



Save the animals

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It all makes perfect moral sense. Why would you condemn to death animals whose only offense was to be lost, abandoned or abused by humans?

Yet that’s what many animal shelters have done. Not because the people who run these facilities are hard-hearted or immoral. Indeed, they usually are animal lovers. Rather, it was thought there was no practical alternative. But there is.

West Valley City became the latest Utah municipality to try that alternative, a no-kill animal policy, this week. Its City Council voted unanimously to form a partnership with the Best Friends Animal Society. The goal is to save the lives of 80 percent of animals who come to the shelter’s care, about 5,000 dogs and cats last year. How? Through an aggressive program of adoptions.

You may have heard of Best Friends. It’s the organization that operates the no-kill animal sanctuary on 3,800 acres about eight miles north of Kanab. At any given time, it hosts about 1,700 animals there. It has as annual budget of about \$50 million and employs some 400 people in Kanab and another 100 elsewhere around the nation.

In recent years, it has focused increasingly on partnerships and grant programs with other like-minded organizations and municipal shelters.

The new agreement between the society and **West Valley City**-Taylorsville Animal Shelter calls for them to work together to increase adoptions, ~~provide~~ spay and neuter assistance and implement a trap-neuter-return program for stray cats. The two cities will give the society \$45,000 annually for two years. The society will provide about \$350,000 worth of programs, including marketing support for the adoption campaigns, taking shelter dogs and cats out into the community in its mobile adoption vehicle, providing free spay and neuter surgeries to low-income pet owners, and implementing the trap-neuter-return for feral cats.

Even with the best of efforts and intentions, not all animals can be saved. Some must be euthanized because they are dangerous or too gravely ill to recover.

Compassion is contagious, whether it is focused on animals or humans. One reinforces the other. That’s why the new partnership in **West Valley City** is worthwhile. The emphasis on spay and neuter also should help to draw attention to ~~responsible~~ pet ownership.

It’s simply a better way.