



Sauk County Humane Society
2014 Annual Report



SAUK COUNTY
HUMANE
SOCIETY



WHO WE ARE

The Sauk County Humane Society was formed in 1921. The purpose of the organization at that time was “...the prevention of abuse of children or cruelty to animals and for the enforcement of the law relating to said subjects in the County of Sauk.” Since 1921 the purposes and the membership have changed with the times. The Society no longer deals with child abuse but concentrates on Animal Care and Welfare. In 1981, the Society was reorganized into its current form. Today, the Sauk County Humane Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charity.

The mission of the Sauk County Humane Society is to encourage responsible treatment of animals through:

- Preventing cruelty to animals,
- Finding homes for animals,
- Promoting spay-neutering efforts, and
- Extending humane education and outreach.

We operate one of approximately 13,600 independent community shelters nationwide. We are an open admission animal shelter where no animal is turned away in its time of need, no matter what its age, condition, extent of injuries, or behavior. It is our belief that no animal, or person turning to us with an animal, should be turned away. “Out of sight, out of mind” is not an option for us.

WHAT WE DO

The Sauk County Humane Society is a full service Humane Society. One of our functions is to operate the Sauk County Animal Shelter, including handle Animal Control duties for the county. Some of these responsibilities include: retrieval of stray, trapped, or injured animals; care of stray animals at the shelter; completing dog and cat bite reports; providing rabies observation services; coordinating rabies control measure with the Department of Public Health; providing a clearing house for the location of lost companion animals; and euthanasia of animals when needed.

Additional programs provided by the Sauk County Humane Society outside the scope of our contract include: serve as an open admissions shelter where no animal is turned away; shelter and care for owner-surrendered animals; education and outreach to include bite prevention, humane animal care, how to be a good companion animal guardian, the importance of spay/neuter programs and proper animal care; Spay/Neuter Assistance Program (SNAP) for those residents meeting low-income requirements; animals in crisis programs to help people who are experiencing various difficulties keep their pets instead of turning them into the shelter; serve as a resource for wildlife questions; provide volunteer transport of injured or unweaned wildlife to rehabilitators.

The County contract pays less than 50% of the cost of operating the Animal Shelter and providing these services. We must raise the balance each year through fundraising, adoption and return to owner fees, donations, and grants.



WHERE WE ARE AS OF 2014

2014 turned out to be a banner year. Adoptions are up, revenue is up, volunteer numbers are up, there are more programs, and we are helping more animals and citizens than ever. To better appreciate how far we've come, a summary of our evolution over the past three years is provided below.

WHERE WE WERE IN 2011

In 2011 the shelter was in crisis. The Board of Directors knew something had to be done. Two members stepped in, rolled up their sleeves, and went to work transforming the shelter. This was a painful process for many of those involved but necessary in order to save the shelter. Today, we are proud of what we have accomplished and where we are. Over the past three years, the shelter has emerged as an organization that puts compassion and empathy for animals first while also serving the pet owners of the community. 2012 was a "clean-up" year and 2013 a year of stabilization where new habits evolved into a culture of putting the animals first in every facet of shelter operations. The change has been profound and the shelter is now positioned to begin to tackle the more difficult problem of pet over-population in Sauk County.

IMPROVEMENTS SINCE NOVEMBER 2011

- Animal care is now the number one priority in the shelter; animals are taken to the vet instead of being allowed to suffer or die.
- The death, loss, or injury of any animal while in our care is taken extremely seriously and requires a full incident report.
- Cages are cleaned according to standard shelter practices; the shelter no longer has a strong odor of urine permeating the walls.
- Staff knows that if an animal is not properly cared for they risk termination.
- Kennels and cages were re-vamped to reduce stress.
- All animals are spayed or neutered prior to adoption.
- Our internal animal tracking database is kept current in near real-time .
- Necessary staff changes were made and employees are in the proper jobs.
- We are no longer adopting out sick, unneutered, or too young animals.
- We have a proper adoption counseling process that focuses on better matching prospective adopters with animals.

