

ANIMAL

CARE & CONTROL TODAY

A Publication of the National Animal Care and Control Association



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On the cover — "Tiny" awaits a new home in foster care.

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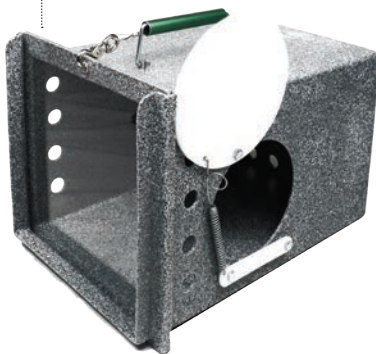
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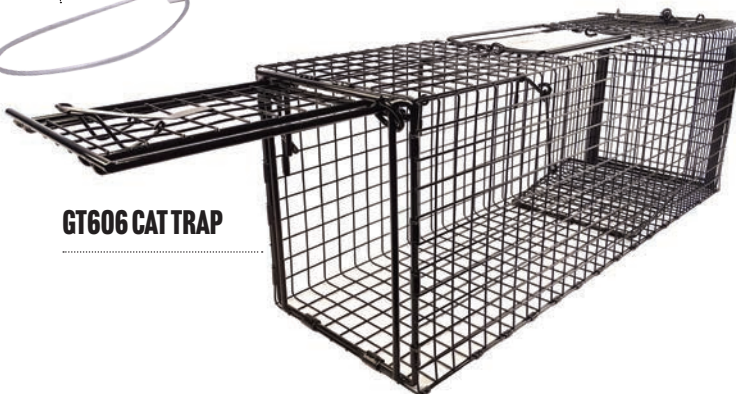
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Finding Tiny

By Angelina Martin

It was a cold and rainy afternoon in early October when our animal control officers received a call to pick up several lost and found dogs at the local veterinary clinic. One of them was a Husky who had been running around in traffic. We shared his intake photograph on our social media pages with the hope of reuniting him with his family. It was truly one of the saddest pictures we had ever seen. He wasn't wearing a collar, and he didn't have a microchip. And even though his post was shared more than 800 times on our Facebook page, no one claimed him. Sadly, this is something we see much too often.

After his stray hold was up, our staff evaluated him and fell in love with his sweetly shy nature. The animal shelter seemed a bit overwhelming for him and he would sometimes curl up into a ball to become smaller, so we named him Tiny.

Tiny seemed like he was becoming more depressed as days went by. We just knew someone was looking for him. Even though he was now available for adoption after being neutered and given vaccinations etc., we posted his photographs and videos everywhere online, still hoping to find his prior family. We even took him for a walk around the neighborhood where he was found, but still no one came forward to say he was theirs.

Over the next month, we were determined to find Tiny a foster home, as he was still declining. Rescue groups have been inundated with dogs over these past many months, especially Husky types and so everyone we asked said no or maybe next time. Another month went by, and still no adoption or foster applications were received. No one was looking for him. He wouldn't eat. He stopped engaging. We were losing Tiny.

Just then, in our moment of despair, a loving foster home opened up to take him in and give him a reprieve from shelter life.

Tiny began to decompress and to learn how to become himself again, to breathe again and to eat again. He remembered how to play. He began prancing a bit when he walked and pawing at you for attention and love. He started smiling in that sweet Husky way and his full body wags began to knock people around him over. We were finding Tiny, who he was, and who he could potentially become. His goofy nature brought laughter and smiles and giggles to all around him.



His foster mom would leave a room, and in typical Husky fashion he'd throw his head back and howl. His personality was blossoming and so was his energy level. Even with long daily walks and exercise, he became a little too much for his foster home; so a second foster stepped in, and together a co-fostering partnership began.

The second foster, who happened to be me, had a young dog who loved to play, so Tiny now had a positive, playful outlet for his energy. Basic training, long hikes, and good rewards filled his daily life. His separation anxiety lessened as we gained greater insights to describe the ideal family for him. And now, it's all about finding Tiny a home.

His spirit is starting to shine through on these sunny days of spring. In our shelter we see too many dogs who just need to get back home, and Tiny is no exception. There are those heartfelt moments with him when we realize how loved he was and how his family must have searched for him.



On stray intake, we understand how the precious animals in our care may have been companions and beloved family members. A few days ago, a dog was found tied to a nearby shelter's door. It was assumed that she had been abandoned, but after searching through her microchip records and a lot of data, we found her family. Through a lot of additional administrative effort, we finally connected with them. She had been missing for some time and her family was grateful to be reunited with her. As I left the shelter that day, I was in the car behind them. As they drove away, that sweet girl sat in the front passenger seat, placing her head out of the window, feeling the fresh air on her face. With the biggest smile in her eyes, she happened to glance back at me. I felt that familiar sting of tears in my eyes and as they rolled down my cheeks, I realized that I was smiling too. She made it back. She's heading all the way home – over an hour away.

And then I sighed. In that quiet moment, I was heading home as well, ready to take Tiny out for his walk. Ready to give him all the love a foster can while he awaits finding a new family.

It's March, and our shelter is nearly full. We are almost at capacity again. Our kennels are filled with so many animals who were found and brought into our care. Without a microchip, engraved ID or license tag on their collar, it's so challenging for us to help them find their way back home.

And one of the things we want the most.

Daily, our hearts are broken, as are the animals who don't understand where they are or why. It's saddest still, when an animal doesn't pass an evaluation for medical or behavior reasons and is humanly euthanized -- their family

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word out about the importance of registered microchips and engraved ID tags and licenses on collars to help us help reunite as many animals as possible, giving us all hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Angelina Martin is the owner of Online Media Solutions, a media agency that helps provide social media solutions through education, training via onsite and remote assistance, and educational webinars for animal shelters. In 2016 she was awarded the first social media contract for Sonoma County Animal Services. Since 2017, the local area has been through four major disaster related events which she produced and implemented social media content, plans and strategies with success for animal control and the community animal response team. After working through so many disaster response events, Angelina has developed educational webinars to help other animal shelter organizations become more prepared for future events. You can find her webinars on her site at www.onlinemediasolutions.biz or through the Justice Clearinghouse. ❖

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finding a photo of them online, months later, and having to explain what happened.

Shelter work isn't for the faint of heart by any means, but it would be easier if we could just get the animals who already have homes back to the families who love them, who want them, who need them.

It breaks us, seeing that lost look in an animal's eyes. We feel it on their faces, we hear it in their cries or whines and we pick up on it while they pace in the open play yards, while they continue scanning people, places and things.

Whenever anyone asks me what the most challenging part of working for Animal Care and Control is, I let them know this – that one in three animals will go missing in their lifetime – and to ensure pets have registered microchips or current engraved ID or license tags attached to their collars. If you want to help animals and do your part to save as many lives as possible, encourage the use of the quickest way for them to get back home if ever lost.

Today, we're working on finding Tiny a home. He's sleeping right here beside me and my adopted dog, who was also a lost/found dog whose family never found him.

All shelters are working extremely hard to find ways to help alleviate the heartbreak from an overwhelming population of lost/found animals. We hope you'll work with us, to help get the



New Year, New Skills!

A new online training course has just been released by our partners Justice Clearinghouse. **ENROLL TODAY!** NACA members will receive a 20% discount on the course.

In many jurisdictions, resource limitations mean that all aspects of investigation and courtroom process are handled by a single humane law enforcement officer. Would you be ready to handle one of these investigations? This five-part series will walk you through the five major elements of an animal control investigation using real-life examples and conversations with sworn officers to give you multiple perspectives on handling a case from start to finish.



