

Annual Meeting 2010

Shelter Report

This has been a very **busy**, yet **gratifying** 6 months since I began my role as Executive Director here at the GCHS. I'm **truly** excited to be able to combine my career experience with my love and passion for animals..... and to work with a board of directors that is so profoundly committed..... and dedicated.....to the future of this organization.

I am **inspired** by their continued devotion and the endless hours of service that they give. Being very familiar with the concerns, challenges, and rewards of animal care and welfare..... I share their passion and am equally committed to achieving our mission. So I would like to take this opportunity to give a brief summary of some of the operational changes that have taken place during this time.

After some initial meetings with our Executive Committee and the Board of Directors.... and receiving some direction and guidance..... I began taking a hard look at the **existing operations which included:**

- the current policies, procedures and internal systems, and how we operate the shelter
- the staffing structure, staff development and cross training to provide better care to the animals
- improving customer service
- improving the health and environment of the animals we care for
- expanding volunteer opportunities to help at the shelter while improving staff & volunteer working relationships
- and looking for opportunities to collaborate with other organizations and to promote GCHS.

As I began to delve into the many aspects of the shelter..... I began making recommendations to the boardand implementing changes.. that would help improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of shelter operations as well as helping us prepare for our new shelter..... So at this time, I want to update you on the progress in some of these areas.

Internal Operational Systems:

Our internal systems address things as important as addressing the publicto managing animal crisis. Some of the issues we have addressed include:

-Working on a more customer friendly approach by staff in all aspects of customer service including answering the phones and greeting the public.....to providing information about our animalsand giving tours

-**For our volunteers** we updated the volunteer application process.....created a new family friendly application with a revised informational handbookand we introduced volunteers to a schedule system that encourages them to come in **anytime** from noon to closing to help out.

- we changed our closing evening hours to 7pm instead of 8pm.....which has resulted in more volunteers assistance earlier in the day when help is really needed..... By changing these hours, and extending the hours that volunteers can work, they have been more available to spend time socializing and walking animals.
- -We have also added a volunteer groomer, Deb Brinkmeier, who has helped weekly with the many grooming needs of our abandoned and stray animal friends. A special thank you to Deb and her talented skills.

- It is important for you to know just how critical our volunteers are and the number of hours they give. Since these changes started in January of this year....., volunteers have given an estimated total of 1,572 hours of service. So THANK YOU to all of the volunteers – we couldn't do it without you!

We have reviewed and implemented new procedures that would reduce risk and injuryand provide a safer environment for the animals, public, our volunteers and staff.

Some of these procedures include:

- providing staff guided tours to the public in our dog kennel areas;
- increased staff interaction with volunteers and the general public;
- bringing dogs out of the kennels and into a more neutral and calming environment for the volunteers to walk;
- ensuring that our youngest volunteers have parental involvement and supervision while at the shelter, and
- we will be implementing staff training in the very near future that addresses appropriate dog handling and positive reinforcement training..... all aimed at making our animals more companion ready for adoption

-We continue to evaluate and implement communication methods to ensure that staff and the public are kept up to date & informed

-We are also focusing on our adoption procedures by shortening the adoption application process..... And reducing the waiting time so that our animals can find that new home quickly;

-We are looking at ways to develop, improve and expand **community awareness.....**, relationships..... and collaborative partnerships..... that will promote our mission and core values . To date;

- we have met with community and county law enforcement agencies to address the growing need of educating the public on responsible pet ownership;
- we have presented to schools on topics ranging from pet/owner responsibility to careers to service at the shelter – I would especially like to thank **Nadine**

Whiteman and Deb Frietag from the Monroe Middle School and the community service they provide through Project World; We are also working with many students in our local school districts throughout the county who are doing community service to help the shelter by raising money and collecting items from our Wish List

- WE have also increased our community awareness in the county by attending community events (*a special thank you to volunteers Mary Schmidt, Angie Meyer and Rhonda Schwarze for their coordination of these activities and the event volunteers*);
- Through the media, we continue to appear on Channel 15 and (side note – since *Mike/Colleen Jerge* have taken on that role of volunteer advocate and appearing on Channel 15 Pet of the Week, we have been successful in immediate adoption of most of the animals he has taken);..... we are also begin working with Channel 3 weekly to post available animals for adoption In addition, we have also begun monthly spots on WEKZ radioas well as continuing to provide information to local newspapers and shopping news regarding the status of our animals – *a special thank you to the many sponsors and the Monroe Times which pays for those spots*. Through these “community awareness” opportunities we continue to promote our message as well as getting animals adopted.
- We have re-activated the relationship with the University of WI School of Veterinary Medicine to provide free medical care to some of our animals. Within the last six weeks we were able to have 8 cats.....and 3 dogs spayed... as well as receiving a week’s worth of medical diagnostics..... which resulted in **NO COST** to the shelter and at a savings of more than \$2000 – a special thank you to **Mike &**

Colleen Jerge, Tina Gilbert, Paul Barrett and Mike & Carol McNall..... (for helping to transport the animals to and from Madison.

