

Animal Tales

Fall 2011

Humane Society of Bay County

989-893-0451

www.humanesocietybaycounty.org

Humane Society 2011 Calendar of Events

Humane Society Board Meetings, 6:30 p.m. in Education Room of Bay Animal Control:

October 20

November 17

December - no meeting

Public is welcome to attend!

- November 5 - HSBC Annual Dinner, at the Grand
- November 17 - HSBC is participating in Bay City's Mingle Jingle downtown
- Nov 5, 6, 17 & Dec 3 & 17 - Constance Grimmer book signing
- December 3 & 10 - Santa & Pet Photo

Autumn Greetings,

Last Saturday, September 24, was the highlight of our last quarter! I'm talking about the luncheon at the DoubleTree featuring Deborah Schutt from Michigan Pet Fund Alliance and her informative talk about "Getting To The Goal" of transforming Bay County Animal Control to a "No Kill" facility. By "No Kill" we mean that all **adoptable** animals will not lose their lives because of "high numbers" or no place to go. When we **really** think about that, how can we let that happen? Animals have no voice. We do. They rely on us to look out for their welfare and not turn our backs on their plight. I encourage you to read the article about the educational program we sponsored on the 24th and to come forward to insure we "stop the killing" of over 2,000 innocent kittens, puppies, dogs, and cats in Bay County. Please e-mail, phone, or write your county commissioners. They represent YOU, but they have to know their constituents expect them to move forward with this important issue.



Please notice the calendar to the left, and be sure to shop downtown in November and tell the store or restaurant that you would like your 17% to go to the Humane Society; get your photo taken in December by our professional photographer, Kari Maples of Say Woof Photography and use it if for your Christmas cards or to send to family and friends; and enjoy an evening with fellow animal advocates, fine dining, and State Trooper Joe La Belle and his dog, "Chip".

Please consider circulating the petition about a "No Kill" facility in Bay County among your friends, family, and co-workers (feel free to duplicate!), and sign up to volunteer at Bay County Animal Control. We would like to have volunteers there every hour they are open. Contact a friend and come together. Ideally we want three people for each

two-hour shift beginning at 10:00 a.m. Monday through Friday. There are three orientation meetings scheduled for Monday, October 3 at 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Volunteers must attend one of those sessions. You will sign a waiver of liability, choose a shift to work, and what you would like to do there. One of the officers will be there to answer questions.

It's been an eventful year. I would like to thank you all for your support and efforts to help animals in Bay County. We all have special places in our hearts for animals and that binds us together in our mission. If you haven't renewed your membership now would be the time!

Enjoy the beautiful autumn and all the holidays we have coming up!

Sadie and Rusty join me in wishing you and your companion animals the best in 2012! *Dee Bishop, President*

IMPORTANT DATE REMINDER

It is time once again to renew your membership with the Humane Society of Bay County. As a member of the H.S.B.C., you will receive a quarterly newsletter and notices of all events held throughout the year. Most of all, you will be supporting the goals of the H.S.B.C. as we work to protect and enhance the lives of animals in our community. For your convenience, a membership form is located on page 16 of this newsletter. Thank you for taking time out of your busy day to renew your membership!

Events Chronicle -continued

Successful Luncheon Opens "No Kill" Shelter Campaign

Over 140 enthusiastic participants attended the HSBC's inaugural "No Kill" luncheon event on September 24, 2011, at the Doubletree Hotel to launch our initiative to transform the Bay County Animal Shelter into a facility in which all adoptable animals are saved. Keynote speaker Deborah Schutt, chair of the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance, spoke on the topic, "Getting to the Goal: Calling Bay County to Stop the Killing of Adoptable Shelter Animals." Ms. Schutt, an experienced urban planning consultant who is also leading the movement to make Michigan a "No Kill" state, urged listeners to follow the examples of other county No Kill shelters in our state by lobbying our public officials and county commissioners to bring out Bay County Animal Shelter into the 21st century.