- Adopt-A-Thons are now held frequently around the county to increase adoptions.
- Our volunteers have returned; existing volunteer programs have been enhanced and new ones created.
- We have significantly increased use of social media and other media outlets to increase shelter awareness and to highlight animals available for adoption.
- Public feedback has been positive.
- We have modified our hours to better serve the public.
- Staff is helpful and courteous to the public.
- We have expanded our wildlife knowledge base to better assist the general public with basic wildlife issues, including serving as a resource for questions, and using volunteers to transport injured and sick wildlife to licensed rehabilitation centers or wildlife centers.
- Three new programs, Pet Partnership, Safekeeping and the Pet Food Pantry, were established to help low-income county residents who are temporarily unable to care for their pets or who have emergency pet food or housing needs. These programs are designed to help residents keep their pets rather than giving them away or surrendering them to the shelter.
- The Josh Diehm Fund (assistance with veterinary costs for Sauk County low-income residents) was streamlined to ensure emergency requests are met in a timely fashion.
- Our newsletter is back on a regular publication schedule.
- We have reestablished positive relationships with area vets.
- We have built strong relationships with Dane County and the Coulee Region Humane Society both of which are helping us with animals when they have space.
- We are better utilizing other shelters and rescue groups when at or near capacity:
 - * from 1/1/2009 through 10/31/2011, the shelter transferred 117 animals;
 - * from 11/1/2011 through 12/31/2012, we transferred 160 animals;
 - * from 1/1/2013 through 12/31/2013 we transferred 136 animals;
 - * from 1/1/2014 through 12/31/2014 we transferred 180 animals.
- The foster program has been rejuvenated, allowing care for animals not quite ready for adoption.
- We are keeping our animal population at, or below, capacity to ensure we can humanely care for them instead of warehousing them.
- We are nearly GAAP-compliant so we can accurately see where we stand financially and are submitting our tax returns and financial reports on time without extensions.
- Board meetings are being conducted in a professional manner consistent with parliamentary procedures and Robert's Rules of Order.



IMPORTANT 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

- The percentage of cat adoptions (adoptions/intake) is up from 2013 by over 3%; the percentage of dog adoptions per intake is up from 2013 by almost 6%.
- Our largest fundraiser of the year, the PAWS Walk and Fun Festival, raised the largest amount ever, bringing in almost \$26,000 for the animals and people we serve. The event was sponsored by a record-breaking 74 sponsors.
- We took 1st place in the state of Wisconsin TWICE in the Rescue Me Shelter Challenges, a contest that is decided by the highest number of votes by fans.
- December had the highest number of cat adoptions in three years; July, September, and August had the next highest, respectively.
- We hired a part-time veterinarian, a first for the Society.
- To tackle the problem of pet overpopulation in our community, we began Sauk County's first low cost spay/neuter clinic.

2014 ANIMAL STATISTICS

Incoming:

	Dog	Cat	Rabbit (domestic)	Other*	Wildlife*	Total
Surrender	232	671	23	48		977
Stray	245	579	2	3		829
Return	21	23				44
Seized	17					17
Bite Quarantine	11	3				14
Safekeeping	7	25		1		33
Protective Custody	6	5				11
Transfer In	27	4				31
Wildlife					107	107
TOTAL	567	1312	25	52	107	2063

*1 badger, 1 bat, 1 bearded dragon, 2 chickens, 3 crows, 1 deer, 2 doves, 15 ducks, 1 eagle, 4 ferrets, 8 finches, 2 goldfish, 2 geese, 31 guinea pigs, 1 gull, 1 hamster, 4 hawks, 2 blue jay, 7 mice, 1 oriole, 2 owls, 1 parakeet, 1 pig, 32 wild rabbits, 2 raccoons 1 rat, 11 robins, 1 snake, 2 sparrows, 7 squirrels, 1 tortoise, 4 turkeys, 1 turtle, 1 vulture, 1 waxwing, 1 woodpecker

Outgoing:

	Dog	Cat	Rabbit (domestic)	Other	Wildlife	Total
Adoptions	180	260	2	15		457
Return to Owner	188	35		2		225
Transfers	24	137	3	7	69	240
Service**	82	181	3	7		277
Died*	3	8			2	13
DOA	6	9	1	1	4	21
Wildlife Release					3	3
Euthanasia	67	697	12	9	29	814
Total	550	1329	21	41	107	2045

*Three newborn puppies died while at an Emergency Vet Clinic; one cat died while undergoing care at an Emergency Vet Clinic; four newborn kittens died overnight when their mother sat on them; two kittens died in foster care; 1 kitten died after failing to thrive with its mother.

