



**MILLION CAT
CHALLENGE**



**ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2016-2017**

Saving Shelter Cats' Lives Becomes the 'New Normal'

What does transformative change really look like? Apparently, very much like a cat!

When the Million Cat Challenge was first conceived, the idea of saving 1 million more cats' lives seemed almost impossibly bold. What seemed even bolder, nearly unimaginable, was the idea that sheltering itself could be forever changed for cats.

Today, Million Cat Challenge shelters are on the brink of having saved one million cats' lives. (We're pausing just to let that sink in.) And that second bold idea no longer seems so unimaginable; in many places, the Challenge itself has come to be seen as an integral part of the sheltering landscape. The Challenge or its initiatives are featured at almost every animal welfare conference, both national and local. Even shelters that aren't participating in it yet have heard of it. It's the subject of discussions online and in the halls outside conference sessions.

While the Million Cat Challenge didn't invent the initiatives that are at the core of its program, it articulated and assembled them in such a way that they formed a roadmap for lifesaving in shelters. Even those once seen as extremely controversial, such as Managed Admission or Return to Field, are gaining widespread acceptance.

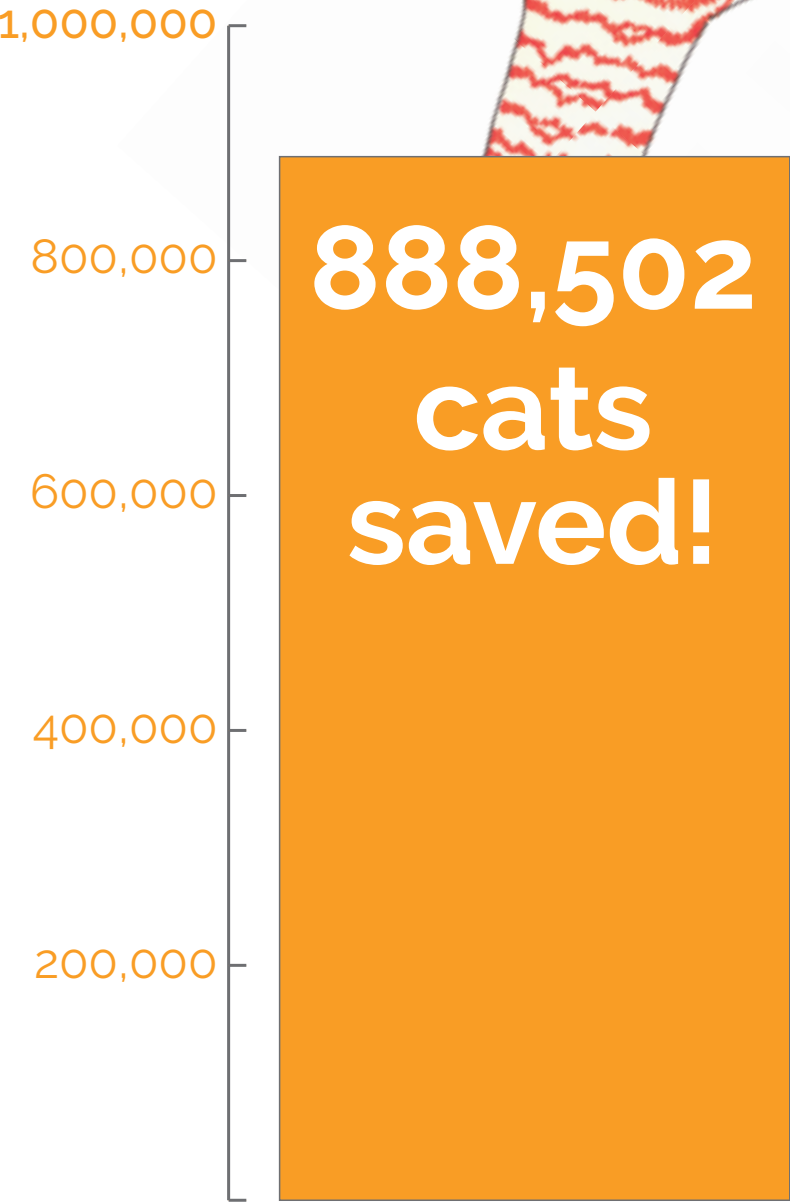
That doesn't mean they're standard practice in all shelters. We still have work to do. But it does mean that the permanent institutionalization of feline lifesaving is truly in our paws. And all of us at the Million Cat Challenge are overjoyed to be part of that sea change, and grateful to the little dog who made it possible: #ThanksToMaddie.

The permanent institutionalization of feline lifesaving in animal shelters is the real goal of the Million Cat Challenge.

