Join us April 26-29, 2024, in Austin, TX
THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!

Also Exhibiting

PARTNER WITH US FOR THE 2024 CONFERENCE!
Sponsor, exhibitor, and advertising opportunities available at www.texasunites.com
Overview

The Texas Unites for Animals Conference provides animal welfare professionals the opportunity to connect, share and work together to improve the lives of pets and people in their communities. At the Texas Unites for Animals Conference, you will find hundreds of animal advocates from Texas and our surrounding states coming together for professional development and a chance to broaden their network in the animal welfare industry.

Workshops

Texas Unites provides a variety of learning opportunities with recognized speakers from across the US, many of our local, Texas favorites, and some new speakers with fresh ideas and personal experiences that you can relate to. The Texas Unites for Animals 2024 conference will include 62 workshops in eight tracks!

Health & Behavior  •  Placement & Shelter Programs  •  Field Services & Investigations  •  Marketing & Outreach
Management & Team Building  •  Back to Basics  •  Shelter Medicine  •  Animal Law

NEW! DSHS approved Animal Control Officer Basic Training Course and test will be offered on Friday & Saturday!

Hotel Reservations

Texas Unites for Animals 2024 will be held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel in Austin, Texas. This pet-friendly hotel offers beautiful indoor and outdoor spaces to enjoy when conference sessions aren't in place.

To reserve your room, call 1-800-468-3571, visit www.texasunites.com/travel-info or click here for our unique reservation link. Reservations at the discounted rate of $199 may be made through Thursday, April 4, 2024 or until the room block is full. Please refer to “Texas Unites for Animals” when booking your reservation.

Meals

Your conference registration fee includes a daily, continental breakfast (Saturday - Monday) and drinks/refreshments at evening receptions. For lunch and evening meals, the Arboretum area, within walking distance of the hotel, offers several restaurant options to explore. Texas Unites offers vegetarian and vegan alternatives for meals and refreshments provided throughout the conference.

Exhibit Hall and Networking

The Exhibit Hall will be open throughout the conference, providing many opportunities to check out all of the exhibitors and participate in several contests and raffles!

Arrive early on Friday to check in and get a first look at the exhibit hall at the Welcome Reception. We can't wait to show off our Texas-style hospitality!

Explore the exhibit hall with games, prizes, food and drinks during Networking Night on Saturday!

Meetup with others doing great work for animals and people across Texas at our Cocktail Hour on Sunday!
Continuing Education Credits can be obtained by following the guidelines set by the following organizations: The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (TBVME), The Association for Animal Welfare Advancement (AAWA), Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) and The State Bar of Texas. A continuing education verification form is made available electronically to all attendees of the Texas Unites for Animals Conference to assist in tracking your conference hours.

**DSHS** - The Texas Unites for Animals Conference adheres to the standards and curriculum prescribed by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Conference workshops (Friday-Monday) will offer CE credit, up to a maximum of 21.25 hours per officer. ACO’s attending the Shelter Medicine Track on April 28, 2022 may be approved for an additional 2 hours. Note: *The Animal Control Officer Basic Training Course does not earn CE hours towards an ACO’s annual requirements. However, courses taken after completion of the ACO Basic Training Course and test will earn CE hours.*

**TBVME** - The Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (TBVME) is reviewing the following continuing education workshops for Veterinarians and Licensed Veterinary Technicians up to a maximum of 10.5 hours:
- **Sat.** Designing for Healthy Animals
- **Sat.** Curbing of Disease and Outbreak Prevention as Intake Rises
- **Sat.** Outside the Box: Where Shelter Medicine & Elevated Quality of Care Meet
- **Sun.** High-Quality, High-Volume Spay/Neuter: Updates and Strategies to Increase Capacity
- **Sun.** Hard Times Call for Hard Decisions
- **Sun.** Paradigm Shift in ASV Guidelines: Embracing Positive Animal Welfare through the Five Domains Model
- **Sun.** Won’t You Be My Neighbor: Collaborative and Lifesaving Medical Teams in Your Community

**AAWA** - Texas Unites is an approved provider of content which enhances professional competence and aligns with the five domains of the CAWA Exam specifications. Every hour of training equals one CE towards CAWA Recertification.

**TCOLE** - Texas Unites for Animals workshops may be eligible for The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) credit. Note: *Texas Unites is not a TCOLE Training Provider, however, Texas Unites for Animals provides a certificate of completion for attendees to keep on file and for organizations to submit to TCOLE for possible approval. TCOLE will require copies of course materials, course outlines, and the conference program.*

**THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS** - The Laws for Paws Animal Law Track has 7.25 hours of CLE credits pending approval through the State Bar of Texas.
## SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

### FRIDAY, APRIL 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM | "Laws for Paws" Track  
*see detailed agenda on pg. 8 |
| 8:30 AM - 6:00 PM | Animal Control Officer Basic Training (Day 1)          |
| 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM | Conference Registration                               |
| 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM | Exhibit Hall Opening Reception                         |

### SATURDAY, APRIL 27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 AM - 4:00 PM</td>
<td>Conference Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 AM - 8:30 AM</td>
<td>Breakfast Served</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 AM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>Animal Control Officer Basic Training (Day 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM | Opening General Session  
Presented by Petco Love |
| 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM | Break in Exhibit Hall                                 |
| 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM | Workshops                                              |
| 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM | Lunch Break  
*The Arboretum area, within walking distance of the hotel, offers several restaurant options to explore.* |

### SUNDAY, APRIL 28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30 AM - 8:30 AM</td>
<td>Breakfast Served</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM | Shelter Medicine Track  
*see detailed agenda on pg. 9 |
| 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM | General Session  
Presented by Best Friends Animal Society |
| 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM | Break in Exhibit Hall                                 |
| 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM | Workshops                                              |
| 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM | Lunch Break  
*Final opportunity to visit exhibit hall*  
*The Arboretum area, within walking distance of the hotel, offers several restaurant options to explore.* |
| 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM | Exhibit Hall Open                                      |
| 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM | Workshops                                              |
| 3:30 PM - 4:00 PM | Break                                                  |
| 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM | Workshops                                              |
| 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM | Cocktail Hour Meetup                                  |

### MONDAY, APRIL 29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30 AM - 8:30 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 AM - 10:00 AM</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 AM - 10:30 AM</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 AM - 12:00 PM</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 PM - 12:30 PM</td>
<td>Closing Event</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Workshops**

**Animal Control Officer Basic Training**
- **Fri.** ACO Basic Training Course (Day 1)
- **Sat.** ACO Basic Training Course (Day 2)

**"Laws For Paws" Animal Law**
- **Fri.** Service & Emotional Support Animals: Updates on Animal Accommodation Laws
- **Fri.** Texas Civil and Criminal Seizure Law for Animals: Texas’ Best Kept Secret
- **Fri.** Employment Issues Surrounding Shelter Professionals and Volunteers
- **Fri.** From DC: Trends in Federal Animal Protection Laws and What it Means for Texas
- **Fri.** Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) Breeder Law Update
- **Fri.** Ask an Animal Law Attorney
- **Fri.** Insight from the Capitol – Passing an Animal Bill

**General Sessions**
- **Sat.** Opening Session, Presented by Petco Love
- **Sun.** Growing Expectations of Animal Services, Presented by Best Friends Animal Society

**Health & Behavior**
- **Sat.** Designing for Healthy Animals
- **Sat.** Curbing of Disease and Outbreak Prevention as Intake Rises
- **Sat.** Outside the Box: Where Shelter Medicine & Elevated Quality of Care Meet
- **Sun.** It Was Us; We Were the Problem! Learn from Our Oversights: A Shelter’s Self-Evaluation in Disease Prevention to Increase Life Saving
- **Sun.** On-Leash Reactivity Case Files
- **Sun.** Shelter Dog Activity: What are They Doing When Nobody’s Looking?
- **Mon.** Reducing Shelter Cat Length of Stay: A Behavioral Approach
- **Mon.** Details Coming Soon!

**Shelter Medicine**
- **Sun.** High-Quality, High-Volume Spay/Neuter: Updates and Strategies to Increase Capacity
- **Sun.** Hard Times Call for Hard Decisions
- **Sun.** Compassion Fatigue: Building Resiliency to the Stresses of the Work
- **Sun.** Paradigm Shift in ASV Guidelines: Embracing Positive Animal Welfare through the Five Domains Model
- **Sun.** Won’t You Be My Neighbor: Collaborative and Lifesaving Medical Teams in Your Community

**Placement & Shelter Programs**
- **Sat.** Intake Diversion Best Practices in Action: The Austin Pets Alive PASS Program
- **Sat.** Release The Hounds! Building and Growing Short Term Foster Programs To Turbo Boost Long Term Lifesaving
- **Sat.** Advancing Your Community Cat Program
- **Sun.** Interfacing with Adopters Using the Science of Online Dating
- **Sun.** Tales from the Barkside: Working with Municipal Shelters 101
- **Sun.** Details Coming Soon!
- **Mon.** Accessible Pet Training Resources for Marginalized Communities
- **Mon.** Thinking Outside the Kennel: How to Maximize Your Life Saving Impact with Retail Adoptions
WORKSHOPS

FIELD SERVICES & INVESTIGATIONS

Sat. Recent Texas Cases Involving the LINK: The Basics on Recognizing and Investigating the LINK between Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence and Prosecuting an Animal Cruelty Case Under Texas Law
Sat. Letter of the Law and Spirit of the Law: Balancing Compliance and Compassion in Animal Control
Sat. Officer Safety
Sun. Community Policing and Animal Protection: Considerations for Enforcement Agencies
Sun. Tactical Animal Handling
Sun. Why Can’t We All Just Get Along? A Proactive Approach to Resolving Human/Wildlife Conflicts
Mon. Serval, and Tegus, and BEARS, OH MY!
Mon. Mitigating Outdoor Cat Complaints

MANAGEMENT & TEAM BUILDING

Sat. Testicle Talk: Not Your Traditional Customer Service Class
Sat. Legislative Update: The Future From the Rearview Mirror
Sat. Emergency Temporary Sheltering for Disasters & Large Scale Intake
Sun. Bridging the Gap: Results, Analysis & Discussion of 2022 RTH National Survey
Sun. Is Your Team Ready for Change, More Importantly Are You?
Mon. DEI How and Why: Strategies to Embed DEI into Animal Welfare Organizations
Mon. Unleashing Compassion: Revolutionizing Accessible and Scalable Community Clinics

MARKETING & OUTREACH

Sat. Grant Writing Boot Camp
Sat. Slow the Flow: Creating Community-Focused Collaborative Lifesaving Programs
Sat. Taking Back Your Lifesaving Power: How to Deal With Backlash
Sun. Pro Tips! Media Q&A Panel
Mon. Se Habla Español! (and Other Helpful Lessons in Involving Your LatinX Community in Life Saving)
Mon. COOP Planning: Cats, Dogs, and Unusual Emergencies

BACK TO BASICS

Sat. Animal Sheltering Fundamentals
Sat. Return to Home
Sat. 10 Customer Service Training Games
Sun. Every Dog, Every Day!
Sun. Essentials to Unlock Your Shelter’s Potential (Before the Word Basic was Featured in Urban Dictionary)
Sun. Intake Best Practices for Disease Prevention
Mon. Where’d All the Adopters Go?
Mon. Leveling Up Your Foster Program
**SPECIAL REGISTRATION**

"**LAWS FOR PAWS**" **ANIMAL LAW TRACK**

*In collaboration with Texas Humane Legislative Network*

**FRIDAY, APRIL 26**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 AM - 8:30 AM</td>
<td>Check-In and Breakfast Served</td>
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</table>
| 8:30 AM - 8:45 AM | **Introduction to Laws for Paws**  
*Ashley Morgan, Esq., President, Animal Law Section, State Bar of Texas* |
| 8:45 AM - 9:45 AM | **Service & Emotional Support Animals: Updates on Animal Accommodation Laws**  
*Randy Turner, Esq.*  
*Cindy Smiley, Esq.* |
| 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM | **Texas Civil and Criminal Seizure Law for Animals: Texas' Best Kept Secret**  
*Lara Tomlin, Esq.*  
*Robyn Katz, Esq.* |
| 10:45 AM - 11:00 AM | Break                                                                                   |
| 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM | **Employment Issues Surrounding Shelter Professionals and Volunteers**  
*Brian J. Levy, Esq., Lynch Law Firm* |
| 12:00 PM - 12:45 PM | Lunch Served                                                                           |
| 12:45 PM - 1:45 PM | **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**  
*From DC: Trends in Federal Animal Protection Laws and What it Means for Texas*  
*Chris Green, Executive Director, Animal Legal Defense Fund* |
| 1:45 PM - 2:45 PM | **Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) Breeder Law Update**  
*Laura Pfefferle, Assistant General Counsel, TDLR*  
*RebeccaBurkhalter, Prosecutor, Enforcement, TDLR*  
*LaTasha Poland, Program Specialist, Compliance, TTDLR*  
*Della Lindquist, Deputy General Counsel, TDLR*  
*Fernando Reyes, Field Inspections Manager, TDLR*  
*James McEachern, Inspector, TDLR* |
| 2:45 PM - 3:00 PM | Break                                                                                   |
| 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM | **Ask an Animal Law Attorney**  
*Randy Turner, Esq.*  
*Donald Feare, Esq.* |
| 4:00 PM - 4:45 PM | **Insight from the Capitol – Passing an Animal Bill**  
*The Honorable Lulu Flores* |
| 4:45 PM - 5:00 PM | **Closing Remarks and Adjourn**  
*Ashley Morgan, Esq., President, Animal Law Section, State Bar of Texas* |
| 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM | Exhibit Hall Opening Reception                                                           |
SPECIAL REGISTRATION

SHELTER MEDICINE TRACK

In collaboration with the Texas Veterinary Medical Association Shelter Medicine Committee

SUNDAY, APRIL 28

8:00 AM - 8:30 AM  
Check-In and Breakfast Served

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM  
High-Quality, High-Volume Spay/Neuter: Updates and Strategies to Increase Capacity  
Andrea Cermele, DVM, Veterinarian, Best Friends Animal Society

10:00 AM - 10:15 AM  
Break

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM  
Hard Times Call for Hard Decisions  
Valarie V. Tynes, DVM, DACVB, DACAW, Shelter Veterinary Behaviorist, SPCA of Texas

11:45 AM - 12:30 PM  
Lunch Served

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM  
Compassion Fatigue: Building Resiliency to the Stresses of the Work  
Cathy M. Rosenthal, CHES, Animal Welfare Communications Consultant, CathyRosenthal.com

2:00 PM - 2:15 PM  
Break

2:15 PM - 3:45 PM  
Paradigm Shift in ASV Guidelines: Embracing Positive Animal Welfare through the Five Domains Model  
Sheila Segurson, DVM, DACVB, Board Certified Veterinary Behaviorist, Director of Community Solutions, Maddie’s Fund

3:45 PM - 4:00 PM  
Break

4:00 PM - 5:30 PM  
Won’t You Be My Neighbor: Collaborative and Lifesaving Medical Teams in Your Community  
Meredith Jones, Chief Community Initiatives Officer, Operation Kindness  
Rachel Redd, DVM, Chief Community Initiatives Veterinarian, Operation Kindness

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM  
Cocktail Hour Meetup
## Schedule

### Friday, April 26

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### Saturday, April 27

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<th>MANAGEMENT &amp; TEAM BUILDING</th>
<th>BACK TO BASICS</th>
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</table>
**Saturday, April 27 (Continued)**

