

**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT
TO THE
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
FOR THE MONTH OF
JANUARY 2008**

At the meetings of January 14, 2008, and January 28, 2008, the General Manager or his designee provided the following updates, summary of activities, and information about events in December and January.

Implementing the No-Kill Equation in Los Angeles: The Department has long been committed to making the City of Los Angeles a “no kill” community for animals, implementing numerous programs and policies to achieve this goal. Recently, there has been something of a buzz in the animal welfare community about a relatively new “No Kill Equation” for local government animal care and control agencies. However, this prescription is comprised of ten commonsense, long-standing practices that have been embraced and implemented by the Department.

Feral Cat Program: In 2005, the Board embraced trap-neuter-return (TNR) as a preferred policy to improve animal welfare, reduce death rates, and meet obligations to public welfare and neighborhood tranquility. The Department has no formal TNR program yet because a proposal to change City law to permit such a program has been delayed by threats from environmental and wildlife organizations insisting that TNR will harm bird species and habitat. Numerous reports however, cite urban development, habitat destruction, and global warming as the real threats. Thru TNR, feral cats in a neighborhood are trapped, sterilized, and returned to the area where they originated by a Colony Manager. FixNation temporarily operating at the Department's North Central Spay Neuter Clinic, is devoted to cat sterilization, spaying and neutering over 8,000 cats annually since 2006, many of them feral.

High-Volume, Low Cost Spay/Neuter: In 1999, the City Council and Mayor adopted a differential-cost dog license ordinance to incentivize dog guardians to spay/neuter their pets, and expanded its subsidy of spay/neuter via discount vouchers and mobile clinics. Since then, dog impounds have declined more than 25% and euthanasia by more than 60%. Under the Department's “Big Fix” program, approximately 45,000 subsidized spay/neuter surgeries are accomplished annually; including over 12,000 performed in mobile clinics operated by the Amanda Foundation and the Sam Simon Foundation. The City of Los Angeles commits \$1.1 million annually to the Department's spay/neuter programs. Additionally, the Department has spearheaded the development of statewide and citywide legislation mandating the expansion of spay/neuter.

Rescue Groups: In 2005, the Department created the Participant Shelter program to streamline procedures for the approximately fifty rescue organizations taking animals from LA Animal Care Centers. In 2006, this program expanded to become the New Hope Program, and now the Department partners with over 125 registered rescue organizations. Department staff provides comprehensive daily lists of available and at-risk animals, as well as urgent notifications, to these rescuers, helping to facilitate nearly 6,000 live releases a year. The New Hope Program allows the Department to help organizations that rely on donations, grants, and dedicated volunteers to maximize their limited resources so they are better able to save the animals most at risk of euthanasia.

Foster Care: Since 2006, the Department has actively recruited new caregivers and now has a network of more than 100 foster caregivers providing care to both adult animals and neonates. Most caregivers are recruited from the community, while some are Department employees. Some of these caregivers provide unique foster care for so-called evidence animals being held while animal abuse allegations are investigated and other legal proceedings are ongoing. As a result of collaborative efforts, in 2007 the Department's Foster Program reduced the euthanasia rate for neonate kittens by 62%. Foster caregivers are provided hands on training and support via information, medical care, and food subsidies. Dedicated staff are made available to assist and/or answer questions on any care-giving issues.

Comprehensive Adoption Programs: The Department has operated mobile adoption events since the late 1990s and continues to hold five to ten or more such events every month in locations all around Los Angeles, in addition to speaking engagements and information distribution regarding adoption at community events. Department volunteers work with staff to accomplish these activities and also to engage in follow-up marketing of the animals that are not adopted from the mobile events. The Department's goal is to substantially increase the number of these mobile adoptions and outreach efforts in the coming years.

Pet Retention: Volunteers regularly provide behavioral training classes in new exercise yards built into the newly opening animal care centers, and augment staff in counseling pet owners and adopters whenever feasible. In addition, volunteers and staff routinely provide training and grooming services to dogs in the shelters to make relinquished pets more attractive and adoptable. The Department is also developing a program called "Safety Net," which identifies and brings together all resources available in our community that can help pets and people stay together. Informational flyers on pet behavior topics and a variety of animal issues are available in each shelter and on the Department's website. When available, donated pet food and toys are given to new owners when they are adopting from the Department.

