

What Worked, What Didn't, What's Next

A review of Year Three of the No More Homeless Pets in Utah campaign

By No More Homeless Pets in Utah Staff

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Overview

No More Homeless Pets in Utah began in July 2000. Its aim is to reduce the number of homeless pets destroyed in Utah's shelters by each year by 13,300 over 5 years. This document provides an overview of each element of the program, and, for each of those elements, lists specifically the things that worked, those that didn't, and what's next.

Overall, the program has so far been dramatically successful in Utah. Many of its elements are experimental, even pioneering. They have worked in Utah. They may or may not work in other communities.

Some results of the first three years:

- Number of animals destroyed is down 19% over the baseline year (1999)
- 19,000 dogs and cats have been spared from euthanization
- Adoptions are up 43% statewide. Those done by no-kill organizations are up 156%.
- 18,900 additional dogs and cats have found homes
- 30,400 discount spay/neuter vouchers have been used.
- The Big Fix (mobile clinic) has performed 17,300 surgeries

While we recognize that these results are remarkable, we nevertheless find ourselves questioning and re-questioning our progress: Are we doing enough? Are we doing it right? Are we doing it as efficiently as possible? Because if we're not, we're letting down the very creatures we're here for. In short, we are so invested in the outcome of this program, that we're never quite satisfied with our accomplishments and are always seeking better, smarter more targeted ways of doing things.

The biggest challenge that we face ongoingly is the balance we strike between focusing on adoptions and focusing on spay/neuter. We recognize the need to help, through rescue and adoption, the animals who have already been born, and we are honored to have this duty, but we know that without aggressive spay/neuter programs, we are not effecting a permanent change.

Despite the challenges, we are very excited to be working toward Utah becoming a no-kill state, and know that we have been given the chance of a lifetime. We are so thankful for the resources provided to us by both Maddie's Fund and Best Friends Animal Sanctuary. They are partners in making our dreams into reality, and everyday we get a little closer. We hope that you will find some help in the following pages, and that you, too, will keep fighting the good fight, so that someday in the not-too-distant future, we will all live in a world with no more homeless pets.

Adoption Program Elements

Furburbia Pet Adoption Center

Overview: Furburbia pet adoption centers, a.k.a. “the hip place to find true love,” are fun, cheerfully decorated, inviting adoption centers located in malls in Salt Lake City and Park City.

The adoption centers were designed to go head to head with pet stores. Their atmosphere is nothing like that of a traditional shelter, and they therefore attract people who are drawn to the idea of adopting, but who aren’t comfortable visiting a shelter.

Each of the Furburbia locations provides the setting for, on average, 35 adoptions every week. Participating rescue partners and shelters fill the two centers seven days a week. Nearly 30 of our partners participate on a regular basis.

The companies that own each mall generously donated the spaces for Furburbia. No More Homeless Pets in Utah was responsible for all remodeling costs.

The centers are run by two full-time and one part-time employee, and have attracted many dedicated volunteers. To offset operating costs, Furburbia carries merchandise, ranging from leashes to pet food to greeting cards, and accepts donations from the public.

Furburbia has received much media coverage, and is a terrific place for photographers and videographers to capture touching photos of adopters with their new pets.

What worked:

- **Involving an architect-** For the Park City Furburbia, which just opened this year, we were lucky enough to have two local architects donate their time to help with the design. These professionals had some great ideas that helped with noise reduction, and were able to recommend materials that will stand up to our fastidious cleaning protocol. They have also given the space style and polish.
- **Investing in a commercial sink-** With the amount of food bowls, litter boxes, toys, etc. being washed on a daily basis, a two or three compartment commercial sink makes life a lot easier.
- **Choosing one group as an “anchor”** – Now that Furburbia is open seven days a week, it is sometimes difficult to keep it “stocked” with animals, especially on weekdays. To keep Furburbia at capacity, we enlisted the Humane Society of Utah, a large organization which has enough employees and animals to come to Furburbia seven days a week.
- **Rotating weekends** - Because weekends are the busiest time at Furburbia, partners are rotated so that they usually have either one Saturday or one Sunday a month.
- **Creating off-leash areas** - The rooms provide a great place for adopters to really get to know a dog or cat they are considering adopting. The rooms also make Furburbia more fun. Who wouldn’t smile at the sight of a kid playing with a dog and a tennis ball?

- **Involving the mall management in decisions** - Consulting with the mall management during both the construction process and the ongoing running of the centers has been very helpful in solidifying the relationship between the malls and No More Homeless Pets in Utah.
- **Volunteers** – Furburbia has a dedicated crew of volunteers, many of whom are at the centers several times a week. All volunteers must attend a training session, and each is granted more responsibility as their skills and knowledge increase.
- **The cleaning protocol** - Because Furburbia is such a big place and has hundreds of people trekking through it every day and numerous animals from a variety of different participating partners, we worried about our ability to create an effective cleaning protocol. After consulting with several shelter managers and veterinarians, we established a workable cleaning protocol. It has been quite effective - no incidences of disease outbreak have been reported.
- **Cultivating good relationships with other mall merchants** - This was a challenging task, especially in the beginning, because the only things the other merchants heard were construction noise and barking dogs. To combat any negativity, a point was made to let the other merchants know what we were doing and why, and to invite them to see the center when they had the chance. We were also quick to apologize when a dog barked too loudly for too long. The relationship was further helped by the perception that Furburbia has increased foot traffic to the malls, and has thereby increased foot traffic to the other merchants.
- **Setting standardized adoption fees** - These fees are \$75 for cats and \$85 for dogs. Having standardized fees prevents confusion in the minds of the public, who often don't understand that more than one group utilizes Furburbia.
- **Charging rescue partners 5% of their adoption fees** - The 5% of every Furburbia adoption fee that goes to No More Homeless Pets in Utah helps to offset the operating costs of the centers.

What didn't:

- **Tiles instead of linoleum** - In retrospect, the installation of multiple colors of vinyl composition tile in the Salt Lake City center, a choice made because the tiles are both durable and attractive, was not the best choice in light of the need for extremely thorough cleaning of Furburbia every day. Although the floor was sealed to prevent seepage into the spaces between the tiles, sterility would have been easier to maintain had the floor been constructed out of one continuous sheet of linoleum.
- **Allowing merchandise sales to slip to the bottom of the priority list** – We have had problems focusing on merchandise sales, and our bottom line shows it. Because our expenses have increased (e.g. adding a part-time employee), we need to start bringing in more profit from merchandise.
- **Inconsistent signage** – We didn't place a big enough priority on professional

and consistent signage, and we ended up with lots of handwritten signs, some of which even had misspellings and/or were torn or wrinkled. It made for a very garage sale like feel. We have recently overhauled Furburbia's signage, and the effect was quite dramatic.

- **Letting young kids volunteer** - From the beginning, the managers of Furburbia have been inundated with kids wanting to volunteer. This has been a delicate situation – on one hand, you don't want to extinguish a kid's willingness to help and his or her devotion to animals – on the other hand, there are only so many tasks at Furburbia that a young child can perform safely. Also, it is too easy to become an unofficial daycare center, which is burdensome for both staff and participating partners. Because of all this, the decision was made that only kids 14 years and older are allowed to volunteer. Having this as an official policy has made it much easier to turn the younger kids away without hurting their feelings.
- **Expecting the adoption partners to be on time with their animals** – All too often, a center is open for a half hour to an hour before the partners and animals arrive. This is, to say the least, undesirable. The public is disappointed to find an empty center and the volunteers and staff are embarrassed to have to admit that the animals are late. This is a constant battle, and one that we do not yet know how to win.
- **Convincing the adoption partners that it is unacceptable to leave before the center closes** - Not every group leaves early, but the ones who do are sometimes unapologetic about it. So far we haven't been able to get them to understand the necessity of us having animals up for adoption every moment that the centers are open. If we are empty, adoptions are lost and people may be tempted to buy from a breeder or pet store. Again, the fight goes on.
- **Relying solely on the adoption partners to clean the centers** - Because so many animals from so many different partners and shelters are brought into Furburbia, thorough cleaning is absolutely essential to prevent the spread of disease. The rescue partners and shelters are, in theory, responsible for helping to clean Furburbia every night. Try as we might, there are some partners who do not help with cleaning. All too often, the managers of the centers are stuck with a very lengthy, grueling job. To help, a cleaning company has been hired to come in once a week.
- **Trying to enforce the rule that people sanitize their hands before and after touching each animal** - Again, this is a good rule, but one we have trouble enforcing. We do not have enough staff or volunteers to watch every person in the center at all times. We have signs up and dispensers of alcohol hand gel placed prominently near all cages, but often people do not sanitize their hands.

What's next:

- **Weekday promotions** – Furburbia's adoption numbers are not nearly as strong on the weekdays as on the weekends. This year we plan to have small promotions Mondays through Wednesdays to try to increase our traffic.
- **A stronger focus on merchandising** - Our merchandise is not selling as well as we would like. A thorough examination of both our inventory and our

merchandising techniques should help immensely.

- **Strengthening the Furburbia “brand”** – We plan to analyze all facets of Furburbia, including signage, advertisements, décor, customer service, etc. to ensure that our message and image is consistent throughout.

Internet Adoptions

Overview: At the start of our program, we wanted to provide the opportunity for all participating rescue organizations to list their adoptable animals on the web. About one half already had websites, with varying degrees of sophistication, and greatly varying numbers of adoptable dogs and cats listed. Few of them were very good at keeping them up to date.

The half that did not already have sites were delighted to be provided with a digital camera and an easy way to put their animals’ pictures and bios online. Initially, one of our staff members was responsible for receiving e-mailed photos, putting them up, and removing them when adopted. After several months, we converted to using Pet-Ark, a separate site with an excellent, easy-to-use system for uploading pictures and information. With the Pet-Ark software, each rescue group can upload their own photos and stories. We now link to the Utah section of that site.

What worked:

- **Hiring an independent contractor to help the partners with their photography and Internet skills** - Because our rescue partners needed to improve their picture quality, we paid a skilled contractor to teach them some simple techniques. Although not every group who received the training put it to use, many did.
- **A billboard campaign designed specifically to drive traffic to our website**—the boards were up for 6 months, and we saw a dramatic increase in website traffic.
- **Providing this resource to participating organizations provides a strong sense of belonging to a cohesive coalition** – It adds a lot to the sense that we’re all working together.
- **The Pet-Ark link arrangement was an excellent change we made** – The site is easy to use, has a wonderful laborsaving method of adding the animals “stories,” and has a better search mechanism than we were able to provide. It also cuts down considerably on staff time from the NMHP in Utah office.
- **Pet-Ark has increased inquiries for adoptables.** Here is a typical e-mail received from one of our rescue partners: “I did not want another day to go by without telling you thank you for what you have done here. The first day our group ‘No more homeless pets’ started using your system I had response and it has continued to explode from there.”

What didn't:

- **Organizing for the animals to be listed on our own site proved to be excessively labor intensive** – The job required chasing people to e-mail their photos and animal details, improving the picture quality before uploading, uploading the photos, chasing people for information about when animals were adopted, clarifying ambiguities in information, etc.
- **The picture quality leaves something to be desired on the Pet-Ark site** – This is because not all photographers are adept at getting the best animal shots, and also because the creators of the Pet-Ark system decided that download speed should take priority over picture quality. We are discussing improving this with the Pet-Ark people.
- **Internet adoptions can provide new challenges for the rescue group** – Screening by telephone is not always easy. Animals sometimes must be transported across the country which presents new challenges and expenses for partners that they had never encountered before. This is especially true for partners in rural Utah, who are delighted by the fact that they are finding new homes, but are presented with the new challenges of long distance adoptions.

What's next:

- **Exploring the possibility of linking to a different pet database**- We want to be sure that we are recommending the very best pet database out there to our groups and shelters.
- **Recruiting more shelters to post their pets online**- It's simple: the bigger the variety of animals online, the more likely it is that any potential adopter will find the pet of their dreams.

Shelter Partnership Program

Overview: Best Friends Animal Society and West Valley City Animal Shelter began a shared project in September of 2002. The partnership is designed to benefit both organizations and to help each achieve its goals. West Valley provides Best Friends kennel space in their shelter as well as unlimited access. In return, Best Friends rescues dogs and cats from the shelter's euthanasia list and finds them new homes through an outreach adoption program.

We choose an average of 10 healthy, well-behaved animals each week - these are animals who've been up for adoption but are now scheduled for euthanasia - and take them to various adoption venues around town. Once in our program, they're never going to return to the shelter's general population.

Best Friends staff does the adoptions, and all fees collected go to operate the program. Animals not placed within several weeks are home fostered until permanent homes can be found.

Results of the program have been dramatic. A total euthanasia rate of around 60% has been reduced to less than 40%, with some months as low as 25%.