Building and Winning an Animal Welfare Case

Beyond the Basics



Solutions for Dead-End Microchips

By Jeanette Garlow

Is your facility having trouble finding an owner of a found dog or cat with a microchip or tag? Thankfully, there is a group of volunteers called Microchip Hunters, that will help get these pets home free of charge! We can increase your return to home rates and create good will for your community!

We know how important and helpful microchips are. They are the only tool that can't fall off, be easily removed, or forgotten to be put back on! We also know that many chips are not registered to an owner, not updated to current contact information, are incorrectly registered because of clerical error, or there are multiple registrations. Sometimes it is hard to figure out which company a microchip came from to get information.

Animal control facilities and shelters are extremely busy, and are not always able to spend the extra time needed to find owners from these dead-end microchip situations. Dead-end microchips can prevent reunions from happening. Microchip Hunters work tirelessly to get in touch with owners through extensive research for cur-

rent phone numbers, emails, close family members, social media, landlords, etc.

Microchip Hunters sign a privacy policy to never disclose personal information. That is why microchip companies have allowed agreements to disclose information to us as if we were a shelter. We respect shelter deadlines as to how long an animal will be held and stop looking when the animal is no longer available

Duke's reunion story

When Duke's owner passed away, he was adopted by a family friend who gave him a loving home. His new owner never thought to check Duke's microchip information. Eight years later, Duke went missing. Unable to contact the original owner, Chicago Animal Care and Control contacted Microchip Hunters for help.

Armed with only the original owner's name, Microchip Hunters volunteer Jane went to work. Searching public records and scouring social media, Jane finally made contact with a relative of the original owner. The relative confirmed that Duke had been taken in by a family friend.

He had the friend's name and Facebook page, but no other information.

Jane's search began again. After multiple messages, emails and calls, she finally got a call back from the family friend, Jeffrey. Success! Except Jeffrey wasn't the friend who adopted Duke. Duke was adopted by Tom and Cathy. Jeffrey didn't know their last names, only the approximate area where they lived. When Jane checked the map, it was the same area where Duke was found.

With guidance from Jeffrey, Jane was able to find Tom's address through Google maps, and was then able to obtain a last name, but no phone number. More internet research turned up a phone number for a relative. When she called, the person said that she had a brother named Tom who had an older dog. This had to be the right person!

"When I called Tom, he broke down," said Jane. "He and his girlfriend Cathy had spent a week looking for Duke, called all the nearby police stations to leave his information, but he never heard back from anyone. He assumed the worst. He told me they have had Duke since 2013, and how much they love him."

Tom and Cathy reclaimed Duke and he's now home with the family who loves him.

**Did you know
there is free help
for dead-end
microchips?**



**Together we can reunite more pets
with their owners.**

Let our Microchip Hunters do the work!



- Increase your reclaim rate
- Save time
- Free up shelter space

www.microchiphelp.com

*In partnership with Lost Dogs Illinois
and Lost Dogs of Texas*

Microchip Help, along with Pet FBI, Lost Dogs of America and Lost Cats of America, is committed to working with shelters and other organizations that focus on reuniting lost pets with their families.

Reunions such as these never get old. In 2021, the Microchip Help group nationwide worked over 1,100 dead-end microchip cases! The Illinois group alone received 391 dead-end microchip/tag cases, and reached 285 of these families (73 percent); 208 of these dogs and cats went home! A huge thank you is extended to Chicago Animal Care and Control for partnering with us in Illinois and accounting for approximately 70 percent of our cases. As part of Lost Dogs Illinois, our Microchip Hunters Illinois group works tirelessly to reunite these pets with their families.

"We rely on Microchip Hunters every day to get animals back to their families more quickly, and you can have a peace of mind to count on Lost Dogs of Illinois to help keep pets reunited to their love ones," says Mamadou Diakhate, director of Chicago Animal Care and Control, Chicago, Illinois.

"The 16th District Chicago Police Station encounters pets with 'Dead-end' Microchips about a dozen times a month and there is no better resource than Microchip Hunters. They have helped reunite the vast majority of the dogs that have come in with bad chips and saved them from being shipped off to Animal Control. The Garrido Stray Rescue Foundation utilizes the sleuths at Microchip Hunters on a regular basis. We are amazed how quick and responsive they are and grateful for their expertise. The primary focus of our rescue is reuniting pets with their loved ones and Microchip Hunters is our number one go to when we encounter a dead-end," says Lieutenant John Garrido, 16th District Police Station/Garrido Stray Foundation, a stray holding facility in Chicago, Illinois.

We feel every microchip or rabies tag that doesn't get



Above: Duke's owner passed away, and his microchip information was not updated. When he went missing, Microchip Hunters got to work and helped him get back home..

a pet home should be submitted to us for another look in case we can find something more! Please visit microchiphelp.com, where you can find our Jotform for shelters and read more of our success stories! These are the sort of feel-good stories that can bring your shelter good local publicity. Everyone loves a happy reunion or a long-lost pet going home.

Jeanette Garlow is co-director of Lost Dogs Illinois and Microchip Hunters Illinois. She has been part of this organization since 2016, and has loved every minute. ❖

No response from owner

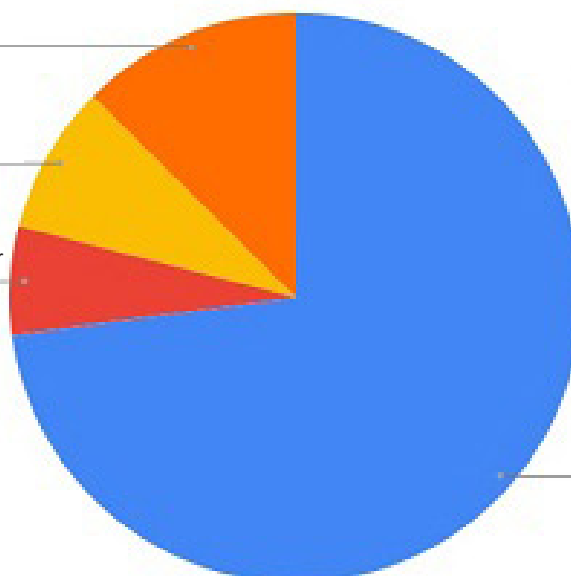
12.6%

No owner information

8.4%

Reunited before we heard back from owner

6.1%



2021 Microchip Hunters Illinois Stats

Owner contacted
72.9%

NACA Lost Pet Prevention Checklist

- ☐ Identification!
 - Make sure your pet has a collar with updated tags.
 - Make sure your pet is microchipped. A microchip means he *always* has ID.
- ☐ License your pet! Oftentimes required, this identification can quickly reunite you with your lost pet.
- ☐ Spay and Neuter! Pets tend to wander more often when they are not altered
- ☐ Recall and Training! Pets with good recall can be called back before they run too far and get lost.
- ☐ Be careful in and around the car! During transit pets may become lost when they bolt from a vehicle. Make sure pets in vehicles are contained in carriers or are wearing seat belts, so that you can control their entry and exit.
- ☐ Keep screens and fences in good condition and repair when damaged.
- ☐ Train your family. Many pets escape because a child (or their friend) left the door open or dropped the leash on a walk.
- ☐ Take extra precautions during changes in routine. Many pets go missing when something's different—have plans in place to ensure their safety during:
 - Construction - Take extra precautions to make sure visitors are not leaving doors open, and consider keeping pets in enclosed rooms while there's major activity going on in your house
 - Vacations—many pets escape pet sitters and dog walkers. Make sure your pet sitter or dog walker understand your pet's routines and habits.
- ☐ Extreme weather and loud noises such as fireworks may make pets anxious, and more prone to run through open doors.
- ☐ Always keep a recent picture of your pet on your phone, so you can show it to people quickly if your pet does stray.
- ☐ Know the first steps to take, so you can act fast if your pet does stray such as:
 - Know your local shelters contact information.
 - Ask neighbors and use social media, often times pets are found less than a mile from where they live.

