

No Kill Equation - Compassionate Leadership  
(a “keep them out” and “get them out” element)

The no kill equation is a one-size-fits-all solution to stop the killing of healthy and treatable animals in shelters. It works in Seagoville, Texas (population 15,478) and it works in Manatee County, Florida (population 333,895). Because the equation is made up of a series of programs, it can be molded and shaped to fit the needs of any community. It is called an equation because it is an “all in” way of functioning. You cannot pick and choose which programs sound good. You have to use them all because they work in concert with each other to keep animals from entering the shelter and to get them out quickly if they do end up in the shelter.

Of all the elements of the no kill equation, the most important element is that of compassionate leadership. When Nathan Winograd first put forth the equation in his book, “Redemption: The Myth of Pet Overpopulation and the No Kill Revolution in America,” he used the title “compassionate shelter director” for this element. He explained that the most important element of the equation is the person running the shelter. It is his position that the buck stops with the shelter director because he or she is the person who decides the manner in which the shelter operates. This element of the equation has since been modified to a degree by some experts in our social movement, particularly as it relates to municipal shelters. It is really more appropriate to describe this element as Compassionate Leadership. Most shelters are run by a singular person, but all shelter directors report to others whether they are boards or elected officials. The person running the shelter is the key, but at the end of the day, the manner in which the shelter is operated is decided not just by one person but by a number of people who make choices about how the shelter is operated using tax dollars and donations.