



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**MILLION CAT CHALLENGE SAVES ONE MILLION CATS ONE YEAR EARLY**  
*North American animal shelters unite to achieve historic outcome*

Davis, Calif. – The Million Cat Challenge, a campaign to save the lives of one million shelter cats in North America within five years, announced last week that participating shelters have met and exceeded that goal a full year early.

More than 1,000 North American animal shelters came together to save a total of 1,148,129 cats as of Dec. 31, 2017.

“It would be hard to overstate how much this milestone means to cats and shelters in North America,” said Challenge co-founder Dr. Kate Hurley of the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program.

“We have complete baseline data for 1,075 animal shelters, and when you compare the year prior to the beginning of the Challenge to 2017 numbers, we saw the live release rate rise from 53 percent to 81 percent.”

Feline euthanasia went down by 63 percent, which broken down means that 24 hours a day, 365 days a year during those four years, there were:

- 1,311 fewer cats being euthanized per day
- 55 fewer cats being euthanized per hour

The Million Cat Challenge launched in 2014 with funding from [Maddie's Fund](#), a national foundation established by Dave and Cheryl Duffield to revolutionize the status and well-being of companion animals.

Challenge co-founder Dr. Julie Levy of the Maddie's® Shelter Medicine Program at the University of Florida said, “That’s not just a million cats, but a million *more* cats saved than ever before, thanks to Maddie. What started as a seemingly audacious goal has snowballed into a movement that can change the face of animal sheltering forever.”

“The realization of this milestone is a watershed moment for North America’s cats signaling a sea change for our communities – and the shelters within them – that cats are an important part of our society,” said Mary Ippoliti-Smith, Maddie’s Fund Executive Leadership Team.

“We just proved the impossible, possible,” said Dr. Hurley. “Possible because shelters and communities of all types and sizes across North America worked together to make it happen.”

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

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

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