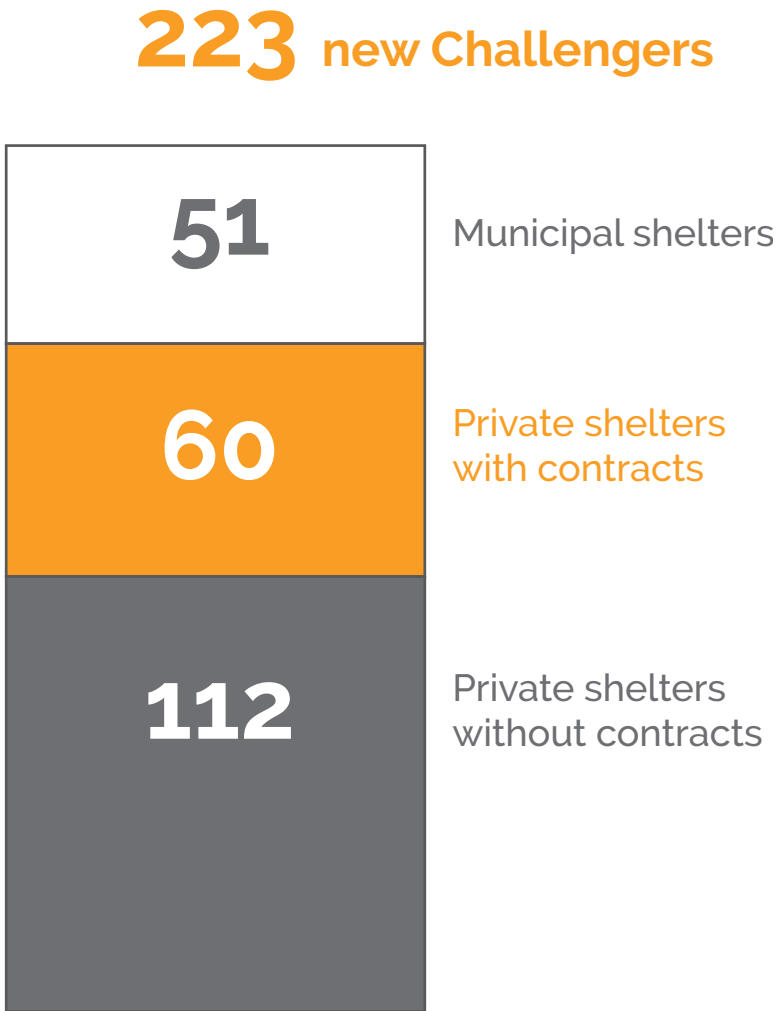


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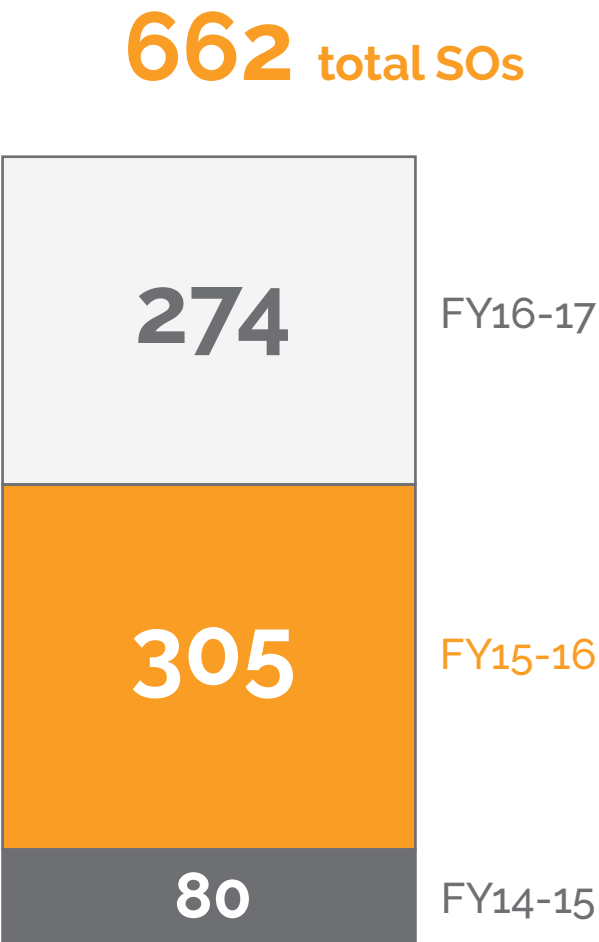
The dramatic arc of lifesaving achieved by Challenge shelters has probably been the single greatest motivator for them to work even harder to save even more cats.



Total Feline Lives Saved as of 6/30/17



New Challengers, FY2016-17



Supporting Organizations Growth

“ Kate and Julie started something amazing, and their enthusiasm, commitment, and brilliance caught on like wildfire. Cats were the ‘underdog’ for too long, and the Million Cat Challenge has helped change that. Things are finally turning around for cats, and it’s happening quickly! ”

- Karina King, Dakin Humane Society



750,000 cats' lives saved!

