



**MILLION CAT
CHALLENGE**

Impact Report

FY 2020/21



Maddie's Fund

#ThanksToMaddie in Times of Change

The pandemic pushed many shelters into operating in new ways. This unleashed a lot of innovation, and also triggered the realization that some of these new ways were improvements over the old even as pandemic restrictions eased. This became an opportunity for the progressive sheltering community to provide support for making those new approaches permanent, and transform how we think about and operate animal shelters.

This new territory wasn't all that new for Million Cat Challenge shelters, as many of the innovations shelters began adopting had long been part of its focus on community-based support systems and keeping cats out of shelters except as a last resort. But like everyone else in sheltering, we were informed and inspired by the work being done by shelters in the trenches, and incorporated those lessons into our approach.

We re-envisioned our Bootcamp program, revised our "Five Key Initiatives" into "**The Four Rights**," and kept our eyes on the goal of creating communities where both animals and their humans are valued and safe.

This powerful transformation would not have been possible without the inspiration of the spirit of Maddie, and the generosity of the Foundation started in her name. #ThanksToMaddie



“ You taught us a lot. You just made everything better and staff doesn't want to go backward now. They are still amazed at how different, how much better our shelter is. **”**

Valerie Robinson, Terrebonne Parish Animal Shelter

“ Thank you so much for being an extraordinary advocate for countless animals in our shelter systems and resourceful educator for organizations to consult. Your expertise, advice and guidance have such a great impact on communities as a whole. **”**

Dr. Alice Bourgeon, San Diego Humane Society, Mentee

The Four Rights

We want to ensure that every animal in need receives

- 1 the **Right Care** in
- 2 the **Right Place** at
- 3 the **Right Time** to
- 4 the **Right Outcome**.

Highlights of a Year of Challenge

Having left its initial 1 million lives saved goal in the dust years before, the Million Cat Challenge counter rolled over 3,323,649 cats saved at the end of FY2020/21. This never would have happened without the incredible dedication and hard work of **the best darn shelters in the world!**

3,323,649

It also wouldn't have happened without our amazing team. One Million Cat MVP is Cameron Moore, who was also called out by Human Animal Support Services as a "HASS Hero" for always being "very knowledgeable and focused on supporting underfunded shelters and her peers." We couldn't agree more! Congratulations, Cameron!

Top right: Cameron Moore holds one of the 1,059 cats her two-person Lucky Cat Rescue pulled from rural Florida shelters and adopted out in 2020. For the full story, listen to Episode 1 of the Bright Spots podcast. Bottom right: Cameron's HASS Hero certificate of recognition.