NACA Supports Appointment-Based Intake

By Liz Finch

The practice of appointment-based intakes, also known as managed intake, has been steadily gaining traction even before COVID made it practically a requirement when shelters were closed to the public. While some shelters went back to “business as usual” as the pandemic subsided, the reality is that we are still in crisis. Industry-wide staffing shortages are limiting our ability to serve the community, and we are facing an increase in intakes of 4 percent.

We’ve been sharing content about the benefits of managed intake for several years, and recently the National Animal Care & Control Association likewise has come out in support of the practice. Scheduling intakes in this way is not merely something to be done in a time of crisis, its multiple benefits to people and animals make the practice something every shelter should consider implementing.

Looking at positive impacts for a changed intake model

In December 2021, NACA released guidelines on implementing appointment-based intake, which cited a variety of negative impacts linked to the common practice of immediately accepting any animal brought in by the public. Those include “animals being unnecessarily impounded; families and pets being needlessly and often permanently separated; increased stress, disease, and death in shelter animals; poor customer experience; compromised staffing efficiency; and decreased organizational effectiveness.”

While some organizations see the benefits of an appointment-based intake process as indisputable, there are others who still have problems with changing the way they serve the public. In recognition of the fact that there is not 100 percent buy-in, NACA recently hosted a town hall to ask shelters and rescue groups about their experiences with appointment-based intake. Not surprisingly, the results were mixed.

A poll taken at the start of NACA’s town hall to measure how many attendees were implementing the process found that 41 percent were doing it for certain populations in their organizations, whereas 36 percent were requiring appointments for all species.

Another 16 percent have not started such intake policies but indicated they were interested, while 7 percent said they were not considering it or that it wouldn’t work in their area.

“Some shelters see this approach as being limited, but it’s really not about saying, ‘No’ to the public; it’s about saying, ‘Not right now’ for many cases,” says Dr. Josh Fisher, president of NACA and director of animal services for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Animal Care and Control.

“It’s certainly not about turning away animals in need,” adds Kristen Hassen, NACA executive committee director and Maddie’s® director of American Pets Alive!. “If there is no immediate viable option, those animals still need to come into shelters. But the benefit of an appointment-based system is that it includes individual assessments and a case management approach for all non-emergency requests.”

NACA’s statement notes a variety of positive impacts thanks to the appointment approach, including having fewer animals in shelters, which creates healthier environments,

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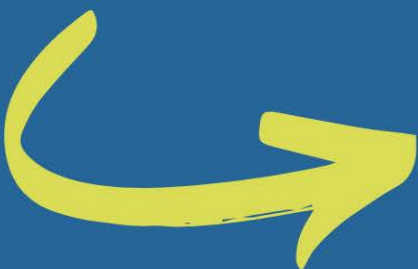
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and improved return rates of lost pets to their people. Brent Toellner, senior director of national programs at Best Friends, also points out that managing intake by appointment helps eliminate the chaotic atmosphere that can be so common in shelter lobbies today. “Anyone who has had to stand in a long line waiting to be served, or who has been on the other side of the counter trying to help increasingly frustrated customers, knows that it’s a horrible experience,” he says. “Managed intake offers the public a far less stressful way to relinquish an animal – something that is already extremely stressful. It allows a steadier, more consistent workflow for staff. Managed intake increases the overall quality of service to the public, not the opposite like many wrongly assume. It has huge benefits for everyone involved.”

Implementing managed intake successfully

For those whose experience with an appointment-based intake process was positive, they agreed it cannot be successful with a one-size-fits-all approach. Intake by appointment should be considered an option, not an absolute. Clearly, where there is no question that an animal is in critical need, they should come into the shelter immediately.

A scheduled intake approach needs to be balanced with the appropriate resources to match each situation. Someone struggling with their dog’s behavior issues should be given training resources while they wait for their appointment (NOT in cases of including dangerous behavior or a history of aggression). Consulting a trainer might not solve the problem or lead to the person keeping their animal, but it will mean that the shelter will be accepting a dog they know more about thanks to some professional input.

For found animals that are not aggressive, shelters should ask if the finder would be willing to hold onto them temporarily. “No one picks up a stray because they don’t like animals; they pick them up because they care. Otherwise, they would just leave them on the side of the road,” says Mike Wheeler, NACA board member and director of Cabot Animal Support Services in Cabot, Arkansas.

“Our data also indicates that most stray pets are picked up within a very short distance from where they live,” he adds. “Having the finder hang onto the animal vastly increases their chance of being returned to their family. It also avoids that animal having to enter the high-stress shelter.”

A shelter’s job is not done once they send people home with a scheduled return date. “You should offer any resources you have available during this waiting period to help the community member care for the animal and find their owner, or to rehome their own animal,” Mike says. “By giving a hard date and having the ACO/shelter working with them during this holding period, I have found that the community is much more understanding. In most cases, they are eager to help.”

Planning for transparent communication

Several attendees of the town hall noted how tough it can be to get the message out about their changed process and

the rationale behind it. Taking the time to explain the “why” behind the change is important, and shelters need to start with staff and volunteers.

Pasadena Humane in California has been doing appointment-based intakes for all non-urgent cases since the summer of 2020, and equipped staff ahead of time by creating scripts incorporating input from the organization’s veterinary health, wildlife and marketing teams. “It took a lot of tweaks over time to make sure that we were explaining the change in a way that the community could understand and that supported our team’s goals,” says Vice-president of Programs Sara Muriello. “The scripting for our team serves as a guide rather than a rule for having meaningful conversations with community members.”

NACA Treasurer Adam Leath, who is also director of Volusia County Animal Services in Daytona Beach, Florida, agreed that transparency with the public is nonnegotiable. “We had one person who was facing eviction and we didn’t have the space to take her pet immediately,” Adam says. “We told her frankly that the only option for us would be to euthanize the dog, who also happened to have documented instances of aggressive behavior. Those are difficult conversations to have, but necessary ones. “Staff then suggested places she could live temporarily with her dog as long as he was housed in a crate and had some behavior modification work (which we provided),” he continues. “That gave her time to look for a place to live that did allow dogs.”

Volunteers can also be a powerful source of support for the change in intake procedure. They can monitor Facebook groups and respond to complaints or questions with the correct information. One attendee even commented that volunteers were invaluable when people on social media were advising people to just take their pets to the shelter directly. Volunteers were able to reroute them into calling the shelter to set up an appointment, thus avoiding a trip altogether.

Gathering input from those on the fence

The town hall had some vocal opponents of appointment-based intake, several of whom pointed out that, as tax-funded agencies, shelters play a specific role in the community. For one, they noted that shelters are there to ensure public safety. Leaving strays on the streets has a direct impact on the community by increasing the risk of bite cases and traffic hazards.

“Assuming stray animals brought in by finders don’t end up back on the streets is overly optimistic as well as a neglect of duty,” said one attendee. “I see this as a ‘Hail Mary’ reaction to a difficult problem.”

Others noted that people may go to adjacent agencies and be dishonest about their situations. Some even cited experiences with such workarounds.

