



Core Values

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Transparency:

At Paws Humane Society, we are committed to openness in all our operations. We believe in being transparent with our supporters, partners, and the community about our successes, challenges, and needs. By sharing our journey honestly and openly, we build trust and strengthen our collective impact for animals in need.

Humility:

We recognize the importance of humility in all that we do, valuing every voice and staying grounded in our mission. Honesty is at the heart of this core value. We hold ourselves accountable and are honest about our limitations, allowing us to learn and grow with integrity as we strive to create positive change.

Inclusivity:

Our commitment to inclusivity means creating a safe, welcoming space for all people and pets. We celebrate diversity, encourage different perspectives, and embrace the uniqueness of each person we engage with. Together, we are stronger and more effective in our mission to support animals and their people.

Compassion:

Compassion drives everything we do at Paws Humane Society. From the care we provide to the animals to the empathy we extend to people, compassion shapes our every action. We are dedicated to treating everyone – human and animal – with kindness, understanding, and respect.

Advocacy:

Advocacy is at the core of our mission, fueled by our commitment to outreach. We actively work to raise awareness, inform the community, and provide resources to keep pets in loving homes. By reaching out and advocating for change, we aim to create a no-kill community where every pet is safe, valued, and loved.

Position Statements

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Cat-Testing Dogs in Shelters

At Paws Humane Society, we strongly oppose the practice of cat-testing dogs in shelter environments. While understanding a dog's compatibility with cats is important for adopters, conducting these tests in a shelter setting poses significant risks to both animal welfare and the reliability of the results.

Understanding the Challenges of Cat-Testing

Cat-testing involves exposing a dog to a cat in a controlled environment to assess the dog's reaction and predict future compatibility. However, we believe this method is unreliable and potentially harmful due to the following factors:

Stressful and Unnatural Environment

- **Shelter Stress:** The shelter environment is inherently stressful for animals. Dogs may exhibit heightened reactivity or anxiety that does not accurately reflect their behavior in a calmer, home setting.
- **Cat Stress:** Exposing cats to the testing process can cause undue stress, fear, and potential trauma, impacting their well-being and behavior.

Safety Concerns

- **Risk of Injury:** Despite precautions, unpredictable reactions from either animal may result in harm. A dog could pose a physical threat to the cat, or a defensive cat could react aggressively, creating risks for both animals.

Inconsistent and Unreliable Results

- **Unpredictable Behavior:** A dog's behavior during a brief test does not guarantee how they will behave in a home environment. Factors like the specific cat's temperament, the home setting,

and the dog's comfort level influence interactions, making shelter-based tests unreliable.

Humane and Reliable Alternatives

Rather than subjecting animals to the stress and risks of direct cat-testing, we support the following ethical and effective alternatives:

- **Home-Based Trials:** Encourage adopters to conduct slow, carefully monitored introductions in a home setting, supported by professional guidance if needed.
- **Behavioral Assessments:** Conduct comprehensive evaluations of the dog's general behavior and prey drive without direct exposure to cats, using safe and controlled methods.
- **Background Information:** Collect information from previous homes, foster placements, or other interactions that provide insight into the dog's behavior around cats in natural environments.

At Paws Humane Society, we prioritize the safety and well-being of all animals in our care. By adopting humane and reliable alternatives to cat-testing, we can better serve the needs of dogs, cats, and prospective adopters while ensuring that all animals are treated with the compassion and respect they deserve.

Community Cat Program: Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) and Return-to-Field (RTF)

At Paws Humane Society, we are dedicated to the humane and effective management of community cats through our Community Cat Program, which incorporates Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) and Return-to-Field (RTF) initiatives. These approaches not only stabilize community cat populations but also enhance their quality of life while addressing public and environmental concerns.

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)

Paws Humane Society strongly supports Trap-Neuter-Return as the most humane and scientifically validated method to manage community cat populations. Unlike the ineffective and inhumane practice of trap-and-kill, TNR directly tackles overpopulation by preventing future litters.

TNR Protocol:

1. **Humane Trapping:** Cats are humanely trapped and brought to our facility for care.
2. **Sterilization and Vaccination:** Each cat is spayed or neutered and vaccinated against rabies and distemper to promote their health and minimize disease spread.
3. **Ear-Tipping:** To identify sterilized cats, one ear is painlessly tipped during surgery, serving as a universal marker for TNR participation.
4. **Return to Home:** After recovery, cats are returned to their original outdoor home, where colony caregivers often provide food, shelter, and monitoring.