What worked:

- **Having access to the shelter-** This allows for us to pick up and return animals at times the shelter is closed. It also prevents us from becoming a burden to the shelter and allows us to have more freedom to organize our adoptions according to the best strategic time to do adoptions as opposed to working around the shelter's schedule.
- **Taking only animals that are on the shelter's euthanasia list** - This is the focus of our program. The shelter can easily place little dogs and puppies. Therefore, we would not reduce the shelter's euthanasia if we were focusing on placing the same animals the shelter can do effortlessly.
- **Having back up foster homes-** Although most of the animals in our program live at the shelter until they can be placed, we have a handful of foster homes that we can call on if the following situations arise:
 - An animal is sick and needs supervision (does not apply to kennel cough or mild upper respiratory infections)
 - An animal has not been adopted within 3 weeks (we try to get an animal into a home to prevent an extended shelter stay)
- **Having dog runs and cat cages in the shelter that are designated for our program-** This is critical for organization purposes for the shelter and our program.
- **Having a box truck instead of a van-** Our truck allows us to transport a couple of dozen animals at a time. This is essential for getting a high volume of animals to any event so a selection is available.
- **Sufficient staffing-** We hired two full-time staff members, each of who works four long days, making it possible to have 7-day coverage.
- **Using classified ads to assist with promoting adoptions at the shelter-** This is an inexpensive way to promote shelter animals so fewer end up on the euthanasia list and need to be rescued.
- **Temperament-testing all animals-** We need to be careful about taking animals in with serious behavior problems. An animal that is very difficult to place will be occupying a space that could probably be filled by several different animals.
- **Having a veterinarian come to the shelter once a week to do spays and neuters** – This arrangement has helped us save time by taking away the necessity of transporting animals to the veterinarian for sterilizations and rabies vaccinations.
- **A cell phone-** We are always available to adopters who have health or behavior concerns. This allows us to both give timely interventions and prevent returns for minor problems.

What didn't:

- **Our attempts to control kennel cough in dogs and upper respiratory infection in cats-** Our prevalence of these diseases is quite high although it varies seasonally. Our limited ability to control this problem results in a lot of medical costs for our program.
- **Rescuing pit bulls-** Currently, we only take pit bull mixes into the program. This is because if we cannot adopt out a purebred pit bull, it is very difficult to find a foster home that will agree to take it into their home.

What's next:

- **Establishing a steering committee to facilitate program development-** It is critical to find the right people to be on the committee in order to develop this program.
- **Potentially expanding into other animal shelters-** The day will come when we will need to work with additional shelters in order to keep meeting our adoption goals.

Events and Promotions

Home for the Holidays

Overview: Home for the Holidays is a six week long promotion designed by Mike Arms of the Helen Woodward Animal Center in San Diego. Its focus is helping shelter animals find homes during the holiday season. The goal is to spread the message that it is better to adopt a shelter animal than it is to buy one from a pet store or a breeder. Home for the Holidays lasts from late November to early January; during this holiday season we found homes for more than 4,100 animals.

For several weekends, adoption events were held at animal shelters throughout the state. We provided the shelters with advertising, decorations, and a Santa to help drive traffic.

Near the end of the promotion, we staged an event at the Salt Lake City Furburbia in order to gain media coverage for what the promotion had accomplished. The event featured a big wooden frame in the shape of Utah that was filled in with 4,100 (exactly!) dog bones, each one representing an animal adopted during Home for the Holidays. Two local TV stations covered the event on both their evening and late-night newscasts.

What worked:

- **Santa on the corner** – This was, surprisingly, our most effective advertising. A volunteer at each shelter location would dress up as Santa, take a shelter dog, and stand on a busy street corner near the shelter. Behind him was a bright banner detailing the adoption event. The Santas waved to passers-by, endured catcalls, and attracted a TON of attention. One other note: buying a Santa suit (approximately \$170) was a lot cheaper than renting one.
- **Advertising in the Classified Ads** – This always seems to be effective, apparently because the classified ads are the first place many people look when they decide to get or buy a pet. One hint: start with a phrase that begins with an “A”, this will put your event/animal first in the classified section.
- **Decorations done by local school kids** – Networking with schools near each shelter was a great way to get cute homemade decorations. It’s also a chance to introduce kids to the problem of homeless pets in their communities.
- **The recap press conference** – As described in the introductory paragraph above, this press conference was quite successful, and was also very inexpensive and simple. The key component was the bone-filled frame of Utah; it was a great visual and also very easily understood.

What didn't:

- **Newsprint advertising** – In past years, we have tried several different approaches with newsprint, but none was as effective as we had hoped. Most people who attended these events were drawn there by utility bills, newsletters, classified ads, or by seeing Santa on the corner.
- **Free refreshments** – People were not drawn to these events by the food as we'd hoped. We wasted more money on cheese trays and Christmas cookies than we'd care to count!
- **“Adoptables” Christmas tree at a shopping mall** – While this promotion, in which we decorated a tree with ornaments featuring adoptable pets, was definitely cute, it was way too time consuming to justify the results and was hard to keep up with which animals had been adopted and which ones hadn't from the variety of different shelters that participated.

What's next:

- **A TV sponsor**- Television is the best way to reach a wide audience, and should work well for this statewide adoption campaign.
- **Small adoption events at local shopping centers** – Staging the events at shelters doesn't generate as many adoptions as we would like. This year, we plan to experiment by holding small, multi-shelter adoption events at locations with built-in traffic.

Lint Roller Party and Utah Awards for Distinguished Service to Animals

Overview: The Lint Roller Party idea sprung from an annual Best Friends fundraising event in Los Angeles. We incorporated it into our repertoire for the first time in 2002 as a fundraiser, silent auction, cocktail-type party with casino gambling to which you were permitted to bring your dog. By coupling the Utah Awards for Distinguished Service to Animals (detailed below) and this party together we accomplished several goals. We raised more money and recognized those in our community that had made a difference and we appealed to a more mainstream Salt Lake City based audience.

The Utah Awards for Distinguished Service to Animals is our annual awards ceremony celebrating those in our community that go above and beyond to help Utah's animals. This event is the culmination of Utah's Week for the Animals – a State proclaimed week - held in October of each year.

We generally have approximately seven categories for the awards, including Volunteer of the Year, Organization of the Year, Young Person of the Year, Veterinarian of the Year and so on. We begin the nomination process in mid-June. Nominations are open to any state resident and close around mid-August. We have announced the winners in two ways – either by waiting until the night of the event to make the announcement or by announcing in September and holding the presentation in mid-October. In past years the event was a sit down type dinner, fairly formal with an awards presentation and

silent/live auction. In 2002 we incorporated the awards ceremony into the Lint Roller Party and advertised to a larger more mainstream audience. The result was positive and we doubled our attendance.

What worked:

- **Allowing dogs:** Having a venue that permitted us to bring dogs in was HUGE! Our guests loved it and it was talked about for quite some time. The trick was finding a venue that would allow it. We charged an additional fee for those with dogs and provided a Very Important Canine Lounge for them to enjoy.
- **Combining the awards ceremony and the Lint Roller Party:** We need to fine-tune a lot of the details, but we seemed to make both groups of people we were attracting – the devoted animal people and the more mainstream folks - happy.

What didn't:

- **The Awards Presentation-** Because we so wanted to recognize our nominees and winners of the UADSA, we had the presentation of the awards during the Lint Roller Party, basically in the middle of the event. The sound system we used was inadequate, causing us to lose a lot of people during the presentation. We realized in hindsight that many of those “mainstream” people we were attracting were not involved enough to give their full attention to the awards presentation.
- **1st, 2nd, and 3rd**- Oops bad mistake here. We had decided on narrowing the selections to 1st, 2nd and 3rd for the night of the event, and then announcing the winners. The decision was made that night to call all three finalists up on stage to award the winner. This was pretty humiliating to those that did not win.
- **The Venue-** Although they allowed us to bring in dogs, in other ways the venue we used was a very difficult one to work with. The space was chopped up and spread out. The 2003 venue is much more streamlined and accessible.

What's next:

- **Revamped ticket pricing-** We need to fine-tune this. In 2002 we had separate pricing for humans and canines. It was confusing to some of our attendees as to what they had to do. Did they need to buy one ticket for all of their dogs, or just one human ticket for themselves and their dog, or what? For 2003 we are looking at making the tickets a package price for one human and one dog.
- **A better venue-** We have secured a venue for 2003 with a better layout. It is larger, will allow us to bring dogs, and the spaces are much better suited to our event.
- **Smarter incorporation of the UADSA-** Because of the problems last year – we have totally redesigned how we are incorporating the UADSA. We have secured a venue that will allow us to hold the UADSA presentation a bit earlier than the start of the Lint Roller Party and in a separate auditorium. The awards ceremony will be free to any and all that would like to attend and will be very focused on

honoring those who do so much for our animals. Immediately following the UADSA presentation guests may enter the Lint Roller Party with their pre-purchased ticket or buy one at the door.

- **The Bow Wow House Competition-** We are partnering with the Young Architects Forum to have a design competition of cat trees, dog houses and anything else they can dream up. These will then be auctioned off the night of the event to the highest bidder. This will help beef up our silent auction, which has plateaued in the past few years.

Strut Your Mutt

Overview: Strut Your Mutt is designed to be an anchor fundraiser for No More Homeless Pets in Utah, and to bring awareness of the cause to the community in an enjoyable atmosphere. Strut Your Mutt has its roots as a Best Friends Animal Sanctuary outreach fundraiser. The popular dog walk, which is held every spring, quickly became a favorite event for dog owning Salt Lakers, currently attracting close to 4,000 people. The event reached its eighth year this past May as the largest fundraiser for No More Homeless Pets in Utah. This year's Strut Your Mutt featured a dog walk, doggie contests, live entertainment, a small adoption area, agility courses and numerous food and commercial booths. The event is held in a community park with rented tents and stages. A significant part of the funding for the event comes from sponsors, who receive logo-recognition on banners, posters, newsprint, and T-shirts. They also receive mention on radio spots and "showcasing" during live radio remotes at the event. Sponsors also get a booth at the event to promote their services or products. The remainder of the money raised from Strut Your Mutt comes from registration fees and participants collecting pledges.

This year we tried a few new things with this event. We had noticed a trend that our participation – the number of attendees– was increasing, however the number of people actually paying to come to the event had plateaued. Because the event is held in a public park, it had been difficult to monitor if participants were paying their registration fees. So, this year we fenced off the area where the vendor booths, free giveaways, live music, contests and agility courses were located. If you didn't register and receive your wristband, you were not permitted into the event.

Another new focus this year was the push to get people to raise money. In the past Strut Your Mutt had been promoted as a fun day at the park with your dog. The emphasis on fundraising had been lost. So we pushed it in our advertising – poster, brochure, TV commercial, radio and signage at the event. We doubled the people raising money for us and doubled the money raised! These two increases were both due to the advertising push and the ability to fence off the event. The changes implemented have reinvigorated Strut Your Mutt as a large fundraiser for us.

What worked:

- **Prioritizing fundraising** – By shifting the focus of the event from a "party" type atmosphere to a true fundraising event we doubled our income. Every time a

potential participant saw a poster, read the brochure, heard a radio announcement, or saw the TV commercial, they were bombarded with the message that this is a fundraiser designed to raise money for Utah's homeless pets.

- **Detailing the value of donations**– In addition to making sure everything mentioned that this was a fundraiser, we tied specific dollar amounts to what that money can do for Utah's animals. For example, "Your \$20 donation will spay or neuter a cat". Our hope was to drive home the point that your money is doing something great in our state.
- **Ordering pledge gifts after the event**- In years past we ordered all of our pledge gifts in advance to give out on the day of the event. By doing it this way, we had to over-order to ensure we didn't run out. It also left us with tons of extra merchandise that sat in our storage unit for years until it was finally donated or sold at a steep discount. This year we had samples of the pledge gifts available for participants to look at on the day of the event, then placed the order after the event and mailed all gifts to the winners. We saved thousands of dollars by doing it this way, even taking into account the cost of shipping of the gifts to each individual.
- **Cutting back on pledge gifts**– We had a tendency in years past to make our pledge gifts too generous. So we revamped the pledge system, changed the pledge levels, and made the pledge prizes more in line with other fundraisers of our caliber. It was a tough change for many of our participants, but after a bit of education about what this event really does, the participants have come around.
- **Fencing off the event**– Although we spent extra money to fence off the event, it worked by forcing our participants to pay to get inside to the good stuff. We had noticed that only about half of the people attending Strut Your Mutt were actually paying the registration fee. Although the numbers of paid participants didn't see large growth this year, the number taking advantage of the freebies we arranged for was kept at a much more reasonable number.
- **Great location**– Strut Your Mutt is held in a favorite Salt Lake park in an affluent neighborhood. As always, we are very careful to choose a location that fits our audience for a particular event. We also choose our locations based on name recognition. Ideally our locations should be so well known that people know how to get to them without an address so we don't spend valuable advertising and messaging time explaining how to get somewhere.
- **Great time of year**– We carefully picked the date of Strut Your Mutt to be held on the third weekend of May every year and we've been consistent with that for the last seven events. We took into account several factors: no overlap with other large fundraising events that may compete with our demographic such as the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Awareness Walk; no overlap with holidays that may take people out of town such as Mother's Day and Memorial Day; this is a family event, so we wanted to hold the event before school got out and families left for summer vacation; finally, after spending a cold and snowy winter indoors, people are ready to get outside and have some fun with their dog!