Participants at the luncheon event, co-chaired by Jeannie Nichols and Leslie Prast, enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch and received a beautiful, customized spiral-bound journal provided by Barb Morina of Journals Unlimited, along with a pocket folder of information about the No Kill movement. Sixty-six signatures were collected at the luncheon for the petitions to change the shelter hours to accommodate working people's schedules, and 96 participants signed petitions supporting No Kill for all adoptable animals in the BCAC Shelter. Additionally, 41 attendees volunteered to help the HSBC develop a No Kill shelter in Bay County.

During her speech, Ms. Schutt gave a brief explanation on the extent to which Americans today spend time and money on our pets, in contrast to Americans in the

1950's. According to data presented, 93.7 million cats and 77.5 million dogs are currently kept as pets in the U.S., and this year Americans will spend \$50.8 billion (compared to \$17 billion in 1994) on our pets. To quote Deborah Schutt, "A recent AP/Petside poll shows that half (50%) of American pet owners consider their pets to be as much a part of the family as any person in the household. . . . Americans LOVE their dogs and cats. They expect their tax dollars and charitable contributions spent on animal welfare to be used to save lives." Unfortunately, sheltering and animal control have not kept pace with the opinions and desires of the pet-owning public.

Specifically, Ms. Schutt cited statistics about our Bay County Shelter which illustrate its poor performance in terms of high kill rates and low save rates. For example, Bay County Animal Control had a "Return to Owner" rate of only 7% in 2009 and 8% in 2010, compared to 48% for all other Michigan shelters and 90% for the best shelters in our state. She also provided figures showing that Bay County is one of only eight shelters which are responsible for half of the dogs and cats killed in shelters in Michigan last year. In 2009, Bay County ranked #131 out of 152 shelters reporting to the Michigan Department of Agriculture in terms of "save rates", allowing only one out of four animals (24.49%) in its care to leave the shelter alive. Even worse, in 2010 Bay County ranked 142 out of 160 Michigan shelters with a 23.7% save rate, killing 2,540 animals or 48 animals a week, adopting an average of 9 animals a week, and returning 5 animals a week to their owners. In other data provided by the HSBC, in 2010 the Bay County Shelter killed 80% of 860 potentially adoptable adult dogs and 94% of 1,042 potentially adoptable adult cats. In comparison, the 162 other licensed Michigan shelters killed 44% of potentially adoptable canines and 61% of potentially adoptable felines. Clearly, these statistics show that our Bay County Animal Shelter is in dire need of reform.



So, how can we stop the killing of adoptable animals in our county shelter? The answer is the "No Kill Equation", a national movement to reform animal shelters, revealing the wholesale killing of adoptable shelter pets as a costly failure in trying to control animal overpopulation. To clarify the term "No Kill", Ms. Schutt explained that it does not mean that every shelter animal can be saved. In fact, animals who are suffering from incurable illness or injury and those who are incorrigibly vicious and a danger to the public must be euthanized. But the vast majority of healthy or treatable shelter pets can be saved by using the following methods, developed and explained by Nathan Winograd in his book, *Redemption: The Myth of Pet Overpopulation and The No Kill Revolution in America*:

- High-Volume, Low-Cost Spay/Neuter reduces the number of animals born, resulting in lower numbers entering shelters. (No animal should leave the Bay County Shelter unsterilized.)
- Rescue Groups which are permitted to take in animals from our county shelter at a reduced cost lower both the shelter animal population and the costs to feed, clean up after, and kill these homeless pets.
- TNR (Trap-Neuter-Release) programs for free-roaming cats lower feral cat populations while also lowering the shelter kill rate.
- Foster Care provides temporary homes for shelter animals too young to be adopted immediately or for those in need of medical/behavioral treatment before adoption.