“Our shelter has experienced some impacts from other local shelters’ that give me and my staff pause,” says Corey Price, animal services manager for City of Irving, Texas. The Irving Animal Care Campus is considering implementing an appointment-only intake policy but is waiting for more infor-

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mation and data from shelters already doing it.

"We have been able to trace a number of animals back to other cities (about 40 in the past few months)," he adds. "Some are stray, some are surrendered by the adopter because they were allegedly turned away by the organization who adopted the animal to them. Since they are from the city, I have a duty to take them."

Along those same lines, Corey notes that shelters have a duty to meet the expectations of the community and that a change in services as elemental as intake policy should require input from the public. "Our community has expectations and a right to provide input (and a vote) regarding how they want to be served," he says. "It's up to us to provide a compelling explanation for why we are changing our service model. If we fail to get their support, then both the shelter and city council will hear about it. I don't feel we have enough information about the successes of this model to provide that explanation and get their buy-in yet."

The Irving shelter does have retention and resource conversations and tries to divert or delay intakes whenever possible, but Corey says it's had limited success. "We've had some people leave with their pets, only for our ACOs to pick them up as strays a few days later," he says. "For now, we are being transparent and providing the best service we can for every person and pet. We also are watching the shelters who

are doing this and learning what is working and what isn't so we can decide what path to take going forward," he says. "For now, though, I'd say we are a solid 'maybe.'"

Focusing on the needs of the community

The overarching theme of the town hall and the details in NACA's statement is that appointment-based intake is a flexible way to manage how shelters serve the public. It's also increasingly seen as the next step toward community-supported sheltering.

"One of the hardest things for animal control officers and other animal welfare personnel to understand is that the majority of the people in our community are not the problem," Mike says. "Sure, we deal with people who violate our laws [and] ordinances and provide poor care to their pets, but those are the minority."

"If my officers issue 450 citations a year, they are citing between 250 and 450 members of our community," he continues. "If our community has a population of 30,000, then we've had a negative interaction with a little over 1 percent of our population. In fact, the people in our community are the solution and we should empower them to help us."

Ed Jamison, vice-president of NACA and CEO for Operation Kindness, admits that he struggled with the concept at first, especially considering the massive intake responsibility he had as executive director of Dallas Animal Services. However, he notes that he doesn't feel it's irresponsible to at least have the discussion.

"It's not a mandate; it's about expanding your thinking," he says. "A decade ago, drop boxes were normal and the world didn't come to an end when those went away. A couple minutes in the field or on the phone can save weeks of time in the shelter when it comes to staff resources."

Kristen adds that what is also challenging about the thought of shifting to an appointment process is that it changes the course that shelters have been on for decades.

"We've taught the community to bring healthy strays to us, and to bring the pets they want to rehome to us," she says. "We started that in a time when most people didn't say pets are family; now most do. Appointment-based intake is our attempt to adapt to the current moment. The process is nothing new; talking about it openly is."

For more info on appointment-based intake, check out the program spotlight "Data Proves Power of Managing Intake," the podcast "Managed Intake Programs," and the town hall "Out With the Old, In With the New: Switching Gears to Managed Intake." Our website also has a Managed Intake Playbook with tangible info about how to implement a program at your shelter.

Liz Finch is senior writer at Best Friends. ❖

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Pet FBI is a nonprofit organization. Along with [Lost Dogs of America](#) and [Lost Cats of America](#), we are committed to working with shelters and other organizations that focus on reuniting lost pets with their families.

NATIONAL ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL ASSOCIATION

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- Wildlife or exotic animal stories
- Lost & found stories
- ACOs in the community
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Zora is Reunited with Her Family

By Morgan Williamson

The sense of helplessness that you feel when your pet goes missing is difficult to describe to anyone who hasn't gone through it. Your family member is missing, you're scared for their safety, and you miss them terribly. You don't know if they are even alive or not. In this incredibly stressful situation, it's often difficult to figure out what the next best step could be. Zora's family learned this lesson the hard way when she went missing a couple of months ago.

That's where PawBoost came in. Zora, a curious little Shih Tzu (pictured at right), wandered away from her family's home one afternoon unnoticed. By the time Zora's mom noticed her absence, she was long gone. Zora is quite the "Daddy's girl," so when Zora's mom had to tell her dad that she was missing, he was absolutely heartbroken. Zora's mom knew that they needed to find her, and fast!

Two days passed with no luck in finding their sweet girl, and Zora's family was starting to feel defeated. After telling social media about their predicament, a community member suggested that they post a lost pet alert using PawBoost. Zora's mom immediately looked up PawBoost, reported Zora's information, and boom! With the click of a button, Zora had a PawBoost alert that was seen by hundreds of people in her area, an email alert sent out to PawBoost's local Rescue Squad members, a listing in PawBoost's lost and found database, and a printable flier they could post all over the area.

Many Rescue Squad members reached out to Zora's pet parents with advice and to let them know that they were on the lookout for their missing fur baby. The comfort of knowing so many people were looking for Zora gave them hope until it finally happened. On the same day that Zora's alert was posted, people reached out to the family on Zora's PawBoost alert to let them know she had been found! Her pet parents (especially her dad) were ecstatic!





their lost and found pets database, automatically and for free. This way, people who have lost a pet can easily view the strays at their local shelter and get in touch if they see their lost pet.

Interested in becoming a shelter partner? Send your inquiry to partners@pawboost.com!

Morgan Williamson is a marketing specialist at PawBoost. In her role, Morgan engages with PawBoost users via social media content creation, blog content creation, and tracking user trends and engagement. With questions or comments, you may reach Morgan at morgan@pawboost.com. ❖

"We went to pick her up, and she immediately ran up to my husband! Less than 24 hours after posting Zora's alert on PawBoost, Zora is now home. My husband was in tears when he held her. I'm totally amazed by the outpouring of love and support from the community of animal lovers that made it possible for Zora to return home. I can't thank everyone enough! We sincerely appreciate all of the help from our community and from PawBoost! Thank you all so much!" - Zora's mom

The next time a pet goes missing or you come across a lost pet, consider using PawBoost! Just fill out a lost or found pet report and they will immediately start helping spread the word.

PawBoost is not only used by lost pet owners and finders, but shelters too. PawBoost has built an integration that enables stray intakes at shelters to be added to



Heading Home: The Journey to Higher RTO

By Ryan Hinderman

The stats drive shelters crazy: if fewer than one out of three dogs and one out of 10 cats in shelters is claimed by owners, does that really mean two out of three dog owners and nine out of ten cat owners don't want their animals back?

In 2021 at the Front Street Animal Shelter, 1,687 (65 percent) stray dogs weren't claimed. Were all these dogs intentionally abandoned? In a city of over half a million people, surely there are at least some abandoned dogs who trickle down to shelters, though we don't know the percentage. If so, would our efforts to get the remaining 65 percent of dogs home be in vain?

We certainly hope not – and given improvements shelters have made in their return to owner rates through proactive strategies, it seems that shelters do have the power to increase their number of happy reunions.

Why are so few pets in shelters claimed? The reasons are likely varied and complicated, and no major study reveals the reasons why animals end up in shelters in the first place or why people who lose their pets don't find them at shelters. It could be a lack of knowledge, fear of authority, a busy lifestyle that doesn't allow for proactive searching, language barriers, inability to pay return fees, lack of transportation, lack of technology, and many other possibilities. It would be of tremendous benefit to our industry to have such data, as well as a modern, large-scale study of where people look for and ultimately find pets. For now, the best strategy for shelters is to try different things until something works, then share with the rest of the animal welfare community.

