

**November 2015 Animal Services Report  
Austin Animal Center**

**Animal Center News**

- The live release rate of animals was 97.5%.
- The number of animals in shelter custody on December 12 was 940. The number of animals in the shelter was 421 and the number of dogs at Town Lake Animal Center was 51.
- More than 1,000 staff dog walks occurred.
- Dogs Out Loud is raising money to purchase treat buckets for the front of all the dog kennels. These will be installed on the front of each kennel with instructions to 'give treats for good behavior.' They are also getting Christmas trees donated for the lobby and are holding a stocking stuffer event.
- Dogs Out Loud has resumed their program of working with specific dogs housed at AAC.
- Dr. Amy Marder, former director of the Center for Shelter Dogs and Bernice Clifford, director of behavior and training for Animal Farm Foundation, came to Austin to audit animal care, enrichment and adoption procedures. Volunteers and staff members were invited to participate in question and answer sessions and they made a series of recommendations. Among key recommendations are:
  - *Make Austin Animal Center more of a resource/community center and less of a routine shelter – dog training classes, lectures for the public, behavior helpline for adopters, behavioral services for adopters up to six months after adoption.*
  - *Set up programs to reduce intake – eliminate or significantly reduce reclaim fees (currently unaltered animal reclaim fee is double the adoption fee).*
  - *Standardize and streamline intake procedures so animals get evaluated medically and behaviorally upon intake allowing, healthy, friendly animals to be fast-tracked to adoption.*
  - *Facilitate adoptions. Conduct pre and post adoption counseling. Have staff in each kennel area to assist adopters. Have information about available pets on kennel cards. Separate animals by availability. Co-house more dogs. Improve adoption process.*
  - *Restructure volunteer program. Establish volunteer levels based on skill level and experience, use dot system to categorize dogs, eliminate public dog walking program and instead build volunteer capacity.*
  - *Change animal care/behavior. Eliminate existing 'review' process and replace with daily behavior rounds. Incorporate 'behavior' into daily care so all dogs are either walked or handled daily. Create an enrichment/behavior support program for high risk dogs. All staff should carry treat bags and there should be treat buckets on cages. Build more play yards closer to the kennels.*
  - *Update veterinary program. Allow puppies to be taken from cages for socialization. Train staff and volunteers to use protective clothing (guidelines from Standards of Care in*

*Animal Shelters – AVMA [www.shelternet.org](http://www.shelternet.org)), Institute medical rounds for all animals conducted by techs. Allow dogs with routine upper respiratory illness to be walked and attend play groups.*

- Deputy Chief, Kristen Auerbach, presented at the Society of Animal Welfare Administrators National Research Symposium about her work on saving shelter dogs through foster. Read about it in this blog written by Dr. Emily Weiss of the ASPCA.  
<http://aspcapro.org/blog/2015/12/02/we-don%E2%80%99t-know-what-we-don%E2%80%99t-know>
- Shelter leadership staff met with Dogs Out Loud and Love-a-Bull to talk about expanding partnerships and to start dog handling and obedience classes for volunteers, staff members and on a limited basis, the public.
- In collaboration with Austin Pets Alive!, AAC held the first-ever adoption promotion for ringworm cats and kittens.
- A working group of volunteers and members of two rescue groups has formed to develop post adoption materials to be given to all adopters. This will include a full list of local and national medical and behavioral resources.
- AAC is doing two holiday promotions this December. This first is called the '12 Stops of Christmas.' Staff and volunteers will be conducting 12 unique adoption events, 10 of which are at various locations around the city. The second is a fee-reduced adoption event running all of December.
- AAC leadership staff met with volunteers at the Town Lake Animal Center to talk about improvements to care for animals housed there. In addition to discussing facility repairs and improvements (lighting, fixing leaking kennels, pen repair), a 45 day rotation schedule and replacing overtime workers with temporary employees for enrichment were discussed.
- Staffing updates:
  - Chris McElhatton has transferred from the position of animal care supervisor to animal protection officer. Sean Gardner has been selected to under fill the vacated supervisor position until Chris' replacement can be hired.
  - AAC is currently in the process of hiring the following positions: Administrative manager (vacated by Aaron Caldwell on November 27), behavior program manager, animal care supervisor (2 positions), animal caretaker (6), research analyst, behavior program staff member. The temporary cleaners hired in October are now filling in for the vacated animal care positions.

## **Operational Updates**

- The walking tag system has been replaced with a walk board system at both Town Lake and Austin Animal Center. The walk board system is the same as the one used at Austin Pets Alive! The walk boards allow staff to track animal status, exercise and kennel breaks and important

notes about ease of handling, special walking equipment and status. At the end of each day, a staff member will record the number of dogs that did not receive a kennel break and this information will be stored in a binder in the volunteer office to be viewed by volunteers at any time.

Name	Equipment	Time Out	Time Out	Notes	Dot Color
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202					
203					
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- A new 'dot' system has been implemented to indicate which dogs can be handled by the public, staff and volunteers. These signs are posted in English and Spanish throughout the facility and are on each kennel. This system is being tried first with dogs and if successful, will be implemented for cats as well.