### Lunch Break
*The Arboretum area, within walking distance of the hotel, offers several restaurant options to explore.*
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

### Exhibit Hall Open
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

### Workshops
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

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<td>Release The Hounds! Building and Growing Short Term Foster Programs To Turbo Boost Long Term Lifesaving</td>
<td>Letter of the Law and Spirit of the Law: Balancing Compliance and Compassion in Animal Control</td>
<td>Slow the Flow: Creating Community-Focused Collaborative Lifesaving Programs</td>
<td>Legislative Update: The Future From the Rearview Mirror</td>
<td>Return to Home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amber Alu, DVM, Chief Medical Officer, SPCA of Texas and Roberta Westbrook, DVM, Chief Animal Welfare and Medical Officer, Houston SPCA</td>
<td>Finnegan Dowling, Shelter Program Manager, Rescue, Kymee Bair, CPDT-KA, FPPE, Behavior and Enrichment Manager, Houston Humane Society and Angelina Saucedo, Marketing Manager, Houston Humane Society</td>
<td>Spencer Conover, Assistant Director, Pasco County Animal Services and Jerrica Owen, Executive Director, National Animal Care &amp; Control Association</td>
<td>Jordan Craig, Executive Director, Spay Neuter Network and Sarah McGoldrick, Vice President of Animal Operations, Dallas Pets Alive</td>
<td>Shelby Bobosky, Esq., Executive Director, Texas Humane Legislation Network and Audrey Tamez, Director of Legislative Engagement, ASPCA</td>
<td>Gina Knepp, National Shelter Engagement Director, Michelson Found Animals Foundation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Break in Exhibit Hall
3:30 PM - 4:00 PM

### Workshops
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

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<tr>
<td>Outside the Box: Where Shelter Medicine &amp; Elevated Quality of Care Meet Dr. Tiffany Tobaben, Chief Veterinarian, Operation Kindness and Heather Dolson, Vice President of Lifesaving Programs, Operation Kindness</td>
<td>Advancing Your Community Cat Program</td>
<td>Officer Safety</td>
<td>Taking Back Your Lifesaving Power: How to Deal With Backlash</td>
<td>Emergency Temporary Sheltering for Disasters &amp; Large Scale Intake</td>
<td>10 Customer Service Training Games</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Exhibit Hall Networking Event
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
## SUNDAY, APRIL 28

**Breakfast Served**
7:30 AM - 8:30 AM

**Shelter Medicine Track (Detailed Agenda, page 9)**
8:30 AM - 5:30 PM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 AM - 9:30 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Growing Expectations of Animal Services, presented by Best Friends Animal Society</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Roel Roy Rodriguez, P.E., City Manager, City of McAllen</td>
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<td>Melissa Webber, Director, Dallas Animal Services</td>
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<td>Christie Banduch, Animal Services Manager, San Marcos Regional Animal Shelter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kasey Schwartz, Animal Shelter Supervisor, City of Lampasas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brent Toellner, Senior Director, Lifesaving Programs, Best Friends Animal Society</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Break in Exhibit Hall**
9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

**Workshops**
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

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<tr>
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<td>Stephani Coe, Sr. Operations Manager, Operation Kindness and Heather Dolson, VP of Lifesaving Programs, Operation Kindness</td>
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<td><strong>Interfacing with Adopters Using the Science of Online Dating</strong></td>
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<td>Stephanie Lara, Adoption Manager, Friends for Life</td>
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<td>Animal Shelter and Melissa Taylor, CBCC-KA, CSB-C, Behavior and Training Manager, Friends For Life Animal Shelter</td>
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<td><strong>Community Policing and Animal Protection: Considerations for Enforcement Agencies</strong></td>
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<td>Tyler Winckler, Senior Coordinator, Law Enforcement Training Center, Humane Society of the United States</td>
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<td><strong>Communicating in a Crisis: The Who, What, When, Where, Why, and HOW</strong></td>
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<td>Lisa Norwood, Public Relations &amp; Outreach Manager, San Antonio Animal Care Services</td>
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<td><strong>Bridging the Gap: Results, Analysis &amp; Discussion of 2022 RTH National Survey</strong></td>
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<td>Jerrica Owen, Executive Director, National Animal Care &amp; Control Association and Lorien Clemens, Co-Founder &amp; CEO, PetHub, Inc.</td>
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<td><strong>Every Dog, Every Day!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aimee Sadler, Founder and CEO, Dogs Playing for Life</td>
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</table>
**SUNDAY, APRIL 28 (CONTINUED)**

**Lunch Break**  *The Arboretum area, within walking distance of the hotel, offers several restaurant options to explore.*
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

**Exhibit Hall Open**  *Final opportunity to visit exhibit hall*
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

**Workshops**
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

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<td>On-Leash Reactivity Case Files</td>
<td>Tales from the Barkside: Working with Municipal Shelters 101 Bethany Colonnese, Chief Operations Officer, San Antonio Animal Care Services and Lisa Norwood, Public Relations &amp; Outreach Manager, San Antonio Animal Care Services</td>
<td>Tactical Animal Handling Kevin Hearst, Consultant/Instructor, Law Enforcement Training Institute</td>
<td>Puppy Mills in Texas: What You Can Do to Combat Them in Your Community Mindi Callison, Founder/Executive Director, Bailing Out Benji</td>
<td>Is Your Team Ready for Change, More Importantly Are You? Kelly Furnas, Chief Operating Officer, Operation Kindness</td>
<td>Essentials to Unlock Your Shelter’s Potential (Before the Word Basic was Featured in Urban Dictionary) Chelsea Staley, Director of Lifesaving, Petco Love</td>
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**Break**
3:30 PM - 4:00 PM

**Workshops**
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

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<th>MARKETING &amp; OUTREACH</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT &amp; TEAM BUILDING</th>
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**Cocktail Hour Meetup**
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM
### Monday, April 29

**Breakfast Served**
7:30 AM - 8:30 AM

**Workshops**
8:30 AM - 10:00 AM

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**Break**
10:00 AM - 10:30 AM

**Workshops**
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

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<td><strong>Details Coming Soon!</strong></td>
<td>Thinking Outside the Kennel: How to Maximize Your Life Saving Impact with Retail Adoptions&lt;br&gt;Alex Pennell-Lemley, Regional Field Program Manager, Petco Love and Amanda Payne, Lifesaving Partner Relations Specialist, Petco Love</td>
<td>Mitigating Outdoor Cat Complaints&lt;br&gt;Nick Walton, National Shelter Support Senior Manager, Best Friends Animal Society</td>
<td>Unleashing Compassion: Revolutionizing Accessible and Scalable Community Clinics&lt;br&gt;Meredith Jones, Chief Community Initiatives Officer, Operation Kindness and Courtney Medina, Animal Welfare Director, 24Pet</td>
<td>COOP Planning: Cats, Dogs, and Unusual Emergencies&lt;br&gt;Laura Welsh, Assistant Animal Services Manager, Tri-City Animal Shelter/Cedar Hill Animal Services, Lauren Sanchez, Regional Emergency Management Operations Coordinator for Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Duncanville, and Lancaster, and Shelly Meeks, Director of Development, Humane Tomorrow</td>
<td>Leveling Up your Foster Program&lt;br&gt;Abby Principe, Foster and Intake Manager, Operation Kindness and Meaghan Swan-Wilson, Data and Logistics Senior Manager, Operation Kindness</td>
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**Closing Event**
12:00 PM - 12:30 PM
Workshop Descriptions

**Friday, April 26**

**8:30 AM – 6:00 PM**

**Animal Control Officer Basic Training (Day 1)**

*Randy Turner, Esq.*

**Ray Rentschler, Instructor**

Texas Unites, a program of Operation Kindness, is a Texas Department of State Health Services approved sponsor of the Animal Control Officer Basic Training Course. This course is for current Animal Control Officers and those looking to become Animal Control Officers. Day 1 includes 7.5 hours of the 12.5 hour training.

Meeting the standards and curricula as prescribed by Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 829, this two-day course will cover: (1) state laws governing animal control and protection and animal cruelty; (2) animal health and disease recognition, control, and prevention; (3) the humane care and treatment of animals; (4) standards for care and control of animals in an animal shelter; (5) standards and procedures for the transportation of animals; (6) principles and procedures for capturing and handling stray domestic animals and wildlife, including principles and procedures to be followed with respect to an instrument used specifically for deterring the bite of an animal; (7) first aid for injured animals; (8) the documentation of animal cruelty evidence and courtroom procedures; (9) animal shelter operations and administration; (10) spaying and neutering, microchipping, and adoption; (11) communications and public relations; and (12) state and federal laws for possession of controlled substances and other medications; and (13) other topics pertinent to animal control and animal shelter personnel.

To satisfactorily complete the course, the participant must pass both parts of a test prepared by the sponsor. The test will be administered at the close of this two-day training.

**8:45 AM – 9:45 AM**

**Service & Emotional Support Animals: Updates on Animal Accommodation Laws**

*Randy Turner, Esq.*

*Cindy Smiley, Esq.*

Under Texas law and the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), people with disabilities may bring their service animals to all public accommodations, such as government buildings, hotels, restaurants, stadiums, and stores. These laws also require those who operate transportation services to allow service animals. But recent trends show continuing confusion over the definitions of service animals, emotional support animals, therapy animals, and pets. Randy Turner and Cindy Smiley (accompanied by a future service dog puppy-in-training) will present an informative, interactive session on the federal and state laws governing animals in public places, including real-life examples of situations involving these laws and their implementation.

**9:45 AM – 10:45 AM**

**Texas Civil and Criminal Seizure Law for Animals: Texas’ Best Kept Secret**

*Lara Tomlin, Esq.*

*Robyn Katz, Esq.*

Under Texas law, animals seized as evidence under the Texas Penal Code may be held for long periods of time while the arrested violator’s criminal trial makes its way through the justice system. Many don’t know about the civil seizure law wherein abused animals can be seized under the Texas Health and Safety Code, which carries less of a burden of proof, no arrest, and allows the animals’ disposition within a ten-day period, pending any appeals. In this course, you will learn all about the Texas civil seizure law, real examples of seizures, when to use the criminal versus civil seizure, and how it is a great alternative in removing cruelly treated animals.

**11:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Employment Issues Surrounding Shelter Professionals and Volunteers**

*Brian J. Levy, Esq., Lynch Law Firm*

A cat is not a dog, a volunteer is not an employee, and a law is not a suggestion. Brian Levy, of the Austin-based employment law firm, The Lynch Law Firm, will discuss several poor employment practices that spread across Texas quicker than giardia in August. More specifically, he will help you get a leash on the activities performed by volunteers, shelter care for humans via the interactive process, and workplace biases more subtle than black-dog syndrome.
12:45 PM – 1:45 PM
KEYNOTE ADDRESS: From DC: Trends in Federal Animal Protection Laws and What it Means for Texas
Chris Green, Executive Director, Animal Legal Defense Fund

In recent years, several federal laws and regulatory actions affecting animals have come to the forefront in Washington DC. Whether it's the EATS Act and regulating agricultural practices within the states to strengthening enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act, there are many potentially impactful bills (both good and bad for animals) currently in front of our federal elected officials. This talk will take a deeper look at some of these laws and bills, identify any trends, and discuss how they might affect animals in Texas—including companion animals, farmed animals, animals used in research or entertainment, and wildlife.

1:45 PM – 2:45 PM
Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) Breeder Law Update
Laura Pfefferle, Assistant General Counsel, TDLR
Rebecca Burkhalter, Prosecutor, Enforcement, TDLR
LaTasha Poland, Program Specialist, Compliance, TDLR
Della Lindquist, Deputy General Counsel, TDLR
Fernando Reyes, Field Inspections Manager, TDLR
James McEachern, Inspector, TDLR

Recent updates to the state’s laws that regulate commercial breeders have been made. This workshop will discuss all of the requirements for breeders as well as have an explanation of field inspection protocols that the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation use to ensure standards are met.

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Ask an Animal Law Attorney
Randy Turner, Esq.
Donald Feare, Esq.

Ever been at a dinner party and found out a guest was an animal lawyer? The questions start pouring out. "My neighbor threatens to call the cops on my barking dog. Can I really get a ticket?" "The rescue wants to take my dog back because he escaped last week. Can they do that?" Well, here is the chance of a lifetime. These animal lawyer titans, who have focused their careers on helping animals and/or their owners over the past thirty years, will come together for a unique opportunity to answer questions from the Texas Unites guests.

4:00 PM – 4:45 PM
Insight from the Capitol: Passing an Animal Bill
The Honorable LuLu Flores

Effectuating change for animals through legislation in Texas can be incredibly powerful but incredibly difficult. Three out of four bills fail every legislative session. The Honorable LuLu Flores will discuss her experience while working on an animal-related bill, HB 3756 (relating to dogs in hot cars), during the last legislative session. Representative Flores will explain how the legislative process works, the journey of an animal bill from pre-filing until it hits the Governor’s desk, and the challenges associated with passing a bill at the state level. It will include a question and answer section with our attendees.

Saturday, April 27
8:30 AM – 5:30 PM
Animal Control Officer Basic Training (Day 2)
Ray Rentschler, Instructor

Texas Unites, a program of Operation Kindness, is a Texas Department of State Health Services approved sponsor of the Animal Control Officer Basic Training Course. This course is for current Animal Control Officers and those looking to become Animal Control Officers. Day 2 includes 5 hours of the 12.5 hour training and the end of course test.

Meeting the standards and curricula as prescribed by Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 829, this two-day course will cover: (1) state laws governing animal control and protection and animal cruelty; (2) animal health and disease recognition, control, and prevention; (3) the humane care and treatment of animals; (4) standards for care and control of animals in an animal shelter; (5) standards and procedures for the transportation of animals; (6) principles and procedures for capturing and handling stray domestic animals and wildlife, including principles and procedures to be followed with respect to an instrument used specifically for deterring the bite of an animal; (7) first aid for injured animals; (8) the documentation of animal cruelty evidence and courtroom procedures; (9) animal shelter operations and administration; (10) spaying and neutering, microchipping, and adoption; (11) communications and public relations; and (12)
state and federal laws for possession of controlled substances and other medications; and (13) other topics pertinent to animal control and animal shelter personnel.

To satisfactorily complete the course, the participant must pass both parts of a test prepared by the sponsor. The test will be administered at the close of this two-day training.

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM
Opening General Session, presented by Petco Love

Petco Love is excited to open the Texas Unites for Animals Conference! You will be welcomed to a weekend of learning and connecting with your peers. Come and kick off the Texas Unites for Animals Conference with Petco Love!

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Designing for Healthy Animals
Kim Hanschen, AIA, Fear Free, Associate Principal, Architect, Jackson and Ryan Architects
Roberta Westbrook, DVM, Chief Animal Welfare and Medical Officer, Houston SPCA

Veterinary clinics are often the heart of animal welfare facilities, providing lifesaving services to the animals in your care. Increasingly, clinics also stretch to provide much needed services to the community. To meet these needs, many organizations work with operational and workflow challenges in addition to deficient facilities, functioning with limited space, inefficient workflows, and inadequate isolation.

Kim Hanschen, AIA, Associate Principal in charge of Animal Welfare Design at Jackson & Ryan Architects and Roberta Westbrook, DVM, Chief Animal Welfare and Medical Officer at Houston SPCA understand the operational, veterinary, and physical challenges faced by organizations striving to care for their animals and those in their community. This talk will provide a discussion of key elements that impact the health of your animals, the design process of new and renovated facilities, and a case study of the Houston SPCA Campus for All Animals which illustrates how shelter operations and shelter design can work together to create a successful facility.