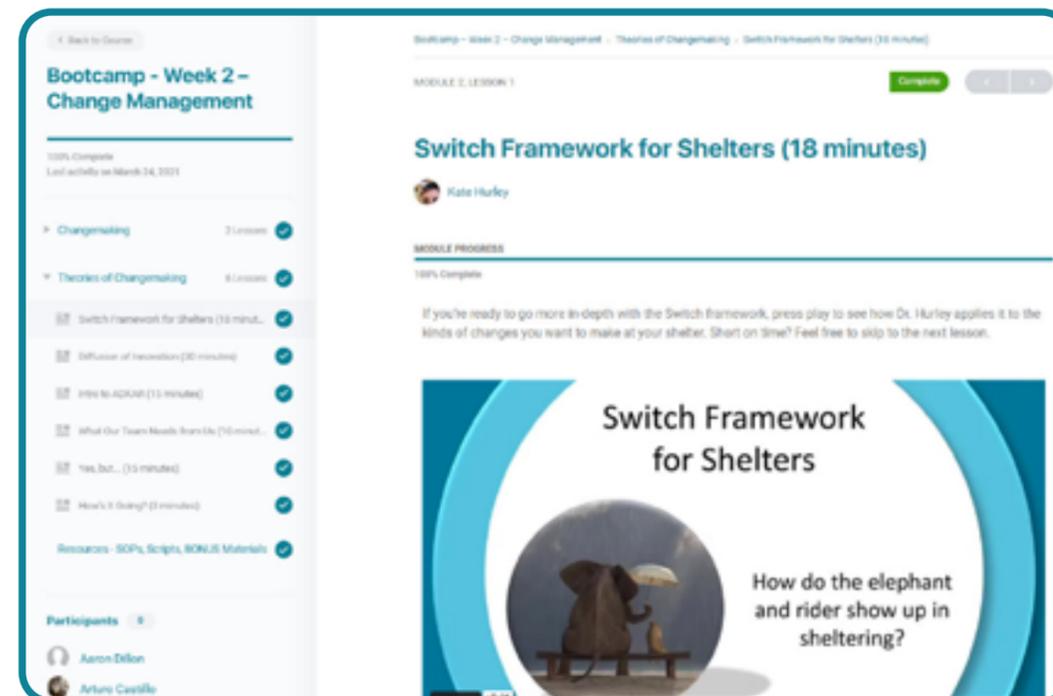


Bootcamp in a Time of COVID: Leveraging the Opportunities of a Market Disruption

Due to widespread adoption of systems changes forced by the pandemic, the Million Cat Challenge team recognized conditions were ripe to join forces with other organizations and turn a moment into a movement. That meant an immediate update of our Bootcamp curriculum to capture new interest in the community-based sheltering model, ground our guiding principles in social justice, and cultivate a greater number of public-facing opportunities to celebrate bright spots.

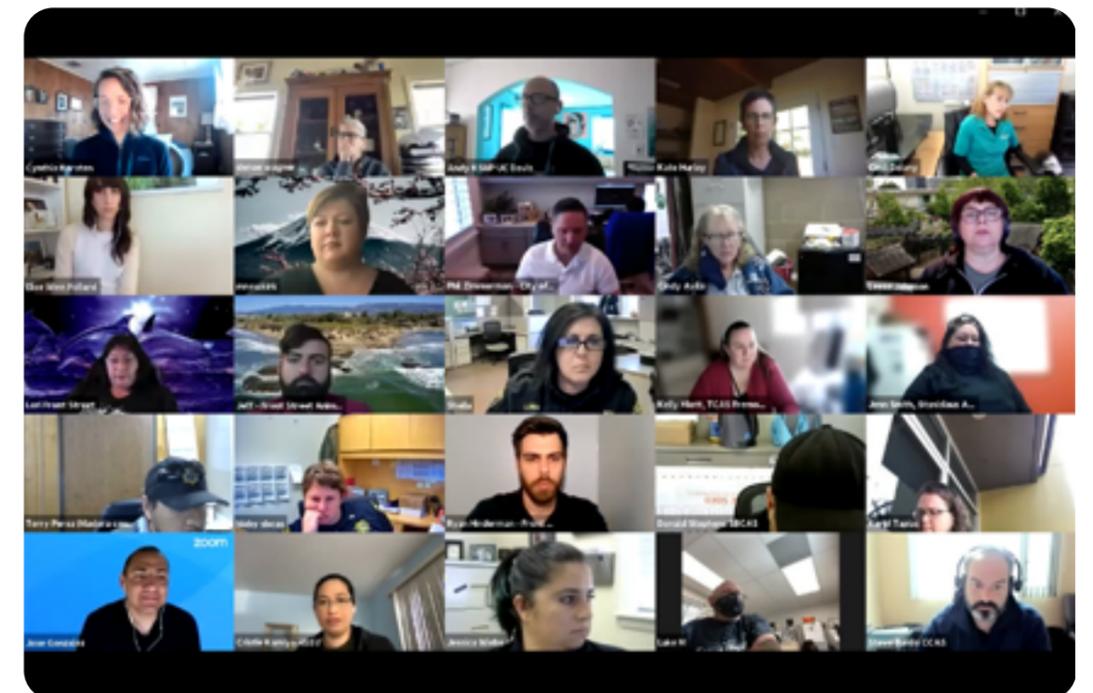
To meet the rise in demand for online engagement, Bootcamp moved to a platform that combined the features that adult learners value with a user interface that made engagement easy for students new to the virtual classroom. With the addition of the role of Team Captain and increased focus on the Bootcampers themselves, the Challenge's original Five Key Initiatives were repackaged as the Four Rights. Modules such as "Identifying your Purpose" and "Leading Change" were built to help shelters guide their commissioners, board, staff, and volunteer body through a change cycle firmly connected to the organization's values and desired role in the community.

In recognition that change at this speed is hard, Bootcamp was re-dedicated as a place where the sheltering community could work through challenges together and with mutual respect. Instead of forcing students to find the courage to dissent, they were encouraged to share their fears about moving away from familiar protocols.