- **Fun, attractive family event**– We work to create events that are festive and upbeat with live music, interesting vendors, dog activities, food and entertainment, and Strut Your Mutt is no exception. Our event trends show that we have many repeat attendees and most of the survey results we get back comment on the fun atmosphere.
- **Consistent legacy**- We've tried throughout the years to keep Strut Your Mutt as consistent as possible to build event legacy and name recognition. This is very important in event marketing, especially if you're just breaking into events in your community. We've worked to keep everything from the location, to the dates, to the time event starts, to the doggie contests, to the logo the same year after year.
- **Great brand awareness** - If you live in Salt Lake City, you'll be hard pressed to have never heard of Strut Your Mutt. At mixers and parties around town in the springtime, you don't hear the usual party small talk, you hear people asking each other if they're going to strut their dog this year in the annual fundraiser for No More Homeless Pets in Utah. In fact, a lot of Best Friends members that we hear from in Salt Lake tell us they found out about Best Friends through Strut Your Mutt. This event has been a great tool to build awareness for our cause as a whole. We attribute this to numerous things on the marketing, PR and advertising front, but we mostly attribute this to the catchy name and the consistency in timing and delivery of Strut Your Mutt.
- **Advertising and Marketing**– Again, we use similar tactics for advertising and marketing for all of our events. You can never have enough advertising and you can never have enough solid marketing. We rely on lots of radio, lots of newsprint and donated TV. The donated TV was especially nice because the sponsor station produced and ran a 10 second and a 30 second commercial. This year we got tremendous feedback from the commercial. And, we can't emphasize enough how crucial it is to pick a location with a lot of drive-by traffic.
- **Distribution of pledge forms and posters**- We are very aware of the fact that people can't fundraise for us unless they have pledge forms in their hands at least six weeks before the event. Knowing that we need to give a six-week window of time for folks to gather pledges from their friends and family, we drop our direct mail piece seven weeks before the event. We also distribute our brochure and poster to over 350 retail locations throughout the Salt Lake Valley. To make our brochure stand out, we purchased cardboard holders to place next to cash registers in retail outlets.
- **PR**– Because this is a fundraising event and you're asking people to do something other than just show up on the day of the event, you need to start your PR a bit earlier than you would for other events. Also, keep in mind that if you start your PR too early, you run the risk of your event becoming part of the "wallpaper." We start gearing up the public relations machine for Strut Your Mutt four weeks away from the start of the event. Our goal is to try to get appearances on at least 15 radio or TV shows. When we focus on our PR we try to get as creative as possible. This is especially important when trying to get pre-event press coverage. This year, for the for the pre-event press, we had one news channel "fly over" the park while many of our volunteers and staff "strutted" around with their dogs – to give a preview the day prior to the event. Our sponsor

TV station turned out the day before the event to conduct short interviews with some adopted pets' owners to illustrate that Strut Your Mutt is about the animals and to promote the adoption element this year.

- **Volunteer Committee**– Job out your event to willing volunteers. They exist everywhere! We organize all of our events to be run through a committee chairperson structure covering everything from distribution to site logistics to entertainment during the event. We regard these volunteers as 'unpaid employees', providing them with job descriptions and committee handbooks.
- **Doing Surveys**– With Strut Your Mutt, it's been easy for us to fall into a category of feeling like we've had enough feedback over the last seven years that we really don't need to do exit surveys anymore because we know enough about what they need and want. Not so! Events and your audience are organic and change all the time. Do not assume that you've mastered this quotient because it will most certainly sabotage you at some point with the future of your event. Listen to feedback, even when it's tough to hear the honest truth, and try to implement what you've been so wisely, and anonymously advised.
- **Networking with the community** – Strut Your Mutt has been a great tool for us to get out and beat the streets for community support and has been a tremendous networking tool. The nice thing about putting on a high profile event is that it forces your organization to get out there and ask the community for help on dozens of different levels, from asking for sponsorship, to getting in front of the media, to asking local businesses to purchase booths.

What didn't:

- **Growth** – Because we restricted admittance to the event this year, by fencing it off, we knew we would not see large growth in our numbers. This held true for the most part. We did see a small increase of about 175 paid participants.
- **Corporate Teams**– This section of participation has been a hard thing to figure out from year to year. In the past the Corporate Team participation has been critical to the event's success. This year Corporate Teams saw a slide in both participation and amount of pledges they raised. We need to revamp this system to make the incentives more attractive to a larger base of participants.
- **Shifting the focus from Best Friends to No More Homeless Pets in Utah** - NMHPU is still a very new organization and Best Friends has been around for a significantly longer time it is challenging to educate our participants that this is a NMHPU event. Many people do not understand the difference, nor do they understand the specific goal of NMHPU. We need to incorporate a more targeted advertising push to educate our participants about who we are and our program specific goals.

What's next:

- **Fundraising first** – We will continue to focus on the fundraising element of this event and it will continue to remain our main goal. We cracked the code this

year, and are hoping to increase our profits again next year and continue the growth for years to come.

- **Using the event as an educational tool for NMHP in Utah-** We've seen the affect Strut Your Mutt had in converting Salt Lakers to the Best Friends mission and we're hoping to use this event as a tool to help get the message of No More Homeless Pets out.
- **Continue to slim down** – We have made great strides this year with the changes we have implemented. We need to continue in this vein by slimming down the expenses, fine tuning the pledge process and expanding our educational campaign through this event.
- **Expanding the event to a statewide level** - We know the brand of Strut Your Mutt is very powerful and we want to expand its fundraising capability by taking it statewide. It will be very similar to national fundraising walks such as the March of Dimes or MS Foundation that are put on at the same time throughout the year. This is a huge undertaking and may take several years to complete, but the groundwork has begun.

Super Adoption

Overview: Twice a year, NMHP in Utah organizes 3-day “anchor” Super Adoptions. We consider these the “Big Daddy” of our adoption events. This year, we were also involved with three smaller adoption events in other communities throughout the state based on the Super Adoption model.

During the twice-yearly Super Adoptions, more than 28 rescue partners and shelters from across the state participate. The goal for each Super Adoption is 600+ adoptions.

Super Adoptions are designed to have a festival-like atmosphere, with bands, food vendors, and kids' activities. This atmosphere provides another venue for the general public to “view” animals outside of the shelter environment. Each event is held in a PETSMART parking lot under rented tents. A significant part of the funding for the events comes from sponsors, who receive logo-recognition on banners, posters, newsprint, and T-shirts. They also receive mention on radio spots and “showcasing” during live radio remotes at the event. Sponsors sometimes get a booth at the event to promote their services or products.

Two of our smaller adoption events were held at a PETSMART on the outskirts of Ogden, a town about 30 miles north of Salt Lake City. The goal of the smaller adoption events was 300 adoptions. We found out that these events can succeed in smaller markets and that rescue partners can produce them.

What worked:

- **Saving animals from euthanasia** – Because the Super Adoption partners make a point of getting their animals from nearby shelters, and some shelters bring their adoptable animals to the Super Adoptions, it is not uncommon for many shelters to be emptied of healthy animals as a result of these events. After the

May Super Adoption the Humane Society of Utah had no need to euthanise any healthy animals for three weeks.

- **Great location** – We were very careful to choose a location that was centralized in the city, right off a freeway exit and had a lot of name recognition. Fortunately a PETsMART store is located in a prime area of Salt Lake City where two major freeways intersect. This provided easy access and a familiar location to most locals.
- **Great time of year** – Although we have had some brushes with bad weather, spring and fall are great times to hold adoption events. It's usually not too hot and shouldn't be too cold for the animals. Still, it helps to plan ahead and have rented swamp coolers or heaters available to help control the temperature in the cat tent...just in case. Our experience has taught us that whether it rains or shines, people will still come to our events to find the perfect pet. Obviously, if the weather is bad, it does have an affect on the number of people that turn out, but surprisingly the affect on the number of adoptions is minor. For example, at our latest Super Adoption in May 2003, our attendance was down by almost 30% due to almost constant rain and cold and we were still able to do 404 adoptions!
- **Creating a festival atmosphere: Bringing the animals to the people** – We work to create events that are festive and upbeat with live music, kids' activities, food and entertainment. We hear from a lot of people that they can't handle or don't want to go into shelters. So, we decided to bring the animals to the public in a way that wouldn't upset them and could be an event for the whole family.
- **Advertising & Marketing** – You can never have enough advertising and you can never have enough solid marketing. We try every grassroots guerilla tactic in the book from lawn signs to 40-foot banners on skywalks to bag stuffers at PETsMART. Take a page out of the book of candidates during the political season and plaster the area of town that makes sense for your particular demographic. We didn't skimp on the regular advertising either—lots of radio, lots of newsprint and four live radio remotes during the event. Classified ads are also surprisingly effective. And, we can't emphasize enough how crucial it is to pick a location with a lot of drive-by traffic; according to our exit surveys, up to 50% of our adopters were "just driving by." To pull in even more of these people, we rent a huge balloon and attach a banner that reads "Super Pet Adoption." We also put volunteers in cat and dog costumes and send them out to a busy corner with signs promoting the event.
- **PR** – Same belief here as the advertising and marketing: a lot of it, a lot of the time. We start gearing up the public relations machine three weeks away from the start of the event. Our goal is to try to get appearances on at least 15 radio or TV shows. When we focus on our PR, we try to get as creative as possible. This is especially important when going after pre-event press coverage. This year, we were worried about attendance for our upcoming May event because stormy weather was in the forecast. So, for the pre-event press conference, we introduced "Doppler", a Border Collie "Mutterologist" dressed in a button down shirt and tie, who predicted a 100% chance of raining dogs and cats. The TV stations ate it up... three of them covered the staged event, giving us some valuable exposure for our event before it even began.

- **Volunteer Committee** – Job out your event to willing volunteers. They exist everywhere! We organize all of our events to be run through a committee chairperson structure covering everything from distribution to site logistics to entertainment during the event. We regard these volunteers as ‘unpaid employees’, providing them with job descriptions, and being prepared to ‘fire’ them if necessary.
- **Standardizing adoption applications** – We spent a great deal of time getting input from all of the partners as to what to put on the application. This has been a very positive experience for everyone. We don’t standardize the adoption contractual agreements; this is still up to the individual partners.
- **Standardizing the fee for the animals** – Cats are \$75, dogs are \$85. This streamlines adoptions and doesn’t confuse the public. We also have a centralized payment station where we collect all of the adoption fees for the rescue partners and use \$7 of the adoption fee to offset the cost of producing the Super Adoption. All paperwork is processed through No More Homeless Pets in Utah and checks to the partners are sent out two weeks after the event. We have made a few changes to the application this year to include several survey questions. We wanted to find out more about the folks that came to the event and actually filled out an application for an animal and test them against those that just showed up and didn’t fill out an application.
- **All animals must be fixed!** – Most partners obviously comply with this, but in the event that an animal is rescued from a local shelter and there wasn’t time to get the animal fixed, we have our mobile clinic on hand to do surgeries on the spot.
- **Training the partners beforehand** – Doing a training session for the partners before the event really helps. There are always going to be details that are missed or forgotten by participants, but spending the time to go over everything in detail helps immensely on the day of the event. We also send out packets to our participants with event layouts, cage and kennel assignments, timelines, and our updated Policies and Procedures manual. This information is sent to the groups two weeks before the event.
- **Having partners show up on time and stay until the end of the event** – This is so important to the image of an event. The first Super Adoption we did, we had several partners show up late and pack it in early. Even if partners have adopted out all of their animals, it is important that they stay with their booth intact. Leaving early sends a message to the public of disorganization.
- **Doing surveys** – Surveys have both pleased and surprised us with this program and this event is no exception. Things we thought were the gospel truth turned out to be the exact opposite of what we expected. Have a college marketing class help you write your survey, and make sure you try to sample at least a third of your crowd. We have people fill out surveys as they exit. As an incentive their names are entered into a drawing for dog food. We also have a volunteer on the gate keeping a count of people attending the adoption. This information is helpful for future sponsors.

- **Starting a bidding war** – We found ourselves wondering if the company we usually rented our equipment from was giving us a good deal. So, we contacted a few of their competitors and got bids. By going through the bidding process, we ended up saving quite a lot of money.
- **Enclosing the cat tents and enclosing the event in portable fencing** – We rented tents that have three enclosed sides and an opening for the entrance that can be closed on the fourth side. This helps cut down on the stressful atmosphere of an event and also helps in case a cat escapes. We began enclosing the entire event in portable chain link fencing in May of 2002 and it has helped immensely on many levels. The event looks more contained and organized, it increases security, allows us to have one main entrance and it also cuts down on the risk of dogs running away.
- **Having an emcee to profile animals** – Craig Wirth, a local television personality, has emceed every one of our Super Adoptions. When we say he emceeds the event, it's more like an emcee marathon. Craig is on the microphone from the beginning to the end of the event profiling individual animals, welcoming people, stressing the importance of spay/neuter and adopting vs. buying a pet. This has an amazing impact on the number of adoptions, and also helps us communicate our message even to those who don't end up adopting.
- **Good communication with sponsors** – After the first Super Adoption we learned the importance of having a written contract with sponsors setting out their obligations and ours. We also learned the importance of having one main contact person on the sponsor's staff.

What didn't:

- **Asking the shelters to stockpile animals** – A lot of shelters have strict policies as to how long they can hold animals before euthanizing. Despite efforts to have some shelters hold animals for longer periods of time during this event, we have been unsuccessful in working out this holding period with a couple of shelters in the Salt Lake area.
- **Last event day shortages** – Invariably we seem to run thin on animals the last day of the event. We are still working on solutions to this. The last animals also usually end up being black, especially the dogs, so we try to offer adopters special incentives, like free gifts and services, and also try to put colorful bandanas on the dogs so they are more noticeable and easier to distinguish from each other.
- **Putting exit surveys on the adoption applications** – We tried this because we had found in the past that most of our exit surveys were being filled out by people who hadn't adopted – probably because adopters had their hands full with their new pets. We thought that putting the survey directly on the adoption form would allow us to gather information from the most important people - adopters. The problem was that many people didn't fill them out anyway, and even those that were filled out were difficult to read because they were carbon copies.
- **Using our staff to transport and adopt out shelter animals** – This year, we decided to help out a local shelter by agreeing to transport some of their animals

to the Super Adoption. The original plan was that shelter personnel would take over from that point and conduct their own adoptions. This didn't happen. No one from the shelter showed up, leaving our staff to take care of and adopt out a dozen animals, some of whom turned out to be sick. In the future, we will insist that participating shelters provide their own transportation and adoption personnel.