Intake Diversion Best Practices in Action: The Austin Pets Alive PASS Program
Lucy Fernandez, Intake Diversion (PASS) Program Manager, Austin Pets Alive

Whether you’re a municipal shelter with zero budget or a multimillion-dollar rescue organization with supportive stakeholders, being proactive in your intake approach can help keep animals out of the shelter and in homes. In this session, you’ll learn how using email templates, easy marketing strategies, efficient networking, data gathering basics, and free in-kind donation distribution helps people, helps pets, and frees up shelter resources for animals who actually need them.

Recent Texas Cases Involving the LINK: The Basics on Recognizing and Investigating the LINK between Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence and Prosecuting an Animal Cruelty Case Under Texas Law
Shelby Bobosky, Esq., Executive Director, Texas Humane Legislation Network

This course will host an in-depth discussion of the relationship between animal abuse and interpersonal violence, the basics of the LINK, recent Texas examples with mass shooters, LINK related Texas and federal laws from a misdemeanors to felonies, and the relationship between animal abuse and other violent crime, including gangs, drugs, and domestic violence/child abuse. Lastly, we will discuss why elected officials should take animal abuse seriously.

Grant Writing Boot Camp
Cathy M. Rosenthal, CHES, Animal Welfare Communications Consultant, CathyRosenthal.com

Grants can provide a critical means of support for animal welfare organizations. Yet, despite their importance, few animal welfare organizations know where to find funders and the steps necessary to prepare and write a successful grant. Learning as you go is frustrating and can impact your ability to secure grants in a timely way. This workshop demystifies the grant writing process by showing you where to find funders, how to prepare materials frequently requested, and how to persuasively tell your story. No matter your level of experience, this workshop has something for everyone. (Cathy has been writing grants for over 20 years and has secured tens of millions in funding for animal welfare projects. In 2023 alone, Cathy secured more than $1.5 million in funding for animal welfare projects.)
Testicle Talk: Not Your Traditional Customer Service Class
Gina Knepp, National Shelter Engagement Director, Michelson Found Animals Foundation

Attendees will have no choice but to reflect intently on their own customer service skills. This is a course that includes grit, humor, and an opportunity to develop team activities to support and ensure that incredible customer service is delivered by every organization and that it is bred into the culture of the organization, excluding no one. The training will offer tangible conversation management with external customers, but also focus on internal customer service, which is far more important and frankly dictates how external customers are ultimately treated. A small portion of the curriculum does include customer service basics (body language, tone, words), but dials a bit deeper into implicit bias and the recognition that we all carry disdain for some things/people and that those feelings can be overcome if recognized. The most important aspect of the training are the candid conversations that most of our colleagues are ill equipped to have. There is no playbook that truly walks one through challenging topics. For example, how do you teach someone to talk about testicles and why dogs don't really need them? How does one tell the 85-year-old lady with the sick cat that we can't help her? Are there better ways to handle adoption returns to maximize the information we get while not disemboweling the adopter? Are you prepared to tell someone that euthanasia is the best option and leave them feeling like it was the best decision possible? Animal welfare work is hard, but it could be so much less challenging if we spent some time really practicing these conversations and sharing approaches that seem to work. This portion of the session will be interactive, and students will have an opportunity to see practice conversations in action.

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM
Curbing of Disease and Outbreak Prevention as Intake Rises
Amber Alu, DVM, Chief Medical Officer, SPCA of Texas
Roberta Westbrook, DVM, Chief Animal Welfare and Medical Officer, Houston SPCA

As canine intake numbers are projected to continue to rise, disease risk increases. However, everyone within the shelter has the power to have a big impact on the animal's health and plays a role in helping curb the spread of disease from the moment the animals enter the shelter. Within this presentation, we will review key prevention and management strategies to reduce incidence to result in a happier and healthier presentation. Space will be given to discuss management of disease during an outbreak to reduce impact. CIRDC will be reviewed with emphasis on the major players in the shelter.

Release The Hounds! Building and Growing Short Term Foster Programs To Turbo Boost Long Term Lifesaving
Finnegan Dowling, Shelter Program Manager, Mutual Rescue
Kymee Bair, CPDT-KA, FPPE, Behavior and Enrichment Manager, Houston Humane Society
Angelina Saucedo, Marketing Manager, Houston Humane Society

These days it seems like everyone is full of long stays and large dogs and no one has had an open kennel in years. How can you increase live outcomes and inspire your community to help? Short term foster! Day and overnight foster programs can help you grow your foster pool and move large and long stay dogs. Whether your shelter doesn't have a short term foster program or is interested in growing an existing program, this workshop is for you. Last year, Houston Humane started a short-term foster program and saw amazing results. In the first part of this workshop, we'll show you what we did, how we did it and the results we saw when we invited the public to come take pets out on field trips. In the second part, we'll walk you through the basics for starting a program, including free resources you
can utilize to get going and how to scale a program for any size shelter. Using examples from shelters around the country, we’ll show you innovative ways to turbo-charge an existing program. From getting a program started to taking it to the next level, attendees will come out of the training inspired, empowered and with the tools they need to start or grow their short term foster program - and get more dogs adopted.

**Letter of the Law and Spirit of the Law: Balancing Compliance and Compassion in Animal Control**

Spencer Conover, Assistant Director, Pasco County Animal Services  
Jerrica Owen, Executive Director, National Animal Care & Control Association

In the world of animal control, navigating the complex landscape of laws and regulations is essential to ensure the welfare and safety of both animals and communities. However, compliance alone does not guarantee the best outcomes for all involved. Understanding the importance of balancing the letter of the law with the spirit of the law is the key to fostering compassionate and effective practices in animal control. In this session, we will explore how to create a compassionate and compliant approach that prioritizes the well-being of animals and fosters positive community engagement. We will delve into the intricate relationship between compliance and compassion and explore the nuanced challenges faced by animal control officers and discuss strategies for finding a harmonious balance between legal requirements and the well-being of animals.

Through real-life case studies, interactive discussions, and practical examples, we will examine how to approach animal control situations with empathy, understanding, and a focus on positive outcomes. We will explore ways to interpret and apply the law in a manner that embraces flexibility, fairness, and the best interests of animals and the community at large.

**Slow the Flow: Creating Community-Focused Collaborative Lifesaving Programs**

Jordan Craig, Executive Director, Spay Neuter Network  
Sarah McGoldrick, Vice President of Animal Operations, Dallas Pets Alive

According to Shelter Animals Count, nearly 100,000 pets are entering shelters in the Dallas-Fort Worth area annually. Shelters in the area have made incredible lifesaving strides over the past decade, but many are still at critical capacity and struggling to keep up with the constant flow of incoming cats and dogs. The solution? Collaboration and proactive lifesaving programs that help pets and people long before they need the safety net of a shelter. Find out how rescue groups and municipal shelters in the Dallas-Fort Worth area are working together, thinking outside of the box, and using technology to support pet owners through surrender diversion programs, community vaccination and pet food events, assistance for pet owners experiencing homelessness, and more.

**Legislative Update: The Future From the Rearview Mirror**

Shelby Bobosky, Esq., Executive Director, Texas Humane Legislation Network  
Audrey Tamez, Director of Legislative Engagement, ASPCA

Join Shelby Bobosky and Audrey Tamez as they discuss the laws passed in the recent Texas legislative session and the last federal session. Shelby will tackle the good, bad and ugly from the 2023 Lege Texas Session while Audrey tackles needed federal legislative changes for the animals. Change is happening at an ever-faster pace. Are things getting better or worse? Are all the agents that can effect change for animals working with legislators in an efficient manner? Taking stock of where we were and where we are will help us build a better future for animals.

**Return to Home**

Gina Knepp, National Shelter Engagement Director, Michelson Found Animals Foundation

With attrition being a constant struggle in the animal welfare industry, offering basic/beginner courses are critical if we are to ensure that all new members of our organizations understand specific programming, particularly curricula that has a direct nexus to lifesaving. Getting lost animals back home where they belong should be a priority for all agencies that take in lost/stray animals. Students will explore how reunification rates are calculated, determine organizational goal setting, understand why data is important and what actionable steps can be taken to develop a culture that is committed to returning pets home as quickly as possible. A tool kit approach will be taken walking students through the key components of a return to home program, which include: 1. Culture 2. Data 3. Websites 4. Technology-
tools (free and low cost) that support lost pet reunification 5. Community messaging/marketing 6. Lost pet prevention.

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM
Outside the Box: Where Shelter Medicine & Elevated Quality of Care Meet
Dr. Tiffany Tobaben, Chief Veterinarian, Operation Kindness
Heather Dolson, Vice President of Lifesaving Programs, Operation Kindness

For too long shelter medicine has been considered lesser quality than care received in private practice. In this session we will be discussing how the opposite can be true. We will present outside-the-box ideas you can take back with you to treat medical conditions while maintaining a high quality of care and staying within your organization’s already stretched resources.

Advancing Your Community Cat Program
Leah Long, Regional Senior Specialist, Best Friends Animal Society
Laura Donahue, Senior Director for Advocacy and Network, Best Friends Animal Society

In 2023, Texas passed House Bill 3660, stating that outdoor cats participating in TNVR are not considered to be abandoned under Texas’ animal cruelty law. This session will cover how this lifesaving precedent allows for many shelters across Texas to start their own community cat program and equip you with the tools to do it. We will delve into the key components needed when launching or enhancing a community cat program. When it comes to community cat programming there is a lot that needs to be considered: shelter policy, stakeholder buy-in, staffing, surgery capacity, program operations, and more. Starting a community cat program can often seem daunting when keeping all of that in mind, but this presentation will give you proven strategies to utilize data, community advocacy, and best practices to create a solid and sustainable foundation for a community cat program. By utilizing these strategies, participants will walk away with ideas to increase cat lifesaving immediately and a better understanding of how to create a successful community cat program for their community. Prepare to come to this session with identified challenges and barriers to starting this lifesaving program. The last portion of the workshop will be dedicated to workshopping your plans for advancing a community cat program in your community.

Officer Safety
Kevin Hearst, Consultant/ Instructor, Law Enforcement Training Institute

Creating a surviving mindset to meet and achieve job requirements, while ensuring your safety. We often fall into a routine or habits that can seem innocent but prove harmful later. Let’s talk about an adventure into safe reliable protocols by using an awesome training tactic (OODA Loop).

Taking Back Your Lifesaving Power: How to Deal With Backlash
Paula Powell, Senior Strategist, South-Central Region, Best Friends Animal Society
Catherine Eldredge, Strategist, South-Central Region, Best Friends Animal Society

Across the country, shelters receive backlash from the media, people on social media, and sometimes even from partners and people within their organizations, taking valuable time away from lifesaving and lowering morale. During this interactive session, shelters, rescue groups, and other organizations in attendance will discover the power of language, learn how to deal with backlash, and find out how to communicate effectively and be transparent.

Emergency Temporary Sheltering for Disasters & Large Scale Intake
Kim Meloncon, Director of Emergency Services, Animal Investigation and Response

Whether a natural disaster or large scale intake it is important that you know how to create an Emergency Temporary Shelter (ETS) for safe housing of impacted animals. The logistics, planning, supplies and running of an ETS in a disaster situation can be overwhelming to say the least. This workshop will share the basics on what kind of ETS best fits your situation, where to establish an ETS to provide short-term housing for displaced or seized animals, and tips on who should staff the facility to increase positive outcomes for the animals. We will cover the basics for natural disasters when you will have owned and displaced animals and how to be a resource for pet owners in your community. We will also explore the differences for a large scale seizure or surrender to your facility and how to prepare for criminal custody holds.
10 Customer Service Training Games
Cathy M. Rosenthal, CHES, Animal Welfare Communications Consultant, CathyRosenthal.com

When it comes to customer service, you know the basics, right? Smile, greet people, and use active listening skills. You will receive a tip sheet outlining the basics, so we can focus on gamifying your training to make hard-to-grasp concepts easier to learn. So, no sitting in this workshop. It's all fun and games as we explore some customer service concepts to take your skills to the next level. Learn these skills for your own career development or, if you are in leadership, take them back to your staff to empower your team to handle the most challenging customers.

SUNDAY, APRIL 28

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM
Growing Expectations of Animal Services, presented by Best Friends Animal Society
Roel Roy Rodriguez, P.E., City Manager, City of McAllen
Melissa Webber, Director, Dallas Animal Services
Christie Banduch, Animal Services Manager, San Marcos Regional Animal Shelter
Kasey Schwartzer, Animal Shelter Supervisor, City of Lampasas
Brent Toellner, Senior Director, Lifesaving Programs, Best Friends Animal Society

Animal Services used to be a forgotten segment of local government, but over the past two decades, it has become a valued community resource. Residents now expect far more from their animal services divisions, including a successful balance of public safety, community support, shelter lifesaving, and transparency. Join us as we examine rising expectations and discuss how we can meet and exceed them.

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM
High-Quality, High-Volume Spay/Neuter: Updates and Strategies to Increase Capacity
Andrea Cermele, DVM, Veterinarian, Best Friends Animal Society

Even as lifesaving advances in shelters and communities, the pandemic was instrumental in showing us that it's too early to let our foot off of the gas pedal. Proactive population control is still a vital component of shelter lifesaving, and access to spay/neuter is an integral part of access to veterinary care for pets in communities. In this session, attendees will learn about the impact of sterilization on lifesaving in shelters and why high-quality, high-volume spay/neuter in shelters and communities is crucial to both lifesaving and access to veterinary care. The role of all stakeholders in provision of services cannot be understated as they all play a vital part in lifesaving success; this includes shelters, non-profit organizations, and private practice veterinary clinics. Unique programs and collaborations between organizations will be highlighted.

Brief updates in various surgical and anesthetic strategies to provide efficient and effective anesthesia, analgesia, and surgical care to shelter pets will be covered, including a brief overview of surgical techniques, prevention of common complications, and a brief overview of anesthetic/analgesia protocols. Strategies for provision of quality patient monitoring, anesthesia, and perioperative care in the HQHSV setting will be discussed, with special attention given to strategies that contribute to efficient patient flow at all stages of the clinic. This includes intake, anesthetic induction and preparation, movement through the surgery suite, recovery, and clinic discharge. The use of volunteers in the clinic setting can contribute to improved overall efficiency and patient care without substantially increasing surgery costs. Special attention will be given to the provision of services for Trap-Neuter Vaccinate-Return or Community Cat programs. Finally, an overview of existing programs for HQHSV training opportunities and online resources will be provided so that attendees know where to go to learn more.

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM
Hard Times Call for Hard Decisions
Valarie V. Tynes, DVM, DACVB, DACAW, Shelter Veterinary Behaviorist, SPCA of Texas

Animal shelters are facing unprecedented challenges in the post-Covid world. Intake is up and adoptions are not. An open intake shelter will ultimately be faced with dogs that are simply not adoptable, but who decides what is adoptable and what is not? A shelter with a behavior department may have the time to do a certain amount of behavior modification, but how much time and effort does a small team put into a dog whose prognosis for success in a home is poor? How do you determine the prognosis? Behavioral euthanasia is a highly controversial subject but one that must be addressed if a shelter also recognizes their responsibility for helping keep their community safe by not releasing dogs that
may cause harm. This presentation will review how one shelter is facing these challenges by using clear adoptability guidelines and bite risk assessments while also closely monitoring quality of life.