**Bite quarantine, safekeeping, protective custody, owner requests, cremation requests.



Our Animal Control staff is on-call 24/7 365 days a week, including weekends and holidays. In 2014 the AC staff took 487 calls, handled 112 bite cases and impounded 446 animals.

RINGWORM OUTBREAK AND CONTAINMENT

In late October, we began to see an increase in the number of cats coming into the shelter with ringworm. This treatable, but highly contagious fungus creates an especially difficult challenge for shelters. By the end of the month it became apparent we had a full blown outbreak and decisions had to be made. The options available to us were limited. In some cases, when outbreaks are particularly severe, shelters

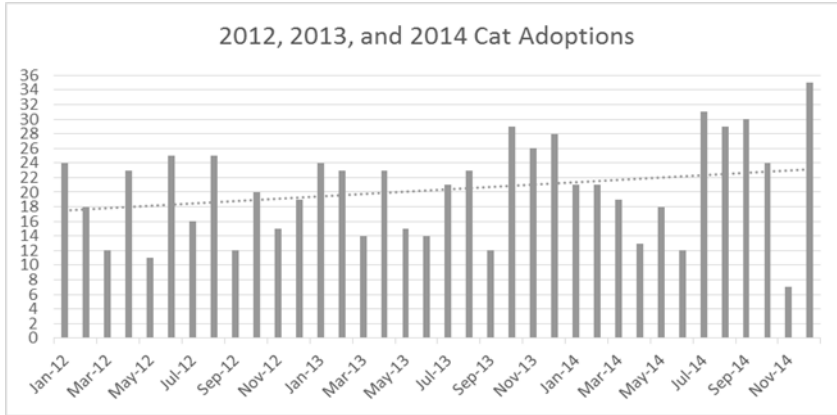
make the painful decision to euthanize their entire population of cats, deep clean the building and then essentially start over. This was not an option we wanted to consider so we chose instead to close the cat adoption area to the public, including to all volunteers, for the three weeks it would take to treat the cats.

During this three week period every cat was dipped in a lime sulfur solution twice a week. The dipping process, while not hurtful to the cat, is nonetheless quite unpleasant and causes a lot of stress. We also had to curtail our enrichment program during this period as ringworm can reside on any object. Even bedding had to be significantly reduced for the cats. We also thoroughly deep cleaned the shelter from top to bottom. Thankfully, every cat made it through and by the end of November we were up and running again and the cats were available for adoption. Our cat adoption number for November reflects this closure period.



ADOPTIONS

Despite being closed for three weeks in November, our cat adoptions continued to increase.



The percentage of dog adoptions per intake was up from 2013 by almost 6%. To help increase adoption of all pets, we are holding more Adopt-A-Thons throughout the county. Available pets can be seen every first Saturday of the month at the Sauk Prairie Small Animal Hospital. Other Adopt-A-Thon locations included Pierce's Marketplace, the Wild Bird Barn, Blain's Farm & Fleet, and the Cayuse Shop.





USING OTHER SHELTERS AND RESCUE GROUPS

We couldn't begin to save the number of animals we do without strong relationships with other shelters and reputable Rescue Groups. When we become perilously close to capacity, we not only reach out to other shelters, but to breed specific rescue groups. We transferred 240 animals in 2014.

