

## Contest Rewards Animal Shelters for Good Service

**Maddie's Fund will award cash prizes to shelters and rescue groups as part of Shelter Pet Project.**

Posted: July 20, 2009, 3 a.m. EDT

Cash prizes will be awarded to animal shelters and rescue groups demonstrating good customer service, says Maddie's Fund. Maddie's Fund will be awarding prizes totaling \$50,000 to Petfinder.com member shelters and rescue groups for good customer service from now through Sept. 18.

The contest can be won in three ways:

**E-mail.** Each week, the Petfinder.com Foundation will randomly e-mail three member rescue groups with questions about an available dog or cat posted on their website. If they get helpful information about that animal within 24 hours, the rescue group will win \$500.

**Phone.** The same process will take place but instead of e-mailing, the foundation will randomly call three shelters. If a person answers the phone and provides helpful information about that animal (or connects the caller to someone who does), the shelter will win \$500.

**In person.** An "adopter" will randomly visit one selected shelter in a different state each week. If the "adopter" reports that the shelter experience was positive, pleasant and helpful, the shelter will win \$2,000.

The contest coincides with The Shelter Pet Project, a national three-year Ad Council campaign sponsored by Maddie's Fund and The Humane Society of the United States in partnership with Petfinder.com. The campaign sets out to encourage people to make shelter and rescue dogs and cats their first choice for adoption.

The Shelter Pet Project can be significantly leveraged if shelters and rescues have good customer service programs in place, according to Maddie's Fund. The first step in good customer service is to capitalize on the public's enthusiasm for adopting by responding right away when initial contact is made, according to Maddie's Fund. The second step, it says, is to make a potential adopter's experience positive.