“Although we work together, and have done so for a long time, and support one another, this Bootcamp really gave some of our staff confidence and security of a safe space to share, contribute ideas, and really find their voices.... It really opened up a dialogue and created new relationships and understanding that will continue on and, fingers crossed, grow into a brand new workplace culture of collaboration! Thank you so much for the gift that will keep on giving!”

Jennifer Smith, Stanislaus County



Shelter Assessments: Fostering Change

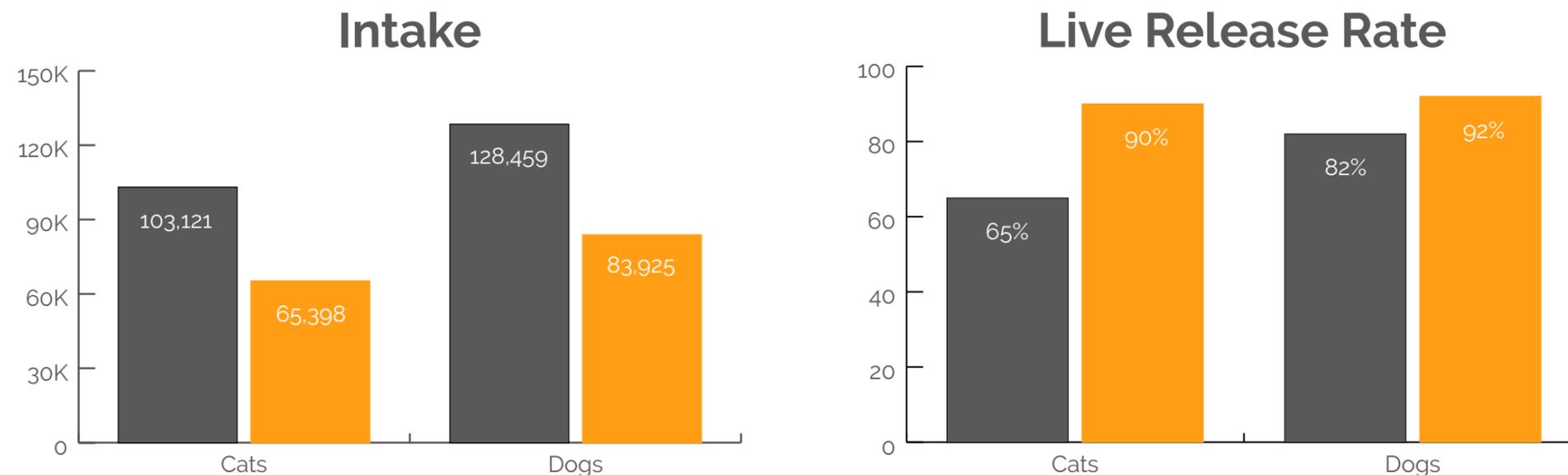
After last year's data call, the Million Cat Challenge crunched the numbers to find out which of the Challenge shelters had made the most advances in lifesaving and which shelters had reduced euthanasia the most. Turned out it was the shelters that received Million Cat assessments with Dr. Sara Pizano and Cameron Moore that year.

“There were times that it was stressful, but as we continued to check off the boxes, staff were more and more motivated to make changes. It was a really valuable experience for us. We highly recommend an assessment and appreciated how the MCC team continuously reminded us about what we were doing right.”

Dr. Josh Fisher, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Animal Services