What's next:

- **Placing more of a focus on fundraising at the Super Adoptions.**
- **Teaching our partners to conduct Super Adoptions** - As NMHP in Utah, we've virtually spoon-fed this event to the rescue partners and shelters. We're concerned they're not learning how to do these events and that they will discontinue if and when NMHP in Utah does not exist. Next year we're going to "test pilot" teaching our partners to run area specific Super Adoptions. We've been refining the process along the way and we are still working on making them more effective and more productive for us and for the rescue partners. One thing we have done is offer cash incentives to the groups for achieving certain criteria and goals during the planning and the running of the actual event, this has proved to be a big motivator. At our latest group-organized adoption in the Ogden area we were able to adopt out 226 animals and hold a very successful event.
- **Doing all we can to achieve our goal of conducting 600 adoptions at one event.**

Animal Control and Rescue Partners

Working With Animal Control Agencies

Overview: The goal of No More Homeless Pets in Utah is not achievable without the cooperation of the state's 56 animal control agencies.

Recognizing this, we have tried to foster good relationships with these agencies and individuals whenever possible. Of course, this has not always been possible – some animal control officers and shelter directors are burned out, skeptical, and/or tired of being the scapegoat for one of society's greatest travesties.

More often than not, however, our attempts to build a bridge between “no-kills” and shelters have been successful. Our relationship with animal control requires constant upkeep, great patience, and compassion.

What worked:

- **Issuing spay/neuter vouchers to officers in the field** – Going on the philosophy that 5% of the population creates 90% of the pet overpopulation problem, we chose several targeted animal control agencies to issue pre-paid discount spay/neuter vouchers to their field officers. We feel officers in the field know best where the pet overpopulation problem areas are in their community. By giving them the tool to hand out nearly free surgeries, we're hoping to see decreases in those communities.
- **Visiting shelters in person** – Touring shelters with animal control officers provides an invaluable opportunity to open previously closed doors. Nothing takes the place of a friendly face and a listening ear. Because many animal control officers feel wrongly judged, it helps to verbally empathize with their situation and reassure them that you are not there to gain ammunition against them but to learn from them.
- **Hiring an “Animal Control Representative”** – Since we created this position, we have seen a dramatic improvement in the depth of cooperation from the shelters. One tip: our Animal Control Rep has attended several National Animal Control Association meetings and trainings. This has helped him with the credibility factor when developing relationships, and has also helped him to understand the challenges that animal control officers face.
- **Asking Field Officers if you can go along with them on their rounds** – You'll be surprised how much you'll learn! This really helps with developing an understanding of their challenges and works wonders to improve relations with animal control.
- **Offering non-monetary assistance to shelters** – For example, we encourage rescue partners to take animals out of the shelters whenever possible. We have seen a dramatic increase in this and a dramatic increase in the cooperation from animal control to open its doors during non-working hours. For example, during one Super Adoption, one animal control facility in Utah County opened its doors to a rescue group at 7:00 a.m. so they could retrieve the animals in time for the event.

- **Inviting animal control shelters to participate in special events and spay/neuter programs** – We involved the shelters in our Super Adoptions, the mobile spay/neuter clinic and also provided them with the opportunity to be an outlet for our discount spay/neuter coupons. Not only did this increase the public’s awareness and enhance their perception of the shelters, it also resulted in some extremely congenial relationships between the shelters and us.
- **Inviting animal control officers to attend our Idea Exchange Meetings** – This is a terrific way to get to know your local animal control officers and to discover common ground. One Idea Exchange we had focused exclusively on building relationships between “no-kill” partners and shelters. It was heavily attended, and though not a panacea, it did result in many grievances being put on the table for discussion, which is the first step toward building better relationships.
- **Pre-Adoption spay/neuter programs for individual shelters** –We have initiated a project with two shelters in geographically isolated rural Utah in which we agree to help them pay to spay or neuter every pet they adopt out, with two major conditions: The animal must be fixed *before* it goes home with the adopter and the animal control agency has to establish a discounted fee relationship with participating vets. We chose a geographically isolated area so we could have a good way of gauging the success of this program.

What didn’t:

- **Thinking agencies were as interested in this program as we were** – after all, it’s about saving animals’ lives. Just like rescuers, a lot of animal control officers are burned out on dealing with the daily fate of animals that pass through their shelters. Because animal control agencies can’t receive any Maddie’s Fund money, some were reluctant to hear more about the No More Homeless Pets in Utah program at first. Most agencies needed added incentive such as Home for the Holidays, Super Adoption and the Big Fix on Tour in order to start cooperating and beginning to realize that we were able to benefit them in other ways than providing funds.
- **Going above an officer’s head to get statistics** – Although we’ve only gone this route a couple of times, and only in drastic situations, we’ve found that is a surefire way to create a bitter animal control officer. In short: not a good idea. Instead, spend your time building relationships with the officers themselves, and you’ll eventually get the statistics you need.

What’s next:

- **An effort to encourage and train more shelters to post their adoptable animals online**
- **A multi-faceted approach to help a few targeted shelters reduce their adoptable euthanasia-** Our assistance will include advertising, transporting animals from the shelters to rescue groups, public relations, signage, and more.
- **Continued face-to-face meetings with Animal Control staff statewide-** Our Animal Control Representative will continue to take trips to visit with Animal

Control staff members throughout the year. We feel this will continue to increase their openness to working with our program and other rescue partners

- **Brainstorm and implement new ideas for increased shelter adoptions-** We will start focusing a great deal of our efforts on finding ways to increase shelter adoptions in addition to rescue group adoptions.

Working with rescue partners

Overview: Twenty-three rescue partners now participate in the No More Homeless Pets in Utah program. These partners range from small to large, from brand new to long established, from rural to urban, from volunteer based to staff based and from facility based to non-facility based.

To participate in the program, partners must report their monthly adoption statistics, increase their adoptions, attend twice yearly Idea Exchange meetings, and cooperate with other partners, individuals, and agencies. In exchange for all this, the partners receive stipends and other assistance to bolster their adoption programs.

They also benefit from the increased name recognition provided by our advertising, program website, Furburbia Adoption Center, mobile spay/neuter clinic and special events such as the Super Adoption.

Other subsidiary benefits are the camaraderie, networking ideas and animal rescues, and strength in numbers they gain by aligning themselves with No More Homeless Pets in Utah and other rescue partners/animal control agencies.

What worked:

- **Grants to rescue partners for hiring part time staff members**— Several \$13,000 grants were given out to rescue partners who convinced us that their adoptions would increase if they were able to hire a person to work for them on a part time basis. This turned out to be a huge success because many groups were able to designate someone entirely new to focusing on increasing animal adoptions. The average increase in adoptions over their highest previous adoption months was 28%.
- **Giving money to rescue groups who need assistance with advertising-** This year we allocated funds to provide to rescue groups who needed additional advertising for their programs. This money funded things such as; banners, billboards, mailers announcing grand openings, intensive classified advertising and more.
- **Dedicating two staff members as “program coordinators”** – Each coordinator’s primary function is to communicate with rescue partners. One of our coordinators focuses on the rescue partners in Northern Utah, and one focuses on partners in Southern Utah. These two people act as “account managers” for the rescue partners – they help with everything from counseling to

advertising to dispute resolution. They also are responsible for communicating the goals and policies of NMHP in Utah to the rescue partners.

- **Giving the rescue partners a great deal of support:** staying in touch with them several times a week (via telephone, e-mail, letters, attendance at meetings, etc.); keeping them up-to-date on the program; always giving them feedback on a job well done.
- **Actively discouraging them from speaking negatively** about other partners or agencies.
- **Encouraging networking among the partners** – As a result of our program, some effective networking is taking place among the rescue partners, many of whom did not even know each other before the program started. E-mail has proved to be a particularly useful means of networking.
- **Providing opportunities for rescue partners to increase adoptions** – Super Adoptions, Furburbia, our website, and a LOT of advertising.
- **Paying adoption stipends monthly** - We do not pay a partner's monthly stipend until we have the previous months statistics in hand. This has helped us be more timely in our statistics reporting, keeping our rescue partners on track with adoptions and helping us know sooner if any of our partners are in trouble.

What didn't:

- **Explaining program policies to just one member of a group** – In some cases, explaining how the adoption stipends are calculated to just one member of a group was not as effective as explaining the same thing to many members of the group. In general, if many members of a group are told about a program policy, that policy is more likely to be understood and followed, than if just one member is told.
- **Grants to rescue partners for specific projects** – In a few cases the small grants given out to rescue partners didn't help their adoptions though they had been quite convincing in their presentation of what would help them. Some rescue partners didn't seem to budge in their adoptions from the previous period the year before. We believe some of these grants may have been too small and ineffectual for the projects requested and feel some of the grants may have been ineffectively managed by our partners.
- **Contracting out fundraising assistance for the partners** – We tried paying an outside consultant to assist the rescue partners with their fundraising efforts. The arrangement was ineffective because the partners were not learning *how* to fundraise, they were simply getting pre-written fundraising appeals. Also, it seemed difficult for the outside organization to capture the "personality" of each group, an essential part of an effective fundraising effort.

What's next:

- **Recruiting new foster homes** – The only thing limiting some of our partners from doing more adoptions is their need for more foster homes. We're working on several different programs to help meet this need.
- **More staff grants in part time and full time amounts** – We are making several grants available each year to partners who want to hire a full or part-time employee. This was so successful last year with only part-time positions, we are hoping that this will only help the groups to continue to increase adoptions and meet the high goals we have set for the coming year.
- **Advertising and PR assistance** – We are planning to focus extra advertising and PR efforts on a few rescue partners each year. This should help the partners increase their fundraising, volunteer recruitment and adoptions, as well as their overall presence in the community.
- **Adding a new member to the Partner Development Team for animal transportation purposes-** This person will work on a part time basis to connect shelters and rescue groups and assist with animal transportation. We have discovered that many of the rescue groups who want to rescue an animal from Animal Control can't do it because they don't have the means to get the animal. We hope this will better the relationships among shelters and rescue partners in addition to getting more animals out of shelters when their time is up.
- **Travel grant opportunities for Rescue Partners-** We will be offering a few small grants to rescue groups who request assistance with the expenses of traveling long distances to find homes for their animals. We expect that this will give them more opportunity to place their pets and hence, increase their adoptions.

Increasing Rescue Group Adoptions

Overview: In order to continue to receive funding from Maddie's Fund, the program must increase adoptions by nearly 2,700 every year.

To help the partners achieve their share of this increase, No More Homeless Pets in Utah conducts Super Adoptions and other adoption promotions, pays adoption stipends to each group, provides grants for staff positions, runs Furburbia, and has set up an online adoption database.

In addition, the rescue partners have used **their own** methods to increase adoptions.

What worked:

- **Networking** – By keeping in touch with other rescue partners (via email, phone calls, etc.), some partners have been able to place animals that would have been otherwise euthanized. Some partners have better luck with certain breeds, some partners are great with puppies, and some breed rescues log many requests

from people looking for breeds other than the ones they focus on. Communication and cooperation is key.

- **Taking animals from rural areas to urban areas for adoption.** Case in point – One remarkable result of our campaign is that the Humane Society of Utah, located in Salt Lake City, is often completely out of puppies. Although this is in many ways great, it may have a negative effect if frustrated potential adopters decide to purchase from a pet store or breeder. To solve this problem, many rural partners have begun transporting puppies to HSU, for adoption there.
- **Holding small pet adoption fairs** with animals from local rescue partners and shelters.
- **Increasing advertising** – Some partners have convinced their local papers to run a “Pet of the Week” for them. Others have increased their use of the classified ads. Writing articles or letters to the editor in local newspapers and getting to know their local media.
- **Posting adoptable animals on websites**-This is most effective when the website is heavily advertised. Also, a good photo can make all the difference. All participating rescue partners were given a digital camera from No More Homeless Pets in Utah to make this process MUCH easier.

What didn't:

- **Teaching them to fish** - Due largely to the effectiveness of our program coordinators, working with the participating rescue partners has been an amazingly successful part of our program. Therefore, it is difficult to say, “what didn't work.” However, one potential pitfall is the possibility of giving the partners too much, of not allowing them to do for themselves. The money from Maddie's Fund is only available for a limited amount of time; when the grant period is over the partners must be able to maintain their results on their own. Our challenge is to empower them to create their own successes, with or without Maddie's Fund money and No More Homeless Pets in Utah manpower.
- **Meeting our shelter adoption goals** - We met our overall adoption goal statewide between our shelter partners and rescue partners, but Maddie's Fund requires that we meet these goals separately and in their own right with one caveat; If our shelter partners don't reach their adoption goals, they can be made up by our no-kill partners, but the reverse situation is not allowed. This year we were fortunate to have our rescue partners do so well with adoptions that they made up for the deficit with shelter adoptions, however, our shelters did not meet the goals we had in mind for them. We are trying to think of any new ideas we can come up with to help increase shelter adoptions as well as rescue group adoptions next year.

What's next:

- **Increased staff grants** – Grants to rescue organizations to help employ part time staff have proved to have great effects on their adoption numbers.

- **Customer service training** – Good customer service is as important for rescue partners as it is for retail stores. This is an area where too many animal rescuers who are passionate about the dogs and cats fall short. There is often not enough appreciation of the importance of good communication with potential adopters. We are developing a plan to help partners develop their skills.
- **Empowering partners to do their own adoption events-** We realize we need to start teaching rescue partners how to run their own adoption events. We will be crafting a system by which we can train and involve our partners on the “how to’s.”
- **Focusing on fundraising** – We will be helping rescue partners to become more fundraising savvy in order to add to their resources and strength. We may do this through our existing fundraising events.