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

It Was Us; We Were the Problem! Learn from Our Oversights: A Shelter’s Self-Evaluation in Disease Prevention to Increase Life Saving

Stephanie Coe, Sr. Operations Manager, Operation Kindness
Heather Dolson, VP of Lifesaving Programs, Operation Kindness

In 2021, Operation Kindness completed a self-evaluation of our disease prevention protocols. The discovery was made that 30% of animals diagnosed with common shelter diseases were likely exposed to the illness within our shelter walls. It was us; we were the problem! The next step was to put together training, set meetings and roll out new policies and procedures to mitigate and prevent illness within the shelter. With a staff of over a hundred, this was a big culture shift that needed to happen quickly. Two years later, we have not only significantly decreased the spread of disease, but because of our efforts we now have the open space to transfer in pets needing parvo, ringworm, or upper respiratory treatment. In this session we’ll discuss using data to determine concerns with disease prevention and the cost-effective easy to implement ways to quickly turn those numbers around and increase your life saving.

Interfacing with Adopters Using the Science of Online Dating

Stephanie Lara, Adoption Manager, Friends for Life Animal Shelter
Melissa Taylor, CBCC-KA, CSB-C, Behavior and Training Manager, Friends For Life Animal Shelter

Innovational shelter adoption programs keep a finger on the pulse of trends in adopter preference. Paying careful attention and adapting to how people make decisions about the pets they bring home can make a significant difference in length of stay, adoption, and return rates for animal shelters. One noteworthy trend is the dramatic increase in disintermediated consumer decision-making, indicating an increasing preference for the removal of intermediaries in a supply chain, including that of shelter animal adoption. At Friends For Life, we have designed and implemented an adopter-centered adoption counseling program based on a disintermediated approach similar to that of online dating algorithms. This unique, choice-based approach in pre- and post-adoption counseling has resulted in a marked improvement in adoption matching metrics and has more than doubled the rate of adopter feedback, allowing us to provide adopters with timely counseling when they are experiencing troubles with their newly adopted companion animals and thereby preventing adoption returns.

Community Policing and Animal Protection: Considerations for Enforcement Agencies

Tyler Winckler, Senior Coordinator, Law Enforcement Training Center, Humane Society of the United States

Animals can play a critical role in fostering trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Building upon fundamental concepts of a community-oriented policing model, this course will review relevant applications in animal protection, including tips for positive interactions, creative community partnerships and dynamic problem solving in the field.


Lisa Norwood, Public Relations & Outreach Manager, San Antonio Animal Care Services

Media relations is an often overlooked (and underused) skill for animal control agencies. The ability to work well with media can make a huge impact on community awareness and your department’s reputation when things are going well...but it is even more vital when things are going badly and you’re dealing with a crisis. Using lessons learned from addressing a recent deadly dog attack in San Antonio, this workshop will use easy-to-learn techniques to give attendees a foundation for handling crisis communications in a way that educates the public and keeps their agency’s reputation intact.

Bridging the Gap: Results, Analysis & Discussion of 2022 RTH National Survey

Jerrica Owen, Executive Director, National Animal Care & Control Association
Lorien Clemens, Co-Founder & CEO, PetHub, Inc.

Is there a gap between the work animal welfare organizations do for lost pet recovery and their communities actually recover lost pets? This was the question we sought to answer in a joint effort by the National Animal Care & Control Association, PetHub and ‘cause Digital Marketing. Together they
conducted a national survey to both animal welfare professionals and pet parents to: 1) explore how U.S. pet owner perceptions and animal welfare worker perceptions of lost-dog prevention and reunion strategies are similar or different, and then 2) determine what lessons can we learn from comparing the two that can help bring more lost pets home. The survey measured resources and strategies used by pet parents when faced with looking for their pets, against those used by the animal welfare agencies when attempting to reunite lost/stray pets with their owners. Presentation will include survey results that clearly indicate significant gaps that could be directly linked to the pressure and high numbers that some shelters/animal welfare organizations are currently experiencing. By sharing the results with animal welfare professionals, together as an industry we can start to have an impact on significantly increasing reunification across the country.

Every Dog, Every Day!
Aimee Sadler, Founder and CEO, Dogs Playing for Life

Dogs live to play, now let them play to live! Come discover the meaning of Every Dog, Every Day! and learn how playgroups can provide canine enrichment, assessment, behavior modification, and improve staff and volunteer morale all while enhancing quality of life, increasing live outcomes, and shortening length of stay. Dogs Playing for Life Founder and CEO, Aimee Sadler, has been teaching playgroup seminars at shelters across the United States and Canada since 2009. In that time, Dogs Playing for Life has served over 350 shelters, working one-on-one with their staff and volunteers to create safe, sustainable playgroup programs. With many shelters across the country struggling with overcrowding and understaffing, playgroups have never been more critical. Far from being an “extra” to be fit in only when there is time left at the end of the day, playgroups can improve efficiency and benefit shelter operations in a number of ways including providing for more efficient cleaning routines, ensuring more successful adoption and foster matches, strengthening dog handling skills, and improving public perception of the shelter. In addition to making the argument for why playgroups are so badly needed, this presentation will also detail what is needed to start a playgroup program (hint: it’s probably less than you think), and how shelters can get creative to create the time, space, and motivation to make playgroups part of daily operations.

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM
Compassion Fatigue: Building Resiliency to the Stresses of the Work
Cathy M. Rosenthal, CHES, Animal Welfare Communications Consultant, CathyRosenthal.com

If we have learned one thing from COVID-19, resilience is important. Resiliency isn’t the same as stress management, which often is one’s reaction and effort to manage stress after a trauma or crisis occurs. Resilience is proactive. It’s about learning skills and improving your ability to be prepared for the next crisis. Some people refer to it as one’s ability to bounce back. Resiliency is not just needed to handle the next crisis, or the one after that; it’s also needed to handle the day-to-day stresses that come with this line of work. Building resiliency means learning new ways to deal with challenges and setbacks. This workshop addresses the importance of developing resiliency and steps that both individuals and organizations can take to create a better culture of resiliency in the animal welfare world.

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM
On-Leash Reactivity Case Files
Aimee Sadler, Founder and CEO, Dogs Playing for Life

Relatively common in shelter settings, on-leash reactivity (OLR) can be frustrating and difficult to manage for shelter staff and volunteers. OLR may be misdiagnosed as “aggression,” limit a dog’s placement options, contribute to longer lengths of stay, and make dogs difficult to pass off to adopters. But when is OLR just a bad habit or the result of shelter stress and deterioration, and when is it indicative of an issue that needs to be addressed? This presentation will introduce a selection of case studies of real-life dogs that were sent to us at Dogs Playing for Life’s Canine Center Florida, an advanced training and behavior care center for shelter dogs, for on-leash reactivity. We’ll discuss what worked—and what didn’t—and how we got each of these dogs to the point where they were ready to be adopted. Each mini case study will feature an abundance of videos, enabling attendees to feel like they are working the dog alongside the trainers. The presentation will also include a detailed discussion of the protocols used in each case so that attendees can implement them at their own organizations. We’ll discuss how to build impulse control, improve leash manners, and increase responsiveness to the handler. We’ll also discuss the ways in which equipment can help and hinder efforts to decrease on-leash reactivity and
how to select the best equipment for each individual dog.

**Tales from the Barkside: Working with Municipal Shelters 101**  
*Bethany Colonnese, Chief Operations Officer, San Antonio Animal Care Services*  
*Lisa Norwood, Public Relations & Outreach Manager, San Antonio Animal Care Services*

A workshop just for the rescues and non-profits out there who find themselves working with municipal animal agencies...or even those who want to seal the deal! Working with governmental entities can come with its own set of rules (and rewards) so this session will detail the basics: working with municipal partners, why all rescues should work in concert with their local animal control, and how to do it without tearing your hair out (or getting arrested). Taught by two long-time government employees (who admit they’re a little biased), this workshop can help you save even more lives and answer your questions about why municipal shelters do what they do.

**Tactical Animal Handling**  
*Kevin Hearst, Consultant/Instructor, Law Enforcement Training Institute*

Non-threatening capture techniques and humane animal handling, with student participation during practical demonstration. Students will learn to access canine body (overview, midrange and closeup), with an open discussion about equipment usage. (ACO Leonel Perales of Pasadena, TX Animal Control will assist with practical presentation section videos)

**Puppy Mills in Texas: What You Can Do to Combat Them in Your Community**  
*Mindi Callison, Founder/Executive Director, Bailing Out Benji*

This session will cover the status of the puppy mill industry in 2024 as it pertains to Texas and nationwide. Texas has a unique role in the puppy mill industry where there are not only puppy mills locally, but the puppy-selling stores are importing over 10,000 unaltered puppies and kittens from midwest mills annually. This session will also give action items for rescues, shelters and advocates to take in order to create lasting change in their communities, including discussion on Texas’ HB 870 from 2023, what the new statewide preemption law means for local advocacy and how to report unlicensed puppy mills or file complaints when contacted about consumers buying sick puppies.

**Is Your Team Ready for Change, More Importantly Are You?**  
*Kelly Furnas, Chief Operating Officer, Operation Kindness*

The animal welfare world has been through tremendous change and it will continue to evolve. How well do leaders do with change? People tend to see change as black and white; you are good with change or you don’t like it. Through this session, participants will learn that there are seven traits associated with change. This session is designed for those that lead teams through change. Do you recognize your own strengths and growth areas when it comes to change? This course allows you to self-evaluate your “change readiness” and describes the 4 stages of change everyone goes through on the way to commitment. Only then are you ready to communicate change and effectively lead a team through it.

**Essentials to Unlock Your Shelter’s Potential (Before the Word Basic was Featured in Urban Dictionary)**  
*Chelsea Staley, Director of Lifesaving, Petco Love*

In the early 2000s, a handful of open-admission shelters creatively and courageously developed innovative programs that have become the cornerstones of lifesaving: adoptions, foster care, rescue transfers, shelter medicine for non-veterinarians, proactive redemptions, and technology. The best part about these revolutionary programs? They had low barriers to entry, meaning any shelter could execute them – and did. Shelters everywhere accepted and adopted the programs, resulting in a dramatic increase in the national save rate! Once the cornerstones of lifesaving were set, the animal welfare industry continued to innovate. Daily playgroups, new technologies, broadening services to include low-cost spay/neuter and wellness, and pet retention counseling continued to increase the national save rate. And we haven’t looked back. Until now. Animal Welfare Organizations industry-wide are feeling the heat this peak-intake season and beyond. While post-pandemic intake has yet to rebound to 2019 levels, shelter pet adoption has stalled, resulting in shelters and rescues alike experiencing critical in-care numbers. For the first time in history, the national save rate declined in 2022 and is tracking to decline again in 2023*. What changed? Nothing - except our
focus. COVID-19 birthed many beautiful lifesaving programs – most of which happen outside a shelter’s walls. Community centered-lifesaving is the future of sheltering, but we can’t turn our focus outward until we’re consistently saving the lives of pets in our care. If you’re new to animal welfare or overwhelmed at where to begin on your org’s journey to lifesaving – this session is for you! Attendees will be encouraged to unlock their shelter’s potential by getting back to basics. We’ll review sheltering 101 essentials, including program highlights, decision making for impact, capacity for care, and lifesaving on a budget. Attendees will have a chance to win grant awards!

2:15 PM – 3:45 PM
Paradigm Shift in ASV Guidelines: Embracing Positive Animal Welfare through the Five Domains Model
Sheila Segurson, DVM, DACVB, Board Certified Veterinary Behaviorist, Director of Community Solutions, Maddie’s Fund

This presentation centers on the significant paradigm shift in the second edition of the ASV guidelines, departing from the conventional five freedoms and embracing the innovative Five Domains model. By prioritizing positive experiences over merely avoiding negative ones, this new approach represents a fundamental change in promoting animal welfare. The audience will explore the Five Domains model’s key principles, emphasizing nutrition, environment, physical health, and behavioral opportunities, and learn how these elements contribute to an animal’s overall mental state and wellbeing. Attendees will gain valuable insights to support and implement positive animal welfare practices.

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM
Won’t You Be My Neighbor: Collaborative and Lifesaving Medical Teams in Your Community
Meredith Jones, Chief Community Initiatives Officer, Operation Kindness
Rachel Redd, DVM, Chief Community Initiatives Veterinarian, Operation Kindness

Do your local shelters need spay/neuter surgeries performed, help with veterinary exams, or disease mitigation within their communities? And if they received this help, would they be able to save more lives? In this session, we will explore how medical teams can fill service gaps across multiple shelters and communities. Whether you are a potential provider or recipient, we will discuss tangible and accessible strategies to partner with your neighboring organizations to increase the number of lives saved in shelters.

Shelter Dog Activity: What are They Doing When Nobody’s Looking?
April Huntsman, CAWA, Senior Director of Animal Welfare, Adopt a Pet

Have you ever been curious about what dogs do in the shelter when we’re not watching? How much are they sleeping, drinking, scratching, or even licking? We were too, so we put activity and health trackers (think Fit Bit for dogs) on thousands of shelter dogs to find out (and collected DNA samples too!). In this session, we’ll provide insights from thousands of data points collected. We’ll share how shelter dog behavior differs from in-foster behavior and even in-home behavior, along with case studies from several participating shelters on how they used the activity monitors’ data to guide program implementation.

Placement & Shelter Programs Workshop
Details Coming Soon!

Why Can’t We All Just Get Along? A Proactive Approach to Resolving Human/Wildlife Conflicts
Kate Rugroden, Director of Special Projects, Bat World Sanctuary

As humans continue to expand their footprint on the landscape, conflicts between people and wildlife inevitably increase. In this 2-hour course, participants will learn techniques for identifying the root causes of human/wildlife conflicts, proven solutions for resolving conflicts, and strategies for preventing future conflicts. We will also explore ways to engage the community and establish cooperative partnerships between citizens, Animal Control agencies, and wildlife rehabilitators to ensure positive outcomes while reducing ineffective solutions such as trap-and-relocate.

Pro Tips!  Media Q&A Panel
Zachary Lashway, Anchor/Reporter, KPRC-Houston
Tori Fugate, Chief Communications Officer, KC Pet Project

Join this panel of media professionals and gain a perspective from the other side of your organization’s media interactions. They are ready to answer your questions and give advice on getting your organization seen and heard and how to work more effectively with TV, print, and digital media.
Flow Matters: Is Your Data Making an Impact?  
**Meaghan Swan-Wilson, Data and Logistics Senior Manager, Operation Kindness**  
**Ed Jamison, CEO, Operation Kindness**

Is your shelter data making an impact? Join Operation Kindness to discuss how to use reporting to make data-driven decisions on animal population management and increase efficiency with operational processes. Then learn about the change management needed to implement new processes. You'll also take a look at reporting examples from different shelter databases and leave with actionable steps that you can take back to your organization.

Intake Best Practices for Disease Prevention  
**Jordana Moerbe, Shelter Support Director, Austin/American Pets Alive!**

Do not wait for a disease outbreak to happen in your shelter! The first hour after an animal is brought into a shelter is the most important. Vaccination and medical triage is key during the intake process. Learn exactly what that means and what steps you can take to ensure your process, pets, and people are set up for success. We will also share with you easy and efficient ways to identify common yet catastrophic diseases on intake that anybody can quickly learn.

