

No Kill Equation. Public Relations/Community Involvement  
(an element which is both “keep them out” and “get them out”)

Increasing adoptions, maximizing donations, recruiting volunteers and partnering with community agencies comes down to one thing: increasing a shelter’s public exposure. And that means consistent marketing and public relations. Public relations and marketing are the foundation of any shelter’s activities and their success. To do all these things well, the shelter must be in the public eye. The way in which no kill communities develop this element of the equation is only limited by creativity.

There are a lot of people don’t give much thought to the municipal animal shelter in their community. Some know it exists but could not tell you where it is located. Some have an idea of what takes place there and perhaps don’t want to think about it. Some are very active in helping the shelter and its staff and they see the wonderful things that happen there, along with the tragic. The first hurdle any shelter has to overcome is making itself visible in the community; making itself relevant. When a shelter is viewed more as a place of hope and of rescue, it goes a long way toward both keeping animals out of the shelter and getting them out of the shelter.

With regard to the animals themselves, this element is all about marketing and all about making it easy to adopt shelter animals. Some people think we have a pet overpopulation problem when we really do not. There are more than enough homes for shelter animals in our community but people tend to get their animals from other sources either because they think shelter animals must be damaged or they think that all shelter animals are given the chance to be adopted. When we market animals consistently and the animals are very visible in the community through off-site adoption events and use of the media, we seek the help of the public in placing animals and we help them understand that homeless animals are just as worthy, loving and loyal as animals from other sources.

When communities transition to no kill and people know that, incredible things can happen. Being a no kill community is a source of immense pride and people are more apt to become part of changing the culture because they know that small acts save lives. And they are proud of what can be accomplished when people work together.