Over the past few years, our shelter has seen improvements by focusing on the following areas....

Knowledge

The average person doesn't know how to comprehensively look for a lost pet. Cat owners don't know that lost cats behave much differently than lost dogs, and that the best tactic is to knock on doors and search yards. Dog owners don't

realize that small paper flyers aren't effective, and what they need are large posters. They may not know to post to Nextdoor, Craigslist, and Facebook. They might not know which shelters exist in the area. They may also believe that the animal will "just come home" or believe it must have been stolen or killed by a coyote, all of which will put a halt to active searching.

In 2018, our shelter made a major push to solve this part of the equation by creating an automated text messaging program to guide owners through every step of finding their pet. When someone texts STRAY to (833) 511-0426, they receive video tutorials, links to lost and found pet pages, a link to Petco Love Lost, and get reminder texts every three days with a one tap link to our stray pets pages, among other things. Thanks to funding from Petco Love and other organizations participating in the 2018 Petco Innovation Showdown, we secured grant funding to send a postcard and fridge magnet with this number to 135,000 residences in the City of Sacramento. The materials and program are translated in both English and Spanish, as we believe language could be a major barrier to lost pet reclaim.



Time and effort

Using the above strategies is effective but time consuming for pet owners. Busy families may not have time to thoroughly look for their pets, especially since it can take weeks before the pet is brought to a shelter. It requires someone to put in a lot of effort over time and not give up hope – easier said than done. Therefore, the more a shelter can do to get an animal home, the better. We have done the following:

- Free monthly vaccine and microchip clinics: These served 2,848 animals in 2021. Microchips continue to be one of the most common ways to get animals back home.
- Community sheltering: When members of the community are willing to hold onto stray animals rather than bringing them to the shelter, we provide tips to proactively look for the owner. While the shelter doesn't have the resources to post every animal to lost pet websites, hang fliers, and walk them around the neighborhood, the finder can – making it easier for owners to find pets than at shelters, where their animals may be adopted out and unfindable after just a few days. We also offer online lost and found reports to help match

found animals with lost animal reports.

- Sacramento Missing Animal Response Team (S.M.A.R.T.): These dedicated volunteers post every lost dog on Nextdoor in the area where they went missing, and have had many success stories.

Cost

We encountered many pet owners who couldn't pay their redemption fees, and guessed that there were far
(continued on page 20)



FREE TO GET YOUR PET OUT OF THE SHELTER

City of
SACRAMENTO
Front Street Animal Shelter

To help more lost animals get home, we are waiving fees to pick up your pet from our shelter through June 30th, 2022



If you lose or find a pet, text the word **STRAY** to **(833) 511-0426** for proven tips to get them home!

Visit **FriendsOfFrontStreet.org** to learn more and help more animals.

*This program is not available in cases where staff reasonably suspect abuse or criminal neglect of a pet. Additional limitations may apply in the future.

Waived fees made possible by Friends of Front Street Shelter (a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization).



Postcards that waive shelter fees can be sent to residents in the area in case pets go missing.

(continued from page 19)

more who didn't bother coming to the shelter for fear of fees. Thanks to our nonprofit, we've been able to run an experiment since July 2021 where all redemption fees have been waived. We did a marketing blitz that included mailing an English/Spanish postcard advertising "no fees" to every residence in the city, along with extensive media, social media, and email marketing. It was prominently featured on our website so as not to be missed by owners. One big surprise is that our RTO rate for dogs didn't increase in the first six months compared to the same time period the year prior. This may be because in the past we already worked with owners who couldn't afford the fees. It was rare for us to deny a return because someone couldn't pay. Being in a global pandemic may also have significantly altered these results from what they would have been in a typical year, and we'll remeasure at the one-year mark. Our data may help some shelters decide if it's worth it, since those redemption fees could be used to fund strategies like free microchipping.

We've seen a steady increase in our dog RTO rate over the past five years, the biggest jumps correlating with our efforts targeting the barriers of knowledge and time and effort. Our stray dog RTO rates (adjusted to remove owner surrenders, confiscations, etc.) have been:

- 2017: 26.7 percent
- 2018: 27.5 percent
- 2019: 31.8 percent
- 2020: 32.4 percent
- 2021: 34.4 percent

Unfortunately, we haven't seen much of an increase in cat RTO, and the numbers are difficult to interpret due to changing policies in healthy cat intake. It is likely that many of the cats previously admitted were owned outdoor cats brought to the shelter by citizens believing they were lost.

While it is difficult to pinpoint which strategies have had the most impact, it is likely that these and continued increases in RTO rate will stem from improvements across a wide range of strategies to meet owners where they are and address their specific needs and concerns.

Ryan Hinderman is the communications and customer service manager at the Front Street Animal Shelter and the creator of the "Lost2Found" texting program. Get in touch by emailing rhinderman@cityofsacramento.org! ❖



Are YOU the Next NACA Board Member?

Have you ever considered running for the NACA Board of Directors? Every year, three seats at the board of directors' table open for new members. The NACA Board of Directors is the governing body of our organization. Individual Board members have one vote each on items and collectively decide the direction that NACA heads in the future!

Specific roles and responsibilities of the directors of the Board are set out in the NACA Bylaws and the Board of Directors is bound by the rules set in the bylaws. Mark your calendars 2022 NACA Board of Directors elections open on July 11, 2022! Will you consider running?

Reasons to Run:

Expanding your network – Take advantage of the opportunity to network and expand your animal welfare professional circle.

Support initiatives that resonate with you – Being on the board provides an excellent opportunity to positively affect change and the future of NACA.

Gain a national perspective – Learn from, speak with, and develop relationships with others around the country doing the same animal care and control work as you.

Board of Directors Applicant Requirements

- Not be an employee of NACA or any organization, business entity, or individual which competes with NACA training functions, evaluations, publications, training conferences, or consulting.
- Have at least five (5) years of experience in the animal care and control field.
- Have never been convicted of a felony, moral turpitude, or offenses related to animals.
- Not have been previously removed from the Board of Directors in accordance with Article IV, Section 7, Removal. If so, said member is ineligible for reelection to the Board of Directors for a period of 10 years.
- Agree to and abide by the Duties to the Corporation Agreement.
- Submit to a criminal and civil background investigation prior to annual elections.
- At the time of the election, and for the term of office, board member applicants must be individuals who promote the animal care and control/animal welfare field,



and/or be employed by a government, nonprofit or other agency that provides animal care and control services.

- Must be a current NACA Individual Member in good standing

Board candidates must be willing to submit to a criminal background check. This step is required to be considered for a Board position. The background check will include a criminal history review along with personal and professional reference checks.