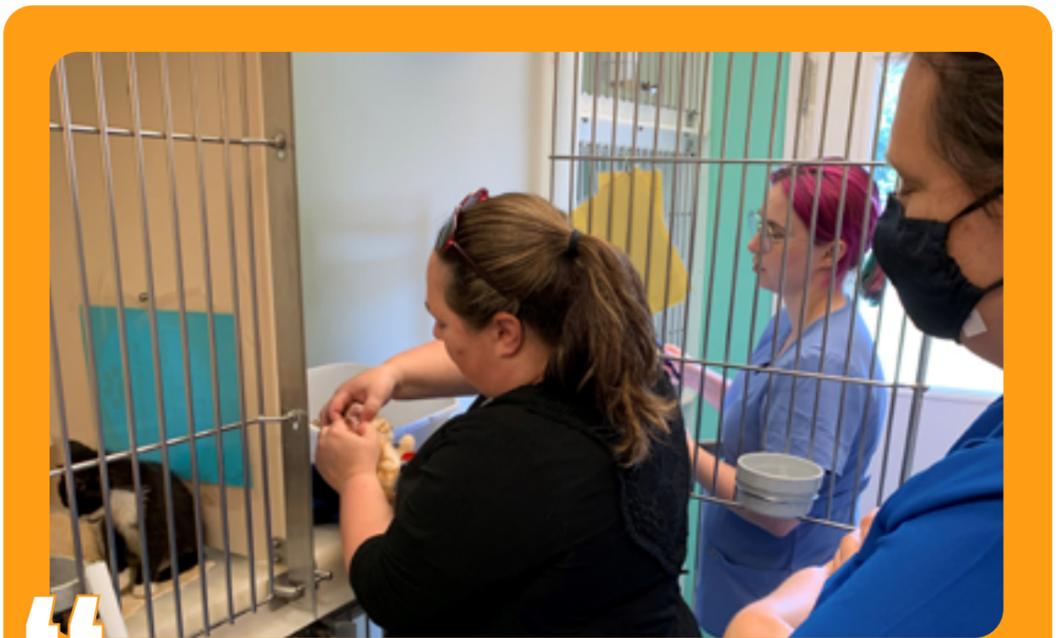
Assessment Shelters 2019-2021

■ Year Before Assessment ■ Year After Assessment



Because our shelter assessments look at the entire shelter and not just outcomes for cats, the MCC impact benefits all animals in the community. That paid off big time for Anne Arundel County Animal Care & Control!

Director Robin Catlett emailed us to say, “I wanted to let you know that, effective yesterday, AACACC began our ‘soft roll out’ of adopting out pit bull-type dogs directly! Still lots to do, but I want to thank you all for including that in your recommendations, because it helped!”



“Our board is 100% supportive of all the recommendations your team has made. We are excited to work with the county and with your guidance implement a community cat and open adoption program. Thank you all for what you do and we cannot wait to improve thanks to your team's advice.”

Leanne Glover, Shelter Manager, Caroline County Humane Society, Maryland

Assessment Case Study: Kauai Humane Society

Director Nicole Schafer and Director of Operations Erin Olsen were new to the Kauai Humane Society in Hawaii in 2020, as were many board members. The staff and board of directors were of the opinion that there was an insufficient number of adopters on the island of Kauai (population 73,000). That idea was engrained in the philosophy of the shelter, leaving transport as a highly prioritized (and costly) outcome.

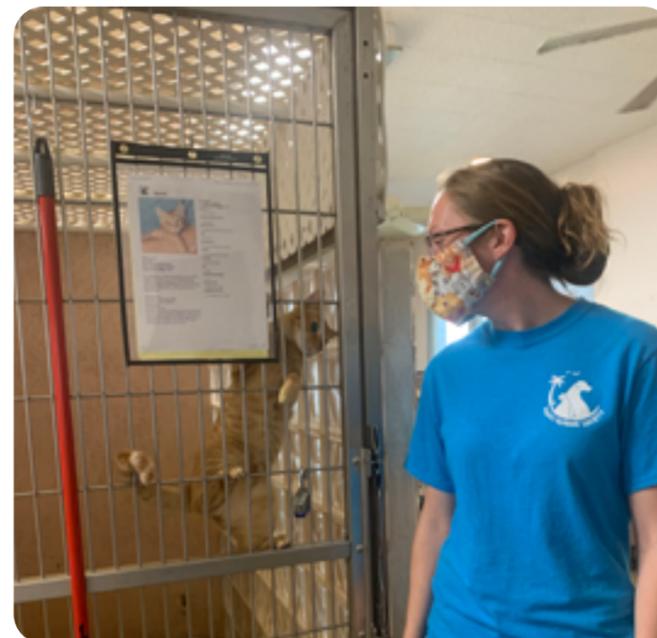
During the Million Cat Challenge assessment, the leadership team and board of directors began working on a Safety Net program, created a spay/neuter partnership with Kauai Community Cats, updated surgical and medical protocols, obtained Fear Free certification for the entire staff, and created Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in line with best practices.

Historically, the shelter's weekly adoption numbers were in the single digits or teens, and they'd never placed more than 20 animals in one week. The very next week after the assessment, a short week due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the staff experimented with their new open adoption philosophy and watched 47 pets go home!



The Million Cat Challenge's assessment helped me prioritize the needs of my shelter and gave me the confidence to make large strides toward change. Even after their assessment they continue to check in, troubleshoot, and provide support. I am extremely grateful and highly recommend their assessment process.