TNR effectively addresses concerns related to public health, wildlife predation, and community cat population growth, ultimately leading to healthier colonies and fewer complaints.

Return-to-Field (RTF)

Return-to-Field complements TNR by focusing on healthy free-roaming cats who enter shelters. Instead of remaining in overcrowded shelters or being euthanized, these cats are sterilized, vaccinated, and returned to their original outdoor locations.

RTF Protocol:

1. **Assessment:** Healthy free-roaming cats are evaluated for RTF eligibility upon intake.
2. **Sterilization and Vaccination:** Eligible cats undergo sterilization, vaccination, and ear-tipping to prevent reproduction and signify participation in the program.

3. **Return:** Cats are returned to their familiar environment, where they are already acclimated, thriving and cared for by the community.

RTF programs reduce the killing in shelters and are cost-effective, efficient, and widely supported by the public. When combined with targeted TNR efforts, RTF has been scientifically proven to be the most effective method of managing the community cat population.

Our Commitment to Humane Community Cat Management

- **Considerations:** All healthy community cats, regardless of temperament, are eligible for our TNR and RTF programs. Whether a cat is social or fearful, if it appears healthy, it is likely being cared for and should be returned to its outdoor home.
- **Discretion and Flexibility:** Shelter staff have the discretion to determine the most appropriate positive outcome for each cat. Options may include transfer, adoption, or relocation to a working cat program, depending on the cat's needs and circumstances. However, we may elect to humanely euthanize if the animal is not thriving due to a severe, untreatable medical illness.
- **Humane Solutions:** We are committed to providing humane alternatives to outdated practices like catch-and-kill, ensuring that community cats are treated with compassion and respect.

By integrating TNR and RTF into our practices, Paws Humane Society works toward a sustainable and compassionate solution to community cat overpopulation. Together, these programs safeguard the lives of community cats while fostering coexistence and harmony in the neighborhoods they call home.

Declawing of Cats

Declawing, or onychectomy, is an inhumane and unnecessary surgical procedure involving the removal of a cat's claws by amputating the last bone of each toe. Performed primarily for human convenience, declawing causes long-term physical, emotional, and behavioral harm to cats. Paws Humane Society strongly opposes this practice and advocates for its prohibition, except in rare cases where it is medically necessary.

Why Declawing is Inhumane

- **A Painful Amputation:** Declawing is not just the removal of a cat's claws—it involves amputating the last bone of each toe, equivalent to removing the tips

of human fingers at the last joint. This surgery causes significant pain during and after the procedure.

- **Chronic Pain and Mobility Issues:** Declawed cats often experience lasting pain, nerve damage, arthritis, and altered gait. These complications can make normal activities such as walking, jumping, and playing painful and difficult.
- **Behavioral Problems:** Without claws for defense, declawed cats may feel vulnerable and resort to biting. Many also avoid using the litter box due to pain in their paws, leading to increased behavioral challenges.
- **Unnecessary Surgery for Human Convenience:** Declawing is often chosen to prevent scratching of furniture or people. However, humane alternatives such as scratching posts, regular nail trims, nail caps, and behavioral training are effective solutions that do not cause harm.

The Ethical Standard in Animal Care

Declawing does not align with modern standards of humane treatment and ethical animal care. It is a procedure that prioritizes convenience over the well-being of the animal. Many veterinarians and animal welfare organizations oppose declawing, and several countries, U.S. states, and cities have already banned or restricted the practice, acknowledging it as cruel and outdated.

Our Commitment to Education and Advocacy

Paws Humane Society is dedicated to educating the public about the harmful effects of declawing and promoting humane alternatives. Many pet owners are unaware of the pain and complications associated with this procedure. Through education, we aim to reduce the demand for declawing, encourage responsible pet ownership, and celebrate cats' natural behaviors.

Declawing is unnecessary and inhumane. Together, we can work toward a future where this harmful practice is no longer considered an option, ensuring all cats can live healthy, natural lives.