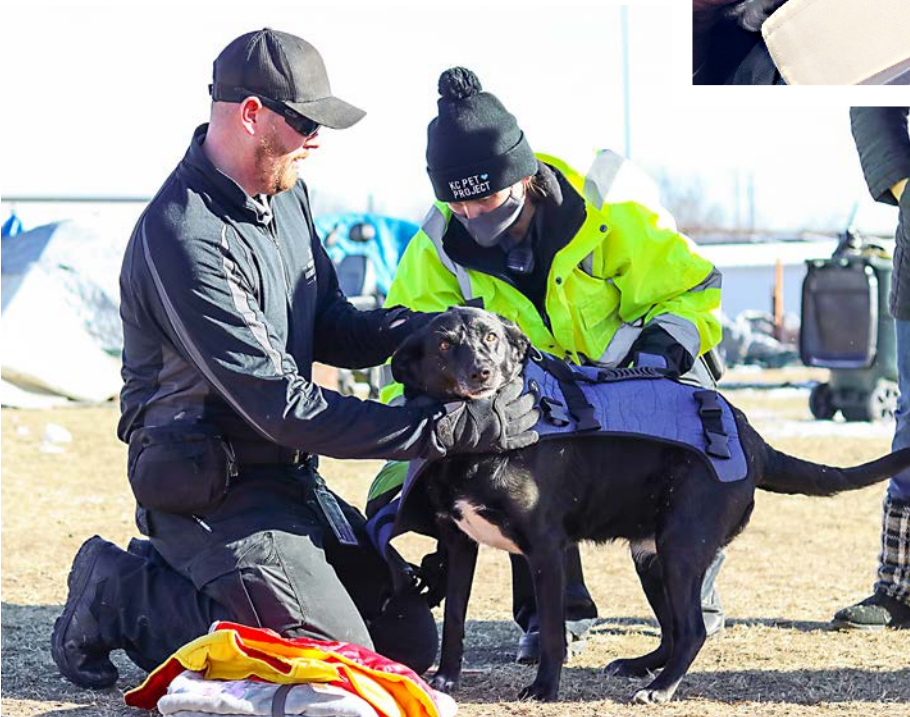
Responsibilities of the Board of Directors:

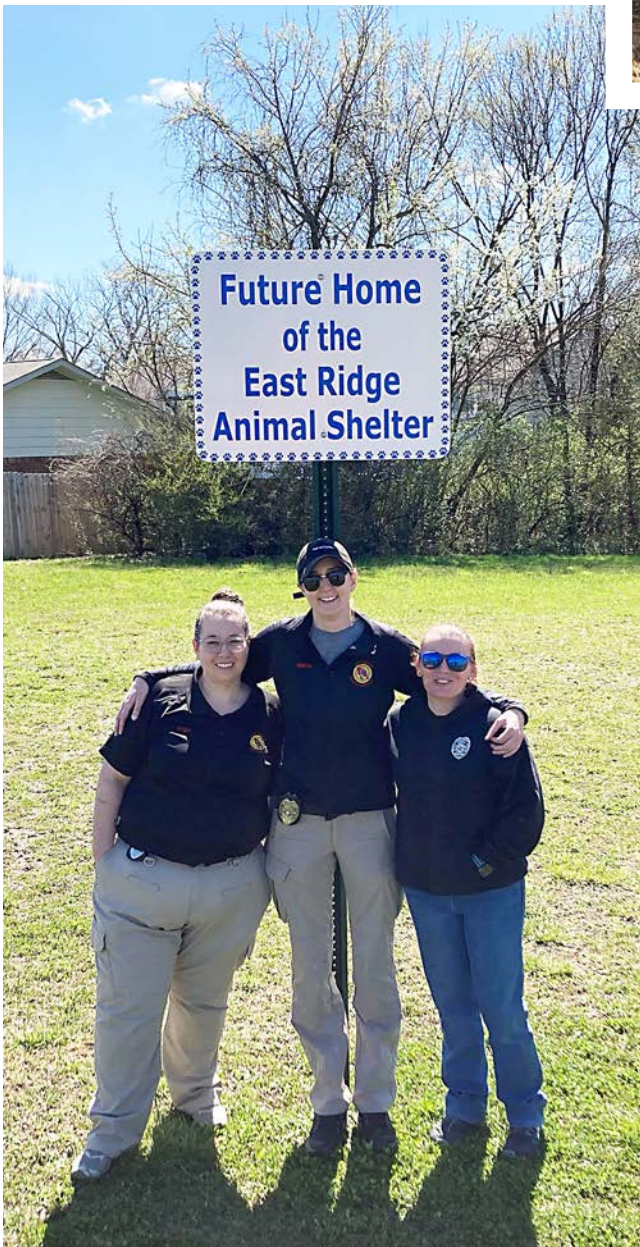
- Policy Administration
- Finance – Budgeting
- NACA Staffing and Personnel
- Public/Community Relations
- Evaluation

In addition to the reasons listed above, there are many more reasons to consider joining the Board! Developing leadership abilities, refining decision-making skills, enhancing your ability to influence others, learning the art of displeasing, and leaving a legacy, etc. We hope you will consider running in the 2022 NACA Board of Directors Election! For more information please visit www.nacanet.org/elections or email naca@nacanet.org. ❖

You Are Appreciated!

The second full week of April gives us a focused time to acknowledge the brave, fearless, and tireless animal control officers across the country! NACA recognizes the sacrifice ACOs make to ensure the safety of the animals and communities where they serve. Thank you to everyone for submitting photos and shout-outs this year! Here are a few we would like to share!





Animal Control and Community Relations

By Jacob Lawson

Working in the community – it's what we do as animal control officers whether you live in a rural or suburban area. There are times when the people of our communities love us and times when they don't want us around at all depending on the issue or situation at hand like any other public service.

You see it all the time; fire and police departments going out and doing public education within the community to show what they do, including demonstrations, exercises with the public, and hands-on learning to allow the public to get a basic understanding of their jobs.

What about animal control? People see us as the "bad people" a lot of times because of what they see on television from movies and TV shows even though we're here to help our communities in certain times of need whether that be a basic call or a large-scale incident like a natural disaster.

I hear it all the time when I'm out on the road: "You kill to kill", "Oh no, dog catcher", or "Please don't take my dog," like we are a bad group of people. Our communities need to know we're here to help, not just randomly take and kill animals.

Recently Sergeant Black and I went to a community event called Safety Night in Villa Hills, Kentucky. At first, when people saw us with our animal control truck and tools they seemed to hesitate because occasionally we are out in the city for various calls and situations.

However, when people came up to our table and we explained our job and what we do within Animal Services, they got a basic understanding of what we do, and the questions began flowing such as: Are you a no kill shelter? (Yes, our live release rate is 94 percent. Our only reason for euthanasia is the animals' wellbeing.) Do you always



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take animals straight to the shelter? (No, we strive to find the families of the found pet using a microchip scanner and any tags that may be on the animal's collar. Also, all animals that come into the shelter go on our website.)

While there were times at this event that some people were very pro-euthanasia due to the amount of community cats in our jurisdiction, others were very understanding and thanked us for trying our best to reunite families with their pets and trying our best to not have to euthanize animals.

I think if people were to understand what our job entails, people would understand the stress and overall exhaustion that we endure.

I believe that animal control departments need to do more public education and work more with the public for things such as rabies clinics, hands-on learning, and public events to show what the job actually involves on a daily basis from small calls such as barking dog complaints to dangerous calls such as vicious animal attack in progress.

While community members may be hesitant about the idea of animal control or shelters explaining the jobs we do, it may give some community members more of a

reason to try and adopt shelter animals as well. Showing attendees how many animals we take care of as well as the overall cleaning and intake procedures could allow for more awareness not just for animal control but animal shelters.

As animal control agencies, we should all strive for a strong sense of teamwork. Increasing our willingness to work within our communities, using public education to assist with ordinance and statute development, and participating in public events will show that we are here to help.

Jacob Lawson is an animal control officer for Kenton County Animal Services in Covington, Kentucky. He has been an animal control officer since November of 2020. He has a background in public service as a volunteer firefighter since 2017 with three departments.