The Million Cat Challenge hit the 750,000 lives saved mark more than a year ahead of schedule, thanks in no small part to the huge boost given to the Challenge by the Maddie's Fund Incentive Grants offered at the end of the previous fiscal year.

Just under 570 shelters joined during the grant period and they, along with the original Challengers and the 223 who joined in FY 2016-17, made it possible to hit the three-quarter of a million lives saved milestone less than a year after celebrating saving 500,000 cats.

These celebrations allow the Challenge to put the spotlight on the achievements of our participating shelters, as well as recognize the support provided by Maddie's Fund and the inspiration of Maddie. We often say no dog has ever saved so many cats as she has, and that's definitely something worth celebrating!

New Partnership with ASPCA

Beginning with an in-depth meeting at SAWA in November of 2016 and officially launching in April, the ASPCA has joined with Maddie's Fund as a partner in the Challenge.

While the partnership came online only at the very end of the period covered by this report, early planning indicated it will enable the Challenge to more effectively engage participating organizations and identify areas where lifesaving and welfare can be improved. Most importantly, it will fill a critical staffing and infrastructure gap that made achieving the kind of engagement and forward momentum that the Challenge requires, well... challenging.

Additionally, collaboration is a key component of lifesaving success, and how better to model it than bringing two of the nation's leading animal welfare organizations together to save cats? This serves to elevate the public profile of the Challenge, increases credibility within the sheltering community, and creates synergies for participating shelters in terms of assets, resources, and operations.



Engagement and Outreach

If the previous year was about recruitment, the current year was about engagement. At every turn, we worked to optimize our connections with Challenge shelters, and theirs with each other. We aggressively utilized the channels available to us to provide participating shelters with resources, education, information, and support.

Primary among those were social media, direct email, our YahooGroup, conferences, and webinars.

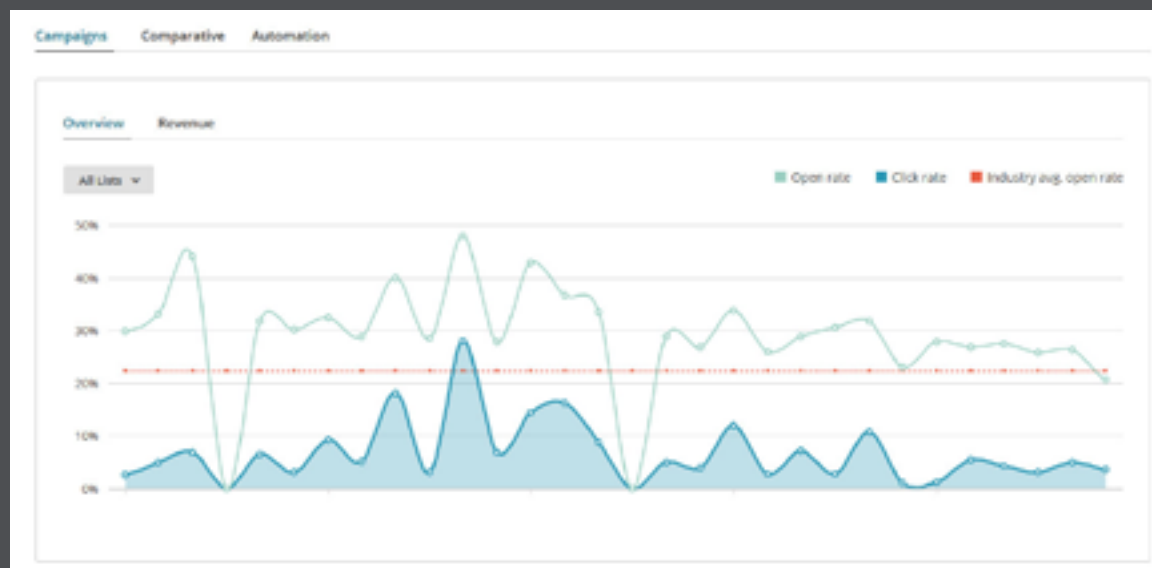
Social media. Facebook continues to be the top-performing public communications channel for the Million Cat Challenge, and the main driver of website traffic:

Facebook: 475,185
Twitter: 50,000
Website: 38,841



Direct email. For Challenger communications, the weekly newsletter, which surfaces blog posts, content from partners including Maddie's Fund, news stories featuring Challengers, webinar promos, and other resources is the top-performing channel to reach Challengers.

Total subscribers: 3,325
Average open rate: 33.6 percent



Discussion. The YahooGroup has continued to be a laboratory for collaboration and peer support, with blog posts and webinar topics frequently arising from its vibrant discussions. While limitations of the YahooGroup platform are an obstacle to higher levels of engagement, it represents a core community that can be built on when a more adaptable platform is adopted in the current year.