**Monday, April 29**

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM  
**Reducing Shelter Cat Length of Stay: A Behavioral Approach**  
**Melissa Taylor, CBCC-KA, CSB-C, Behavior and Training Manager, Friends For Life Animal Shelter**

There is abundant research indicating adopters’ unsurprising preference for cats who are friendly and affectionate. Cats who interact socially with shelter visitors, no matter their age category, have one third the length of stay of those who are fearful and unapproachable. Environmental enrichment can improve cat behavior to a degree, but what if it were possible to directly cultivate pro-social behavior in feline shelter residents?

In 2018, Friends For Life Animal Shelter launched the Fraidy Cat Program, aimed at systematically conditioning fearful shelter cats to approach and solicit affection from potential adopters. This five-step program has consistently demonstrated success even in adult cats with long-standing history of fearful behavior towards humans. Since the advent of Fraidy Cat, FFL has seen a dramatic reduction in the length of stay of less approachable, non-interactive cats, historically a population associated with long time to adoption. This presentation provides an overview of the Fraidy Cat program and resource-friendly changes that shelters can undertake to promote successful placement of fearful cats.

Accessible Pet Training Resources for Marginalized Communities  
**Shonyae Johnson, Director of Virtual Behavior Programming, Humane Rescue Alliance**

This session addresses the critical need for accessible dog and cat training resources, tailored to marginalized communities that may not otherwise have access. Join Shonyae to explore the challenges faced by pet owners with lower available income, working individuals, and other groups illustrating the impact of financial constraints, transportation issues, and time limitations on their access to conventional pet training programs. She’ll discuss innovative and cost-effective approaches for your shelter, leveraging technology and community-based solutions to make pet training more accessible. Learn about the benefits of implementing strategies for bridging the gap between these individuals, helping to support pets in their home. Together, we can make pet training accessible for all and inspire positive change in our community.

Serval, and Tegus, and BEARS, OH MY!  
**Kati Krouse, Executive Director, Bears Etc.**

This is an introductory course that includes basic care of exotics kept as a part of the exotic pet trade. As the exotic pet trade continues to boom across the US, to the point of $15 billion a year, more and more calls are being received for exotics. When rescues/animal control receive a call, what do you do? What supplies will you need? Who do you call? How do you know that the animal will end up in the right hands and not continue to be neglected and abused and/or sold back into the exotic pet trade or become a “mill animal”. You will receive resources for basic husbandry, and the people to call, when you receive a call.
Se Habla Español! (and Other Helpful Lessons in Involving Your LatinX Community in Life Saving)
Jacqueline Hernandez, Manager of Operations, National Embed Program, Best Friends Animal Society

More than 17 million Hispanics live in California and Texas alone; the two states not only make up over 40% of the U.S. population, but also with the biggest lifesaving gaps. Creating and sustaining relationships with others is crucial to our life-saving mission and without the ability of speaking the same language, it can affect how a person can share their thoughts and feelings. Are you looking to bridge the language barrier spoken throughout your community? In this session you will be able to learn about simple tools and resources to make sure you are speaking your community's language (literally!).

DEI: How and Why: Strategies to Embed DEI into Animal Welfare Organizations
Maria Morukian, MA, PCC, President and Founder, MSM Global Consulting

Animal Welfare leaders often struggle to develop and operationalize diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Although studies show that DEI is critical for organizational success and sustainability, many leaders continue to struggle with getting buy-in and maintaining momentum. Moreover, DEI efforts have been recently targeted as divisive and polarizing initiatives that should be disbanded, further complicating how leaders leverage data and research to build stronger, culturally responsive organizations. This session uses research and practical experience based on our work with leaders across the animal welfare profession to demonstrate to tackle real life challenges AWOs experience when establishing and maintaining effective diversity, equity, and inclusion practices.

Where'd All the Adopters Go?
Kerri Burrows, Adoption Grants Manager, PetSmart Charities
Rory Adams, Senior Manager of Adoption Initiatives, PetSmart Charities

In 2019, shelter adoptions were at the highest they've ever been, and though intake was also high, organizations were making huge strides in lifesaving. Enter COVID-19, which changed everything about our world, including animal welfare. Shelters and rescue groups closed to the public, and the look and feel of lifesaving changed with it. When organizations did open, they structured their shelter processes to limit risk to staff, and they narrowed their focus because of a reduced labor force. If they had a volunteer program, it suffered, so additional efforts to get animals into the community were eliminated. Though the height of the pandemic is over, our animal welfare organizations are still recovering, and many organizations have lost years of institutional knowledge. Intake is up and adoptions are down. What happened? At PetSmart Charities, we're on the front lines of the adoption effort nationwide, hosting thousands of organizations in our stores, and we have the insight into what happened to our adopters, what they expect, and how we can meet those expectations in animal welfare and save more lives. Join us as we take a deep dive into current adoption issues and help organizations reclaim their efforts to get more animals out the door and into homes so we can save more lives.

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Health & Behavior Track Workshop
Details Coming Soon!

Thinking Outside the Kennel: How to Maximize Your Life Saving Impact with Retail Adoptions
Alex Pennell-Lemley, Regional Field Program Manager, Petco Love
Amanda Payne, Lifesaving Partner Relations Specialist, Petco Love

It’s a narrative that’s becoming all too familiar: Animal Welfare Organizations, especially those in the South, are continuing to struggle with low shelter pet adoptions and critical in-care numbers. The decline in the national save rate we experienced in 2022 and 2023 may continue through 2024. That doesn't have to be our reality, though. Through dynamic partnerships and our industry's continued hard work and dedication, we can once again make progress towards our lifesaving goals. With kennel space and foster homes at a premium, shelters and rescues alike need to once again explore alternative ways to get their pets seen and adopted. By partnering with Petco, we can help with both. Organizations have the ability to house cats in the on-site habitats and have the flexibility in scheduling adoption events at Petco Pet Care Centers. With Petco Love, our grant awards are paid out based on the number of adoptions at our Petco locations. We will also provide our approved animal welfare partners an Adoption Support Benefit page to support every adopter, not just adopters at Petco, to set their journey up for success. During this session, attendees will learn how to become an adoption partner and how to get the most out of their...
adoption partnership with Petco. Attendees of this session also have a chance to win grant prizes and qualify for a one-time adoption bonus! By partnering with Petco, you save not only one life, but two!

**Mitigating Outdoor Cat Complaints**  
*Nick Walton, National Shelter Support Senior Manager, Best Friends Animal Society*

This session will cover how to respond to residents who don’t want community cats, also known as feral, stray or free-roaming cats, on their property. We’ll discuss strategic placement of deterrents, de-escalation techniques and information sharing regarding the long-term effectiveness of managing populations of community cats after sterilization.

**Unleashing Compassion: Revolutionizing Accessible and Scalable Community Clinics**  
*Meredith Jones, Chief Community Initiatives Officer, Operation Kindness  
Courtney Medina, Animal Welfare Director, 24Pet*

Community initiatives don’t have to be daunting and overwhelming. As the future of pet ownership grows and evolves, it’s crucial to develop strategies that cater to all pets and pet parents, regardless of background or location. Whether you’re a municipal organization or a 501c3 looking to help your community, join us as we talk through how to make your efforts scalable, how to think outside the box, and how to take advantage of resources already available to you. Join Meredith Jones (Operation Kindness) and Courtney Medina (24Pet) as they break down how to make community clinics accessible and equitable.

**COOP Planning: Cats, Dogs, and Unusual Emergencies**  
*Laura Welsh, Assistant Animal Services Manager, Tri-City Animal Shelter/Cedar Hill Animal Services  
Lauren Sanchez, Regional Emergency Management Operations Coordinator for Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Duncanville, and Lancaster  
Shelly Meeks, Director of Development, Humane Tomorrow*

Animal Shelters know how to care for animals in times of calm and in times of disaster when there is a surge. But what if that disaster hits closer to home and your shelter is damaged? Or key staff can’t report to work? Or you’ve lost access to all online files and systems? One staff member might know the fixes to these challenges, but do all your staff know if that person is unavailable? Creating and maintaining a COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan) captures all the information on your shelter’s key functions, backup process to accomplish them, identifies key staff, and more. A COOP can truly be your lifeline when your shelter is faced with an emergency that disrupts your normal operation so that you don’t have to think of solutions during the crisis. In this presentation you will learn how two Animal Shelters in two different cities worked through their COOP Planning process to ensure they are better prepared to face disruption and continue the crucial care of animals. We will share lessons learned and guidance so that your COOP Planning is a success.

**Leveling Up your Foster Program**  
*Abby Principe, Foster and Intake Manager, Operation Kindness  
Meaghan Swan-Wilson, Data and Logistics Senior Manager, Operation Kindness*

Whether you’re building a new foster program or feeling stuck when looking to increase growth without overwhelming staff, in this session we’ll discuss the number of ways to streamline processes within your foster program to make getting pets into care and supporting foster parents easier than ever before.

We’ll go over how, in one year, Operation Kindness increased their foster program 19% by streamlining processes, utilizing tech programs, and taking a customer service approach. No materials or protocols will be made secret, phones are encouraged to stay out during the presentation as QR codes will be provided to gain access to everything needed to level up your foster program and increase your life saving.
Rory Adams, Senior Manager of Adoption Initiatives, PetSmart Charities

Rory Adams utilizes feminist frameworks to honor the connection between people and animals. As a transgender person, Rory is most comfortable leading from the margins, working at the intersections of social justice and animal welfare to create equitable and inclusive change for people, animals, and the planet. Before joining PetSmart Charities, Rory worked for over 16 years in animal well-being at the local and national levels, including American Pets Alive and Maddie’s Fund, where he created, developed, and implemented Maddie’s Apprenticeship and Fellowship programs. Rory is passionate about ensuring all shelter animals are valued and given a chance at life. Rory’s areas of expertise include connecting people and pets, creating learning opportunities for the field, increasing community engagement, removing barriers to foster care and adoption, and teaching shelter directors and advocates how to access, understand and utilize shelter data. Rory believes that people are the solution to creating a world where animals and people thrive. Rory is committed to expanding programs that grow future leaders, heal injustices, facilitate the inclusion of historically marginalized people, and celebrate the love between people, animals, and our habitats. Rory has spoken at both regional and national conferences for Petsmart Charities, HSUS, American Pets Alive!, Best Friends Animal Society and Maddie’s Fund.

Amber Alu, DVM, Chief Medical Officer, SPCA of Texas

Dr. Amber Alu is passionate about providing high quality, high value compassionate care to animals within shelters, within the community and other animal welfare organizations. While her career started in small animal general medicine and emergency care, Dr. Alu actively worked with local rescue groups and volunteered at shelters from a young age. Her passion for shelter medicine and animal welfare continued to grow and, eventually, she made a complete transition to shelter medicine. She is the current Chief Medical Officer at the SPCA of Texas and serves as a consultant to other shelters to increase life-saving capacity, infectious disease prevention and behavioral health of animals while in shelter. Dr. Alu graduated from the University of California, Davis in 2007 where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science. She received her Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine in 2013 from Western University of Health Science. She is currently working towards the completion of her Master of Science in Veterinary Medical Sciences with a concentration in Shelter Medicine from the University of Florida.

Kymee Bair, CPDT-KA, FPPE, Behavior and Enrichment Manager, Houston Humane Society

Kymee Bair, CPDT-KA is the Behavior and Enrichment Manager at the Houston Humane Society. She has developed and led many programs focused on increasing animal welfare including an enrichment program, behavior modification training, Doggy Day Out, and most recently implemented playgroups. Her impact has led to multiple news articles highlighting the success of these programs as well as increased welfare of the animals that call Houston Humane Society home. She takes pride in helping all animals reach their full potential and be successful outside of the shelter. At home, she lives with her husband, Reid Allen, as well as multiple pets including 3 dogs, a rabbit, and 2 cats. She is also an avid kitten foster and has helped foster over 20 kittens in her time at Houston Humane Society.

Christie Banduch, Animal Services Manager, San Marcos Regional Animal Shelter

Christie Banduch has more than 23 years of experience in animal welfare. Banduch accepted her first job as an Animal Care Technician at the Animal Defense League in San Antonio as a senior in high school, later becoming a Veterinary Technician and then taking a position as an Animal Control Officer for the City of Schertz. While in Schertz, Christie worked hand in hand with other city departments to address animal needs in the community. She also developed a rescue outreach program to help maintain a high live outcome rate for the shelter. Christie’s experience then led her to the City of Kirby, where she worked to increase funding, improve living conditions for animals, and achieve a 96% live outcome rate. Later in her career, Christie was instrumental in developing a partnership between Bexar County and the City of Kirby to build a jointly operated shelter. Christie has been with the City of San Marcos Regional Animal Shelter since 2020, and currently serves as the Animal Services Manager,
overseeing all Shelter and Animal Protection operations.

**Shelby Bobosky, Esq., Executive Director, Texas Humane Legislation Network**

Shelby has been the Executive Director of the Texas Humane Legislation Network since 2019 and the Texas Humane Network since 2020, but she began her volunteer service with THLN in 2011 as a board member. Since 2011 and under her leadership as President, Vice President and Legislative Chair, THLN has had four successful legislative sessions wherein THLN successfully passed the Anti-Gassing Law (passed in 2013), the Mandatory Canine Encounter Training Law (passed in 2015), the Animal Cruelty Enhancement Law (passed in 2017) and the Safe Outdoor Dogs Act (passed in 2021). In 1999, Ms. Bobosky moved from Chicago to Dallas to begin her law practice. Ms. Bobosky continued practicing general civil litigation until 2017 when she decided to do only pro bono work putting in hundreds of hours for THLN as well as assisting animal welfare advocates and rescues when possible. She teaches Animal Law and Wildlife Law at the Southern Methodist University College of Law and travels the state teaching animal cruelty laws and Texas animal laws. She shares her animal kingdom with three boys, one spouse and three rescued dogs and two rescued prairie dogs.

**Mindi Callison, Founder/Executive Director, Bailing Out Benji**

Mindi Callison is the Founder and Executive Director of the national nonprofit organization, Bailing Out Benji which focuses on the grassroots effort to combat the puppy mill industry. Mindi founded Bailing Out Benji at 21 years old after falling victim to the puppy mill industry by way of a local pet store, who offered her a credit card with high interest. Upon learning about the pet store/puppy mill connection and learning about the predatory lending practices that these stores utilize to take advantage of low-income families, Mindi knew that she needed to act. Bailing Out Benji and its research have been instrumental in passing humane ordinances across the country, they have also been one of the driving forces behind exposing the national puppy laundering scheme that is currently happening in numerous states.

**Andrea Cermele, DVM, Veterinarian, Best Friends Animal Society**

Dr. Andrea Cermele is a 2001 graduate of The University of Florida’s School of Veterinary Medicine. Prior to private practice, she completed a 1-year rotating internship at Red Bank Veterinary Hospital, in New Jersey. Upon completion, she worked in general practice while simultaneously practicing shelter medicine until 2017. 2017 brought about a focus change as she transitioned full time into animal welfare. For six years she worked at the ASPCA Spay/Neuter Alliance, mentoring private veterinarians, HQHSVNS clinic teams and 4th year veterinary externs. Her current, and most exciting opportunity, is supporting national shelters and communities through Best Friends’ Shelter Outreach Program.