Jacob has always had a love for animals and wanting to help the public at the same time. Having grown up around police and fire personnel, this profession has opened a new range of opportunities for him and allowed him to do what he thinks is the best of both worlds working and helping animals while assisting with public safety at the same time. Jacob can be reached at jacob.lawson@kentoncounty.org. ❖

Best Friends-endorsed programs

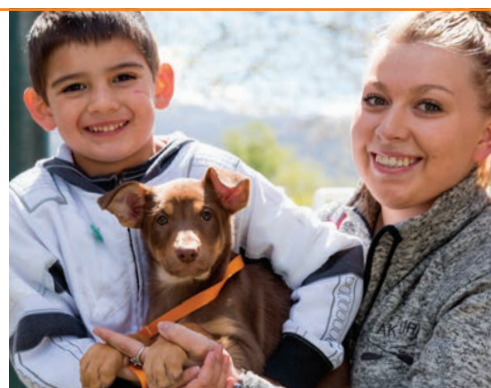
Best Friends Animal Society endorses collaborative and robust programs that will help you to save more lives, reduce the number of pets entering your shelter and build better relationships with the people in your community.

Those programs include but are not limited to:



- Return-to-home programs
- Community cat programs
- Community-based field services
- Strategic intake services
- Open adoption services

Scan the QR code or visit network.bestfriends.org to learn more about how to implement these lifesaving programs in your community.



And the NACA Award Goes To...

Are you ready for the 2022 NACA Annual Awards?

Do you know someone who deserves recognition for the work they do in the animal care and control field? The 2022 NACA Annual Awards are right around the corner!

The National Animal Care & Control Association understands that animal care and control work is physically as well as emotionally demanding and requires individuals of the strongest character.

NACA has been recognizing individuals, agencies, organizations, and state associations for more than 25 years on the national level for their service within the animal care and control field.

Those working in animal care and control know exactly how much sacrifice and dedication it takes to truly excel in this field. Show how much you appreciate the dedication of your fellow officers, kennel personnel, office staff, volunteers, state associations, veterinarians, and industry partners, by taking the time to nominate them this year for one of the 2022 NACA Awards!

2022 Awards Schedule

- August 11, 2022 – Publicly Announce at the NACA Board Meeting
- August 12, 2022 – Nominations open
Nominations will be open for 30 days!
- September 9, 2022 – Nominations close
- October 10, 2022 – Award winners publicly announced

The Bill Lehman Memorial Award

This award is given to an individual not directly employed in the animal care and control field, but who has shown an exceptional awareness of animal care and control-related matters which merits distinction. The recipient will be recognized as a “friend” of animal care and control, for contributions and outstanding action that has helped further the positive image of animal care and control professionals through local, state, or national animal control associations.

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The Diane Lane Memorial Award

This award is for outstanding volunteer service. The nominee selected to win this award is not directly employed in the animal care and control field but serves in a volunteer capacity within the animal care and control field or other animal welfare-related activities. He or she will have demonstrated exceptional dedication or performed outstanding work far beyond the volunteer position's requirements. To nominate someone for this award, you must work with or have direct first-hand knowledge of the nominee. Support or services provided by the nominee shall have directly benefited your agency or organization.

The Animal Care and Control Employee of the Year Award – 3 Awards:

- (Individual NACA Membership Required)
- Animal Control Officer of the Year
- Humane Law Enforcement Officer of the Year
- Animal Care/Shelter Professional of the Year

These awards are given to individuals who have been directly involved in the animal care and control profession for a minimum of five years and are current individual NACA members. Recipients may be nominated for a single outstanding achievement in animal one of the three specific groups, or long-term exceptional performance in the animal care and control field.

The Outstanding State Association Award

This award recognizes the state animal control association that best promotes and exemplifies professionalism in the animal care and control field. Factors considered in granting this award include the number of active members, increases in new members, improved quality of animal care and control programs within their state, active sponsors of seminars and training for members, and engagement in NACA-sponsored training and events. The recipient of this award must be a current NACA Affiliated State Association.

The Outstanding Animal Care and Control Agency Award

This award is given to a current Agency Member of NACA. This award's selection criterion includes effective training programs for personnel, outstanding/innovative public education programs, active community involvement, and average officer response time to calls for assistance. ❖





NATIONAL ANIMAL
CARE & CONTROL ASSOCIATION

The National Animal Care & Control Association
is committed to setting the standard of professionalism in animal
welfare and public safety through training, networking, and advocacy.

ANNUAL SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES 2022

Sponsorship Level	Benefit
NACA Awards Sponsor \$1,500 (Limit 1)	Logo will be on all the 2022 NACA Annual Awards publications. Sponsors will be recognized for their contribution to communications related to the marketing of the annual awards. This includes outreach on our association lists to more than 10k animal welfare professionals and multiple email blasts to our membership list of more than 1,000 professionals. Corporate Partner Membership for one year Included.
ACO Academic Allstar Sponsor \$500 (Limit 15)	Logo and recognition of contribution on all promotional materials for one Justice Clearinghouse Webinar. Your contribution will directly support and impact access to training for officers who might not otherwise have access without your generous donation. Recognition at the end of the year in the NACA Newsletter and Winter edition of the NACA Magazine.
NACA Monthly Newsletter Sponsor \$250 (Limit 12)	Logo will be prominently placed, and sponsors will be recognized for their contribution in the monthly newsletter. Social media post dedicated to promoting the newsletter to members and recognizing sponsors. This digital newsletter goes out to our active membership list which has a reach of over nearly 2k!
Disaster Relief Fund (Unlimited)	<p>From forest fires in California to hurricanes in Florida, many times NACA members need short-term assistance to help them get back to their day-to-day life with the basics we may take for granted. The Disaster Relief Fund will assist members and their families who have been impacted by natural disasters or other serious situations.</p> <p>Your tax-deductible contribution will provide direct support to NACA members as they work to rebuild their lives. In times of crisis, it's more important than ever that we stand together. Recognition for all gifts.</p>
Ballistics Vest Fund (Unlimited)	<p>Every day in America, many animal control officers go to work without body armor. More than ever our officers are encountering criminals and mentally ill individuals with greater frequency. No animal control officer should be without the protection they need and deserve. NACA is working with our partner, the Safe Surfin' Foundation to provide top-of-the-line protection our officer desperately needs. Your tax-deductible donation can start saving lives right now! Recognition for all gifts.</p>
Scholarship Fund (Unlimited)	<p>With decreasing or even no training budgets, today's animal control officers are faced with higher hurdles in pursuing training than ever. NACA wants to foster training opportunities for our members in need by offering scholarships to annual conferences and other training opportunities. Recognition for all gifts.</p>
General Donation (Unlimited)	<p>Your tax-deductible gift will help us to achieve our mission in setting the standard of professionalism in animal welfare and public safety through training, networking, and advocacy. The National Animal Care & Control Association can continue its mission because of your support and generosity. By contributing to a campaign listed below, you'll help ensure that our work continues. Online donations are quick and easy using our secure credit card transactions. We welcome donations of all sizes. Recognition for all gifts.</p>

What's Cooking, ACOs?

Animal control is a tough job. Sometimes finding the time to cook is even tougher. “ACO Michele” created a Facebook group in 2017 called “ACO Bites” that quickly grew to over 200 members with an average of 51 posts a month! The group is designed for ACOs and animal care professionals to share their favorite foods with other like-minded professionals! The emphasis is mostly on quick meals that can go from idea to table in under an hour because we all know coming home after a long, hard day and being able to prepare a good meal is important to staying healthy – and keeping one's sanity!

This issue we are proud to feature Spring Bean Salad, submitted by ACO Michele. We hope you will enjoy this! Keep watching this column for more recipes to come!