Events Chronicle -continued

Successful Luncheon Opens "No Kill" Shelter Campaign (continued)

- Comprehensive Adoption Programs are "responsive to community needs, including public access hours for working people, offsite adoptions, adoption incentives, and effective marketing" with the result that "... shelters can adopt their way out of killing."
- Pet Retention programs help owners keep their pets by providing innovative solutions, advice, and assistance for problems which people believe compel them to surrender their pets.
- Medical and Behavior Programs rehabilitate animals who enter the shelter sick, injured, unweaned or traumatized and support saving animals' lives by keeping them healthy, clean and happy.
- Public Relations/Community Development enlists the aid of the community in supporting the shelter through donations, fund-raising activities, and partnering projects while creating a positive public image of a progressive animal shelter in which local residents can take pride.
- Volunteers are essential to saving the lives of homeless pets in the shelter by providing support for shelter staff, unpaid work in areas such as walking dogs, grooming and socializing cats, educating the public, counseling potential adopters, and many other chores. In Winograd's words, volunteers are an "army of compassion" and the "backbone of the No Kill effort", making "the difference between success and failure and, for the animals, life and death."
- Proactive Redemptions prevent unnecessary killing by making every effort to



Shown above: Co-Chairs Jeannie Wolicki-Nichols & Leslie Prast

locate the owners of lost animals and reunite them with their pets by checking for microchips, tracing licenses and tags, searching the "lost" notices in newspapers, posting "found" fliers, canvassing neighborhoods, etc. (which can be done by volunteers).

- A Compassionate Director is crucial to establishing and maintaining a No Kill shelter by ensuring that killing adoptable animals is not an option, by hiring staff committed to the No Kill philosophy, by instituting innovative methods, and by inspiring the public trust in a shelter that lives up to the name "No Kill". Without such a director who demonstrates through results and statistics his or her commitment to the No Kill philosophy by "taking killing off the table", all other efforts in support of No Kill are futile.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Deborah Schutt asked her audience, "Does Bay County want No Kill?" The answer was a resounding YES! and a standing ovation. But how do we start? Ms. Schutt advised that we take the following steps:

1. Desire to improve
2. Establish an officially designated Task Force including the Humane Society, Animal Control Shelter Manager, county commissioners, and others to:
3. Develop a plan in three months
4. Report back to the County Board with the plan and an implementation schedule
5. Seek assistance from the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance

6. Begin improving to eventually become No Kill

Now the Humane Society is calling on all our members to join the No Kill effort by:

- Circulating the No Kill Petition in this newsletter for signatures and returning it to the Humane Society of Bay County, PO Box 215, Bay City, MI 48707.
- Contacting your county commissioner by phone, email or letter to express your support for No Kill for Bay County. (To find your commissioner's contact info, please call the County Clerk's Office at 989-895-4280.)
- Volunteering to help by calling the HSBC at 989-893-0451 and leaving your name, address, email and phone number so that you can be contacted.
- Talking to family, friends and neighbors about the importance of reforming our Bay County Animal Shelter to No Kill.
- Sending a donation to the HSBC No Kill



From Left: Leslie Prast, Co-Chair, Commissioner Joe Davis 4th District, & Deb Schutt Chair--Michigan Pet Fund Alliance

Fund at the above address. Requesting more information about No Kill by contacting the HSBC at 989-893-0451, or going to our web site at www.humansocietybaycounty.org.

The message that came through loud and clear at the No Kill luncheon was that we can reform our Bay County Animal Shelter to save adoptable animals instead of needlessly killing them. Will YOU help us bring about a No Kill Animal Shelter for Bay County? Submitted by Leslie Pratt



Petition in Support of NO KILL in Bay County

We, the undersigned, support No Kill for all adoptable animals in the Bay County Animal Control Shelter, including High Volume Low-Cost Spay/Neuter, Collaboration with Rescue Groups, Foster Care for Animals, Comprehensive Adoption Programs, Feral Cat Trap-Neuter-Release, Pet Retention Program for Owners, Use of Volunteers, Community Involvement, and Shelter Staff Committed to No Kill for All Adoptable Animals.

Name

Address (Bay County residency not required)

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18.	_____

Please return to Humane Society of Bay County, PO Box 215, Bay City, MI 48707.