Medical and Behavior Rehabilitation: The Department's new facilities feature modern, fully-equipped medical clinics and medical wards and a veterinary team with compassionate, highly-qualified veterinary professionals. By the end of the fiscal year 2008, there will be seven such clinics in the system, staffed by a total of at least seven veterinarians and over two dozen veterinary technicians. Additionally, the Department routinely contracts with dozens of outside veterinarians to provide both preventive and remedial care for thousands of animals a year. The Department has established a relationship with Los Angeles Pierce College to provide internship opportunities for pre-veterinary students and is negotiating with Western University veterinary school to create a formal internship program that will augment care in the shelters and introduce future veterinarians to the practice of shelter medicine.

Public Relations / Community Involvement: Department staff members routinely discuss spay/neuter, pet adoption, animal cruelty prevention and other important topics on local television and radio and in local newspapers, as well as meet with neighborhood councils, associations and other organizations to discuss these issues. The bimonthly Animal Services Commission meetings provide a unique forum for the rescuers, volunteers, and the general public to regularly communicate with the Commission and the Department regarding policies and operations integral to the welfare of the animals. Late in 2007, the Department received authorization to establish a new, full-time public relations staff position to enhance its ability to

promote its animals and activities, although circumstances have temporarily prevented an appointment to the post. Over the past two years, the Department has utilized outside public relations professionals to market special events and adoptable animals. The pending re-establishment of an in-house public relations staff for the first time since 2005 will greatly improve the Department's ability to communicate with both the media and the public.

Volunteers: The Department's 1,076 active volunteers contributed over 150,500 hours in 2007 in a wide variety of tasks, including shelter clean-up, grooming, dog walking, rabbit exercising, adoption assistance and counseling, assisting staff at mobile adoptions, community information booths and special events, and other valuable tasks. The Department estimates that its volunteers conservatively donated over \$3 million dollars worth of volunteer service in 2007. Recently, the overall Volunteer Program was reviewed and recommendations that focus on improving the volunteer experience and resolving issues that arise between volunteers and staff are forthcoming. A new volunteer coordinator is expected to join the staff in 2008, filling a void that has existed for oversight to a network of hard-working animal care center-based volunteer liaisons. Recruitment of new volunteers is ongoing and will be a priority for the new volunteer coordinator.

A Compassionate Director: Current General Manager Edward Boks brings a unique blend of management competencies to the Department, including more than three decades of animal welfare experience where he successfully introduced and implemented No Kill principles and programs as described in the "No-Kill Equation" in two of the largest animal care and control programs in the United States. His programs are designed to educate and involve the community, and protect the lives of lost and homeless pets. Since coming to Los Angeles, Boks has applied his expertise to feral cat issues, spay/neuter issues, rescue groups and foster care programs, adoption and pet retention efforts, medical and behavioral rehabilitation, public relations, and community involvement. Under Bok's leadership, the Department continues to progress via increasing adoptions and reducing euthanasia.

Highlights of the LA Animal Services 2007 Statistical Report: The 2007 Euthanasia Rate for dogs and cats fell nearly 22% to 15,009 compared to 19,238 in 2006. The Cat Euthanasia Rate fell over 27% with the Neonate Kitten Euthanasia Rate also falling over 55%, representing the steepest decline in cat euthanasia and neonate kitten euthanasia since the Department began collecting data. The 2007 Dog Euthanasia Rate fell over 21%, continuing the trend of annual double-digit decreases. The Pit Bull Euthanasia Rate fell over 27% compared to 2006.

In 2007, the Department adopted out 16,262 dogs and cats combined, an 11.5% increase over 14,581 in 2006, while it placed 6,145 dogs and cats through the New Hope Program. Through the Department's Adoption and New Hope programs combined, 22,407 dogs and cats were placed into loving homes in 2007. The Department adopted out 5,663 cats in 2007, more than a 5% increase over the 5,374 cat adoptions in 2006, and placed 2,571 cats through the New Hope Program. The Department adopted out 10,599 dogs in 2007, more than a 15% increase over the 9,207 dog adoptions in 2006, and placed 3,575 dogs through the New Hope Program. Although the 2007 Pit Bull Adoption Rate decreased by 3.5%, Pit Bull placements through the New Hope Program rose 4.86%.