Idea Exchange Meetings

Overview: Idea Exchange meetings are held twice a year. They are designed to build the skills of our participating rescue partners and shelters. To achieve this objective, in our second year, No More Homeless Pets in Utah developed the Idea Exchange Meetings into a higher impact program, which offers intensive 'one subject oriented' workshops to rescue partners twice a year.

Instead of passively taking notes during a lengthy series of lectures, participants are actively engaged in the learning process. We emphasized that it is critical that the partners bring as many members of their group as possible to each of these workshops - as each rescue group is asked to begin to plan and work on projects during the one- or two-day workshops. For example, one recent meeting focused on fundraising, and partners were expected to leave the meeting with a moneymaking project plan in hand! The facilitators for each meeting assist the partners/shelters by guiding them through the necessary steps to succeed.

Each meeting has a different focus. In the past, Idea Exchange meetings have focused on spay/neuter, healing compassion fatigue, and public relations and media exposure. The most recent meetings have focused on marketing adoptable animals and developing spay/neuter programs in local areas.

What worked:

- **Reformatting the Idea Exchange Meetings to focus on one educational topic at a time-** Our new approach to Idea Exchange Meetings is akin to continuing education. Our focus is high impact, hands on, and most of all, having our partners leave with a plan that can be implemented upon return. We’ve all experienced coming back from a conference, putting our notes away with the best intention of studying them in depth, and never seeing them again until we move. So far, the Fundraising and Coalition Building Educational tracks have netted measurable results with some of our partners.
- **Identifying the needs of participating rescue partners** and featuring topics and guest speakers that will be relevant/helpful to them.

- **Holding the meetings in different parts of the state** – For example, the first meeting of the year might be held in northern Utah and the second in southern Utah. Because the participating rescue partners are scattered throughout the state, scheduling the meetings in this fashion is more equitable than always holding them in Salt Lake City.
- **Inviting animal control officers to the meetings** – Until recently, our meetings have been only sparsely attended by animal control officers, but each time we have a meeting, we find that more officers are eager to join in.
- **Planning the meetings well in advance** – Rescuers are busy people – the more time you can give them to plan, the more of them will be able to attend.
- **Having Fun!** - A lot of conferences can be intense and very focused. We try to provide a true party or mixer at the end of day. It's actually a great bonding tool and helps ease tensions.
- **Having key No More Homeless Pets in Utah staff members attend meetings** -This increases solidarity, shows respect for the partners, enhances trust, and provides an opportunity for staff members to address concerns in their particular area of the program.
- **Sending tapes, notes or minutes from each meeting to all partners,** especially those who were unable to attend.

What didn't:

- **Not all of our rescue partners are going to take advantage of implementing a plan even when they've taken the time to put it together-** We recognize that not every partner will implement what they've taken away during these continuing education tracks. Our hope is that with consistent education on a variety of topics, each partner will find the right way of successfully making use of what they've learned.
- **Providing only a short time for a question and answer session** – Partners invariably have very specific and detailed questions about the ever-changing program. Guest speakers should be scheduled accordingly, leaving plenty of time for the Q&A session.

What's next:

- **Doing a better job of convincing veterinarians and animal control officers to attend meetings.**

Gathering and Tracking Success Through Statistics

Overview: To gauge our progress toward our annual goals, Maddie's Fund requires

monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual reports. These reports contain statistics on intake, adoptions, spaying and neutering, and euthanasia. To create the reports, numbers are gathered from animal control shelters and participating rescue partners, spay/neuter clinics, and veterinarians. This itself is a very large task. Once the statistics have been gathered, the report is generated. Again, this is a large and time-consuming job. We have tried many things to streamline this process, and are still working very hard to make it less cumbersome.

The program has increased the tracking of statistics in Utah immeasurably. When we started this program, a number of our participating partners didn't even keep track of their adoptions and therefore, their progress. It is important that the animal welfare community knows the progress of their work and what type of direct or immediate effect their programs are having in their local area. Tracking the numbers of adoptions and looking for trends will help everyone in the animal welfare community better understand their work.

What worked:

- **Creating a standard form** that each agency fills out and submits every month – This makes things easier for both the person who is collecting the statistics and the person who is submitting them.
- **Designating one person in each part of the state** (north and south) to be responsible for relating to and collecting statistics from rescue partners – Even though the rescue partners benefit directly from Maddie's Fund and NMHP in Utah, they are often slow to submit their statistics. Having just one person who relates to the rescue partners helps to avoid confusion and allows for a good working relationship to be formed. To convince partners to report their statistics in a timely fashion, it helps to emphasize that the future funding of the program is reliant upon us being able to track our progress.
- **Making personal visits to animal control shelters** – Because animal control shelters do not benefit monetarily from Maddie's Fund and NMHP in Utah, they tend to be less willing to provide the statistics we need. Visiting the shelter and developing personal relationships with the animal control officers can mitigate some of the skepticism and animosity. For example, after a staff member made visits to animal control shelters in Southern Utah, timely reporting from that area increased by nearly 50%.
- **Promising not to publish statistics from any one animal control shelter** – Even though such statistics are public record some authorities are sensitive about publishing them. We undertake to treat them as confidential. This can help immensely when trying to alleviate an animal control officer's fears of being judged. We publish only regional statistics.
- **Being persistent** – Many of the agencies that were initially hesitant to provide statistics have eventually come around. Frequent and congenial contact by mail, e-mail and telephone all contribute to enhanced relations.
- **Making it as easy as possible for animal control shelters to report** – If a shelter is reluctant to report their statistics, we try to give them as many options

as possible: fax, mail, e-mail or telephone are all effective ways of reporting. Also, if an agency can only provide partial information, we take it.

- **Dividing the state into five regions** – Tracking statistical trends by region, we were able to see some significant differences and adjust aspects of our programs accordingly.
- **Hiring a staff member whose only job is working with the statistics** – Creating monthly, quarterly, and annual reports for Maddie’s Fund is very time consuming, and takes good Excel spreadsheet skills. By hiring someone part-time specifically to do this, we have freed up other employees to focus on their many other tasks. We also produce reports in a more timely fashion, which gives us some luxury as a staff to more quickly attend to the trends of our statistical reports.
- **New measures for analyzing statistics** – We have put new measures into place with our statistics such as: measuring our figures against the Utah population base, and providing a county by county per thousand statistical measurement of key numbers.

What didn’t:

- **Allowing too little time for the gathering of the statistics** – Still a problem for us! We did not realize how challenging and time-consuming the monthly statistics gathering would be, especially in a state that contains several small, rural agencies that are not used to keeping records. The gathering of the stats turns out to be more difficult than generating the reports based on them.

What’s next:

- **Reviewing trends**– We expect to have monthly meetings with the entire NMHP in Utah staff dedicated solely to reviewing trends and brainstorming on trouble spots. This process has begun already and is very helpful.

Spay and Neuter Program Elements

The Big Fix on Tour, Mobile Spay/Neuter Clinic

Overview: First, it is important to mention that Maddie's Fund does not believe that mobile clinics are usually the most effective way to increase spaying and neutering, and therefore has a policy against funding them. However, they did agree to purchase our mobile clinic because Utah presented some special challenges. For example, 80% of the state is rural, making it more difficult to reach large segments of the population through more traditional means. Maddie's Fund does not provide funds for surgeries performed on The Big Fix. A subsidy from Best Friends Animal Society enables us to maintain discount prices.

We have dramatically altered our perspective on the Big Fix in the past three years. Initially, as stated above, it was intended to focus on under serviced areas. We were surprised to discover after year two that one of the few areas in the state to have decreased shelter admissions in Utah was an urban area that the Big Fix visited quite frequently. We started to believe that the decrease in that area showed that the Big Fix was an effective tool to fix the pets of the working poor, who are reluctant to have their pets fixed in a conventional veterinary clinic. Since this realization we have been concentrating more on areas that have the highest shelter admissions, which is primarily urban areas. In the coming 1-2 years we hope to decrease shelter admissions in other areas through the Big Fix and other spay/neuter promotions.

The change of focus from underserved to urban areas is also based on economics. Visiting rural areas increases the daily cost by \$300-\$350 for hotel, per diem and vehicle expenditures. Rural areas tend to have lower turnouts than do urban areas, because of the decreased population and the generally lower emphasis that rural communities put on animal care, especially cats. The combination of lower turnouts with higher costs dramatically increases the average cost per surgery in rural areas. The Big Fix functions not only more economically, but also more effectively, when it is able to consistently operate at capacity.

The Big Fix began operating in September of 2000. The original goal was to do 35 surgeries per day, four days per week, 50 weeks per year. This amounts to over 6,000 surgeries annually. We were not able to reach this goal in our first year as we struggled with staff and procedural issues. Our second year proved to be much more successful, and we performed over 5,800 procedures. Despite complex mechanical problems with the unit and several key staff changes, year three proved incredibly successful with well over 8,600 surgeries performed on the clinic. Mobile clinics present many issues because of the difficulties of travel, weather, mechanical factors and cramped quarters and their impact on staff turnover. If you are thinking of starting up a mobile clinic program, please do not underestimate its probable difficulty. We feel that one essential criterion is to have a veterinarian play an integral role in the set up and management of the vehicle. Good management structure is essential to deal with the frequent issues that arise in the operation of the mobile clinic. Because the core mission of the clinic is to provide veterinary surgery, having a veterinarian with a strong managerial presence is crucial. We feel that employing a full-time veterinarian to manage and work on the van is the best solution. There is a tremendous range of surgical skill and aptitude

amongst veterinarians. Veterinarians that work primarily as spay/neuter surgeons tend to become more proficient than non spay/neuter surgeons. Many veterinarians in general practice struggle to perform 2-3 cat spays in an hour. Experienced spay neuter vets can typically perform anywhere from 6-10 cat spays per hour, typically with fewer surgical mistakes because of their increased aptitude. To develop this level of skill takes many months to years of performing high numbers (at least 75-100 per week), which few veterinarians in general practice are able to attain. Employing a full-time veterinarian with one established protocol, rather than part-time veterinarians also improves the efficiency of the clinic. Lastly, working in a busy spay/neuter clinic requires lots of teamwork that is hard to attain with relief or part-time veterinarians. In summary, we feel that a full-time veterinarian is essential to manage the operation, establish protocols, provide leadership, and perform surgeries proficiently.

Our biggest challenge by far during year three was mechanical breakdown. We had repeated engine failure on the Big Fix that resulted in the cancellation of 10 days and the postponement of 4. While we waited for parts to arrive, we had the van towed over 2,000 miles. We felt we needed to do whatever we could to miss as few days as possible, so people would not begin to think we were unreliable. Furthermore, most of our costs are salaried wages, so not working becomes very expensive for us. The cost of towing this year was over \$7,000. Fortunately, most of the repairs were covered under warranty. We do hope, however, that we will not have to continue battling the mechanical problems, as the truck will soon go out of warranty, and the future budgetary costs of towing, repair, and missed sites may be difficult for us to overcome in the future.

In year three the Big Fix operated 213 days and performed 8619 surgeries, an average of 40.4 per day, with a range of 2 to 160 surgeries per day. We found that these increased numbers were largely due to an increased advertising effort (see below). The clinic has been successful and we estimate that approximately half of our patients would not have been fixed had they not been serviced on the Big Fix.

What worked:

- **Moving up to 18 days every four weeks, with four full-time technicians and one full-time and one part-time veterinarian**— This allowed us to do more surgeries. By hiring a fourth full-time technician we were able to work an additional three days per month without having to regularly rely on relief technicians, which allowed us to be able to maintain a higher level of consistency and quality. The only downside of this was the decreased down time for the truck for repairs. It was often difficult to have the truck serviced, especially when several things broke at once. For example, while we waited 6 weeks for our engine part to arrive, we were unable to have our broken refrigerator looked at.
- **County Spay/Neuter Promotions**-A number of vets, especially in rural areas, are hostile to the Big Fix. We feel this is mainly because rural vets often have a monopoly in their own community and a visiting veterinary clinic is difficult for them to swallow. We helped to decrease the problem by incorporating local veterinarians into the Big Fix visits. During Big Fix visits we asked area veterinarians to match our prices in return for a \$25 subsidy, which we were able to fund with Maddie's grant money. Many vets were overwhelmed by the

demand and discovered that many of the pet owners that respond to such promotions are not their normal target clients. It was also very effective for our program in increasing the impact the Big Fix has on communities. Despite some complaints, many veterinarians in rural and urban areas are eager participants in these county promotions.

In year three of our program, we increased the number of county promotions to a total of thirteen for the year. To make all of these promotions successful, it is imperative to develop a thorough promotion plan that utilizes flyers, display and classified advertising, community calendars, mailers to area residents and on occasion, banners.

We have found that, in some areas, the county promotions work better without including the Big Fix. Some of the benefits included: simplified advertising messaging, less confusion among community residents, and fewer vets who felt threatened by the competition of the Big Fix.