Nicole Schafer Crane, Executive Director, Kauai Humane Society



During the Million Cat assessment at the Kauai Humane Society, Cameron Moore posted this photo of our cover cat, Kimera, to Facebook. KHS shared it to their page, and something amazing happened: Kimera's owner recognized her cat, who had been missing for two months. Happy reunion accomplished! *Photo: Cameron Moore.*

Million Cat Mentorships: Creating a Wave

As a unique part of the Million Cat Shelter Assessment Program, the MCC offers mentorships to members of the veterinary and sheltering professions. These veterinarians, vet students, interns, and staff from other animal welfare organizations apply to join us on a shelter assessment.

Once selected, they then take our Maddie's Mentorship course online at Maddie's University, read the *Best Practices Playbook for Animal Shelters*, and attend a presentation reviewing the preparatory materials for the site visit. They physically join the team on the onsite assessment, review the report once finished, and are invited to all follow-up meetings.

Due to COVID, some mentorships were conducted virtually. For example, mentees in the Broward County Animal Care and Adoption Center assessment in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, beamed in via Zoom to share the experience with the consultant team onsite at the shelter, including video tours, pictures, and updates. This process allowed the mentees to receive nearly the same education as those who attended an assessment in person.

One shelter, the San Diego Humane Society, has found the program so valuable that it's made participation a requirement for their interns.

The Mentorship Program essentially creates an army of professionals across the country who can guide shelter transformation in their own organizations and assess and advise other shelters. It is one of the Million Cat Challenge's most enduring legacies.



The discussions we had with members of the shelter team as well as at lunch or dinner with our small mentor/mentee team were so helpful in understanding the 'why' behind the 'how.' I feel this mentorship experience needs to be more widely advertised, as many people would benefit from this experience. I don't know how you would do it but it would be helpful for every veterinary student to participate, because even if they go into private practice it is important for them to understand the daily struggles of a shelter and how they might be able to help in their communities.

Dr. Denise Katz, The Love Pet Project, Indiana



Bootcamp Case Study: Tri-City Fremont

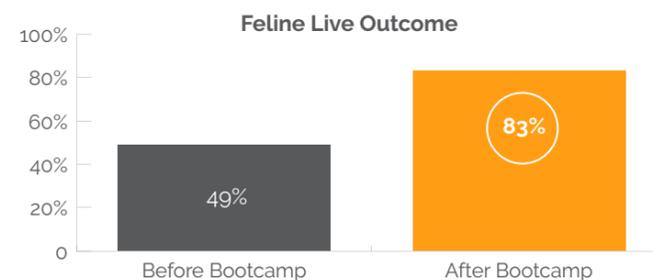
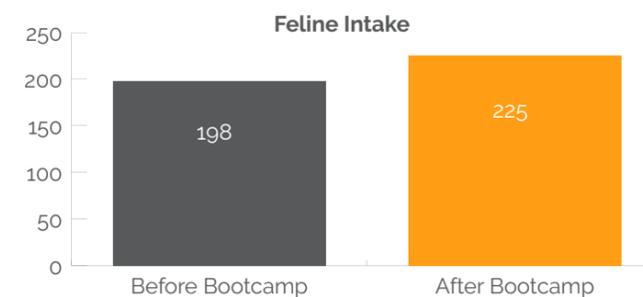
Three-month and six-month follow-up calls are standard operating procedure for Million Cat Bootcamps, but sometimes campers can't wait that long to share their excitement over early results of Bootcamp-inspired changes. Tri-City Animal Services Manager Kelly Miott couldn't wait even two months.

Miott emailed to tell us that in the five-week period following Bootcamp Spring '21, Tri-City Fremont took in 225 cats. During the same five weeks in 2019, the shelter had an intake of 198 cats. In that pre-Bootcamp, pre-COVID period, only 98 cats returned to owner, were adopted, or went to a transfer partner. That meant the shelter was only moving 49% of the cats who entered the shelter out to positive outcomes. Cats who were adopted were staying on average 49 days, and transferred cats 25 days.

After the shelter participated in Million Cat Bootcamp, that same period in 2021 saw 225 cats enter the shelter, but 186 – 83% – left to a positive outcome. Feline length of stay for cats who were adopted dropped to 12 days, and for transferred cats just 9 days. The feline euthanasia rate dropped by 72%!