She was born and raised in New Jersey. She and her husband live in Asheville, North Carolina, with their Bluetick Coonhound and three indoor cats. In her spare time, she is a board member of the Animal Haven of Asheville, a local farm sanctuary. She is an avid vegan, lover of all animals, and she particularly looks forward supporting Best Friends’ No-Kill 2025 movement.
Lorien Clemens, Co-Founder & CEO, PetHub, Inc.

Lorien Clemens is the co-founder and CEO at PetHub, Inc. and co-founder of EveryPet Charity 501(c)(3). She joined PetHub in June of 2011 as the start-up was in its beginning stages. She has guided PetHub to its wins of multiple pet industry awards, including two Dog Fancy Magazine Editors' Choice Awards, the PetAGE Magazine Retailer Silver Select Award, and two Pet Business Magazine Product of the Year Awards for its unique digital ID tags and online services. Most recently, PetHub was named one of Business Insider Magazine's 50 Coolest New Businesses in America. Individually, Lorien was honored by PetAge Magazine as one of the pet industry's Women of Influence. She was also named the Pet Industry Network's 2014 Pet Industry Woman of the Year and was a keynote speaker at their national conference. PetHub, Inc., was started in 2010 to help make pet parenting fun and easy. Its first goal was to combat the issue of low RTO (“return to owner”) rates for lost animals. PetHub’s mission is to help keep every family's pets happy, safe and HOME for the rest of their lives. Combining software with a physical ID tag allows anyone to help a lost animal get home quickly, often avoiding a trip to a vet or a shelter. 96% of PetHub recovered “pack members” are home again in under 24-hours, and before ever entering a shelter. PetHub’s award-winning platform has multiple software and hardware patents pending on its ID tags and Internet services. The company’s tags are now in over 1,000 communities in the United States as their pet license or rabies tag, and more than 1 million pets are now members of PetHub.com. PetHub is part of the Leap Venture Studio (Mars & Michealson’s Found Animals), Plug-and-Play's Animal Health vertical, the Purina Petcare Innovation Network and one of three companies chosen for the 2023 Association for Animal Welfare Advancement's “Innovation Station” program. EveryPet Charity was founded in late 2023, and has a goal of getting a digital ID tag on every pet in the US, and improving community lost pet recovery programs through technology and community resource collaboration.

Stephani Coe, Sr. Operations Manager, Operation Kindness

Stephani is a Senior Operations Manager at Operation Kindness, bringing a decade of experience to her role working with and overseeing the Animal Care, Foster, Intake, and Kitten Nursery teams with a focus on collaboration with shelter partners, disease prevention, reducing length of stay and streamlining processes to maximize lifesaving. Based in North Dallas, she shares her home with her two dogs, Scout and Walter, and cat, Winnie. Stephani is dedicated to animal welfare and committed to making a difference in her community and beyond through her work at Operation Kindness.

Bethany Colonnese, Chief Operations Officer, San Antonio Animal Care Services

Beginning as a volunteer with the City of San Antonio’s Animal Care Services a decade ago, Bethany Colonnese quickly discovered her new career. Colonnese left her longtime management role in the restaurant industry to head up the shelter’s adoption division and quickly began creating new programs that have seen placement grow. Bethany took over as Chief Operations Officer and her “let’s try it” attitude has not only led to increases in lifesaving; it’s also made San Antonio a leader in progressive placement programs.

Spencer Conover, Assistant Director, Pasco County Animal Services

Spencer Conover assumed the role of Assistant Director for Pasco County Animal Services in April of 2018. Spencer oversees an organization operating animal control for all seven local municipalities and all unincorporated areas of Pasco County. His animal control team consists of a Field Services Supervisor, Field Training Officer, Rabies Control Officer, Humane Cruelty Investigator and six animal control officers for 747 square miles and over 525,000 citizens. Spencer is a certified animal control officer and certified humane euthanasia technician in the states of Florida, Colorado and Utah. Prior to working for Pasco County Animal Services, Spencer served as a regional adoption center supervisor with Best Friends Animal Society (Salt Lake City, UT), A Customer Care Manager with the Dumb Friends League (Denver, CO) and as the Director of Operations with the Humane Society of Utah (Murray, UT). Spencer graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Telecommunication from the University of Florida and worked in sports journalism for 7+ years. Spencer is a certified green belt in Lean Six Sigma process improvement and has received leadership training certification from Best Friends Animal Society, Pasco County and Strategic Government Resources. Spencer also proctors ‘Enneagram Personality Typing’ training for Pasco County and is pursuing a Master of Interdisciplinary Studies in Contemporary Animal Services Leadership
Jordan Craig, Executive Director, Spay Neuter Network

Jordan Craig joined the Spay Neuter Network (SNN) team in the Dallas-Fort Worth area as executive director in January 2022. She came on board with a goal of taking the organization to the next level and becoming the primary resource for helping Texas pet owners get access to affordable veterinary care. During the past year and a half, she effected change in her community by bringing more organizations together to meet the needs of pet owners and to keep more pets out of the community shelters. She also expanded SNN’s service area through transports and opening a new clinic location in San Antonio, Texas. Prior to leading the SNN team, Jordan started her career in animal welfare in the nonprofit sector, working in wildlife rehabilitation and then domestic animal sheltering. She became a part of Austin Animal Services in 2010, starting out cleaning kennels during the overnight shift. For the next eight years she worked closely with her colleagues to create innovative strategies to achieve Austin’s vision of a 90% live release rate. She joined the Dallas Animal Services (DAS) team in 2018 and served as the general manager, overseeing shelter, medical, and field operations. As one of the largest open intake shelters in the country, she worked with her team at DAS to improve programs and execute new strategies to better serve the residents of Dallas and improve processes in the shelter. In her leadership roles, she has endeavored to improve the quality of life for both the pets and the people who love them. Jordan has also had the privilege of speaking at national and regional animal welfare conferences to help other organizations learn how to use data and automation to develop strategies to help improve processes and break through barriers to save more lives.

Heather Dolson, Vice President of Lifesaving Programs, Operation Kindness

Heather Dolson joined the Operation Kindness team in July 2021. As Vice President of Lifesaving Programs, she is responsible for all shelter and medical operations. Some of her first priorities included decreasing length of stay in the shelter, expanding lifesaving programs, and enhancing disease prevention protocols. It takes multiple teams working together to ensure that every animal’s journey from intake to adoption is both happy and healthy. Originally from Ohio, Heather graduated from Kent State University with a bachelor’s degree in business management. She started her career in animal welfare in 2010, managing high-quality, high-volume spay/neuter clinics in the Akron and Cleveland areas. Heather moved to Texas in 2016 to work for the SPCA of Texas. During her tenure, she supervised operations of both stationary and mobile veterinary clinics and streamlined medical protocols throughout their shelters. In her free time, Heather enjoys the Texas heat in the swimming pool with her husband and their two pit bulls, Jackson and Kaiman. She also enjoys yoga, dancing, and baking.

Laura Donahue, Senior Director for Advocacy and Network, Best Friends Animal Society

Laura Donahue is the Senior Director for Advocacy and Network at Best Friends Animal Society. In this role Laura leads Best Friends’ legislative efforts, advocacy and outreach campaigns, as well as the Best Friends Network Partner program which is now more than 4,300 members strong. She oversees a diverse team of attorneys, policy experts, research analysts, advocacy professionals, and shelter operations and communications experts, who are working to increase life-saving in America’s shelters. Laura has two decades of experience working in campaigns, legislative advocacy, and non-profit management. She comes to Best Friends after most recently working for Austin Pets Alive! and American Pets Alive! as the director of mission advancement. Prior to joining the no-kill movement, Laura served as the executive director of the Texas Humane Legislation Network for four years. Before returning to her home state of Texas, she worked on the East Coast, serving as an in-house policy consultant for the Pew Charitable Trusts and as the Virginia state director for the Humane Society of the United States. Laura has founded two independent political action committees for animals: Humane Dominion and THLN PAC. She got her start in policy reform working for former U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski and former Baltimore Delegate Salima Marriott. Laura holds a master’s degree in social work, specializing in social action and community development, from the University of Maryland, Baltimore. In her spare time, Laura enjoys time with her animals, which include her three dogs, Demi, Minnie and Chica, and her horse, Bow. She and her husband, Daniel, live in Lago Vista, Texas, and are proud parents to their daughter, Evelyn.
Finnegan Dowling, Shelter Program Manager, Mutual Rescue

Finnegan Dowling is Mutual Rescue’s shelter program manager. She has been poking around animal welfare for almost thirty years and has worked in shelters in Washington, Colorado, California, and Nicaragua. Prior to Mutual Rescue, she was the social media manager for Humane Society Silicon Valley, where her work was honored with Shorty and Communicator Awards. Finnegan's writing has been published in The Bark, Bay Woof, and Huffington Post. She has presented at numerous animal welfare conferences around the US. She lives in coastal Texas with Waylon, her neurotic pitbull and her husband. When not working, you can usually find her reading, writing, or running around Latin America.

Catherine Eldredge, Strategist, South-Central Region, Best Friends Animal Society

Catherine Eldredge is the south-central strategist for Best Friends Animal Society. Through her position, she assists organizations in Oklahoma and Texas with implementing proven programs, practices, and procedures. Catherine previously worked as the operations manager at the Tulsa Animal Welfare shelter as part of the Best Friends embed program. The work being done in Oklahoma is especially important to her as she is one of the founding member of Common Bonds, a statewide coalition focused on getting Oklahoma to no-kill. Catherine has worked in both nonprofit and municipal animal welfare since 2006. She has served in multiple roles including animal control, surgery technician, and community cat program director.

Donald Feare, Esq.

Mr. Feare is a solo practitioner in Arlington, Texas, where his practice is dedicated to animal law. He is an adjunct professor at the Texas A&M School of Law, past member of the College of the State Bar, and council member of the Animal Law Section of the State Bar since 1999. Mr. Feare is a nationally known speaker on animal law, has authored numerous papers and briefs in the field, and has been instrumental in the drafting and passage of animal welfare bills in Texas. He has served as special prosecutor in several civil animal cruelty seizures, including seizure of 500 dogs from a puppy mill and a herd of cruelly treated horses. He was one of the attorneys in the civil seizure and litigation in the largest cruelty seizure in history of over 27,000 animals. He also represented citizens of Kaufman, Texas, in a case that resulted in the closure of the last remaining horse slaughter plant in the United States. Mr. Feare was honored as a "Distinguished Alumnus" by Texas Wesleyan University School of Law in 2010. In 2012, he was awarded with the first "Lifetime Achievement Award" by the Animal Law Section of the State Bar of Texas for his work in animal advocacy. That same year, he was honored as one of the "Top Ten animal Defenders in America" by the Animal Legal Defense Fund. Mr. Feare is a past member of the board and the legislative committee of the Texas Humane Legislation Network (THLN). He is a professional wildlife photographer and past field contributor to Nature Photographer magazine.

Lucy Fernandez, Intake Diversion (PASS) Program Manager, Austin Pets Alive

Lucy Fernandez always had a knack for engaging with the public. Formerly a Geeks Who Drink quizmaster, an amateur stand-up comedian, and LGBTQIA+ rights grassroots advocate, shy isn't her leading trait. She officially entered the animal welfare industry in 2019 as a cat adoption counselor (aka used cat salesperson) with Austin Pets Alive! When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, she assisted with the development of the virtual adoptions process to combine technology and foster-centric frameworks and establish a 30% increase in adoptions and the lowest owner surrenders for cats in APA!’s history. Shortly after the launch of the Human Animal Support Services project, she volunteered to lead the Supported Self-Rehoming Working Group to invite collaboration among the leaders of Rehome.adoptapet.com, Home-Home, and GetYourPet.com, along with the intake diversion staff from rescue groups around the globe. In 2021, she was promoted to Positive Alternatives to Shelter Surrender (PASS) program coordinator to work directly with the public to keep pets with their owners and out of the shelter. In 2022, she became the PASS program manager to integrate data-collection tools, set volunteer procedures, and expand community support to make common sense common for animal support services.

The Honorable Lulu Flores

Lulu Flores is a longtime champion of equality and social justice. She rose through the grassroots ranks to serve as President and CEO of the National Women's Political Caucus, the longest serving institution committed to increasing women's
participation throughout the political process. Likewise, Lulu’s leadership can be seen at all levels, from being elected a National Delegate for Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign, to Chairing the Austin Arts Commission, to serving as Chief of Staff to the first Mexican American woman elected to the Texas House, Representative Irma Rangel. Thanks to her parents’ strong belief in education, Lulu moved to Austin to study at the University of Texas, where she also graduated from law school. She began her career in the state legislature working for Rep. Irma Rangel, a pioneer who rose to serve as Chair of the Higher Education Committee. Lulu continued her career in public service working as Director of Legislative Programs for the State Bar of Texas, and Assistant Director for Alternative Fuels Policy and Legislation/Governmental Affairs at the Texas Railroad Commission, before joining her husband, Scott, as partner in their law firm, Hendler Flores Law, PLLC. Lulu is excited and looks forward to serving on Culture, Recreation, & Tourism and Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence during her first session in the Texas House.

**Tori Fugate, Chief Communications Officer, KC Pet Project**

Tori Fugate joined the KC Pet Project team in March 2012 — shortly after the organization took over the Kansas City, MO, animal shelter in January 2012. Tori’s role with KC Pet Project has enabled her to build the organization’s brand and promote its mission from inception to what it is today. She oversees all marketing, events, web management, social media, retail sales, education initiatives, and media relations, and she recently served on the design and construction committee of the KC Campus for Animal Care, Kansas City’s new animal shelter. She enjoys the opportunity to promote KC Pet Project and its pets through social media and in print, radio and television appearances on a local and national level — including People Magazine, The Dodo, The Huffington Post, CBS News, USA Today, Queer Eye, and The Rachael Ray Show.

**Kelly Furnas, Chief Operating Officer, Operation Kindness**

Kelly Furnas became Chief Operating Officer of Operation Kindness in July 2021, following her roles as Director of Operations and Volunteer Services in recent years. Her responsibilities include the day-to-day running of the shelter, including medical, operations, and facilities. She has been involved with Operation Kindness since 2015. As COO, her goals include helping Operation Kindness have the largest impact on lifesaving in North Texas, enhancing her team’s skills, and finding process improvements that allow us to save more lives. Previously, she worked in various senior leadership and operations roles in the financial services industry before finding her dream job with Operation Kindness. She holds a bachelor’s degree in business management from Texas A&M University. At home, Kelly loves spending time with her cat, Smokey (an Operation Kindness alumni), and her dog, Quinn. As an A&M grad, you will find her rooting for her Aggies during every game. She also loves to cook and even acted as a judge in a local cooking competition!

**Chris Green, Executive Director, Animal Legal Defense Fund**

Assuming the Executive Director role in September 2023, Chris rejoins the Animal Legal Defense Fund having established the organization’s Legislative Affairs Program and served as its director from 2013–2015. For the past eight years, Chris has been the inaugural executive director of the Brooks McCormick Jr. Animal Law & Policy Program at Harvard Law School — where he helped launch the Harvard Animal Law & Policy Clinic and grew the Program from an initial staff of three to now having over 30 faculty, staff, lecturers, scholars, researchers, and fellows.

During his animal law career, Chris has helped defeat Ag-Gag legislation in several states, helped pass and defend farmed animal protection ballot measures, directed efforts that led SeaWorld San Diego to halt the breeding and import of new orcas, served on a National Academies committee that caused the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs to stop using dogs in biomedical research, and persuaded the top three U.S. airlines to cease transporting African hunting trophies.