Spring Bean Salad

Ingredients

1 can each:

- Garbanzo beans
- Cannelini beans
- Red kidney beans
- 1 Pint sliced grape tomatoes
- Green olives (as desired)
- 2 stalks sliced celery with chopped leaves
- Lemon zest and pulp from fresh lemons

Dressing

- Lemon zest and pulp from fresh lemons
- Apple cider vinegar
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper

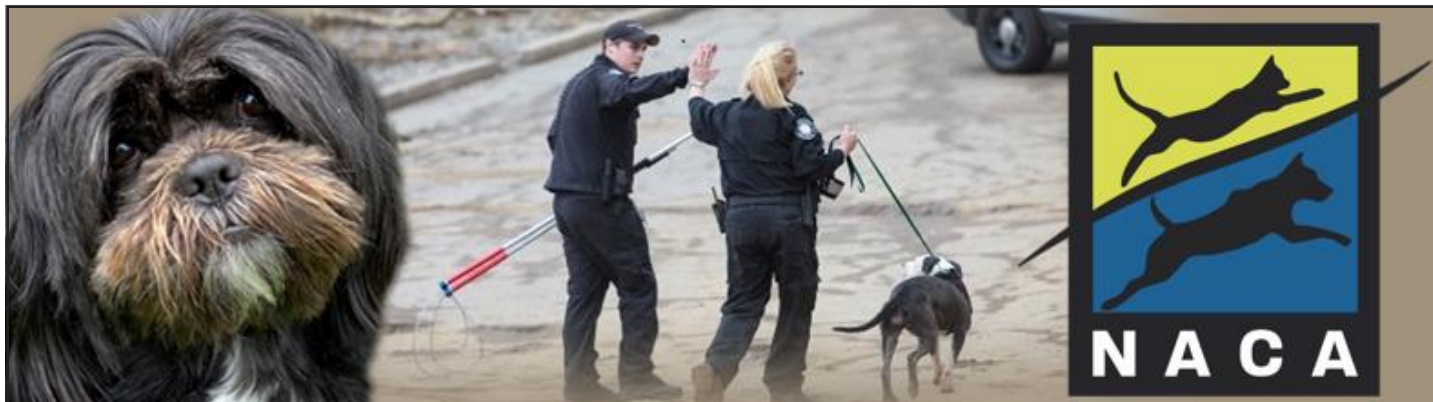
Directions

Mix all ingredients together in large bowl.

To make the dressing, blend olive oil, lemon juice, apple cider vinegar, salt and pepper, and pour on top of salad at least 15 minutes before serving. Adjust amount of dressing ingredients to your taste. A food processor emulsifies the dressing well.

Tip: Make extra dressing if you have leftovers. The salad will soak up the dressing overnight.





Upcoming Training Opportunities

May 2022

- May 3 Justice Clearinghouse Webinar: The Forgotten Partner in Responding to Animal Abuse: The Veterinarian. Reserve your seat today!
- May 6 CalAnimals Legislative Review Webinar
- May 9-13 Training Designed to Prepare You For Basic Technical Animal Rescue In Emergency Response. Code 3, 1456 Skyway Drive, Longmont, Colorado 80504
- May 10 Justice Clearinghouse Webinar: Proactive Responses to the Community's Concerns: Success in the Field for Today's ACOs
- May 10 University of Florida: Animal Abuse Workshop: Identification and Documentation of Crimes Against Animals
- May 12 NACA Monthly Board Meeting
- May 24-26 The 2022 National Alliance of State Animal and Agricultural Emergency Programs (NASAAEP) Summit, Minneapolis, Minnesota

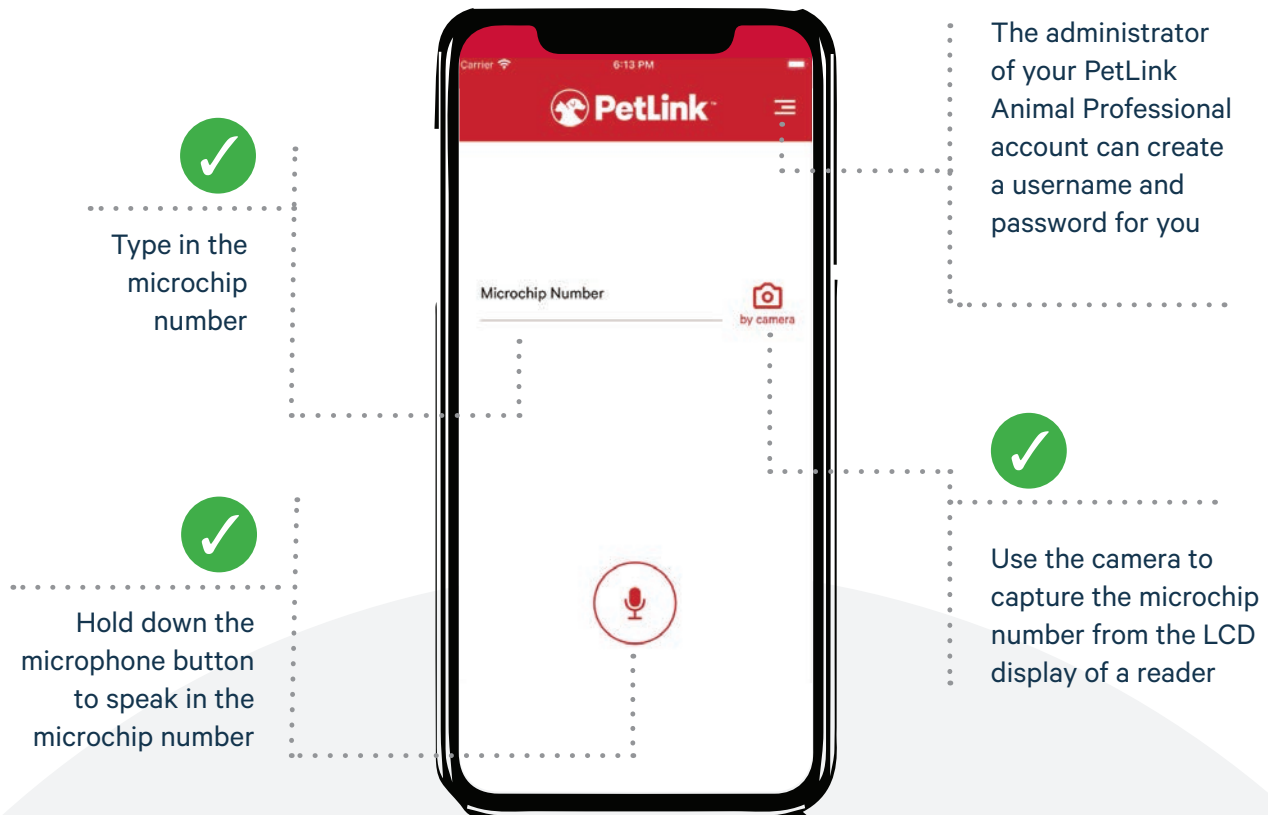
June 2022

- June 2 Justice Clearinghouse Webinar: Tomorrow We Ride! Investigating and Processing Equine Cruelty Cases
- June 5-7 Prairie States Animal Welfare Conference
- June 9 NACA Monthly Board Meeting
- June 15-17 Association for Animal Welfare Advancement Spring Conference, Chicago, Illinois
- June 28 Justice Clearinghouse Webinar: Rescuing the Rescuer
- June 29 Association for Animal Welfare Advancement: Maximizing Employee Retention Webinar



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Use PetLink Pro in the field to search for owner details in:

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PetLink will contact the owner immediately and let them know their pet has been found.





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NACA is a proud recipient of funding from Maddie's Fund®, #ThanksToMaddie.