Euthanasia

At Paws Humane Society, we are dedicated to the belief that every animal deserves a chance at a healthy, fulfilling life. Our priority is to provide exceptional care and to find loving homes for all animals that come into our shelter. While we work tirelessly to save every life, there are rare and difficult circumstances where euthanasia may be the most humane option to prevent unnecessary suffering or for the safety of our community.

Euthanasia is considered only as a last resort and is performed under the following circumstances:

- **Irremediable Suffering:** When an animal is suffering from a severe, untreatable medical condition that compromises their quality of life, and all

other options for relief have been exhausted, euthanasia may be considered as the most humane option to alleviate pain and suffering.

- **Public Safety Risks:** In cases where an animal poses a significant and unmanageable danger to the community, and efforts to rehabilitate or manage the behavior have been unsuccessful, euthanasia may be considered to protect the safety of people and other animals.
- **Severe Behavioral Issues:** If an animal displays extreme behavioral issues that make them unadoptable and unmanageable, despite dedicated rehabilitation efforts, euthanasia may be considered as a last resort to ensure the safety and well-being of the animal and others.

Ethical Considerations Surrounding Behavioral Euthanasia

Behavioral euthanasia remains the most challenging and controversial. Unlike medical euthanasia, which is often more readily understood, decisions to euthanize for behavioral reasons can be particularly difficult for the community and shelter staff alike. Behavioral euthanasia—ending an animal's life due to severe behavioral issues that pose a significant risk or lead to unmanageable suffering—is considered only when every other option has been exhausted. This approach is ethically justifiable only as a final, last-resort measure, after comprehensive efforts at rehabilitation and management have failed.

Essential factors:

1. **Prioritizing Public Safety and Well-being:** In cases where an animal exhibits dangerous, unpredictable aggression or behavior that poses a serious risk to humans, other animals, or itself, behavioral euthanasia may be necessary to prevent harm. This is especially true if the behavior is beyond rehabilitation or if there are no safe, effective management options to reduce the risks.
2. **Assessing Quality of Life for the Animal:** Some animals with extreme behavioral challenges experience immense internal distress, anxiety, or fear that leads to a poor quality of life. If these issues are persistent, unmanageable, and cause ongoing suffering, euthanasia may be considered as a compassionate act, relieving the animal from chronic emotional and psychological torment.
3. **Exhausting All Other Options:** Behavioral euthanasia should never be the first or easiest option. Comprehensive efforts must be made to assess the animal's behavior, consult with veterinary behaviorists, trainers, and animal welfare professionals, and explore all potential rehabilitation methods. These may include behavioral therapy, medical treatment, environmental changes, or placement in specialized homes such as sanctuaries.
4. **Individual Assessment and Ethical Decision-Making:** Every case of behavioral euthanasia should be evaluated individually, taking into account the animal's history, potential for rehabilitation, and the risks involved. The decision must be grounded in a thorough understanding of the animal's behavior and an ethical framework that balances the well-being of both the animal and the community.

5. **Transparency and Accountability:** Animal welfare organizations and veterinarians involved in making decisions about behavioral euthanasia must maintain transparency with stakeholders, including the animal's guardians and the community. Decisions should be made with accountability, ensuring that euthanasia is only performed when it is ethically justified and no viable alternatives remain.
6. **Promoting Education and Early Intervention:** To reduce the need for behavioral euthanasia, there must be a strong emphasis on education for pet owners, early intervention for behavioral problems, and responsible pet ownership. Providing resources for training, socialization, and veterinary care can help prevent behavioral issues from escalating to the point where euthanasia becomes necessary.

Our Commitment:

1. We are dedicated to exhausting all possible alternatives before considering euthanasia. This includes providing medical care, behavioral rehabilitation, and working with rescue organizations.
2. Euthanasia decisions are made with the utmost care, compassion, and consideration for the animal's well-being, and are only carried out by licensed and/or trained professionals following humane and ethical standards set forth by the American Veterinary Medical Association.
3. We ensure that every euthanasia decision is made collaboratively, involving experienced veterinarians, behaviorists, and shelter leadership with a focus on what is in the best interest of the animal and community.
4. We are committed to continuous improvement in our shelter practices, regularly reviewing and refining our euthanasia protocols to align with the latest advances in veterinary medicine, animal behavior, and ethical standards.