Chris is a graduate of Harvard Law School, where he took the school’s first course in Animal Law, and the University of Illinois, where he created the school’s first Environmental Science degree. He also spent several decades working in the fine arts, film, and music industries — producing documentaries that include Of Dogs and Men, a film about police shooting people’s companion animals. Chris currently resides in Illinois where he still manages a farm that has remained in his family for 185 years.
Kim Hanschen, AIA, Fear Free, Associate Principal, Architect, Jackson and Ryan Architects

Kim Hanschen, AIA leads Jackson & Ryan Architects’ nationally recognized animal welfare design studio, dedicating herself to projects that have a positive impact on our communities. Kim specializes in the complex design of animal welfare facilities, from adoption facilities, community resource centers serving the needs for animals and their families, barns that provide space for rehabilitation, veterinary hospitals, and wildlife habitats serving the needs of native birds.

Kim received her Bachelor of Arts at the University of Texas in Austin and her Master of Architecture at Rice University in Houston, TX. Since joining Jackson & Ryan in 2013, Kim has managed projects across the country, working directly with clients to identify their specific needs and bring their visions into reality. She derives great joy combining her love for animals with her passion for design.

Kevin Hearst, Consultant/Instructor, Law Enforcement Training Institute

Kevin Hearst Sr. began his animal welfare career in Atlanta GA in 1994, where he was heavily influenced by Dr. Melinda Merck in 2007 who opened his eyes to animal cruelty investigations. Being part of a Countywide Animal cruelty task force was incredible for his next chapter in life as an instructor. Mr. Hearst was given training opportunities which led to LETI (Law Enforcement Training Institute), where he met Lisa Dority, John Worden and Bill Stephens. Mr. Hearst has been a member of the National Animal Cruelty Investigations School faculty for over 12 years and is recognized as an expert in the field of animal cruelty investigations. He delivers many presentations for conferences throughout the nation.

Jacqueline Hernandez, Manager of Operations, National Embed Program, Best Friends Animal Society

Hailing from the vibrant border town of Laredo in South Texas, Jakie’s journey into the world of animal care began over 18 years ago, marking the inception of a remarkable career. Jakie’s first step into the realm of animal welfare was as a kennel attendant in the only shelter in her small hometown. It was an environment fraught with challenges, with a save rate as low as 8% at the time. However, this early experience ignited a spark within Jakie, leading her to discover the mission of Best Friends, an organization dedicated to making the nation a no-kill haven for animals. Inspired by Best Friends’ cause, Jakie embarked on a journey to be part of the transformative team striving for a compassionate and humane society for animals. Throughout her career, Jakie has worked in various types of animal shelters across Texas and even ventured into some shelters in Canada.

She believes in the power of sharing resources and information, especially in her native Spanish, to bridge gaps and create a more inclusive environment. Jakie is dedicated to ensuring that people and their beloved pets can stay together, fostering a sense of unity and responsibility within the communities she serves.

Beyond her professional endeavors, Jakie is also a proud mother and the guardian of cats and dogs who have found a loving home in her care. Her commitment to creating a better world for animals extends not only to the shelter but also into the heart of her own family.

April Huntsman, CAWA, Senior Director of Animal Welfare, Adopt a Pet

April Huntsman, CAWA, serves as Senior Director of Animal Welfare at Adopt a Pet and Rehome by Adopt a Pet, the nation’s largest self-supported rehoming service. Her credits include launching sustainable social enterprise models, implementing at-risk animal population programs, administering life-saving community partnerships, and gathering important data insights and research surrounding adoption trends and online searches. She is currently developing how shelters can best utilize AI to maximize their animal well-being initiatives. April has been in the animal welfare industry for over 20 years and has worked for both local and national animal welfare organizations including Maricopa County Animal Care & Control, Salt Lake County Animal Services, Best Friends Animal Society, and Michelson Found Animals Foundation. April lives in Utah with her husband John, and is the proud pack mom of two senior dogs.

Ed Jamison, CEO, Operation Kindness

Ed Jamison serves as CEO of Operation Kindness, a lifesaving non-profit animal welfare organization based in Texas. Under his leadership since March 2021, Ed guides the organization to administer
innovative programs impacting dogs and cats across the region, including community initiatives, shelter partnerships, interstate transport, forensics for animal cruelty and more.

Ed leads the lifesaving work at the Operation Kindness shelter in Carrollton, which includes a medical wing, neonatal kitten nursery and pet food pantry, as well as the Operation Kindness Lifesaving Partnerships Hub in Dallas, which is expected to provide community, veterinary and transport services beginning in 2024.

With an extensive background working in the animal welfare field beginning in the early 2000s, Ed worked in Cleveland, Ohio, before moving to the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. In the position of Chief Animal Control Officer for the City of Cleveland, Jamison pushed to redefine functionality and public perception of animal control. Ed also served as the Director of Dallas Animal Services (DAS) between 2017 and 2021. Ed currently serves on the board of the Association of Animal Welfare Advancement and Shelter Animals Count.

Shonyae Johnson, Director of Virtual Behavior Programming, Humane Rescue Alliance

Shonyae is a dedicated professional with more than a decade of experience in the field of animal well-being, with a specialized focus on companion pet behavior. Her unwavering passion lies in enhancing the human-animal bond through education and facilitating access to valuable resources for pet owners. Shonyae is committed to sharing her wealth of knowledge with shelter staff, aiming to elevate their expertise and contribute to the continual improvement of the field. Her work is driven by a deep commitment to fostering healthier and happier relationships between pets and their human companions.

Meredith Jones, Chief Community Initiatives Officer, Operation Kindness

Meredith Jones joined Operation Kindness as Chief Community Initiatives Officer in July 2022. She has an extensive background in grassroots advocacy and activism, as well as leadership experience with nationally renowned animal welfare organizations. She has fought passionately for equal access for underserved pets and their people throughout her career. With over 15 years of animal welfare experience, Meredith has overseen high-volume shelter and veterinary clinic operations, large-scale grant programs, and community outreach campaigns. As the Chief Community Initiatives Officer for Operation Kindness, Meredith strives to ensure that all community programs provide accessible, compassionate, and nonjudgmental assistance. These programs strengthen the bond between pets and their people, keep pets in their loving homes, eliminate economic euthanasia, support under-resourced shelters by providing sustainable solutions that increase long-term lifesaving capacity, and improve the health and quality of life for all animals within communities. Meredith graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a bachelor's degree in government and from Duke University with a master's degree in political science.

Robyn Katz, Esq.

Robyn Katz is an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Austin. Ms. Katz earned her Bachelor of Science from the University of Michigan in 2003, her Masters of Education from the University of Texas in 2004, and her Juris Doctorate from Texas Tech School of Law in 2010. She was admitted to the State Bar of Texas in 2010, the State Bar of New Jersey in 2018, and the State Bar of Colorado in 2019. She has 14 years of legal experience, including eight years as a prosecutor in municipal, Justice of the Peace, misdemeanor, and felony level courts, and 5 years practicing civil law. Ms. Katz is experienced in criminal law, animal law, legislation, and ordinance drafting. Ms. Katz is admitted to practice before all County and District Courts of Texas, the Texas Supreme Court, the United States District Court, Western District of Texas, and all courts in New Jersey. Ms. Katz currently serves as an Adjunct Professor at St. Mary's School of Law teaching Animal Law. The primary focus of Ms. Katz is municipal law and prosecution.

Gina Knepp, National Shelter Engagement Director, Michelson Found Animals Foundation

Gina Knepp is the National Shelter Engagement Director for the Michelson Found Animals Foundation. Her primary focus is increasing the return to home rate by engaging animal sheltering organizations in finding innovative ways of locating missing pet people and more importantly, helping people not lose their animals to begin with. Gina’s background includes managing the Front Street Animal Shelter in Sacramento, California. Her
experience leading a municipal, open intake, high volume shelter adds to her passion for helping lost animals get back home where they belong. Her current work with Michelson Philanthropies has offered the opportunity to work with shelters across the country, improving reunification efforts. Gina is currently on the Board of the Bitterroot Humane Association and on the Executive Committee of Human Animal Support Services (HASS) with American Pets Alive, launching national animal shelter reform. Gina lives in Hamilton, Montana with her husband Chris, two dogs, Lucy & Rex, her cat, Kit, 18 deer and 80 turkeys.

Kati Krouse, Executive Director, Bears Etc.

Kati is the Executive Director of BEARS Etc., a Bear & Exotic Animals Rescue & Sanctuary, and has been passionate about animals, and their wellbeing, her entire life. She went to Veterinary Technology School at Purdue University where she minored in Wildlife Management and Natural Resources and tracked wildlife and exotics. She is, also, a 5th generation farmer and is a certified Master Gardener. She believes in sustainable farming using plants working together instead of using harsh fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. She, and her husband, founded BEARS Etc. to leave the world better than they found it by connecting people with nature and giving them, and their rescued animals, a PEACE of the Wild. Over the last 25 years she has worked in corporate, private practice, and nonprofit facilities, and has run her own pet grooming, pet training, and pet sitting/boarding businesses. She, currently, lives in Huntsville, TX and sits on the board as the past Chair of the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce, is a past diplomat for the Conroe/Lake Conroe Chamber of Commerce, Vice President of the Texas Black Bear Alliance, and previously sat on the Advocacy Committee for the Big Cat Sanctuary Alliance. She cares about her community and leaving it better than she found it. Kati has spoken across the US about exotics, and wildlife, and their care. She has spoken to first responders, Lions/Rotary/Kiwanis clubs, schools, and even zooms into veterinary facilities. She, also, speaks at the Texas Animal Control conferences such as Texas Unites for Animals and the annual TACA conference.

Stephanie Lara, Adoption Manager, Friends for Life Animal Shelter

Stephanie Lara leads the adoption department at Friends For Life Animal Shelter, where she develops forward-thinking initiatives that match animals with the right families. Under Stephanie’s lead, the Friends For Life adoption department facilitates unusual and challenging placements, including those of long length of stay animals with histories of medical and behavioral issues. Stephanie’s team has used their unique learning-forward approach to adoption counseling to place not only cats and dogs, but also livestock and exotics such as chickens, guinea pigs, pigs, and ferrets! Stephanie discovered her passion for animal welfare at Friends For Life 8 years ago. Prior to that, she received her Bachelors of Arts in Culinary Arts at Houston Community College - Central. She finds that her experience in the hospitality industry has prepared her well for the fast-paced, consumer-centered climate of shelter adoptions. When Stephanie is not at Friends For Life helping animals find their perfect match, she can be found at the gym or at home cuddling with her cats! All three of them tuxedos, their names are Wilde, Simon, and Joey, a tripod who also happened to be one of the special medical cases that Stephanie has devoted her professional career to finding families for.

Zachary Lashway, Anchor/Reporter, KPRC-Houston

Bio Coming Soon!

Della Lindquist, Deputy General Counsel, TDLR

Bio Coming Soon!

Leah Long, Regional Senior Specialist, Best Friends Animal Society

Leah Long is a Regional Senior Specialist with Best Friends Animal Society. She has been involved in animal welfare since she first interned at a Chicago animal rescue organization at the age of 13. She has not looked back since. Leah has immersed herself in animal sheltering and community engagement work nationally. Previously, her work was focused on the areas where she formerly resided: Chicago, Atlanta and New Orleans. In Atlanta, she worked first as volunteer coordinator and then as program coordinator and foster director for Atlanta Animal Rescue Friends. This allowed her to build out her skills in volunteer and foster management, as well as grassroots work. Leah developed a strong background in community cat programming during her time embedded in the Jefferson Parish Animal Shelter as a community cat coordinator. Her current role is to collaborate with shelters around the South
Central region, offering training and customized coaching on topics such as community cats, complainant mitigation, enrichment, and intake diversion.

Brian J. Levy, Esq., Lynch Law Firm

Brian Levy is an employment and commercial litigation attorney with the Lynch Law Firm, representing employers before state and federal trial and appellate courts and administrative agencies.

James McEachern, Inspector, TDLR

Bio Coming Soon!

Sarah McGoldrick, Vice President of Animal Operations, Dallas Pets Alive

Sarah McGoldrick joined Dallas Pets Alive! in 2019 as a PASS team volunteer. Shortly after starting as a volunteer, she was furloughed from her position in hospitality due to the pandemic. During her abundance of free time, she added additional volunteer roles. She quickly learned that animal welfare was what she wanted to do for a career. At the end of 2020, she joined the team at Spay Neuter Network working on a project to help with owner surrenders at Dallas Animal Services. At the start of 2022, she was back with Dallas Pets Alive! as the vice president of animal operations and director of the Positive Alternative to Shelter Surrender (PASS) program. In these roles, Sarah oversees the lifesaving efforts for the animal operations and the shelter diversion programs. Sarah has a passion for the lifesaving efforts of both reactive and proactive rescue. She works closely with the animal operations team on innovative lifesaving efforts, such as bringing in new foster volunteers and getting more pets out of the shelter. Through her role on the PASS team, she works on programs that focus on collaboration with other organizations to provide a greater impact of keeping pets in their homes. Sarah lives just north of Dallas, Texas, with her two resident pups (both DPA! alums), Harper and Theo, and DPA! foster pups Stevie Nicks and Dixie Rae. Her husband lives with them too and has come to accept the rotating door of foster pets coming through the home!

Courtney Medina, Animal Welfare Director, 24Pet

Courtney Medina has a robust background in animal welfare with over 19 years of experience. From volunteering, to running operations for foster based rescues before joining the SPCA of Texas as their Operations director in 2016, she’s led operations from top to bottom. Since joining 24Pet in 2018, Courtney has been driving relationships between 24Pet and their partners, all while advocating for strengthened community bonds, support networks, and keeping pets in their homes. Courtney has a commitment to innovative thinking and champions ingenuity in Texas.

Shelly Meeks, Director of Development, Humane Tomorrow

Shelly was destined for a career to help animals. Growing up in a boarding kennel, grooming shop, and dog show/horse show ring, she has been exposed to a variety of animals and people (ever been to a dog show??) since birth. It is no surprise that in her adult life, Shelly has pursued a career that helps not only animals but people as well (she actually likes people!) She started her professional career in the animal field at a veterinary clinic in 1999. Being the only technician, she did everything from cleaning kennels to assisting in surgery. Realizing she could help more animals and more people, she joined a large animal control agency and quickly rose to the challenge of a Lead ACO and Dangerous Dog Investigator.

Shelly has since worked at multiple municipal as well as non-profit agencies, including assisting with the largest animal cruelty seizure in the United States. She has held every position from kennel attendant to animal services manager and knows a thing or two. She has responded to multiple disaster areas including hurricanes Katrina and Harvey. Shelly loves to share information and some of the knowledge that she has gleaned along the way. Currently she is the Director of Development for the well-respected and long-standing nonprofit in North Texas, Humane Tomorrow.

Kim Meloncon, Director of Emergency Services, Animal Investigation and Response

A responder with Animal Investigation and Response since the beginning, Kim has served in a variety of roles in natural and man-made disaster responses. As Director of Emergency Services Kim is responsible for all our Emergency Temporary Sheltering, Transport, Placement, Shelter Coordination and Animal Extraction Team to assist jurisdictional authorities to increase positive
outcomes for animals. Kim works closely with local animal sheltering agencies, law enforcement (police and sheriff departments) and national animal welfare organizations. Kim has been rescuing animals since her teens when she worked with abused ponies and horses. Fostering dogs in need has been a vocation for her and her family for 30 years. Fostering primarily giant breeds in need and nursing them back to health. After moving to Texas in 1997 she started volunteering in area shelters and serves on the board of a large breed rescue group, as well as volunteering for other responsible rescue programs. Kim has presented at the Texas Animal Control Association (TACA), taught on behalf of the Paige Anderson Education Fund for Animal Welfare and testified before state and city legislatures on issues that impact the Texas animal welfare community.