Conferences. The Million Cat Challenge has presented sessions and/or had a booth presence at the following conferences during FY 2016-7:

Best Friends, Salt Lake City, Utah
SAWA, Portland, Ore.
HSUS Expo, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, Ottawa, Ontario
Michigan "Getting to the Goal" No Kill Conference, Flint, Mich.
Great Lakes Animal Welfare Conference, Battle Creek, Mich.
Business of Saving Lives Conference, Walnut Creek, Calif.
Pacific Veterinary Conference, Sacramento, Calif.
Florida Animal Control Association Educational Conference, Orlando, FL

This mailing out-performs nonprofit industry standards both on average and every week. (Note that the two that show a zero open-rate were text-only mailings, which cannot be tracked.)

Boards, Workgroups, etc.:

1. ACCD advisory board
2. Fear Free advisory board
3. Shelter Animals Count board
4. Operation Catnip board
5. ASV Task Force to Advance Spay-Neuter
6. Fix Before Five Task Force
7. Maddie's Fund Community Cats Research Workgroup
8. No Kill 2025 National Steering Committee
9. Alachua County Animal Welfare Summit participant
10. CATalyst Council Standard Shelter Pet Health Record Task Force

Presentations. Online and on-site learning and consultations:

1. One Shelter's Journey to Save More Feline Lives webinar
2. How Your Animal Shelter Can Save Cats by Helping People webinar
3. House Fewer Cats, Save More Lives, Make Everyone Happy! webinar
4. Small Changes, Big Results for Cats webinar
5. Plexus Institute webinar
6. University of the Pacific shelter operations course
7. Community Cats podcast
8. Broward Humane Society, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., presentation
9. Comprehensive Consultation: St. Lucie County, with Target Zero
10. Taylor County Animal Control consultation: cat housing, husbandry, enrichment, and population management
11. Jacksonville Shelter and Clinic Executives consultation: TNR Strategies
12. Osceola Animal Services (informal on-site visit)
13. Miami-Dade Animal Services consultation
14. City of Los Angeles Animal Services consultation
15. Edmonton Humane consultation
16. Edmonton Animal Services consultation
17. Calgary Humane consultation
18. Arizona Humane consultation
19. Capital Area Humane consultation
20. Cleveland APL consultation
21. City of Stockton Animal Services consultation
22. Tulare County multi-stakeholder consultation
23. Mendocino County Animal Services consultation



Media Coverage

Shelters embrace challenge to save more cats from euthanasia

Orlando Sentinel, Jan. 7, 2017

Million Cat Challenge founder wins 'Maddie Hero Award'

Davis Enterprise, May 6, 2017

3 years into Million Cat Challenge, Vets, Shelters Save 750000 cats

Veterinary Practice News, March 16, 2017

Edmonton Humane Society to start pilot project in hopes of increasing cat adoption rate

Edmonton Examiner, July 6, 2016

Shelter cats in Calgary & Edmonton to benefit from quality-of-life program

Global News Canada, July 5, 2016

Maddie's Fund Surprises Animal Welfare Superheroes with \$150K in Grant Awards

GlobalNewswire, April 26, 2017

Trap, neuter, release programs offer humane solution to feral cat overpopulation

Florida Weekly, Aug. 3, 2016

Profile of Ana Zorrilla

New Orleans Magazine, Nov. 1, 2016

2 UF vets win Maddie's Fund grants for shelter work

Gainesville Sun, May 9, 2017

Partners produce Great Lakes Animal Welfare Conference

Grand Rapids Business Journal, Oct. 20, 2016



“ Everyone we have interacted with through the Million Cat Challenge has shared our commitment to saving cats. It's like we're a huge team, spread across the country, helping each other over hurdles, coming up with new and better ways to do things, and asking and answering tough questions, all with the same goal. It's incredibly powerful. ”

—Karen Green, Portland Cat Adoption Team

What Comes Next?

The Million Cat Challenge shelters should cross the 1 million lives saved milestone late this calendar year. What happens next? How can we save even more cats? And most importantly, how can we create lasting transformative change in every shelter, large or small, urban or rural, wealthy or resource-limited, for every year to come?

While the answers to these questions are emerging outside the scope of the past fiscal year, the groundwork for the next two years of the Challenge began to be laid in Portland in late 2016, and continued to be part of ongoing discussions both internally and with Maddie's Fund and the ASPCA.

“ The Million Cat Challenge is not just phenomenal for the numerical outcomes they have helped shelters across the country achieve, but for changing the way the industry sees and values cats. As passionate cat advocates, it has been an uplifting experience to be a part of this larger movement -- where respect and protection of our feline friends no longer takes a back seat and we no longer feel like we are pushing that boulder up the mountain alone. ”

–Tanya Hilgendorf, Humane Society of the Huron Valley