Means Testing

Means testing is a process used to determine eligibility for benefits or services based on an individual's financial situation, often assessing income and assets. At Paws Humane Society, we are generally against most forms of means testing, particularly when it comes to providing assistance for pet care. While the intent is to direct assistance to those in need, we believe it can create barriers for individuals and families who may still face challenges but do not meet the specific criteria set by financial thresholds.

Programs based on means testing can often become complex and bureaucratic, requiring individuals to disclose sensitive financial information.

We prefer to create an environment where pet owners can focus on their pets' health and well-being, rather than navigating complicated financial eligibility processes.

Instead of focusing on means testing, we believe in empowering pet owners to make responsible choices for their pets. By offering support through education, low-cost options, and resources that are open to all, we can help people provide the best care for their animals without judgment or financial scrutiny.

Open Adoptions

At Paws Humane Society, we believe that every animal deserves a loving home and that the adoption process should be as welcoming and accessible as possible. Guided by the principles of the *Adopters Welcome* approach, our open adoption policy is designed to prioritize the well-being of the animals while fostering strong, positive relationships with potential adopters.

Our Approach:

Welcoming Environment: We strive to create an adoption process that is friendly, open, and non-judgmental. We welcome all individuals and families who are interested in adopting, recognizing that there is no one "perfect" adopter, but rather a diverse range of people who can provide loving homes.

Flexible and Inclusive: We understand that potential adopters come from all walks of life and have varying circumstances. Our adoption process is flexible, aiming to accommodate different lifestyles, living situations, and experiences, rather than imposing rigid criteria.

Education and Support: We view the adoption process as an opportunity to educate and support adopters, providing them with the information and resources they need to make informed decisions. This includes offering guidance on pet care, behavior, and integration into the home, both before and after adoption.

Collaborative Process: Adoptions are a partnership between the shelter and the adopter. We engage in open, honest conversations to understand the needs and expectations of both the animal and the adopter, ensuring the best possible match.

Empowerment: We believe in empowering adopters to make decisions that are right for them and their future pets. Our role is to provide support and advice, while respecting the adopter's ability to know what will work best in their home.

Free or Fee-Waived Adoptions:

At Paws Humane Society, we are committed to finding great homes for dogs and cats, regardless of whether an adoption fee is involved. All free or fee-waived adoptions undergo the same adoption process as fee-based adoptions. Our focus is on matching pets with the right families, ensuring that each animal is placed in a loving, responsible home. We believe that successful adoptions do not require the payment of a fee, and that free adoption promotions can help more animals find homes without compromising their care or well-being.

Why We Support Fee-Waived Adoptions

1. Reducing Shelter Overcrowding and Euthanasia Rates Shelters across the country often face overwhelming animal populations, particularly during peak seasons, such as kitten or puppy season. Fee-waived adoptions provide a crucial solution to alleviating overcrowding by encouraging more adoptions. This strategy directly contributes to lowering euthanasia rates by moving more animals into homes more quickly, freeing up shelter space for others in need.

2. Breaking Down Financial Barriers Adoption fees, while necessary to cover basic shelter costs, can sometimes be a barrier for potential adopters. By waiving fees, we remove a potential obstacle for responsible pet lovers who may not have the funds to cover both adoption fees and initial pet care expenses. A fee-waived event gives these individuals the opportunity to provide a loving home, while still being able to allocate resources for essentials such as veterinary care, food, and supplies.

3. Promoting Adoption Over Purchase Fee-waived adoptions help highlight the value of adopting from shelters rather than purchasing animals from breeders or pet stores. By offering fee-waived events, we encourage individuals to adopt animals in need of homes instead of contributing to the demand for animals from sources that may not prioritize welfare, such as puppy mills or irresponsible breeders.

4. Encouraging Lifelong Companionship Studies show that there is no significant difference in the long-term care and commitment of adopters who adopt through fee-waived events compared to those who pay adoption fees. People who adopt fee-waived animals are equally likely to provide safe, loving homes and ensure the well-being of their new companions.

Addressing Common Concerns

1. Adopter Screening Remains a Priority Fee-waived adoptions do not mean reduced standards for adoption. All prospective adopters are still subject to the same rigorous screening processes, including interviews, home checks, and behavior assessments. The goal of fee-waived adoptions is not to rush placements but to make it easier for the right families to find their perfect pet match.

