

***PAWS....*** FOR SOME NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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# **NO KILL ANIMAL CONTROL!**

*Euthanasia Rate Plummets to All-Time Low!*

*Ithaca....* Tompkins County is the safest community in the United States to be a homeless dog or cat.

For the second year in a row, the Tompkins County SPCA saved each and every healthy dog and cat who came to the shelter. This makes Tompkins County one of only a handful of communities in the United States that saved 100% of healthy, friendly dogs and cats in its care. As the animal control authority for the county and all townships, the TC SPCA accepts all dogs and cats, stray or owner surrendered.

In 2002, the TC SPCA took an even more dramatic lifesaving step last year by also rehabilitating and placing 100% of treatable sick and injured dogs and cats. We also saved every feral cat by partnering with local farmers to ensure that the cats were altered, provided a rabies inoculation and then released on neighborhood farms.

It didn't matter if they were cute and cuddly, old and blind, missing limbs, or in need of behavioral or medical intervention. If they were healthy or treatable, we found them all a loving, new home.

Overall 92% of all dogs and cats who entered the shelter found their way back to their caregivers or into new homes. This represents a 75% decline in deaths from just two short years ago when we instituted a "No Kill" policy for Tompkins County. With a euthanasia rate of 1.9 for every 1,000 residents, Tompkins County is *the* safest community in the entire United States for homeless dogs and cats.

Animal People, a national publication that tracks euthanasia rates throughout the country, charted San Francisco at 2.2 euthanasias per 1,000 residents and New Hampshire at 2.6. Tompkins County ranked No. 3 in 2001, but climbed to the top spot in 2002 after reducing the number of dogs and cats killed by 52% this past year.

"There is no secret to our success," said Nathan J. Winograd, the SPCA Executive Director. "It can be achieved in any community through a combination of hard work,

flexibility, lifesaving programs, and broad public support.” The programs Winograd cites for the TC SPCA’s success include:

- **Comprehensive adoption programs.** Being open seven days a week helped ensure that working people and families had an opportunity to adopt animals. Adoption events around the county, including the first permanent “offsite” adoption facility at Ithaca Agway and a full service adoption booth during our December Home for the Holidays event at Pyramid Mall, resulted in over 150 additional homes for dogs and cats.
- **Volunteers.** SPCA volunteers fostered almost 800 animals and put in 12,500 hours last year socializing, grooming, and caring for shelter pets.
- **Aggressive spay/neuter programs.** The shelter altered every animal prior to adoption last year, and helped spay/neuter over 600 pets of low-income Tompkins County residents.
- **Rescue Groups.** An expanded partnership with other No Kill agencies in five states allowed 329 additional dogs and cats to find loving new homes.
- **Local Veterinarians.** Local veterinarians, including the Cornell Hospital for Animals, provided free health exams for SPCA adopted pets, low-cost neutering, and other medical services for shelter animals.
- **Feral Cat Assistance Program.** This program neutered 114 feral cats and returned them to their habitats.
- **Media Supporters.** Our media supporters, including the Ithaca Journal, Eagle Broadcasting, Time Warner Cable, the Ithaca Times, and local radio stations and newspapers helped promote SPCA programs, services and available animals.
- **Local Government.** The City of Ithaca, all ten townships and the county Board of Representatives supported the TC SPCA’s lifesaving services.
- **Tompkins County Residents.** Adopters, donors, members and many others opened their hearts or homes to needy SPCA animals in 2002.

“This is really the community’s achievement,” said Winograd. “It was the combined work of every adopter, Good Samaritan, reporter, veterinarian, business person, donor and volunteer whose support helped the animals who made their way to the Tompkins County SPCA.”

“We couldn’t have done it alone,” said Winograd. “There are only twelve employees at the TC SPCA. But with the public’s support, we are thousands strong. And together, we made 2002 the year of saving lives and Tompkins County, the most pet loving community in the country.”