for the New Year.	http://www.aspcapro.org/upcoming-webinars.php
Center for Shelter Dogs, Animal Rescue League	Drs. Amy Marder and Shelia D'Arpino have created several webinars on shelter dog behavior assessments and modification. Even beyond your behavior department, these provide an informative background in animal behavior for shelter staff and involved volunteers.	http://www.centerforshelterdogs.org/Home/ResearchandEducation/Webinars.aspx
Maddie's® Institute	The Maddie's® Fund has done a superb job in creating this webcast series on topics related to shelter medicine, companion animal behavior, and infectious disease. These continue to be accessible on-line and offer continuing education credits for veterinarians and veterinary technicians.	http://www.maddiesfund.org/Maddies_Institute/Webcasts.html
PetSmart Charities Webinar Series	PetSmart Charities offers ongoing on-line training for shelter administration and management, particularly in the areas of communication, adoption, and volunteer programming.	https://petsmartcharities.webex.com/mw03071/mywebex/default.do?siteurl=petsmartcharities

The day-to-day work of sheltering can be all-consuming, but it is crucial to take time to update your information, training, and thinking. It is also helpful to realize that others are going through many of the same challenges, and asking the same questions. Take a look at these sites and make a list of training sessions for your staff, and be mindful to allow sufficient time for successful completion! Better yet, schedule a group session to watch the

webinars together and provide a time for necessary interaction and discussion. Team-building is a nice extension of such collaborative efforts, and critical to successful goal-setting and completion.



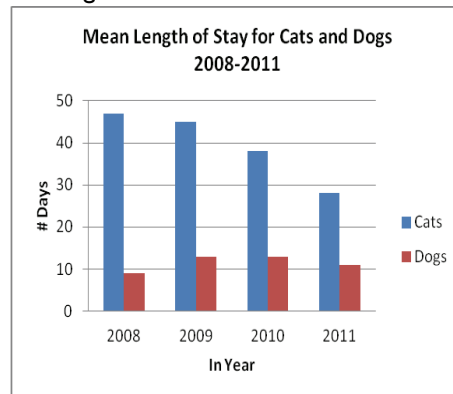
Monitoring Progress Towards Meeting Goals Dr. Jan Scarlett



“Monitoring progress could involve creating a sheet (e.g. paper or in Excel®) to check off staff members’ completion of specific online webinars, or their completion of a refresher on an animal handling module. Other goals, such as reducing your length of stay will require using software (e.g. Pet Point® or one of the other software packages) to provide you with mean length of stay (LOS) statistics. The data below regarding mean LOS were taken from Pet Point Reports (Animal: Length of Stay) each year over a four year period. You can see from the graph that the shelter has made progress towards reducing its mean LOS.”



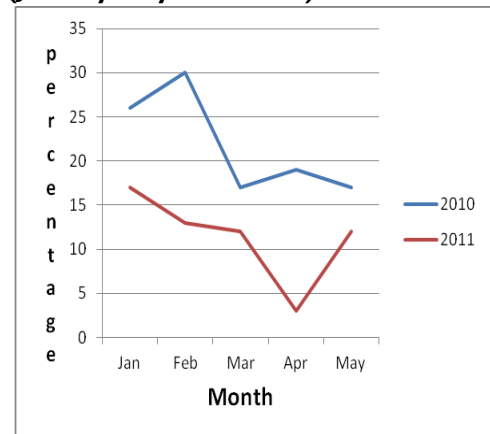
Those of you who read our newsletter regularly can imagine where I am going to go in this article. So, I will not disappoint you. Monitoring progress towards health and welfare goals (or any goals for that matter) often involves the use of metrics. Obviously, this is not always true, but for those that do, there are numerous approaches to monitoring progress using metrics. Monitoring progress can involve creating a sheet (e.g. paper or in Excel®) to check off staff members’ completion of specific online webinars, or their completion of a refresher on an animal handling module. Other goals, such as reducing your length of stay will require using software (e.g. Pet Point® or one of the other software packages) to provide you with mean length of stay (LOS) statistics. The data below regarding mean LOS were taken from Pet Point Reports (Animal: Length of Stay) each year over a four year period. You can see from the graph that the shelter has made progress towards reducing its mean LOS.



As part of the objective of reducing upper respiratory infections (URI) in cats within a shelter, goals were set to reduce the average LOS and average daily census in a chronically overcrowded shelter. The data in the next column shows the effects of making progress towards those goals and their impact on the incidence of URIs.

Year	Ave Daily Census	Ave Length of Stay in Shelter (Days)
2010	193	33
2011	119	25

Cumulative monthly incidence of upper respiratory tract infections in cats (January-May 2010-2011)



These graphs are not hard to make. Most shelters have a staff member who is familiar with the graph-making feature on Microsoft’s spreadsheet program, Excel®. If not a staff member, then a volunteer or someone’s son or daughter can do these for you! Graphs such as these are easy to understand and facilitate monitoring progress towards goals for the administration, staff, Board members and the public.

The key is to carve out time, set goals, make plans to achieve those goals, monitor progress regularly, and share the results of your efforts with others!

Events Calendar

January 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
		1	2	3	4	5	
		New Years Day					
6	7 Dr. Henry ASPCA Consultation	8 Chemung SPCA Consultation	9 Southside Clinic	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18 NAVC	19 Winter Session Ends	
20 Conference "Cats in Context" (Buffalo, NY)	21	22	23 Southside Clinic	24	25	26	
	Clinical Rotation in Shelter Medicine (2 Weeks)						
27	28	29	30	31			



Cornell University
College of Veterinary Medicine
Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program



Maddie's® Shelter Medicine Program is underwritten by a grant from Maddie's Fund®, The Pet Rescue Foundation (www.maddiesfund.org), helping to fund the creation of a no-kill nation.