2. Commitment from Adopters Research and experience from shelters nationwide have demonstrated that fee-waived adoptions do not result in higher return rates. The majority of people who adopt during these events are just as committed to the lifelong care of their pets as those who pay fees. Shelters offering support services, such as post-adoption counseling and veterinary care, can further ensure successful placements.

3. Community Engagement and Awareness Fee-waived adoption events generate excitement and interest in the community, drawing attention to the importance of adopting from shelters and educating the public on responsible pet ownership. These events often lead to an increase in overall shelter visibility and may inspire future adoptions, donations, or volunteers.

Conclusion

At Paws Humane Society, we believe that fee-waived adoptions are a powerful and humane tool for promoting adoption, reducing shelter populations, and saving lives. By removing financial barriers, we make it easier for animals to find the loving homes they deserve, while still ensuring that all adopters are thoroughly screened and prepared for the responsibilities of pet ownership.

Our goal is to give every adoptable animal a chance at a happy, healthy life, and fee-waived adoptions play an important role in achieving that vision.

Overpopulation, Breeding, Elective Procedures, Identification, and Veterinary Standards of Care

At Paws Humane Society, we are committed to addressing the critical issues of pet overpopulation, indiscriminate breeding, and the health and welfare of all animals in our care and community. Our approach is multi-faceted, focusing on prevention, responsible care, and the well-being of every companion animal.

Overpopulation

Companion animals in our community suffer due to the ongoing pet overpopulation crisis. To end this suffering, we must employ a multi-faceted approach that includes preventing the birth of unwanted litters and ensuring that every pet owner has the resources to keep their pets in happy, healthy homes.

Our Protocols:

1. Spay/Neuter before Adoption: We spay all female and neuter all male companion animals before they are adopted from our organization. This step is crucial in preventing overpopulation.
2. Affordable Veterinary Care: We provide affordable veterinary care to the public, ensuring that all pets have access to necessary care, regardless of the pet owner's resources.
3. Pregnancy Termination: When appropriate, we spay pregnant female dogs and cats, terminating the pregnancy. Our priority is the lives of the already born over the lives of the unborn, as our community lacks the resources to care for an additional burden. This procedure is performed following the guidelines set forth by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians, ensuring that the fetuses remain unconscious to prevent suffering.
4. Pediatric Spay/Neuter: We perform pediatric spay/neuter when appropriate, following the same guidelines to ensure the best outcomes for young animals.

Breeding

Paws believes that indiscriminate breeding is a leading contributor to the overpopulation crisis. We are fundamentally opposed to any breeding that compromises the health and welfare of the pet or their offspring. "Responsible" breeding may be considered in certain situations, defined as breeding that prioritizes the health of the animals and the betterment of the breed. Animals with detrimental genetic traits should never be bred, and proper testing should be conducted before breeding is considered.

Elective Procedures

Paws is opposed to elective surgical or cosmetic procedures that do not benefit the animal. These procedures place animals at unnecessary risk of anesthetic and surgical complications and can be detrimental to their health.

Examples of Disapproved Procedures:

- Tail Docking: Unless medically indicated and performed by a licensed veterinarian to improve the animal's welfare.
- Ear Cropping
- Cosmetic Piercing and Tattooing: Tattooing is only permitted for identifying reproductive status.

- Debarking
- Declawing: Considered only in rare cases where all alternatives have been exhausted, and euthanasia is the only other option. Our veterinarians do not perform this procedure at our facility.

Identification

Paws supports and provides the following methods of animal identification to ensure they can be returned to their owners if lost:

- ID Tags and Collars: A visible method of identification indicating that the animal is under someone's care. It can assist in returning lost animals but is not ideal due to the possibility of the collar being lost or removed, or the information on the tag not being updated.
- Microchips: A permanent method of identification using ISO-compatible microchips, which, when kept updated, is the best way to reunite lost pets with their owners.
- Ear Tip: The surgical removal of the tip of the left ear of community cats indicates that the cat has been spayed/neutered and vaccinated, signaling that the cat is likely under someone's care in the community.