“ Bootcamp is the gift that just keeps on giving. ”

Kelly Miott, Tri-City Animal Shelter



Coming Together to Help El Paso

When the Million Cat team showed up to do a pro bono assessment at El Paso Animal Services, almost 900 pets were housed at the shelter, many in spaces that were not temperature controlled. Mass testing supported financially by Maddie's Fund confirmed that canine distemper was present throughout the shelter.

The MCC team, along with an amazing group of mentees, went to work. The result was a collaboration of magnificent proportions involving Maddie's Fund, Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program at UF, Bissell Pet Foundation, HASS/American Pets Alive!, Best Friends, Team Shelter USA, and Animal Rescue Corp.

Because testing had made it possible to segregate the infected dogs for treatment and create a healthy population of dogs who could be adopted or transported with confidence, the group coordinated a three-flight, two-day transport for 216 pets and a followup flight to Ontario for 85 more dogs. On one flight alone, eight distemper patients who were among the first to recover during isolation and treatment headed to a shelter that was a first-time receiving partner. That shelter quarantined the dogs in foster homes for two weeks as an extra precaution and to allow the dogs to decompress from an arduous few weeks.

The sponsored PCR tests allowed dogs actively shedding distemper to be identified and treated, with many isolated off site until testing negative. Protocols for controlling distemper were improved, and the MCC team continues to help the shelter by recruiting new transport partners, retesting positive dogs during recovery, and ongoing case consultation.

The Million Cat Challenge salutes the staff at El Paso Animal Services who work hard every day to make life better for the pets in their care, and the heroes in our field who answered their call for help.



APPENDIX

Webinars, Seminars, and Conferences

HSUS Conference (7/20 and 4/21)

- Speaker-Round Table Host

Shelter Medicine Club, University of Washington vet school

- Best Practice presentation

Shelter Medicine Club, Cornell University vet school

- Best Practice presentations

University of Florida (12/20 and 5/21 x 3)

- Grand Rounds, graduate course

G2Z conference, Australia

- Best Practices for Animal Shelters

Community Cat Podcast Online Leukemia Day Conference

- New AAFP FeLV/FIV Guidelines: 5 Critical Takeaways for Animal Shelters

Alachua Veterinary Medical Association

- New AAFP FeLV/FIV Guidelines: 5 Critical Takeaways for Animal Shelters

IDEXX Key Opinion Leaders Virtual Roundtable

- FeLV and laboratory diagnostics

HSUS Expo

- An oral cat contraceptive option as you manage spay delay
- New shelter cat vaccination protocols roundtable

Association for the Advancement of Animal Welfare Conference

- Spayathon for Puerto Rico: Lessons & Data from 50,000 Surgeries
- The Veterinary Shortage

VMX

- One Health and the COVID-19 pandemic

Florida Association of Animal Welfare Organizations (FAAWO)

- The state of the state in 2020: Florida's animal sheltering trends and the road ahead

CalAnimals

- The Four Rights presentation

Annenberg Foundation's Petspace series

- Cats and Birds Co-Existing presentation

Several additional groups in Hawaii and California

- Cats and Birds Co-Existing presentation

Best Friends

- Length of Stay presentation

MCC Webinar (6/25/21)

- The Top Ten: Questions and Controversy with Community Cat Programs



JOIN MILLION CAT CHALLENGE FOR FIVE FREE KITTEN MANAGEMENT- FOCUSED WEBINARS,

SPONSORED BY ROYAL CANIN®

Every Thursday from August 6, 2020 — September 3, 2020

Covering everything shelters need to know about managing kittens from intake to adoption.



The Kitten Series

In August and early September 2020, the Million Cat Challenge partnered with Royal Canin to premiere a free five-part webinar series hosted by Maddie's Fund covering all things KITTEN! Guests included Hannah Shaw, aka the Kitten Lady and many others.

1. Kitten Intake Decisions in Animal Shelters (8/6)
2. Support for Kittens in the Field (8/13)
3. Foster Greatness (8/20)
4. Kitten Care in the Shelter (8/27)
5. Going Home (9/3)

APPENDIX

Bootcamp shelters FY20/21:

- Madera Animal Shelter
- Tri-City Animal Shelter Fremont
- Front Street Animal Shelter
- Contra Costa County Animal Services
- Santa Barbara County Animal Services
- Yolo Animal Services
- Stanislaus County Animal Services



We knew we'd have to demonstrate the benefits of removing barriers to redemption to our city leaders to get the fee-waived approval we wanted, and we realized we weren't going to accept that hill as our own barrier to lifesaving any longer! Our Friends of Front Street group agreed to cover any financial loss due to our amnesty program and that gave us the freedom to try it out.... Removing financial barriers between our most underserved community members and their pets has more than doubled our RTO. Staff is on board, the community is on board, our donors are on board, and the ten dogs that left their cage at our shelter to return to their homes yesterday are most definitely on board. What we've really learned from Bootcamp is how to get out of our own way.

