

National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week Raises Awareness

Campaign runs Nov. 2-8 to show appreciation for workers, volunteers.

Posted Nov. 3, 2008, 3 a.m. EDT

National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week is intended to recognize the people who care for the homeless cats and dogs in America's 3,500 shelters. The first week of November marks National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week, to recognize the people who care for homeless cats and dogs in the nation's 3,500 animal shelters.

It's estimated that 6-8 million cats and dogs are abandoned each year by owners who give them up, according to Associated Humane Societies. The role of animal shelters is to give these animals a safe haven, provide food, health care and affection until they are placed in a new home.

The shelter campaign, from Nov. 2-8, aims to show appreciation for shelter workers and the programs they implement. Roseann Trezza, executive director of Associated Humane Societies, said it's important for communities to take a closer look at the things accomplished in animal shelters.

"Every day, animals are given a second chance at a good life, thanks to the dedication of the men and women who run and work at our shelters, and the generous donations and volunteer efforts of our supporters," she said in a statement.

As a result of a poor economy, the number of unwanted pets being left at shelters is increasing dramatically, according to Associated Humane Societies, an animal sheltering system in New Jersey. Trezza said there are several ways for people to show their support, including the following ideas: Make a donation to shelter programs. Share your talent by volunteering at a local shelter. Donate canned cat and dog food, blankets and towels, newspapers and treats. Visit a local shelter and take a self-guided tour. Spay and neuter your pets to help manage the pet population. Adopt a pet and spread the word about your local animal shelter.

The Humane Society of the United States launched National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week in 1996, based on an idea from the Capital Humane Society in Lincoln, Neb.