Animals Transferred in 2014

	Cat	Dog	Other	Total
Columbia County Humane Society	1	0	0	1
Coulee Region Humane Society	6	8	0	14
Dane County Humane Society	115	8	8	131
Doberman Rescue Alliance of WI	0	1	0	1
Feline/Canine Friends	4	0	0	4
Four Lakes Wildlife Center	0	0	50	50
HAWS-Humane Animal Welfare Society	0	5	0	5
Highway of Hope	0	1	0	1
Hill-Dale Vet Hospital	2	0	0	2
Kitties On the Prairie Cat Rescue	1	0	0	1
Small Scale Reptile Rescue	0	0	1	1
Soaring Eagle Wildlife Rehab	0	0	5	5
Specialty Purebred Cat Rescue	8	0	0	8
Wild Bird Barn	0	0	1	1
Wisconsin Rottweiler Rescue	0	1	0	1
Miscellaneous Mammal/Bird Rehab	0	0	14	14
Total	137	24	79	240

EUTHANASIA STATISTICS

The year-end euthanasia rate for all animals was 39.5% (including wildlife), compared to 51.1% and 53.7% for 2012 and 2013, respectively. Most important, as in prior years, ***no healthy, adoptable animal was euthanized.***

The number of dogs that need to be euthanized is very low in our community. At only 11.8%, this number is significantly below the national average (reported to be anywhere between 31% and 56% depending on source). Although cats do not fare as well, the 53% is near or below the national average (anywhere from 41% to 71% depending on source) and lower than in 2012 and 2013 at 67.9% and 71.5%, respectively.

	Dogs	Cats	Other Domestic
Health	23	325	8
Age	4	105	0
Bite Quarantine	1	10	0
Behavior	39	257	13
Space	0	0	0

Euthanasia Reasons

Because we do not turn our backs on the injured, sick, diseased, and otherwise unadoptable animals as well as the people who have nowhere else to turn, and because we serve as the last refuge for animals that are turned away from other jurisdictions, our euthanasia rate will likely be higher than our neighbors. Furthermore, while we are grateful the need to euthanize has been significantly lower for 2014, until the community begins to take the problem of pet overpopulation seriously, especially for cats, we will continue to see euthanasia rates much higher than any of us would like. What we will not do is myopically focus on an arbitrary number at the expense of alleviating animal suffering.

SCHS believes in helping the greatest number of animals with our available resources. That is why we will accept any animal that comes to our door. We attempt to place healthy, adoptable animals into new homes. We provide rehabilitation for animals who may need extra care and attention before they are adoptable. We use precious donations to provide veterinary care to sick and injured animals. We use rescue groups, other shelters, and foster homes. The reality is that due to the overwhelming volume of animals coming into our shelter, healthy adoptable animals could possibly be euthanized due to resource constraints. Despite that, thankfully, because we move heaven and earth using other resources, we have not had to euthanize a healthy, adoptable animal in many years.

We are here for the animals no one else will take and are here for anyone who needs to surrender their animal, no matter where they live or the condition of the animal. We rely 100% on donations to provide this service.