Phillip Zimmerman, Front Street Animal Shelter



Assessment Sites FY 20/21:

- Anne Arundel County Animal Care and Control, Millersville, MD
- Broward County Animal Care and Adoption Center, Fort Lauderdale, FL
- Caroline County Humane Society
- Cat Depot, Sarasota, FL
- El Paso Animal Services
- Hawaiian Humane Society, Honolulu, HI
- Inland Valley Humane Society & SPCA, Pomona, CA
- Idaho Humane Society, Boise, ID
- Kauai Humane Society, Kauai, HI
- Nate's Honor Rescue, Bradenton, FL
- PAWS, Okaloosa, FL
- Your Humane Society and SPCA, Lake Panasofkskee, FL

Note: Due to COVID restrictions and travel bans, additional assessments were conducted virtually so that all shelters could receive immediate help.

Mentees

Veterinarians

Dr. Jonathan Chapman, San Diego Humane Society
Dr. Brie Sarvis, San Diego Humane Society
Dr. Aleisha Swartz, University of Wisconsin
Dr. Meghan Arevalo, Santa Rosa County

UF Shelter Medicine Interns

Dr. Ashley Saver
Dr. Jerika Brooks
Dr. Deana Rowlison
Dr. Hannah Naples

Cornell Shelter Medicine Interns

Dr. Joy Keaton
Dr. Liz Mulhall

Interns, San Diego Humane Society

Dr. Alice Bourgeon
Dr. Alicia Everett
Dr. Lauren Barber
Dr. Laura Bunke

15 UF Veterinary Students



APPENDIX

Media Coverage

Royal Canin Partners with Hannah Shaw to Launch Second Educational Web Series: 'Catology Presents: Kitten Lady And Friends'

PR Newswire
July 30, 2020

Kitten Intake in Animal Shelters

FelineFoster.org
Aug. 6, 2020

Royal Canin Partners with the Million Cat Challenge on New Webinar Series

Pet Business
Aug. 10, 2020

Royal Canin and Celebrity 'AdvoCATs' Team up for Annual 'Take Your Cat to the Vet' Campaign

PR Newswire
Aug. 12, 2020

Royal Canin Partners With PetSmart, Chewy and Others for "Take Your Cat to the Vet" Campaign

Pet Product News
Aug. 19, 2020

Kitten Care in the Shelter

FelineFoster.org
Aug. 27, 2020

Why Our Good Intentions Might Be Killing More than 1,000 Cats and Kittens Every Day

MaxCaders.com
Sept. 3, 2020

Inside the Plan to Revolutionize Animal Shelters

Fast Company
Sept. 21, 2020

Come to the Bark Side: Wagoween Presents a Social-Distance Event—for Humans, Anyway

Long Beach Post
Oct. 9, 2020

Investing in Cats Will Help Achieve No-Kill

Best Friends Blog
Oct. 13, 2020

Florida Animal Shelters Set Life-Saving Record in 2019

Florida Animal Friend
Dec. 7, 2020

When Not to Adopt Out Free-roaming Cats

iHeart
Feb. 1, 2021

COVID Helped Florida Pet Shelters Hit a Record — but Cats are a Challenge

Miami Herald
April 23, 2021

The Buzz

Pet Connection
May 10, 2021



Podcast Series

The **Bright Spots** Mini-Podcast Series with Dr. Sara Pizano
<http://blog.millioncatchallenge.org/tag/bright-spot/>

- Episode 1: Cameron Moore, Lucky Cat Rescue
- Episode 2: Nicole Shafer, Kauai Humane Society
- Episode 3: Jim Sweet, Marion County Animal Services
- Episode 4: Valerie Robinson, Terrebonne Parish Animal Shelter
- Episode 5: Bob Gruhl, Montgomery County Animal Resource Center
- Episode 6: Dr. Josh Fisher, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Animal Services
- Episode 7: Cindy Avila, Madera County Animal Shelter
- Episode 8: Dr. Megan Arevalo, Santa Rosa County Animal Services
- Episode 9: Annette Bedsworth, Stanislaus County Animal Shelter