## WHAT DOES THE DOT MEAN?



May be walked and handled by any adult member of the public or AAC volunteer.



May be walked and handled by staff and approved AAC volunteers only.



Puppies and kittens may be handled by staff and approved AAC volunteers only.



May be walked and handled by staff only. Speak with a counselor for more details.



- A new 30-day sign will be placed on any kennels of pets who have been in the shelter more than 30 days. Each animal with a 30-day tag will also have a paper file, kept in the volunteer office, so volunteers can easily access information about these pets to tell potential adopters.

*I've been waiting for*  
**MY NEW FAMILY**  
*for more than*  
**30 DAYS!**  
He estado esperando para mi nueva familia durante más de 30 días!

Please call 512.687.1472  
to speak with customer  
service staff and learn  
more about me!

Favor de llamar a 512.687.1472  
para hablar con un representante  
y saber un poco mas de mi!

- Play groups are currently being conducted once a week. Regular play groups will resume once the behavior and enrichment program manager and the second behavior staff team member are hired. Currently, only one position in the behavior and enrichment department is filled.
- Beginning December 1, all available-for-adoption dogs will be concentrated into the 100 through the front of the 400 kennels and lost and found, stray and otherwise unavailable dogs will be held in the back of the 400 kennels and 500 kennels. Dogs with behavioral challenges that require volunteers and staff have special training to handle will be housed in the back of the 500 kennels, closest to the play yards.
- December 12, shelter leadership staff members are meeting with cat volunteers to plan for turning the center part of the large cat adoption room into a volunteer and staff only enrichment space for cats.

### **Customer Service – Update on SCRP (stray cat return program)**

- SCRP is a component of the No Kill Implementation Plan to increase live outcomes and has been in place since 2011. It is a partnership program between AAC and the Austin Humane Society.
- Cats in the program must be a minimum of three pounds and three months of age, must have a body condition score of 4/9 or above, cannot have obvious signs of illness or injury, cannot be declawed, and must not have a current ID or traceable microchip and must not have a known history of living primarily indoors. They must have a known physical address for return. Program cats may be transferred to AHS during their stray hold but will remain on the website as stray and will not be released until after stray hold has passed.
- In 2014, 1,035 cats were sent to AHS to be sterilized and returned and 959 were returned. All cats receive a microchip.
- Austin Humane Society has performed 33,795 TNR surgeries and 2,207 surgeries for cats in the SCRP program.
- Relevant statistics: 1 in 50 cats (2%) reclaimed when brought to shelter. 40% of cat owners let their cats outdoors. Read Dr. Hurley's article from Animal Sheltering from 2013: [http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/magazine/sep\\_oct\\_2013/change-for-community-cats.pdf](http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/magazine/sep_oct_2013/change-for-community-cats.pdf)

### **Animal Protection**

- Animal protection officers responded to 2,732 calls, wrote 180 citations and returned 69 animals to the owners in the field.
- Animal protection is in the process of hiring a part time dispatcher.

### **Media , Marketing and Outreach**

- News release regarding holiday hours, events and off site adoption events: <http://www.austintexas.gov/news/holiday-season-give-pet-new-home>
- Fees waived for reclaiming pets after flooding: <http://keyetv.com/news/local/austin-animal-center-waiving-fee-to-reclaim-pets-lost-during-weekend-storms>
- 3,228 likes AAC on FB this month. This is a record for new likes in one month.
- 13 owned animals and 105 community cats were sterilized through outreach program in October.
- Outreach team held two volunteer cat trapper orientations, with two new trappers attending.
- Outreach facilitated two responsible pet owner classes, with eight people attending.
- Outreach attended two offsite events.

### **Volunteer, Foster and Rescue Programs**

- 365 animals were transferred to rescue, including 226 to Austin Pets Alive!, 68 to Austin Humane Society and 21 to Paws Shelter.
- 81 cats were transferred to the Austin Humane Society for the SCRIP program.
- 57 new volunteers attended orientation.
- 326 volunteers gave 3,801 hours of service and seven groups donated 108 hours.
- AAC held a quarterly volunteer social hour, which 18 volunteers attended.
- A series of eight volunteer strategy sessions were completed and volunteer agreements were distributed to all volunteers to be signed and returned by December 1.
- A clicker training for cats was held and several adoptable cats learned how to 'shake.'
- 89 new foster applications were approved in November.
- On December 1, there were 366 animals in 207 foster homes.

### **Vet Services**

- Vets performed 1,436 exams on shelter pets and did 544 surgeries, including more than 500 spay or neuter surgeries.
- 208 animals were held for rabies observation.

### **Friends of the AAC**

- One Hard Luck Hound was adopted and one went into foster.
- 19 Classic Canines were adopted, four were transferred and one was returned to the owner during November which is Adopt a Senior Pet month.
- Tomlinson's hosted adoption events for Classic Canines and Hard Luck Hounds.
- 20 Desperate Housecats were adopted.

- The FAAC purchased kennel inserts for the ringworm ward and supported medical funding for several older animals.