- We are actively working with Angel's Wish out of Madison to find homes for the many cats that we care for. So far in 2010, we have been able to send 13 companion ready and older cats to this rescue - they have now all been adopted and placed in caring, compassionate homes. We will continue to promote and work with this rescue to find homes for our feline friends.
- Our collaboration with ENAH from Lafayette County... and the Dane County Humane Society and their traveling clinichelps provide free spaying and neutering to pets of county residents in need of this service. And we would be remiss if we did not thank the United Way of Green County and the anonymous donors who have provided the funding for this service.
- And finally, I have worked with many of the board committees to address medical protocols and procedures for the animals and in revising the current policies and procedures to meet the challenges of growth and expansion, and meeting the needs of the shelter animals.

So thank you to everyone, board members, volunteers, members, the public and staff as we review and update our internal operation procedures and look forward to preparing for our new shelter;

Now, onto the animal statistics at the shelter. (you have a ___colored sheet in your packet that you can refer to)

2009 Animal Number Highlights:

-In 2009, we had a total of 600 animals come into the shelter:

- Incoming Dogs - 259 dogs entered the shelter of which 139 dogs came from Green County and 18 came from Lafayette County. From the City of Monroe, we took in 62 dogs
- Outgoing - 150 dogs were adopted and 108 were reunited with their owners
- 38 dogs were returned to us for reasons such as behavior challenges, inability to adapt to their new environment or get along with other family pets, and death of the owner
- 2 dogs were euthanized due to severe health issues
- ***Currently we have 31 dogs in our care; 13 of these animals have been with us between 10-45 months. Our goal will continue to be.... finding adopters for these dogs or to search out rescues that are compatible with our mission. I am encouraged as we have started to adopt out long term dogs. Since January, we have adopted 7 of these animals.***

As for our feline friends:

- Incoming Cats – During 2009 there were 341 cats that were taken into the shelter; 174 came in from around Green County and 149 came from the City of Monroe; only 17 cats were returned to us
- 262 cats were adopted out but only 6 were reunited with their owners, 29 died of illness complications, and 11 were euthanized due to severe health issues.
- Finally, of the 147 cats we have, 16 are currently in Foster Care.

In summary, during 2009, the shelter averaged 34 adoptions and 10 redemptions per month.

In reporting the animal statistics, I would be remiss if I did not report on some of our **achievements regarding animal health and welfare**. Together with the Medical Advisory Committee, we have **aggressively** worked towards improving basic animal health care and providing a healthier environment for the shelter animals. By reviewing and updating our procedures and services provided to the animals, we achieved the following:

- we revamped the **Spay/Neuter Assistance Program** to Green County Residents who qualify for assistance, and increased the voucher amounts to \$75 per animal; so far this year alone, 24 Green County residents have participated in this program which is funded by the UW of Green County
- we have **aggressively** worked towards getting all animals vaccinated within their first day at the shelter; tested all cats for FIV/FelK; and had all animals spayed and neutered prior to adoption except for those too young to have the surgery
- We have **tightened** up medical protocols on handling ...administering & inventory of medications.... More consistent documentation of animal medical histories and conditions.... and improved the reporting procedures of any animal health concerns.
- We have implemented new sanitation and cleaning procedures resulting in healthier animals, fewer visits to the vets, and more animals available for adoption....In addition, as a result of these changes, the cat population at the shelter has improved to the point that we now only have about 14 cats (of the 147 cats available) that are not adoptable at this time and are on medical hold.
- And **finally**, to be more responsive to animal health needs, we added a vet tech to the staff providing the expertise needed to help diagnose and care for sick animals more quickly which has also helped to improve the overall health of **all the shelter animals**. And a special thank you to our volunteers vets, **Dr Amy Hagen and Dr Lisa Holcomb**, who rotate weekly visits and provide ongoing support to us not only during, but after hours when emergencies arise.

As you can see..... it has been a very busy time for us as we implement changes that will be necessary as we transition towards a new shelter. As we continue to expand and grow..... and as our needs increase and change..... we need to stay focused on our mission and core values which brings us together..... and we need to stay open to new ideas and work together in a spirit of cooperation to help our most important clients – the shelter animals that so desperately need a compassionate and loving home. Thank you to everyone who has helped as we move closer to achieving these goals.