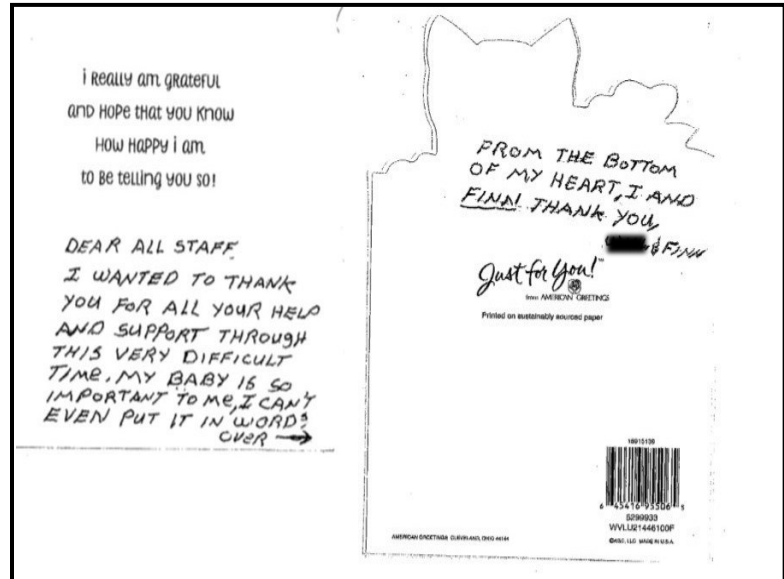
KEEPING PETS WITH THEIR OWNERS

Sauk County Humane Society is dedicated to keeping pets and their families together. We currently have four active programs designed expressly to keep pets with their owners. Together these are referred to as our "Animals in Crisis" programs. The first, the Josh Diehm Memorial Fund, was established in late 1997 in memory of long-time supporter and animal lover, Josh Diehm. This fund helps residents without means who find themselves facing unexpected or large veterinary bills for their pets. Funded entirely of donations, we are able to help people pay for emergency medical care for a pet they might otherwise have to surrender, put to sleep, or let suffer.

In February 2012, we started three additional programs: Pet Partnership, Safekeeping and the Pet Food Pantry. These programs are designed to help residents keep their pets rather than giving them away or surrendering them to the shelter during difficult times. The Pet Food Pantry supplies low-income individuals with dog and puppy food, cat and kitten food, and kitty litter (when available). People who have suffered financial tragedies, lost their homes from fires and other disasters, fallen victim to sudden illness, or have to flee quickly from domestic abuse, can keep their pets at the shelter or in one of our foster homes through our Safekeeping Program. Through our Pet Partnership Program, volunteers will help individuals with no safety net available care for their pet in-home on a temporary basis if they are unable to due to recovery from surgery, hospitalization, or some other reason.

	Number of people helped	Number of animals helped	Dollars spent	Days spent in shelter
Josh Diehm	42	42	\$3,605	
Pet Food Pantry	70	175	\$0	
Safekeeping	29	33		661
Pet Partnership	1	1	\$0	

Animals and Individuals Helped in 2014





BETSY'S FUND

Betsy's Fund was established in 2002 after a small, stray female Cocker Spaniel who came into the shelter with toenails grown into her pads, severely infected gums, flea infestation, and worse, who was being eaten alive by maggots living in her flesh all over her body. This sweet dog was given immediate and intensive veterinary care and badly needed TLC from a foster volunteer. However, after several days, it was clear she was losing her battle...her kidneys began to shut down and the decision was made to humanely euthanize her.

Betsy's Fund provides for acute medical care for homeless animals brought to us in critical condition and allows us to proceed with life-saving health care by taking the animal to a veterinary hospital. This year we were able to save over two dozen animals through the generosity of donors who contribute to this fund, including cats Shelley, Bailey, Missy, Trini, and Charlie and dogs Koba, Buddy, Ralphie, among others.

Ralphie had what looked like a chicken wing where his leg should have been. It was clearly bothering him and getting caught on everything. Once removed, he was a much happier dog!

Charlie had severe trauma to his front leg causing the nerve to die. Despite aggressive physical therapy from staff, the feeling never came back so it had to be amputated.

Bailey had the worst frostbite we had seen all winter. She was also suffering from a severe URI and worse, had been shot, shattering her front leg.

Koba had severe and painful dental disease requiring two surgeries and several extractions.



Missy had a very large, deep and badly infected wound on the back of her neck from self-mutilation due to an extreme flea allergy.

Trini had half of a stump where one of her hind legs should be. It was very sore and swollen and constantly getting in her way. She was so much happier once the leg was removed.



Buddy had such severe dental disease he required three surgeries. We almost lost him during one of the surgeries.



VOLUNTEERS

We could not successfully exist without our volunteers. We are very fortunate to have a dedicated group of individuals who selflessly contribute their time and talent. This year we saw a dramatic increase in our volunteer contributions, coming in at 11,722 hours! That's an increase of 13.7% over 2013 and equal to almost six full-time staff. Their activities include cat socializing, dog walking, photography, front desk support, animal transport, fostering, kennel cleaning, Adopt-A-Thon support, special events help, and outside facility maintenance. This year we started three new volunteer programs: animal enrichment, humane education, and spay/neuter clinic support, each of which has received a lot of interest and participation.