Veterinary Standards of Care

Paws is committed to providing competent, affordable veterinary care to both publicly owned animals and shelter animals in our community. We believe that no animal should receive substandard care due to a lack of resources. Our veterinary staff follows evidence-based protocols set forth by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Animal Hospital Association, and the ASPCA Spay/Neuter Alliance. These protocols have provided proven results for millions of companion animals.

Our Commitments

- We balance the needs of the animal with the resources of the owners, ensuring that all animals and owners are treated humanely, with compassion and respect.
- Owners are provided with a spectrum of care options, and barriers to care are minimized.
- We strive to prevent disease and suffering while minimizing fear and anxiety in all animals, regardless of ownership status or owner resources.
- Our veterinary team is dedicated to continuous improvement through education and training, staying up to date on industry standards to provide the best possible care.

Pediatric Spays and Neuters in Overpopulated Areas

At Paws Humane Society we strongly advocate for the use of pediatric spaying and neutering as a vital strategy in combating the overpopulation crisis in animal shelters. Performing spay and neuter surgeries on puppies and kittens as young as 8 weeks old is a safe, effective, and humane approach to preventing unwanted litters, reducing shelter overcrowding, and ultimately saving lives.

The Importance of Pediatric Spay and Neuter

1. Addressing the Overpopulation Crisis Shelters in overpopulated areas face the daunting challenge of managing an overwhelming number of animals, many of which come from unplanned or accidental litters. Pediatric spay and neuter surgeries are a proactive solution, preventing animals from reproducing before they reach sexual maturity, thus reducing the influx of unwanted animals into shelters.

2. Preventing Early Reproduction Dogs and cats can begin reproducing as early as 4-6 months of age, leading to rapid population growth in areas where animals are not sterilized in time. By performing pediatric spay and neuter surgeries, we can ensure that animals are sterilized before they have the opportunity to reproduce, effectively curbing the cycle of overpopulation.

3. Easing the Burden on Shelters Overcrowded shelters often struggle with limited resources, space, and staffing, leading to high euthanasia rates and reduced quality of life for animals in their care. Pediatric spaying and neutering directly helps alleviate these pressures by preventing future intakes, allowing shelters to better allocate resources to the animals already in their care.

Benefits of Pediatric Spay and Neuter

1. Safe and Effective Procedure Pediatric spay and neuter surgeries have been proven to be safe for healthy puppies and kittens as young as 8 weeks old and weighing at least 2 pounds. These procedures are performed by trained veterinarians who use specialized techniques to ensure minimal recovery time and reduced risk of complications. Younger animals typically recover more quickly and with less pain than their older counterparts.

2. Long-Term Health Benefits Early spaying and neutering provides long-term health benefits for animals, including:

- **Reduced Risk of Cancer:** Spaying females before their first heat cycle significantly reduces the risk of mammary tumors, while neutering males eliminates the risk of testicular cancer.
- **Improved Behavior:** Early sterilization can help reduce unwanted behaviors such as marking, aggression, and roaming, making animals more adoptable and easier to live with.
- **Increased Lifespan:** Studies have shown that spayed and neutered animals tend to live longer, healthier lives than their unaltered counterparts.

3. Reducing Barriers to Adoption Pediatric spay and neuter programs can make a significant impact on adoption rates. By ensuring that puppies and kittens are sterilized before adoption, shelters and rescues prevent adopters from facing the added cost and responsibility of scheduling these surgeries later. This increases the likelihood that animals will be adopted quickly, freeing up shelter space for others in need.

Addressing Common Concerns

1. Safety and Health Decades of research and experience have demonstrated that pediatric spaying and neutering is a safe procedure with minimal risks. In fact, younger animals tend to heal faster and experience fewer complications than older animals. Shelter veterinarians and clinics performing these procedures follow strict protocols to ensure the well-being of every animal.

2. Humane and Ethical Practice Performing pediatric spay and neuter surgeries is not only humane but also ethical, as it prevents the suffering of future generations of animals who may otherwise be born into overpopulated shelters or end up homeless. By preventing unwanted litters before they can occur, we help break the cycle of animal homelessness and reduce euthanasia rates.

We are committed to addressing the root causes of animal overpopulation through effective and humane measures, including pediatric spay and neuter programs. By supporting early sterilization, we can prevent the birth of unwanted animals, reduce the burden on overcrowded shelters, and improve the overall health and well-being of pets in our community.