- **Employing a full-time veterinarian/manager**-the veterinarian is always the default medical/surgical manager and solidifying this management structure only serves to avoid problems
- **Setting the following prices** – \$40 for female dogs, \$35 for male dogs, \$25 for female cats, and \$15 for male cats. Our vaccination prices are: \$10 for FELV, \$10 for dog or cat combos, and \$10 for rabies.
- **Offering postoperative pain medication for both dogs and cats**-We offer oral etogesic for dogs and oral burprenex for cats, at a flat rate of \$10 per animal. Animals and owners feel better when pain is appropriately addressed.
- **Not scheduling appointments** – For a while, we tried to set up appointments for a certain number of clients in each town we visited. This was incredibly time-consuming, and often resulted in missed opportunities when clients failed to show up at their scheduled time. (See below about appointments when volunteer community coordinators are involved.)
- **Emphasizing quality** – Our complication rate (infection, incisional dehiscence etc.) was approximately 1 per 800. We treat pain both pre and post operatively. We feel that excellent quality is one of the biggest factors in increasing the demand for the Big Fix.
- **Having two surgery tables and three anesthetic machines, even though only one vet works at a time** – This allows for one animal to be induced, while one is prepped, while another is undergoing surgery. When the vet finishes with one animal, he/she can move right on to the next without having to wait. Having three machines also allows for less experienced veterinarians to be more effectively trained into high-volume spay/neuter.
- **Involving the local community to become a legion of volunteers which can promote our clinic**- We have a volunteer support program for the Big Fix called Community Coordinators. We've found they seem to work best in rural areas. Depending on the level to which they wish to become involved, they can hang posters, pre-register clients, provide lunch, do laundry, help with intake and discharge and do a huge amount of local PR for The Big Fix on Tour. The

efficacy of a Community Coordinator depends on their enthusiasm. The most effective Community Coordinators are typically affiliated with a local animal rescue/assistance program, which is grateful to have the Big Fix in its community and will do anything and everything to help. Unfortunately less motivated individuals tend to be less effective and usually do little more than hang a few fliers. We have been unable to find individuals in urban areas that are willing to volunteer as community coordinators, even when they are given five free spays/neuters for their efforts. In general, the Big Fix is successful in rural areas where there is a motivated Community Coordinator. We are very reluctant to visit rural areas without a Community Coordinator, as the turnout is frequently quite low.

- **Traveling to urban Utah**-Our statistics show that most of the homeless animal problem is in urban Utah. We feel that the van should go to the areas where the animals need it most. We are typically overwhelmed by the demand for the Big Fix in urban Utah.
- **Traveling to rural Utah.** This was the true function of The Big Fix to begin with, and although it took us a good year to get to the point where we could service rural Utah, the results have nonetheless been encouraging. Although the demand for the Big Fix is not as high in rural areas as in urban areas, we have been effective in rural communities with highly motivated community coordinators. The rural communities are usually poverty laden and are in need of the low-cost services we provide. And, while there are many animals in rural Utah, they tend not to be a priority to the owners, which is especially true of cats.
- **Having three staff on board that can tech and fulfill auxiliary roles.** Each full-time technician works an average of three days on the clinic, in addition to performing other tasks, which include the scheduling, supply ordering, truck maintenance, volunteer coordination, public inquiries, and various and sundry tasks. It is essential to have three support staff on board with experienced high volume spay/neuter veterinarians. Veterinarians that have not reached high spay/neuter proficiency require two technicians on board.
- **Having a clinic cell phone which is carried by one of our on-board staff at all times** – This makes it possible for clients to contact us if they have questions or concerns.
- **Exit Surveys** – These surveys provide invaluable information. They tell us what demographic we're reaching, how effective various means of advertising are, and provide an opportunity for people to suggest ideas to us that we may not have ever considered. They can also be a great morale booster, as the comments are almost always very positive. It is important to create a database as soon as possible where the information from these surveys can be correlated and used as a tool for various departments in your organization.
- **Direct mail, direct mail, direct mail** – Running a close second to the success of the Community Coordinator program is our direct mail postcard to every citizen in the community. Obviously direct mail can be very expensive and certain communities are much more responsive to this method of advertising. Knowing where direct mail works best (as with all your advertising methods) is a certain amount of trial and error. The surveys can be a great help in terms of gathering

this information. Many of the places we visit are so rural that the address on the postcard simply has to state “Boxholder” or “rural route”, the name of the town and the zip. You can discover this information either by calling the post office in the rural town or closest rural town you wish to mail to or on-line with the help of your mailing service. If you call the post office, ask if they have a post office box and rural route system and how to send a generic non-profit mailer to area residents. The post office can tell you where the routes run and how many postcards are needed to hit all the area residents via post office boxes or rural routes. In larger towns, we contact the local post office and ask for the zip code of the closest rural route.

- **Placing ads in utility bills and city newsletters** – These methods of advertising seem to bring us most of our clients. . Also, usually they are free of charge. Having a city or county employee who agrees to be a contact can be of great help in this arena.
- **Parking the clinic at local animal control agencies** – At first, we tended to park the clinic at parks, shopping centers, and other high-traffic areas. This worked fairly well, but had some drawbacks. One of these was a negative response from the Utah Veterinary Medical Association, who felt that having us at non-animal related sites tended to “cheapen” veterinary medicine. The decision to begin parking at animal control shelters has been helpful for a number of reasons:
 - **Laundry.** Most animal control shelters have laundry facilities.
 - **Advertising.** Many shelters advertise heavily that The Big Fix is making a stop in their town.
 - **We give the shelter exposure** and bring people to the shelter who may be potential adopters or volunteers.
 - **We enhance our working relationship** with the shelters, most of which are very appreciative of our efforts.
 - **We usually fix 3-5 shelter animals for free each day.**

Unfortunately, a few veterinarians opposed the Big Fix working at their local facilities, in spite of the Utah Veterinary Medical Association request. In those instances we found alternate facilities (large pet stores or churches), which are more visible and increased our exposure and surgery numbers.

- **Parking in the same place for two to three days** – This cuts down on gas costs, wear and tear on the truck, and staff hours. It also allows us to gain more clients through word of mouth and people driving by. This is only possible when the demand is high.
- **Parking the clinic at Salt Lake County Animal Services when it is not in use** SLCAS has provided us with a spot in a secure parking lot and a locked storage area for our supplies. We are quite grateful for this arrangement.
- **Emphasizing that surgeries are subsidized by Best Friends Animal Society** – We make this clear to clients via a paragraph on both intake forms and receipts. This helps people understand why our prices are so low in comparison to those at the local veterinary offices. This is quite important to the vets, who don’t want people to think that their prices are exorbitant.

- **Offering vaccine clinics only in underserved areas**-we set aside a time outside surgery for non-surgery patients to be vaccinated in areas that did not have a veterinarian within 40 miles. Vaccines are veterinary practitioners' bread and butter. By not directly competing with them we are eliminating a large concern of private veterinarians.
- **Offering family plan rates**-We will fix a mother and one of her litters for a flat rate, \$125 for dog and \$85 for cats, however many there are in the litter.
- **Sanitation**-Many of the surgery animals on the Big Fix have never been vaccinated, despite education asking that their animals be vaccinated before surgery. The potential incidence of upper respiratory disease, distemper and parvo in our patient population is quite high. All staff members must wear gloves at all times and must disinfect their hands between animals.
- **Offering staff bonuses**-We offer both daily and yearly bonuses to the staff of the Big Fix. There is a bonus for reaching the daily goal and a smaller bonus for each animal done over the goal. There is also a 10% salary bonus for reaching the annual goal. After the bonus was implemented the staff became more inclined to work harder. Also the complication rate decreased significantly after the bonus system was implemented.
- **Having a donation box on the Big Fix**-The donation box states: "All proceeds go to pay for homeless and shelter animals to be fixed on our mobile spay/neuter unit – The Big Fix. Every month our mobile clinic fixes an average of 45 shelter/homeless animals at no cost. Thank You For Your Contribution!"
- **Providing four free feral surgeries per day when our full-time veterinarian is working**-We have decided to make the Big Fix part of the feral cat solution. Doing an additional four feral cats per day is relatively inexpensive, requiring 30 minutes, or less, of total staff time. We performed 185 free feral surgeries in year three, which was fewer than expected. We feel this is in large part due to Utah's other successful feral cat sterilization programs.
- **Having reduced cost cat only surgery days called Super Cat Fixes**-We held three "Super Cat Fixes" this year, charging \$9.99 for each cat. We learned to limit the female cats to 65, which were all done on the Big Fix. The male cats (no limit set) were all done in an indoor animal control facility equipped with equipment to treat any cat for anesthetic complications. We employed 2 vets, 6 techs and 6 part time volunteers on these days. We held these events during the winter, when the pregnancies were fewer, thereby enabling us to take as many females as possible. We fixed 128, 160 and 130 cats at the three successive events. We coordinated two of the three events with local morning television coverage. While these days were very successful, they require much more planning (cat identification procedures are much more detailed on these days) and much longer days for the staff. We plan on holding five such days in year four.
- **Working the staff three to four days per week on the Big Fix**- All four of our full-time technicians work 12 days on the Big Fix every four weeks. Two of those techs have other administrative duties: one is the operations manager (in charge of vehicle and Big Fix maintenance), another is the inventory and order

manager/emergency telephone contact. It is assumed that these administrative duties require approximately two days every four weeks. We have had an office worker take over as schedule manager and community coordinator manager. We felt it would be better to have this position filled by someone who is not working on the clinic and would therefore be more accessible to community coordinators, and be better able to do the frequent mailings. Days on the Big Fix are long and hard. Staff are able to deal with the stress if they are given time off to recover.

- **Having the truck winterized** – The truck was outfitted in Houston and the climate in Houston is nothing like the climate in Utah. Though it is a great vehicle from many points of view, our truck was, to put it mildly, less than ideal in cold weather – we had frozen pipes with resulting floods and ice-covered floors. We also had difficulty in keeping it heated during the nights and weekends, which is essential for the biologics and chemicals used on the clinic. Our winterization enables us to heat the vehicle when it is not in use and it has eliminated our frozen water problems. We are now able to keep the refrigerator running at all times, not just when the generator is running, or when it is plugged in. Despite some bugs we are working out we are quite happy with the winterization.

What didn't:

- **Handling ordering and maintenance through the main office** – Doing the administrative work in the main office was inefficient and problematic. The Big Fix operates primarily outside the realm of the office and communication problems were frequent and troublesome.
- **Servicing needs other than spaying, neutering, and vaccinations** – There wasn't enough time to perform other procedures or prescribe most meds. The mission of the clinic is spay/neuter. It should not even try to perform as a full-service clinic, because it will ultimately fail. The pets' owners are informed of any concerns noted by the veterinarian during the presurgical exam and are advised to visit their local veterinarian. The local veterinarians are best able to give full veterinary service to patients and are able to offer follow-up care for persistent problems. We are, however, likely to begin offering microchipping for our surgery patients (see below).
- **Using the same advertising strategy for all places** – It is important to customize advertising to fit the location being visited. This is an ongoing process. We are still figuring out the best ways to advertise in certain areas. Our exit surveys are helping us fine-tune our methods. In general, we have found that in rural or small towns, advertising in the local paper or papers and in city newsletters are both quite effective. These methods are not as effective in large, urban areas. Display ads work well in the smaller rural newspapers and are fairly inexpensive and often the papers will give us significant discounts when we ask. Classified ads work well in larger papers in more urban areas – especially weekend runs. Also, in both rural and urban areas, specialty papers like the "Thrifty Nickel", which are basically want ad papers, are very successful for hitting our target markets.

- **Working technicians more than 12 days every 4 weeks on the van-**Our staff members that did not have administrative duties were required to work on the van 14 days every 4 weeks. We found that these employees' performance decreased during longer weeks.
- **Working technicians 6 days in a week-**Several of our techs expressed a desire to work a long 6 days weeks followed by a week off. One of them functioned well with this format; the other did not. We feel it is better not to schedule using this method.

What's next:

- **Offering microchips to our surgery animals-** As our ultimate goal is to reduce euthanasia of adoptable pets in Utah, we feel that by offering microchipping to our surgery patients we may be able to help some shelter animals return to their homes rather than suffer euthanasia. While we expect there may be some veterinarians who will be angered by this, we feel the benefits of microchipping, which is commonly done at spay/neuter time in private veterinary practice, will far outweigh the negativity.
- **Focusing on the Spanish-speaking community in our advertising-** Providing our Spanish-speaking residents with a Spanish message on our phone system as well as spay/neuter materials in Spanish. This is the largest ethnic group in Utah, and we plan to target relevant areas in order to understand more about their feelings and habits related to spay/neuter.

Spay/Neuter Voucher Program

Overview: Our spay/neuter voucher program, dubbed "Clip 'n Save," originally offered a \$20 discount on spay/neuter surgery at participating veterinarians. From the beginning, the vouchers were advertised quite heavily, via television, radio, newspapers, and billboards. The vouchers are distributed through our office, through rescue partners and shelters, and were also downloadable from our website.

In Year Two, we changed the voucher program dramatically. Vouchers became available only through an application process, and were targeted to low-income people. Vouchers range in value from \$10 to \$50 depending on factors such as income, number of children in the household, type of pet, etc. Applications are available on our website and at shelters throughout the state.

This plan continued in year three with an average voucher value of \$25. We sent out voucher applications and spay/neuter brochures to all the participating veterinarians in our program on a bi-monthly basis.

What worked:

- **Spreading the word that the voucher was available** – Unfortunately, in year one, this seemed to work almost too well. The vouchers were highly popular, with nearly 16,444 having been redeemed in the first year of the program. What we found out, though, was that one out of every three surgeries we were subsidizing

would have happened even without our help. This means that thousands of people used the voucher who did not really need it. Essentially, in one third of cases, we did exactly what we did not want to do – we funded surgeries that would have been done with or without the voucher.