In addition to our community volunteers, we work with the county and bring on Huber workers throughout the year. These individuals provide very valuable support while learning new work skills that ultimately help them once they are released, often returning to the shelter as employees.

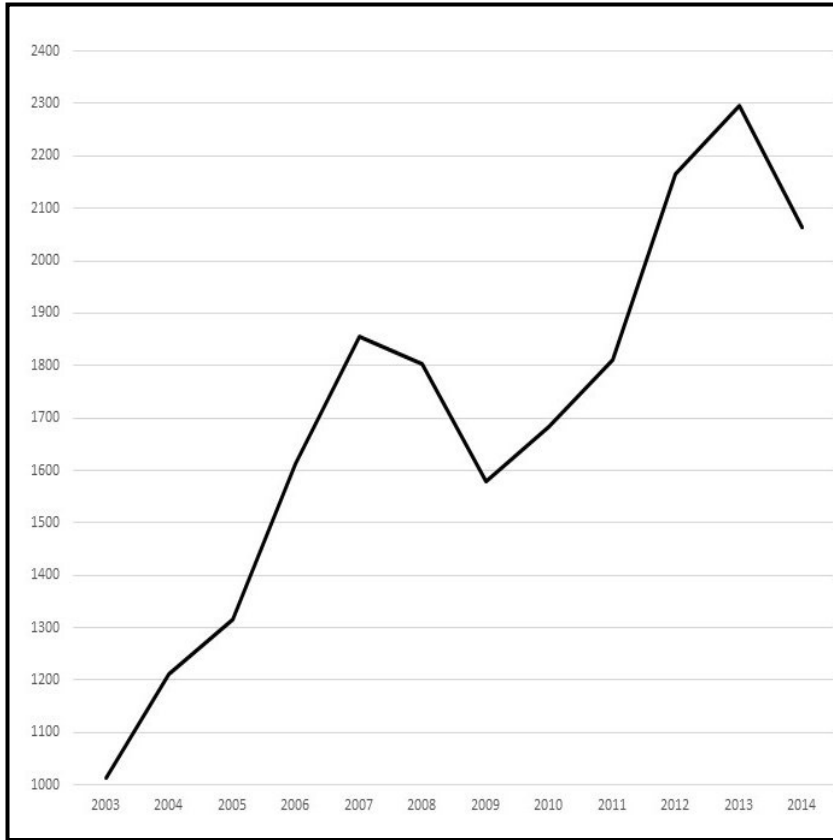


INTAKES THROUGH THE YEARS

The Sauk County Animal Shelter opened on June 1, 1999 after 20+ years of effort—first a dream and then finally a wonderful reality. Every year we rededicate ourselves to continuing to build on the foundation laid by our predecessors.

By all accounts, the shelter was full within days of that opening. Within weeks, more than 500 animals had come into the shelter and within six months over 1,000. Today, we are averaging more than 2,000 animals each year. Without strong relationships with other shelters and rescue groups and without a cadre of wonderful foster volunteers, we would be unable to humanely care for these animals waiting for adoption. Thankfully, we saw a 10% dip in the total numbers in 2014, from 2296 to 2063. However, before we become too optimistic that there is a new trend emerging, we need to recognize that the winter of 2013/2014 was brutal and a lot of animals, especially outdoor cats and/or their offspring, did not survive.

We are optimistic, however, that our focus on a strong spay/neuter program will eventually result in fewer homeless animals coming through our doors. In the meantime, we will continue our stewardship to ensure the shelter is one of which the community can be proud and to show our children that we as a county value the lives of animals and need to show kindness and respect for all living things.