Pediatric spay and neuter is an essential tool in creating a future where every animal has a chance to live in a loving, forever home. We encourage all shelters, rescues, and communities to embrace this practice as a critical part of their efforts to control the pet overpopulation crisis.

Responsible Pet Ownership

While pet ownership may look different for different families based on their resources, living situations, and lifestyle, the **Five Freedoms** of animal welfare provide a strong framework for responsible pet care. Here's how these freedoms translate into our approach to responsible pet ownership:

1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst

Every pet deserves access to fresh water and a nutritious, balanced diet.

- **Provide appropriate food:** Ensure your pet's diet is suitable for their age, size, and health needs. Always make sure they have access to clean water throughout the day.

2. Freedom from Discomfort

Pets should live in an environment that is comfortable and safe, offering shelter from the elements and enough space to move around freely.

- **Ensure a comfortable living space:** Whether your pet is indoors or outdoors, they should have a safe, clean, and secure place to rest and sleep, with adequate bedding and protection from extreme weather conditions.

3. Freedom from Pain, Injury, or Disease

Pets should be protected from harm and provided with appropriate veterinary care when needed.

- **Access to health care:** Regular veterinary check-ups, vaccinations, and prompt treatment for illness or injury are essential. Preventative care, such as flea and tick prevention, is also crucial to ensuring your pet's well-being.

4. Freedom to Express Normal Behavior

Pets should be able to engage in natural behaviors that contribute to their physical and mental well-being.

- **Provide opportunities for activity:** Pets need regular exercise, mental stimulation, and enrichment. Offer toys, engage in playtime, and create an environment that allows pets to express their instincts, such as scratching posts for cats or daily walks for dogs.

5. Freedom from Fear and Distress

Pets should feel secure in their environment and be free from unnecessary stress or fear.

- **Create a stable environment:** Ensure your pet feels safe and secure by minimizing stressors, maintaining a routine, and addressing any behavioral issues through positive reinforcement training.

Duty to Keep Your Pet from Being a Danger to the Community

Pet owners also have a responsibility to ensure that their pet is not a danger to others in the community.

- **Ensure safety:** Pets, especially those allowed outdoors, should be kept under control at all times. This includes preventing dogs from roaming freely, keeping them on leashes when appropriate, and ensuring both dogs and cats have identification tags or microchips to help reunite them if lost.
- **Prevent nuisance behaviors:** Responsible owners should also address behaviors such as excessive barking, aggressive tendencies, or destructive habits that could disturb neighbors or put others at risk.

By adhering to the Five Freedoms and understanding the importance of being a responsible member of the community, pet owners can ensure that their pets live a life full of comfort, happiness, and well-being, while minimizing risks to others. At Paws Humane Society, we are committed to helping pet owners understand and implement these principles to create a compassionate, supportive environment for every animal.

Tethering Dogs

At Paws Humane Society, we believe every dog deserves a safe, enriching, and humane environment that promotes their physical and emotional well-being. While we strongly oppose the practice of chaining dogs, responsible tethering can serve as a practical and humane alternative in certain situations when done safely.

Understanding the Reality

In an ideal world, all dogs would live indoors as part of the family, with access to secure, fenced yards for exercise and play. Unfortunately, not every pet owner has the resources to provide these ideal conditions. For some, tethering may be the only viable option to keep their dog safely contained and prevent escape.

Punitive measures that ban or heavily restrict tethering often have unintended consequences, such as increasing the number of dogs surrendered to already overburdened shelters. Rather than focusing on punishment, we advocate for education, support, and the promotion of responsible pet ownership to improve the lives of dogs and their families.

The Difference between Chaining and Tethering

Chaining and tethering are often used interchangeably but represent very different practices in terms of animal welfare:

- **Chaining:** This involves securing a dog to a single, fixed point with a heavy chain or tether, severely restricting the dog's movement. Chaining often uses inappropriate equipment, like heavy chains or tight collars, and leaves dogs exposed to extreme weather, unable to avoid hazards, and isolated for prolonged periods. This practice is inhumane and can lead to physical harm, behavioral issues, and psychological distress.
- **Tethering:** Humane tethering involves attaching a dog to a cable or line system that allows for greater mobility, commonly known as a "runner" or "trolley" system. This setup enables the dog to move more freely and access various areas within the tethered range while remaining secure. When used responsibly and for limited periods, tethering can provide a safe alternative to free roaming, preventing risks such as traffic accidents or escape, without the severe restrictions of chaining

Promoting Safe and Responsible Tethering

While chaining is never acceptable, we support safe, temporary tethering practices as a humane alternative to situations that might otherwise put the dog at risk. Responsible tethering includes:

- **Proper Equipment:** Use of a well-fitted, non-restrictive harness or collar and a secure tether that allows the dog to move freely without risk of entanglement.
- **Adequate Shelter and Care:** Providing access to shade, clean water, and shelter from extreme weather conditions.