- **Huge Success! Switching to an application-based low-income voucher** – This switch solved the problem we had in Year One of paying for surgeries that would have happened anyway (below baseline surgeries). In fact, surgeries paid for in full at vet offices increased.
- **Designing the program in a way that didn't require veterinarians to discount their prices** – The voucher program is popular with the veterinarians because they are reimbursed by NMHP in Utah for the entire amount of the voucher. They get to offer a discount without taking a financial hit, which most rescue partners ask them to do. Because of this, veterinarians from throughout the state were eager to participate; the ranks of participating vets swelled from 52 at the beginning of the program to a high of 90.
- **Utilizing Senator Hatch as a TV PSA spokesperson**- Although we can't directly track the results of this, we have numerous anecdotal stories indicating that people saw the commercial and were getting their animals fixed because, "The senator told them to."

What didn't:

- **Last three months of Year One left a bad taste in the mouth of the veterinarians.** Because so many vouchers had been redeemed, we were facing the dilemma of running out of funds to pay for future surgeries. We had to do something immediately to stop the abuse of the voucher, so we ended up having to resort to paying vets only for "above baseline" surgeries for the last three months of Year One. The veterinarians thought that the program was unfair, and many left the program. Luckily, most of them came back after we switched to the low-income program, but it took some time. Year Three also got a slow start but we found the county promotions helped increase our spay/neuter vouchers statewide and we eventually were able to catch up and achieve our goals.

What's next:

- **More vouchers distributed by animal control officers in the field** – ACOs are in a very good position to determine who needs a spay/neuter voucher. We now grant this ability to chosen officers who have demonstrated an interest in our program.
- **Celebrity spay/neuter psas** – we would like to recruit several local celebrities to appear in a series of spay/neuter public service announcements that will promote our discount voucher.
- **New forms of advertising and addressing the Spanish-speaking community**

The Feral Fix

Overview: The Feral Fix is a program that offers \$10.00 spay/neuter vouchers for feral cats. The Feral Fix is a statewide coalition of feral cat caregiver's lead by a NMHP in Utah staff member and a committee of volunteers called Darryl's Posse. Darryl's Posse is named after the Feral Fix mascot Darryl and his girlfriend Cheryl, the sterile ferals.

Darryl's Posse coordinates Trap Trading Posts throughout the state, who in turn loan out traps in their local community, provide community resources regarding feral cats, and keep statistical records of feral cat sites. Darryl's Posse also fields numerous phone calls and public inquiries, records and administrates overall feral cat statistics and trains the Trap Trading Posts and public as to how to trap feral cats.

What worked:

- **Recruiting veterinarians-** We accomplished this by sending a packet that details the program specifics, including a Q & A sheet outlining veterinarian agreement and policies and procedures.
- **Reimbursing veterinarians a flat rate, regardless of gender, of \$40.00 per cat-** This amount seems fair to everyone involved.
- **Setting up various volunteer "Trap Trading Posts" across the state** - where members of the public could borrow traps, attend a trapping workshop, receive mentoring advice, and get referrals to veterinarians in their area.
- **Creating Libraries and Workshop guidelines for every trap trading post and phone volunteer** - Training each trap trading post/phone volunteer and providing all postage, phone cards, library materials. This information was readily available on our website as well.
- **Requiring all persons borrowing a trap to fill out a loan agreement form and leave a deposit** - Caregivers were asked to either return the traps within two weeks, or if they had more cats to trap, simply submit their statistical cat tracking sheet so we could confirm that they were using the traps effectively.
- **Donated vaccines for feral cats when they were fixed by caregiver** - Vaccines were donated by the manufacturer who agreed to ship them directly to the participating veterinarians.
- **Setting up hotline where a different volunteer was responsible each day for retrieving and returning feral cat inquiries** - These volunteers also agreed to handle e-mail referrals.
- **Publicity and promotion-** We created door hangers with English on one side, Spanish on the other, did a large-scale promotion for National Feral Cat Day, and

ran regular “feeding a stray” classified ads alerting the public of the opportunity to get ferals fixed for only \$10.00

- **An incentive program for the caregivers** -We did this quarterly. Every statistical tracking sheet that was submitted was automatically entered into a drawing for prizes. The caregiver who fixed the most ferals won a gift certificate to a pet supply store. There were 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prizes.
- **Creating PowerPoint presentation to take to large corporations to promote Trap, Neuter, Return.** The Alley Cat Allies video “The Humane Solution” in conjunction with a PowerPoint presentation resulted in every single corporation that was approached, agreeing to at least try the TNR!
- **Offering veterinarians a free trap divider to assist them with handling ferals.** This opened up a rare opportunity to talk with clinics about appropriate feral cat handling.
- **Offering financial assistance to caregivers who were unable to pay the \$10.00 per cat fee.** We implemented this entirely on the honor system, and it seems to have worked well.
- **Keeping a database of caregivers (e-mail database was the most efficient)-** We used the database to send out notices of new incentives and program updates.
- **Winter shelter building party** – The party brought caregivers together to network and meet others like them. We received tremendous positive feedback on that event.

What didn't:

- **Voucher system can be cumbersome-** Sometimes caregivers find themselves with a cat in a trap but no voucher in hand.
- **Sending out a large packet complete with Humane Solution video and tips on handling feral cats to every participating veterinarian** – The packet also contained the free trap divider offer. Only a handful of vets responded initially. It appeared many vets may not have read the packet or did not share it with their staff. However, as caregivers and word-of-mouth spread, and veterinarians heard about the trap dividers and they called us.
- **Program got off to a slow start-** Many caregivers were used to a prior program run by the Utah Veterinary Medical Association that did not require a voucher.
- **Incentive programs for the Trap Trading Post volunteers and phone volunteers** - This did not seem to have an effect on their performance.
- **Waiting for caregivers to follow through** - We found that, in many cases, the Trap Trading Post volunteers needed to be proactive in getting caregivers to follow through after their initial interest.
- **Not establishing a workable definition of “feral”-** There was much confusion about what could qualify as a “feral” and what couldn't. Some caregivers were turned away by participating veterinarians because the cat was not “mean.”

About 20 percent of cats in most feral colonies are not totally wild, but are quite shy. It is important to educate those involved in the program what constitutes a “feral” cat.

- **Expecting caregivers to be self-sufficient after one training session** - Many caregivers require additional assistance-even if only for a short time to help them become more comfortable with trapping the cats themselves. We did not have enough trapping volunteers in various areas to keep up with this kind of requested assistance.
- **Not stressing enough the need to fix absolutely every cat in a colony** - It appears some caregivers returned the traps leaving one or two wily cats untrapped.

What's next:

- **Working to educate and get the buy-in of local governments and animal control agencies.** We also plan to propose ordinance changes that will decriminalize TNR.
- **Recruiting more trapping teams across the state to aid in the actual trapping for newcomers or those who are unable to trap themselves. Recruit a chairperson to monitor trapping teams.**
- **Establishing assistance to help trap those final few really wily cats-** and reiterate to caregivers that if any new cats enter the area, we would be delighted to loan them traps again!
- **Having a drop trap built and made available at every Trap Trading Post.**
- **Organizing food assistance programs**
- **Increased program promotion-** New caregivers must be sought out to achieve the goal of 5,000 spay/neuter surgeries planned for Year Four.
- **Regular classified ads during the peak trapping times**

Marketing, Advertising & Public Relations

Marketing

Overview: Before receiving funding from Maddie's Fund for the No More Homeless Pets in Utah program, we hired a marketing firm to conduct a telephone survey relating to the adoptions and spay/neuter. We also integrated a survey the Humane Society of Utah conducted several years prior. We believe this is one of the most important uses of money and resources. Based on this information, we were able to construct an advertising campaign to directly target our primary audience. We also rely heavily on information we glean from our exit surveys.

What worked:

- **Do your homework** – We found through the aforementioned survey and previous activities and events that our primary market for adopters was women, aged 36-55, with a household income over \$60,000. We also found that a lot of people had only one pet at home.
- **Focusing media buying** – Based on the woman factor, we have been able to focus our advertising and media buying to fit the age group and category of woman that is most likely to adopt another animal.
- **Initially we used the pros to conduct our surveys** – There's more to surveying and market research than meets the eye. Formulating a survey can be a tricky venture if you don't know what you're doing. We used a marketing firm in the beginning of the program to help us sculpt our surveying approach. Once you've done this, you can learn from what they've provided. Or, as suggested earlier, ask a masters level marketing student to help.
- **We gather information anywhere we can** – We survey all the time--- everywhere from Furburbia to the Super Adoption to The Big Fix. The more information we have and the more we can understand our audiences, and the more effective we will be.

What didn't:

- **Not using a targeted message for spay/neuter** – We should have decided earlier to target low-income areas for spay/neuter.
- **Utah is geographically very diverse** – This seems to dramatically affect certain elements of our program depending upon what part of the state we're in. This applies to activities from The Big Fix, to adoption programs, to the voucher program. We are realizing that we have to treat each market very differently and that what may work in one town may not work in another 30 miles down the road.
- **Attempting our own telephone survey-** We tried this once for The Big Fix and realized three quarters of the way into the process that the questions were too open ended and we were getting skewed information.
- **A research project on spay/neuter** – We ended up spending a lot of money just to find out what we already knew : low-income is where it's at.

What's next:

- **Targeting new homeowners for adoptions-** It seems smart to hit people with the adoption message as soon as they are in their new home. Lists are available online and are created based on factors such as: price of home, zip code, household income, etc.
- **A renewed emphasis on analyzing our own exit surveys** – Although we have always gathered information from exit surveys, it's very easy to get lazy and not analyze that information.
- **Targeting Hispanic areas for spay/neuter** – Learning more about this community so that spay/neuter programs can be more effective in these areas.
- **Some special promotions to target males** – Targeting males who do not want to have their animals (especially dogs) spayed or (especially) neutered. The first of these is a partnership with the restaurant Hooters.

Advertising

Overview: We feel very strongly about placing a significant portion of our budget into advertising. We also feel very strongly about conveying the right kind of message regarding the No More Homeless Pets in Utah campaign.

The animal welfare movement is one of the last non-profit sectors to really focus on what type of message and image is sent to the general public. Our goal is to boost the image and level of importance that Utahns place on their animals and we are placing a big emphasis on advertising to help achieve this.

Our advertising campaign covers the spectrum from general messaging regarding spay/neuter to specific grassroots events. We have used TV, radio, billboards, bus boards and newsprint.

What's worked:

- **A yellow pages ad for Furburbia** – our local pet stores place HUGE ads in the yellow pages...we need to be there, too, to compete.
- **Billboards to drive traffic to our website-** Our billboards were up for several months, and we saw an immediate increase in website hits.
- **Striking a sponsorship deal with specific media outlets** – We worked out sponsorship relationships with both TV and radio partners. In return we have received nearly \$150,000 in added media exposure and added value items such as banners, t-shirts and catered goods for our special events and promotions.
- **A spay/neuter TV ad featuring Sen. Orrin Hatch.** The Senator has a constituency in Utah that has been hard to reach and impact. Having his advocacy to these folks has worked very well.
- **Classified ads for adoptions** – Sounds simple, and it is. We try to include specific breeds if possible, and are always sure to include our web address.

What didn't:

- **Advertising events in large metropolitan magazines or newspapers** – We still don't know why this is, but speculate its because of the frequency of the daily paper—not enough people see a one time ad. We would have to boost our frequency to have an impact and that wouldn't be worth our media dollars.
- **General adoption spots on TV**– Actually, we can't really say that this didn't work, but changing people's minds is a long-term proposition, and therefore not very feasible for us to do within the confines of a 5-year program. TV is also quite expensive.

What's next:

- **Underwriting a local public radio station** – Public radio listeners are generally more astute, affluent, and active than commercial radio listeners... in short: a great audience for adoption messages.
- **More billboards**- Our billboard campaign was so successful that we feel compelled to roll it out again this year.

Public Relations

Overview: We've spent a great deal of time developing our public relations plan. We put a lot into creating PR opportunities and try to get the message of No More Homeless Pets in front of Utahns as much as possible.

What worked:

- **Developing relationships with the local media** – Members of our staff have worked for many years to cultivate relationships and build the trust of the local press. This has paid off for us in the long run as we have gotten a lot of coverage from both state and local media.
- **Setting up media opportunities** – We try to create a press event for every major milestone we pass in our program, such as the launch of No More Homeless Pets in Utah, unveiling of The Big Fix on Tour, program results at six months and the end of Year One. We also stage press events for smaller promotions, such as Labrador Day Weekend at Furburbia.
- **Creating visuals that work for television and newsprint** – We really brainstorm out ideas about how to attract the media to our events. For the launch of NMHP in Utah we decided to have a marching band and skydivers dressed as cats and dogs during the event on the capitol steps. This did the trick. All of the media stations showed up in full force and we had coverage on all channels for the next two days. We know we can't buy that kind of coverage and credibility.

- **Having one or two spokespersons only** – We want to focus on building relationships with the media, so we have designated two official spokespersons to represent NMHP in Utah.
- **Holding press conferences on Sundays** – In many ways, it seems like a bad idea, but it has been very effective for us. Sundays are slow news days, so the stations are looking for things to cover. Also, the viewership is high for Sunday evening news, meaning that our stories are seen by more people than they would be most other days of the week.
- **Inexpensive gimmicks** – We’ve had a lot of luck with simple things like animals in costumes and press conferences with themes like “The Wizard of Paws” and “A Taste of the Good Life.”
- **Press coverage at least once a month** – We once thought that this was a lofty goal, but have had no trouble achieving it. In fact, it’s more often the case that we are covered two to three times each month.