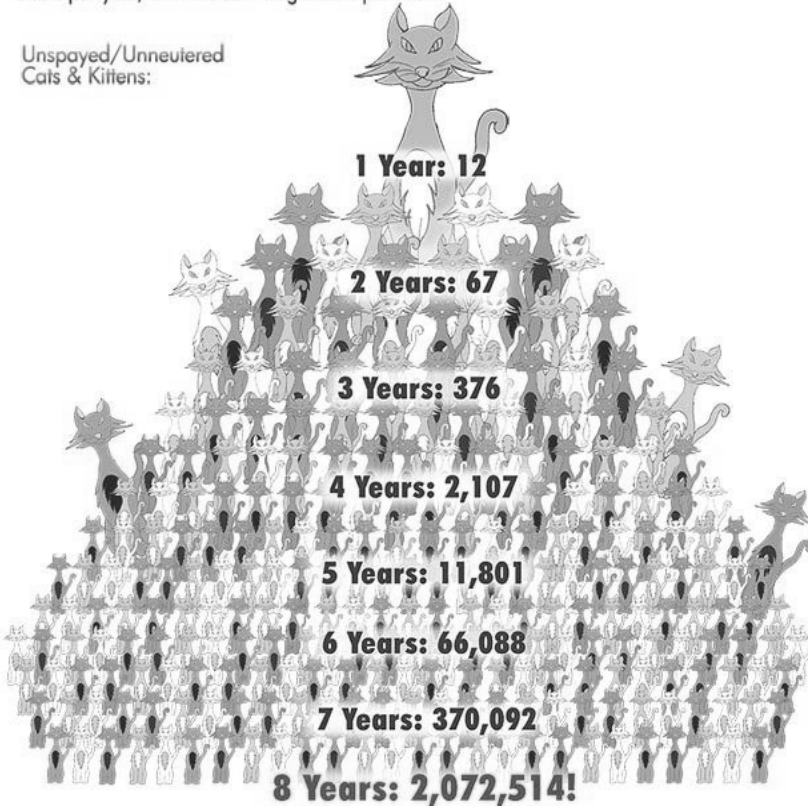


Animal Intakes Since 2003

What impact will the Campaign to Save Pets' Lives have?

This chart represents one unspayed female, her mate and all of her offspring, producing 2 litters per year, with 2.8 surviving kittens per litter:

Unspayed/Unneutered
Cats & Kittens:



By spaying and neutering just one male and one female cat, more than 2,000 unwanted births can be prevented in just four years – and more than 2 million in 8 years!

SPAYING AND NEUTERING

Addressing the severe pet overpopulation in our area has always been a major part of the Humane Society's mission. In 1986, we began our Spay Neuter Assistance Program (SNAP). Pet owners could obtain vouchers from us for a small discount when they had their dogs or cats neutered or spayed. Every veterinarian in the county honored these vouchers. Over the years, the program was well used. By the mid-1990's we had spent well over \$100,000 in reimbursements to the vets and assisted in the sterilization of approximately 6,000 pets. This program continues to this day, however, we have taken our efforts to the next level.

After more than a year of planning and preparation, Phase I of Sauk County's first Low Cost High Volume Spay/Neuter Clinic became a reality this year. After years of seeing the flood of unwanted animals, usually cats and kittens, come through our doors, we took a long hard look at this problem and we decided we could no longer accept this as our reality in Sauk County. The single most important thing we can do to reduce the pet overpopulation problem in Sauk County is to spay and neuter-- nothing else we do will alleviate as much suffering or prevent the euthanasia of animals as quickly or efficiently as spaying and neutering. Recognizing that ***prevention of the next generation of homeless pets has to be our number one priority***, the idea to offer a low cost spay/neuter option for people was born in early 2013. Establishing the County's first low cost high volume spay/neuter clinic is a start toward preventing future pet abandonment, homelessness, and neglect by preventing unwanted births.

This endeavor was not easy or inexpensive but we could no longer do nothing. One of our first tasks was to define our initiative. As strong believers that all companion animals deserve proper, and regular, veterinary care, we felt it was important to establish early on what we are NOT, i.e., ***our only goal is to tackle the severe pet overpopulation in Sauk County***, not to become another resource for companion vet care. We strongly encourage those taking advantage of our spay/neuter clinic to seek follow up care with a veterinarian.