- **Supervision:** Ensuring that the dog is not left tethered for extended periods and receives daily exercise, socialization, and mental stimulation.

Education Over Punishment

We believe that creating punitive regulations around tethering could lead to more dogs entering shelters, compounding the challenges of overpopulation. Instead, we advocate for:

- **Community Education:** Offering resources and guidance on humane tethering alternatives, such as building outdoor enclosures or using temporary containment systems.
- **Assistance Programs:** Supporting pet owners with materials, fencing solutions, and training to transition dogs to better living conditions.
- **Collaboration with Local Authorities:** Working together to address cases of neglect or abuse while encouraging solutions that prioritize keeping pets in their homes.

At Paws Humane Society, our goal is to create a community where every dog has the opportunity to thrive in a safe and loving environment. While chaining is never an acceptable practice, responsible tethering can provide a humane and practical solution for pet owners with limited resources. Through education and support, we aim to reduce the need for tethering while keeping more pets with their families and out of shelters.

Transport of Animals to Less Populated Areas

At Paws Humane Society, we support the humane and ethical transport of shelter animals to less populated areas where there is a higher demand for adoption. This practice is a vital tool in reducing overcrowding in high-intake

shelters and decreasing euthanasia rates, while giving animals a second chance to find loving, forever homes.

The Need for Animal Transport

In many regions, particularly in densely populated urban areas, animal shelters face significant challenges related to overpopulation. This leads to:

- **Overcrowded Shelters:** Many shelters operate at or above capacity, leading to stressed animals and limited resources for care.
- **High Euthanasia Rates:** Overpopulation in shelters often forces the heartbreaking decision to euthanize healthy, adoptable animals simply due to space constraints.
- **Limited Adoption Opportunities:** In high-intake regions, the number of animals far exceeds the number of potential adopters, leaving many animals with slim chances of finding a home.

Conversely, many less populated areas experience a shortage of adoptable animals, where potential adopters are eager to provide homes but have fewer local opportunities to do so.

Benefits of Transporting Animals to Less Populated Areas

Transporting animals from overcrowded shelters to less populated regions provides numerous benefits, including:

- **Increased Adoption Rates:** By relocating animals to areas with higher demand for pets, we significantly increase their chances of being adopted into caring homes.
- **Reduction in Euthanasia:** By relieving overcrowded shelters of excess animals, we reduce the number of animals euthanized for lack of space.
- **Improved Animal Welfare:** Transported animals often experience less stress in less crowded shelters, where they can receive more individualized attention, better care, and a better chance at socialization.
- **Community Collaboration:** This practice fosters cooperation between regions, connecting communities that are struggling with overpopulation to those that can offer homes.

Commitment to Humane and Ethical Transport

While we strongly support the transport of animals to areas with higher adoption demand, it is imperative that these transports are carried out humanely and responsibly. We advocate for:

- **Safe and Comfortable Travel:** Ensuring that animals are transported in a manner that minimizes stress and adheres to humane standards of care during transit.
- **Health and Behavioral Screening:** Prior to transport, animals should be health-checked, vaccinated, and behaviorally assessed to ensure they are fit for travel and ready for adoption.
- **Partnerships with Reputable Shelters:** Working only with trusted partner shelters that uphold high standards of care and ethical adoption practices.

Our Vision

We envision a world where every adoptable animal has the opportunity to find a loving home. Animal transport is an important strategy in achieving this vision, helping to balance the distribution of animals across regions and creating new opportunities for adoption in underserved areas.

By supporting responsible animal transport, we can make a meaningful impact on reducing shelter overcrowding, lowering euthanasia rates, and providing countless animals the chance to experience the love and companionship they deserve.