What didn’t:

- **Not training the entire staff on how to handle the press** – We’ve realized that at some point or another, a member of our staff is going to have to deal with the media. We’ve had reporters come into Furburbia unannounced and onto The Big Fix unannounced. While the situations for the most part are harmless, we hadn’t told our staff anything about how to handle the press. We’ve since corrected that and are in the process of training them on basic tips.

What’s next:

- **More spay/neuter press events-** Our press coverage is a bit skewed toward our adoption programs, so we’d like to eke out more coverage for spay/neuter.
- **A bigger emphasis on getting coverage in the newspapers** – Because of pre-established connections, we have better luck at getting the TV stations out to cover our events than we do newspapers. We need to spend time cultivating relationships, and making our press conferences more “newspaper friendly.”
- **An effort to get more “feature story” coverage** – Most of the publicity we get is centered around our special events and/or our progress toward our goals. We’d like to be the focus of more feature stories.

No More Homeless Pets in Utah Website

www.utahpets.org

Overview: While recognizing that a website cannot replace advertising and other forms of promotion, right from the start we felt that the Internet could be an important element

in our program and could reflect our upbeat, fun “brand.” Utah has a high level of Internet penetration – approximately 60% – and we wanted to make full use of this 21st century resource. The site includes:

- Background information on the purpose and ideals of NMHP in Utah
- Facts, figures and FAQs
- Details of and links to participating organizations, shelters and veterinarians
- Information on upcoming events
- Spay/Neuter information, including the downloadable discount voucher
- A link to an online pet database used by our participating groups
- Reports on how the program is progressing
- A newsletter

What worked:

- **As expected the site is widely used** – We receive frequent e-mails commending it and have tracked the user level.
- **It effectively communicates our “brand”** – What we do is fun and to be enjoyed, though it has a very serious mission. We want our site to communicate this and focus on the positive aspects of animal rescue.
- **Using other advertising mediums to drive the website** – We realize that the Internet medium, especially a new site, cannot be effective without significant advertising. We publish and mention our site in all of our TV, newsprint, radio and outdoor advertising. Because we have so many different elements to our program, including a large number of participants, we centralized and focused our advertising to our website. Our aim is to drive traffic to our site through intense advertising to support our different program elements.
- **It has proven an excellent means of connecting all dog and cat related topics in the state** – We are giving people one place to go for a variety of information about animal related issues, adoptions and help.
- **It has been a very effective way** of making the discount spay/neuter voucher readily and widely available.
- **Internet adoptions** – When we started the website in July of 2000, several of the partners had never used a digital camera or published anything on the Internet. Currently we have trained most participating partners to list animals on our site, which has resulted in numerous successful adoption stories.
- **Time saving tool** – Our website has proven to be an easy, timesaving tool in responding to inquiries about the program and related elements.

What didn't:

- **A simple donation button**- We haven't received the level of online donations that were hoped for. We believe we need to dedicate an entire section of the site to fundraising in order to meet our goals.

- **Relying too much on the site to distribute spay/neuter vouchers** – This cuts down on availability for those who don't use the Internet and, in many cases, these are individuals who need the vouchers the most. We found we needed to adjust some of our advertising to show an 800 number, rather than the web address, particularly in certain geographical areas.
- **Labor intensive to keep up to date** – We have put such an importance on the website in communicating our message that it's very critical for us to keep the site up to date on a consistent basis. We didn't originally factor in that we'd need someone to maintain the site at least part-time.

What's next:

- **A section devoted to fundraising** – The section will feature an online store, a donation form, information on our specialty license plate, and more.
- **A resource section for pet owners** – we'd like to provide information on behavioral issues, a network of local trainers, and a pet-friendly housing list.
- **Video clips of our events and programs** – if a picture's worth a thousand words, a video must be worth, what, five thousand?

Sponsorship/Cause Marketing

Overview: A corporate sponsorship program is a creative, virtually untapped way to increase revenue streams for a non-profit organization's income. Last year, we introduced a full-time staff position to package partnerships with corporations with the objective to create new revenue streams for both the sponsor and NMHP in Utah.

A lot of non-profit organizations ask for sponsorship of their programs when in reality they are just asking for donations in disguise. Our major objective in this process is the concept of "Cause Marketing" or utilizing the assets of your organization to create a situation where both parties meet their goals. They are usually financial goals and it's usually up to the non-profit to initiate the creative process as to how these goals are going to be met. A word to the wise: Most companies are onto the old way of sponsoring, which is in reality a donation---you know routine, "we'll put your logo on the T-shirt in exchange for a million dollars." When you're first calling on a new sponsor, it make take a lot of initial upfront discussion to get the corporation to understand that you're not just asking to empty their wallet in return for a logo on a banner.

We are very glad we added the sponsorship position as the added revenue has given us the freedom to expand some of our programs as well as give us added exposure with recognizable, trusted organizations in Utah.

What worked:

- **Discounted radio remotes-** This was a new idea that allowed the Corporate Sponsorship Director to approach a radio station for a discounted or donated live remote for a specific event or promotion. We tested this theory out on a mini promotion for Feral Cat Day and found that the Corporate Sponsorship Director was able to get a live remote discounted 50%. In the following months, we negotiated several other similar deals. In addition to the monetary savings, these negotiations allowed the Sponsorship Director to start building relationships with the radio stations and give them more of a sponsor status in connection to the program.
- **Collaboration with team-** For several of the larger sponsorship projects the Corporate Sponsorship Director met with the those who would be a part of the team to initialize the project and also some creative outsiders to generate ideas and discuss roadblocks. This worked very well because it first, gave the people who would be involved a chance to give an opinion prior to the finalized plan, and second, allowed the Sponsorship Director to gather some great ideas to incorporate in the final plan.
- **Planning ahead** – Ideally, the initial cold call to the potential sponsor should be at least six months in advance. This way we have some leeway time in connecting with the decision maker and giving them time to say whether they are able to be partner with us or not. Also, we inquire with every company we talk to about when they plan their budgets for the upcoming year; this lets us know the exact time to approach them in the future.

- **Following up** - This is the most important thing on every level of sponsorship, from the time you make that initial phone call, to the time you close the deal, to the time you have your wrap-up meeting. It sometimes takes several months to get in touch with the correct person at a company to inquire about sponsorship. It is therefore critical to use some sort of sales database like ACT!, which helps us stay organized and keeps us on top of the follow-up calls. Once the deal is made, we are sure to stay in touch with the sponsor. We make sure they are following through with what they promised and that they are on the same page as us regarding the event, promotion or program that they are going to be involved in. After the event, we send out a follow up report within a month. This report includes the final numbers: marketing demographics, numbers of impressions, money raised, attendance, whether or not a goal was met, etc. Along with the report we include all pertinent advertising and marketing materials that the sponsor was mentioned in.
- **Communicating well with everyone** – The importance of communicating with those on the staff who are in charge of the event/promotion and your sponsor are critical to a successful outcome. Our Sponsorship Director makes sure each event coordinator is aware of everything that has been promised the sponsor and also goes over the contract to be sure there are no surprises.
- **The internal sell** – Believe it or not, it's just as difficult to sell sponsorship and cause marketing notions internally to your staff as it is to sell it to a corporation. Many of us in the non-profit sector are protective that our cause remains "pure" and unobstructed by the commercial world and that we are worthy of their money without all of the strings attached because we do a great thing for society. We are nervous that we are in some way selling our soul to corporate America. The truth is, unless a sponsor is seriously trampling on your code of ethics through their day-to-day business, most of your constituents are supportive of the fact that you are reaching out to other sectors of the community to make yourself more successful and well known. Our corporate sponsorship director has done a very good job at pointing out the importance of partnering with our community and the importance of additional revenue to support our programming

What didn't:

- **Putting all of our eggs into one basket**- This dilemma came about during an opportunity for a partnership between No More Homeless Pets in Utah and a retail grocery chain store in Utah. The project was to be a statewide fundraiser involving our rescue partners with a tie into Strut Your Mutt. The project ended up falling apart and never came to be. As we analyzed what went wrong, we realized that we put everything into this one project without the thought that it may not happen. Several employees put in many, many hours on this project and the disappointment and loss of time was devastating for some when it did not work out. The lesson learned is to not go into a potential partnership with a set plan of how the promotion/event is going to play out. Leave lots of room for changes, suggestions and the possibility for it to turn into nothing, especially when dealing with a large corporation.

- **Not getting a signed contract** – We’ve been burned in the past because we did not get the sponsorship deal in writing. This is especially important because of the possibility of employee turnover within the sponsoring company. If you make a deal with one person, he or she might not be there a few months later when it comes time to collect the sponsorship money or products. We now make sure a contract is put together and signed by both NMHP in Utah and the sponsor before going ahead with the sponsorship. This should eliminate any problems with follow-through. The contract reflects the exact dates as to when we need the money or in-kind goods, details of what we are providing the sponsor (e.g. logo on posters, mention on radio spots, etc.), and details of what is required of the sponsor during the event or promotion. This is your insurance policy for dispute resolution.
- **Stumbling on promises of exclusivity** – An important element of many sponsorships is exclusivity. Exclusivity is when you promise a sponsor that there will be no competing organizations present (e.g. two pet food companies). During one of our Super Adoptions, we inadvertently broke a promise of exclusivity. This happened due to poor communication between the Event Coordinator and the Sponsorship Director. If a sponsor has been offered exclusivity, the Event Coordinator needs to know this and needs to give the Sponsorship Director a list of organizations or companies which have been invited to the event so they may check it over to make sure there is no overlap.

What’s next:

- **Cause Marketing Program-** We plan to develop several cause marketing campaigns in the fundraising department. We may revive the idea of partnering with a retail chain grocery store for a statewide fundraising campaign involving the rescue partners. One other possibility is to partner with a bank or credit union to tap into their client base for a community based fundraiser centered around an event or holiday.
- **Media Sponsorships-** A plan is in place for the Corporate Sponsorship Director to take care of securing most of the media for Year Four. This will be an attempt to get some media sponsorships for some of our bigger events and also to build relationships so that we can ultimately work on getting most or all of our media either donated or discounted.
- **Specific Media Campaign Sponsors-** We are working on putting together a few large-scale PSA media campaigns (cat identification and spay/neuter). A large-scale sponsor to underwrite all the media for the specific campaign is the goal for Year Four. This will involve collaborative efforts between No More Homeless Pets in Utah, our advertising agency and the potential sponsor.

Volunteers

Overview: Volunteers are essential to our program's success. We have a volunteer base of approximately 500 individuals. These people average 1,343 hours each week. We are extremely fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers. Our challenge is to continue to not only build this base, but also retain those we have. Retaining volunteers requires giving them fulfilling assignments and recognizing their good efforts.

What worked:

- **Moving Volunteer Orientation sessions to every other week-** Doing them every week was too often. Some weeks we would have 10+ attendees and other weeks we would only have one. Moving them to every other week has made the sessions much more balanced. There are usually 6+ attendees at each session now, which is a better use of the Volunteer Director's time.
- **Continuing to use volunteer committees to help run special events-** Though it does require organizational skills on behalf of the staff involved, having volunteers help create and run these events eases the burden on the staff.
- **Using Corporate or "group" volunteers for "one-time" volunteer opportunities that require little to no training-** Many businesses, schools or clubs want to do volunteer work together as a one-time project. Finding jobs they can do without having to attend our typical training session can ease the load on our regular volunteers. Good examples of these are dog walking and clean up at the Super Adoptions and water station attendees at Strut Your Mutt.
- **Having Furburbia volunteers attend the general orientations-** By having volunteers that initially only want to volunteer at Furburbia attend one of the orientations, the Volunteer Director can track their involvement and move them into other volunteer jobs as needed. Previously, those volunteers that just helped at Furburbia and perhaps got tired of helping there simply fell off of the radar. Now, they are aware of other volunteer opportunities that might better fit their talents or schedules.
- **Showing our appreciation-** We have done well in this area in the past, but are continuing to improve. Besides verbal and written "thank yous" our staff has taken some volunteers out to lunch or dinner to express their thanks. Small gifts have been given as well. Additionally, the monthly Volunteer Spotlight in the newsletter is another way we show recognition for their hard work.

What didn't:

- **Weekly training sessions.** As stated above.
- **Relying solely on the newsletter to notify volunteers of upcoming events** - The monthly newsletter has been sent out by our pro bono printer on a sometimes erratic schedule. Sometimes, the volunteers have received

the newsletter publicizing an upcoming event after that event has already taken place.

- **We have no formal recognition program for our volunteers.** Besides thank you notes, small gifts and newsletter recognition, we haven't ever formally recognized the outstanding work of some of our volunteers.

What's next:

- **Taking photos of each volunteer at the orientations and posting them on a board for all the staff to see** - Our staff has done a tremendous job this year in relating to the volunteers and helping them feel welcome. Sometimes, however, it is difficult to put a name with a face. Hopefully, this will help all of us in better communicating with the volunteers.
- **One on one staff training** - We have new staff members that could benefit from some "how to" training in working with volunteers.
- **Written policies and procedures distributed to all volunteers at their orientation** - This has not been adequately addressed before. It is necessary to help our volunteers feel confident in what they are doing. It is also necessary in case disciplinary action must be taken.
- **Formal volunteer recognition** - At the Christmas Party, we will be giving awards to deserving volunteers. Some of the categories will include, "Outstanding Furburbia Volunteer." "Outstanding Super Adoption Volunteer," and "Volunteer of the Year." Small Christmas gifts will be given to all volunteers at this event. This will also be a mandatory event for the staff. Their presence will be very meaningful for the volunteers.