In mid-July we took our first step and hired a part-time veterinarian, also a first for the Humane Society. Dr. Casey Walter (see next page) joined the staff and immediately went to work determining our surgical needs and establishing proper spay/neuter protocols and procedures.

An anonymous donor graciously paid for most of the necessary surgical equipment, including an anesthesia machine, an autoclave, an ultrasonic instrument cleaner, and surgical instrument packs. Several other donors stepped forward and earmarked donations to help pay for much of the remainder which included oxygen tanks to get the surgeries underway, surgical drugs, and a safe to securely store the controlled drugs.

Phase I, which starts with the low cost piece for cats, began with our first surgeries in early September. Dogs will be added at a later time and Phase II, which will evolve at a later date, will add the “high volume” piece.





OUR FIRST SHELTER VETERINARIAN

With the advent of the long-awaited low cost spay/neuter clinic, the Sauk County Humane Society welcomed Dr. Casey Walter, DVM, as a part-time member of the shelter family in mid July. Having a veterinarian on staff represents an important milestone for the shelter.

With the mandate that every animal in our care receive proper veterinary care during its stay at the shelter, our veterinary costs had skyrocketed. While local veterinarians graciously provide deep discounts, nonetheless, our generous donations could not keep up with the increased expenses we were incurring. Since we needed a veterinarian for the spay/neuter clinic, we felt it was time for the shelter to evolve to the next level. With experience in a high volume spay/neuter setting as our number one search criteria, we launched our search efforts. It was our extremely good fortune that Dr. Casey Walter was seeking such an opportunity at the time and had the requisite shelter, and most important, high volume spay/neuter experience.

Dr. Walter graduated from the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine in 2002 and throughout her career has been committed to helping to end pet overpopulation. She started out in private practice treating cats and dogs and then spent three years as a veterinarian at a clinic in Madison serving animal rescue groups, shelters, and pet owners with financial hardship. She performed approximately 500 spay/neuter surgeries at the Dane County Humane Society and was a volunteer veterinarian for Shelter from The Storm Animal Rescue.

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

Sauk County Humane Society is committed to continuing our growth as a responsible steward of homeless, neglected, and abused animals and as serving as a role model for how animals should be treated. We are also committed to continue to be an open admissions shelter. We will turn no animal away in its time of need, no matter what its age, condition, extent of injuries, or behavior. We cannot imagine watching a rejected person leaving our building, not knowing what to do with the animal they can no longer care for or looking at an innocent face and saying “You’re on your own.” We also do not charge a surrender fee. We have found that animal dumping is a very real and serious problem in our area and has been for decades. We hear stories weekly about animals who have been thrown from cars, dumped by the side of the road, or worse. While we encourage those surrendering animals to make donations to help with animal care, we believe the risk to an animal if an individual cannot or will not pay a surrender fee to be too great to require payment.

	Out of County	%'age of total intake
2012	317	14.6%
2013	408	13.8%
2014	421	20.4%

We recognize that by accepting ill, injured, and otherwise unadoptable animals our euthanasia rate will be higher than that of limited admission shelters. We also recognize that the animals brought to us from outside our jurisdiction are likely coming to us because they are, in fact, unadoptable, which also contributes to our euthanasia rate. As a result of being an open admissions shelter, our intake numbers include a high percentage of animals from outside the county.

Out of County Intakes 2014

We are committed to lowering the euthanasia rate at its source, i.e., too many unwanted animals allowed to be born in the first place, rather than by turning our backs on those already born and in need. This commitment involves offering a low cost spay/neuter option as well as an aggressive education initiative that includes requiring any adopter with animals to spay and neuter their existing pets, thereby ensuring they are not part of the problem. ***Community involvement in our efforts to stem the tide of unwanted litters will be essential to that success*** and we are committed to working together toward a goal that reduces unwanted litters and the community euthanasias that result. We all must be committed to a ***total program*** of animal care and control including: an enforceable ordinance placing responsibility for the pet squarely on its owner; a sterilization program; and public information material to inform all pet owners about humane and responsible pet care and control.





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