



# City of Austin

## Animal Services Office, Austin Animal Center

7201 Levander Loop Bldg A, Austin, TX 78702

### August 2015 Animal Services Director's Report

#### Animal Center News

- AAC took in 1,247 stray animals and 288 animals surrendered by owner.
- 721 animals were adopted and 570 animals were transferred to rescue groups.
- A total of 1,552 animals were adopted, placed in rescue or returned to their owner.
- The live outcome rate was 95.8%.
- New shelter dog metrics are now available at <http://fetchitsoftware.com/metrics/metrics.html>
- Nine animals were adopted at the Austin Home and Garden Show August 28-30.
- Cats and kitten adoption fees were \$25 through Labor Day.
- All dogs at both locations are now outfitted with collars and leashes, instead of slip leads.
- Aimee Sadler, Executive Director and Founder of Dogs Playing for Life, a shelter dog playgroup program, visited the shelter to provide training and to help implement play groups for dogs. Funded through a grant, Aimee Sadler spent eight days with staff and volunteers, getting up to 50 dogs per day incorporated into play group. Play groups are continuing on a daily basis with staff and volunteer support.
- A SWOT analysis survey was sent to volunteers, staff, rescue partners and community stakeholders and was posted on AAC social media. The purpose of this is to gain information about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as they relate to AAC. The survey window closed September 5 and we are gathering and analyzing data.
- Staff dog walking continues to be a success with the goal of 100% of the approved dogs (not on stray or quarantine) being walked every day. We will be moving to a walk board system to make tracking walks more efficient and effective.
- Shelter Art Foundation <http://shelterartfoundation.org/> will be coming to AAC September 28 – October 3 to present a series of workshops for volunteer photographers to teach them how to take studio-quality portraits of shelter pets. A schedule of workshops is forthcoming. This is a grant-funded program which donates services and studio photography equipment including lights and backdrop to animal shelters.
- The annual Travis County interlocal agreement for shelter services is scheduled for council approval September 17.



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- Shelter leadership, along with Austin Pets Alive! leadership and Aimee Sadler, hosted a public meeting at AAC to discuss behavioral euthanasia decisions. Approximately 70 volunteers, staff and community members attended.
- Employees from animal care and animal protection have been selected to serve as playgroup leads.

### Personnel

- Deputy Chief, Lee Ann Shenefiel will be starting on September 21. She will be overseeing outreach, animal protection and vet services.
- An updated organizational chart has been finalized and disseminated to staff and volunteers.
- A manager on duty (MOD) system is being implemented beginning September 21. A manager will be assigned to be onsite Saturdays and Sundays to serve as a point of contact, to improve operations and to ensure animals are receiving adequate exercise and enrichment and to identify areas for customer service improvement.
- Customer service has had several temporary staff promoted to permanent positions and is preparing to advertise four temporary customer service positions.
- There is one full time dispatcher vacancy, one part time dispatcher vacancy and one vacancy for an animal protection officer. Four new officers are in training.
- Aaron Caldwell has been reassigned as the animal care and enrichment manager, and will be focusing all his attention on improving in-shelter quality of life for dogs and cats.
- Chery Henderson has been reassigned as the volunteer, foster and rescue manager and will be working closely with the deputy chief and the volunteer and foster coordinators to improve and expand the animal services volunteer and foster programs.
- Two new temporary technician positions started in vet services.
- Three temporary positions were hired in animal care.
- Two animal care lead positions were vacated and will be re-hired in September.

### Vet Services

- Veterinarians performed 453 spay/neuter surgeries and 41 specialty surgeries.
- They responded to 73 incoming emergencies and received 53 animals from the emergency clinic.
- 217 animals were held and monitored for rabies observation.



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- The center renewed its contract with Mobile Veterinary Specialists, who provide specialty orthopedic surgeries.

### Animal Protection

- Officers assisted with transport of dogs and set-up for dogs playing for life playgroup training.
- There were 151 domestic animal bites in July and seized on dog for serious bodily injury.
- Officers responded to 2,186 calls for service and issued 134 citations including rabies quarantine, proper care and tethering violations.
- 27 animals were returned in the field (prevents the stress and resource use associated with those animals being impounded in the shelter).

### Volunteer and Foster Program

- 327 volunteers served 4,887 hours.
- 42 volunteers assisted with play groups.
- Volunteer and Friends group board member Harrell Hoffman oversaw the construction of the play yards, which were paid for by a donation to the Friends group.
- 28 new foster families were brought into the program.
- 340 animals in foster homes

### Media Coverage

- AAS was featured more than 70 times in print, web and television media, including being highlighted in the Statesman, El Mundo, Rescue Magazine and several local television networks.
- Dogs Playing for Life was featured: <http://www.kvue.com/videos/life/2015/08/29/71376130/>
- Dogs playgroups: <http://www.kvue.com/story/news/local/2015/08/29/dogs-leave-cages-show-personalities-outside-animal-center/71409804/>

### Outreach and Education

- 37 owned pets and 66 community cats were sterilized.
- Nine people attended responsible pet ownership classes.



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- Outreach staff attended seven community events.

### **Upcoming Changes (implementation dates range from 30 – 120 days)**

- **Volunteer program changes:**

- Volunteers will have specific job descriptions, scheduled time spots and a regular schedule.
- Experienced volunteers will be selected by the volunteer coordinator and will receive training to become volunteer mentors, to assist with training, onboarding and support of new volunteers.
- The shelter will be recruiting volunteers to focus on enrichment and care for the most at-risk animals.
- Volunteers will have ongoing training opportunities.
- Volunteers will receive a manual and will sign a volunteer agreement that outlines their duties and responsibilities, as well as outlines conduct.
- A series of seven volunteer meetings start on September 15 and continue into October. All volunteers are required to attend one of these meetings. During these meetings, current volunteers will provide feedback and will be made aware of upcoming program changes.

- **Animal care and enrichment changes:**

- The shelter will be changing from a tag system to a walk board system to track out-of-kennel breaks.
- Chief Hammond is working with human resources to hire temporary cleaners, so existing caretakers can diversify their role to include providing in-kennel enrichment, conducting play groups and taking dogs out for individual outings to do the Thinking Walk. Caretakers will also work to provide additional enrichment and kennel breaks for cats and kittens.
- The animal care manager is working with the enrichment team to identify animals that appear to be declining or need additional behavioral support and to ensure those dogs receive additional care.
- Animal care, the deputy chief and vet services are working together to write a euthanasia SOP, including communication protocol. This will be complete September 15.

- **Outreach and Communications changes:**

- The outreach team has developed a strategic communications plan which will be communicated to all staff, volunteers and stakeholders so that key messages are consistent.
- AAC is adopting a new tagline of “Pets are Family” which will replace “Give a Pet a Better Life”.



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- We have increased our presence on social media and turned our focus to promoting specific animals, particular long-stay and special needs pets.
- The outreach and marketing program manager has new priority tasks, which are to be completed in the next 30 days. These include new signs between the parking lot and the building and better signage for customers once they enter the building. Also, to re-create the AAC map to make it easier for potential adopters to navigate around the building.

