



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:**

Christie Keith  
media@millioncatchallenge.org  
415-205-4461

**HALF A MILLION SHELTER CATS SAVED SO FAR IN MILLION CAT CHALLENGE**

*UC Davis and University of Florida teamed up with North American shelters and saved 500,000 cats*

Saving the lives of 1 million cats in North American animal shelters over five years may be an audacious goal, but the Million Cat Challenge is halfway there.

Founded in 2014 by Dr. Kate Hurley of the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program and Dr. Julie Levy of the Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program at the University of Florida, the Million Cat Challenge will hold an Internet celebration on Monday, April 11, 2016, to celebrate reaching its 500,000 milestone with the nearly 400 shelters across North America who are taking part.

“From the far north of Alaska to the southernmost cities on the east coast of the United States, this is a social movement we’ve been waiting a long time to see,” said Levy. “The Million Cat Challenge is a map for change,”

Shelters expanding the challenge to include every cat-lover in the community has gotten the Challenge to the half-million milestone more quickly than anyone predicted. “We’ve learned to design better facilities, optimize operations, and market adoptable pets and services more creatively,” said Hurley. “Most importantly, we’ve found new ways to engage the community as our partner in lifesaving.”

Hurley and Levy, both pioneers in the study and practice of shelter medicine, knew that shelters were ready for change. Still, even they were staggered by the groundswell of support that quickly surrounded the Challenge.

Maddie's Fund, a leading animal welfare foundation, took the conversation from a dream to a reality that has already changed the animal sheltering landscape. “The lifesaving work of the Million Cat Challenge and the mind-shift they are creating is extraordinary,” said Amy Zeifang, Maddie's Fund Board Chair and Executive Leadership Team. “Through the efforts of their participants, more than 500,000 lives have been saved so far, with the goal of 1 million – or more! – clearly in sight.”

In celebration of 500,000 feline lives saved, participating shelters, supporters, and animal lovers everywhere are invited to join the Challenge on its Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/MillionCatChallenge](http://www.facebook.com/MillionCatChallenge) on Monday, April 11, at 3 PM Eastern Time. Confetti, a celebratory video, and kittens galore will be part of the festivities as supporters gather to watch the Million Cat counter roll over.

“We’ve reached a tipping point; nobody wants to turn back now,” said Hurley. “Shelters now have strategies that are more humane, more effective, and better serve cats and communities. These strategies really work, and on April 11, we’ll have 500,000 witnesses to prove it.”

### **About the Million Cat Challenge**

*The Million Cat Challenge is a shelter-based campaign to save the lives of one million cats in North America over the next five years. The core strategy of the campaign will focus on five key initiatives that offer every shelter, in every community, practical choices to reduce euthanasia and increase live outcomes for shelter cats. Drs. Levy and Hurley are available for interviews. For more information, visit [www.millioncatchallenge.org](http://www.millioncatchallenge.org).*

### **About Maddie’s Fund**

*Maddie's Fund® is a family foundation founded in 1994 by Workday co-founder Dave Duffield and his wife, Cheryl, who have endowed the Foundation with more than \$300 million. Since then, they have awarded more than \$172 million in grants toward increased community lifesaving, shelter medicine education, and pet adoptions across the U.S. The Duffields named Maddie's Fund after their Miniature Schnauzer, Maddie, who always made them laugh and comforted them during stressful business times when Dave was launching a startup software company. Maddie was with Dave and Cheryl from 1987-1997 and continues to inspire them today. For more information, visit [www.maddiesfund.org](http://www.maddiesfund.org).*

-###-