**Jordana Moerbe, Shelter Support Director, Austin/ American Pets Alive!**

Jordana brings over 15 years of experience in the animal welfare field and is one of the founding staff members of Austin Pets Alive! Her work there created the Medical Triage and Wellness Clinic that is now the largest foster-centric medical clinic in the country and sees upwards of 7,500 medical cases each year. Her work more recently has been in Medical and Disease Management and Shelter Support, working with shelters and rescues across the country to improve medical practices, live outcomes, and shelter efficiencies through innovative ideas and programming. Jordana also served as the American Pets Alive Maddie's Medical Program Instructor, creating in-person training courses as well as online coursework. Jordana's passion continues to be bringing outside-the-box thinking to the industry, uncovering live outcome pathways, and helping people acquire realistic methods and tools to accomplish the job. Jordana is a conference speaker across the country on issues of shelter clinic management and contagious disease. Jordana resides just outside of Austin with her husband, daughter, dogs, cats, and many farm animals.

**Ashley Morgan, Esq., President, Animal Law Section, State Bar of Texas**

Ashley Morgan is a trial attorney at Cain & Skarnulis PLLC in Austin, Texas. She has handled pet ownership disputes (marital and non-marital) and defended civil dog bite lawsuits. She is currently the Chair of the Animal Law Sections of the State Bar of Texas and the Austin Bar Association. Ashley obtained her JD, MA, and BA from Baylor University. While attending law school, Ashley was President of Student Animal Legal Defense Fund and organized a trap-neuter-return program for a feral cat colony on campus. In graduate school, she received the award for Top Student Paper in Philosophy & Ethics of Communication at the Southern States Communication Association Conference for her paper critical of anthropocentrism in communication studies.

**Maria Morukian, MA, PCC, President and Founder, MSM Global Consulting**

Maria is an organizational consultant, coach, and facilitator specializing in diversity, equity, inclusion, and intercultural competence. She has worked with hundreds of clients in developing sustainable and transformational change efforts to build thriving organizational communities, including numerous animal welfare organizations. Prior to founding MSM Global, Maria served as a leadership development specialist with the U.S. Department of State and a faculty member at OPM’s Federal Executive Institute, Practice Director for Leadership and Management with Management Concepts, and Executive Director for the National Multicultural Institute. Maria has worked closely animal welfare for several years as a DEI partner. Maria has served as a DEI consultant for the Association for Animal Welfare Advancement, Animal Welfare League of Arlington, Oregon Humane, and Friends for Animals of Metro Detroit, and was responsible for the first of its kind “State of DEI in Animal Welfare” audit, which has provided the profession with valuable data on DEI issues. She has conducted a broad range of training experiences for animal welfare professionals, including the AAW A’s DEI Leadership Accelerator for CEOs, DEI Ambassador programs, DEI Dozen webinar series, and workshops for the AAW A DEI Council and AAW A Board. Maria has been a speaker at numerous conferences, including ATD, SIETAR, Thought Leadership Conference, TEDx, and the Forum on Workplace Inclusion, as well as AAW A’s national conferences. She is on the faculty at American University and is published in Forbes, Ellevate, and TD Magazine. Maria hosts a podcast on critical DEI issues called Culture Stew. Maria is author of the book, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for Trainers: Fostering DEI in the Workplace (ATD Press, 2022). Maria earned a dual Bachelor’s Degree from the University of Michigan in Organizational Studies and Spanish, and a Master’s Degree from American
University in International Communication. She lives in Washington, DC with one husband, two daughters, and two cats, all of them rambunctious!

Lisa Norwood, Public Relations & Outreach Manager, San Antonio Animal Care Services

With 17 years as the Public Relations Manager for the City of San Antonio’s Animal Care Services Department, Lisa Norwood has seen just about everything. From thousands of media interviews on responsible pet ownership to hurricane response to crafting award-winning promotional campaigns, Norwood has used her media savvy and street-style marketing to boost the Alamo City shelter’s reputation and release rate. A working journalist for more than a dozen years, Lisa now oversees all things media for ACS and works closely with the Community Engagement team to craft compelling community events and workshops.

Jerrica Owen, Executive Director, National Animal Care & Control Association

Accomplished animal welfare professional Jerrica Owen joined the National Animal Care & Control Association in April 2021, as the Director of Partnerships and Programs and was named Executive Director in December 2021. Jerrica has over 20 years of experience in emergent animal welfare, engaging and developing a diversity of staff, and shelter operations, and leading successful initiatives in Animal Welfare in a cross-cultural environment. Jerrica is committed to inclusive engagement and resource accessibility for the industry. Jerrica earned her Bachelor of Science Degree from California State University-Chico and holds certifications in Animal Welfare Administration (CAWA), Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, Organizational Leadership, and Modern Humane Resource Management. She lives in California and is a proud wife and mother to both human, fur, and shelled (tortoise!) babies.

Amanda Payne, Lifesaving Partner Relations Specialist, Petco Love

Amanda is a Lifesaving Partner Relations Specialist with Petco Love where one of her specialties is assisting shelters and rescues with retail adoptions and events at Petco. Prior joining the Petco Love team, Amanda worked with organizations and shelters in California, Texas, and Louisiana. During her eight years in sheltering, she managed foster, transport, and volunteer programs as well as collaborated with pathway planning and cat & dog enrichment programming. She’s also been part of emergency responses including evacuation efforts for both Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Ida. Amanda lives in New Orleans and is lucky to share her home with a sassy cohort of cats and dogs. When not working, she loves to paint, read, listen to music, and take her two cattle dogs on swimming adventures throughout the South.

Alex Pennell-Lemley, Regional Field Program Manager, Petco Love

Alex Pennell-Lemley is the Regional Field Program Manager for Petco Love with a demonstrated history of working in the retail, non-profit, and veterinarian industries. In her positions at Petco over the past 8 years, she has built a strong background in Veterinary Technology, Sales, Retail, Team Building, Training, and Customer Satisfaction. Prior to her time with Petco, Alex worked in non-profit animal welfare for 5 years.

Laura Pfefferle, Assistant General Counsel, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation

Laura Pfefferle is an Assistant General Counsel at the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR). She attended Tulane University School of Law in New Orleans where she was a member of the Tulane Law Review, a managing editor of the Environmental Law Journal, and received a certificate in Environmental Law. She formerly worked for the Texas Office of the Attorney General under John Cornyn and Greg Abbott, for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), and for the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). She is the attorney for various regulatory programs at TDLR, including the Licensed Breeder program, and is experienced in areas of law including open records, medical privacy, and information security. Her experience with animals encompasses many types of livestock and pets, and even a pot-bellied pig.

LaTasha Poland, Program Specialist, Compliance, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation

Bio Coming Soon!
Paula Powell, Senior Strategist, South-Central Region, Best Friends Animal Society

Paula Powell is a Senior Strategist for the South-Central Region with Best Friends Animal Society where she works with shelters in some of the hardest areas of the country. She strives to help each overcome their lifesaving barriers and implement sustainable programming to reach their goals and provide the valuable service that these communities deserve. Before joining Best Friends, Paula worked with the City of El Paso for 26 years, most recently serving as the animal services director after decades in parks and recreation. Her lifesaving focused, community-centric approach to animal services combined with data-driven, empathetic leadership, resulted in numerous process and program improvement that propelled the shelter to achieving record lifesaving for the 27,000 dogs and cats entering the shelter annually! The department’s collaborative work to improve community pet health and support was also a key factor in El Paso’s achievement of the 2020 All-America City Award. Paula received a Master’s in Public Administration from the University of Texas at El Paso and is a graduate of Best Friends’ Executive Leadership Certification program. When she’s not building stronger communities and evolving animal services, she loves spending time with her family, which includes three dogs (Jelly Bean, Scrappy, and Taco), and competitive powerlifting.

Abby Principe, Foster and Intake Manager, Operation Kindness

Abby’s roots in animal welfare started in rural Kentucky fostering bottle kittens and volunteering at her local humane society in high school. In 2022, Abby joined Operation Kindness with six years of experience managing shelter and intake teams, along with developing kitten programs for municipal and nonprofit shelters in the DFW area. As the Foster and Intake Manager, Abby oversees their growing foster programs and builds intake partnerships across Texas and Louisiana. In this role, she has been able to connect with transfer partners to provide training, resources, and education to help grow their own foster programs. Abby resides in Dallas with her partner, their three cats, and tripod Catahoula.

Rachel Redd, DVM, Chief Community Initiatives Veterinarian, Operation Kindness

As Operation Kindness’ Chief Community Initiatives Veterinarian, Dr. Rachel Redd oversees all community veterinary services outside of the shelter walls, including, but not limited to: spay/neuter surgeries, vaccine and microchip clinics, and City of Dallas veterinary forensics. Dr. Redd attended Colorado State University for veterinary school and then worked for eight years in private practice in New Mexico, where she was born and raised. In 2018, Dr. Redd moved to the Dallas-Fort Worth area and worked at the SPCA of Texas Spay/Neuter and Wellness Clinics for four years. Growing up on a pecan farm in rural New Mexico, Dr. Redd is very familiar with how difficult it can be to access emergency veterinary care, as well as preventative veterinary care which is equally, if not more, important. Dr. Redd loves being a veterinarian because she is able to develop relationships with people and their pets.

Ray Rentschler, Instructor

Ray Rentschler has been in the animal control field for over 22 years and has worked in the positions of Animal Control Officer, Bite Investigator, Dangerous Dog Investigator, Cruelty Investigator, Field Operations Manager, Animal Services Coordinator and Shelter Manager. Ray has completed his Basic, Advanced and Administrative Animal Control training and instructs Animal Control classes across the state. Ray is a certified Cruelty Investigator through the University of Missouri-Columbia, certified in Chemical Capture through Safe Capture and has specialized training in Basic Criminal Investigation and Intermediate Crime Scene Investigation. Ray has had special training with wildlife including Wildlife Rehabilitation Basics, Urban Wildlife Training from Parks and Wildlife, as well as attended an alligator handling class. Now retired, Ray enjoys spending time with family and friends.

Fernando Reyes, Field Inspections Manager, TDLR

Bio Coming Soon!

Roel Roy Rodriguez, P.E., City Manager, City of McAllen

Roel Roy Rodriguez, P.E. has over 35 years of public service experience and has served as the
City Manager for the City of McAllen since March 2014. He was previously the General Manager of the McAllen Public Utility as well as an Assistant City Manager. Mr. Rodriguez previously worked as the City Engineer, Assistant City Manager and City Manager in Harlingen, Texas. He has also served as City Engineer in Weslaco, Jefferson County Engineer in Beaumont, Texas and as Area Engineer in Oklahoma.

Mr. Rodriguez has a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Texas A&I University and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Texas - Pan American.

He has served on the Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS) Board of Trustees, to which he was appointed by Governor Rick Perry from 2005-2018. He was also appointed by Governor Rick Perry in 2009 and served on the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority. He is married and has two daughters and one son.

He is a member of the engineering advisory council at University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. He serves on the Public Administration Advisory Council at South Texas College and in the Texas A&M University Kingsville College of Engineering Dean's Advisory Board. He is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers as well as the Texas City Manager Association where he was selected as the Administrator of the year in 2017. He is a member of our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, where he does his favorite community work as a catechist teacher.

Cathy M. Rosenthal, CHES, Animal Welfare Communications Consultant, CathyRosenthal.com

Cathy Rosenthal has worked for more than 35 years in the animal welfare field in communications and education. She has worked for local humane societies and national humane groups, appearing on hundreds of television and radio programs to address animal issues. Today, Cathy consults with local and national animal groups on their media and marketing plans and writes media, marketing, education, and grant materials for these groups. She also gives workshops at state, regional and national animal welfare conferences on such topics as grant writing, teambuilding, customer service, and compassion fatigue for animal welfare professionals. Cathy writes the Animals Matter pet column for the San Antonio Express News and is a syndicated pet columnist for My Pet World that appears in newspapers across the country. She is also the author of several children's picture books on dogs and cats. Cathy is a certified Compassion Humane Educator and a Certified Compassion Fatigue Educator through Regent University's Center for Trauma Studies.

Kate Rugroden, Director of Special Projects, Bat World Sanctuary

Kate is a TPWD permitted wildlife rehabilitator specializing in bats, opossums, and raccoons, and holds both TPWD and USDA Educational Display permits as well. She has over 30 years' experience in presenting live animal programs in addition to her 18 years as a rehabilitator. She is a member of IWRC, NWRA, NACA, the Texas Animal Shelter Coalition, and serves as Chair of the Stakeholders Committee for the National White Nose Syndrome Response Team. Kate serves as Director of Special Projects for Bat World Sanctuary, the largest rehabilitation and teaching facility in the world dedicated exclusively to rescue, rehabilitation, and sanctuary for bats. In that role, she has presented educational programs to thousands of adults and school children's classes, and, with Amanda Lollar of Bat World Sanctuary, co-authored the book The Essential Bat (Bat World Sanctuary, 2012). In addition, she is approved by NACA and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to provide up to 60 hours of continuing education credit to Animal Control Officers for the wildlife rehabilitation classes she teaches, by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to provide rehabilitator initial and continuing education, and by AAVSB to provide 16 hours of continuing education credit for veterinarians and licensed veterinary technicians. She is also a TCOLE certified instructor.

Aimee Sadler, Founder and CEO, Dogs Playing for Life

Aimee Sadler is the Founder and CEO of Dogs Playing for Life (DPFL). With 35 years of experience working with multiple species in varying venues, Aimee has become an internationally recognized trainer and speaker specializing in shelter programs that enhance quality of life and reduce canine euthanasia in animal shelters. The cornerstone of DPFL's programming is Every Dog, Every Day!, an out-of-kennel enrichment program featuring playgroups that is in increasing demand and has been introduced to more than 350 shelters across
the U.S. and Canada. With measured programming, DPFL is contributing to 30% shorter lengths of stay while increasing canine lifesaving at an average rate of 3.5% at participating animal welfare organizations. Starting in 2017, dogs most at risk of behavioral euthanasia can get a second chance at DPFL’s Canine Center Florida, an advanced training and behavior care center with an overall save rate of 84 percent.

Aimee regularly presents at animal welfare and professional dog training conferences such as HSUS’ Animal Care Expo, Best Friends Annual Conferences, and the International Association of Canine Professionals Conference. DPFL’s industry-leading, measured achievements were recognized when DPFL became the inaugural recipient of Petco LOVE’s Love in Action Award. In 2016, DPFL was featured in Episode 4 of the PBS television series, “Shelter Me TV.” Aimee is a proud recipient of the Henry Bergh Leadership Award and the Maddie’s Hero Award and has been inducted into the Members Hall of Fame for the International Association of Canine Professionals. Aimee currently resides in Longmont, CO, with her husband and their very full family.

Lauren Sanchez, Regional Emergency Management Operations Coordinator for Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Duncanville, and Lancaster

Lauren Sanchez is the Regional Emergency Management Operations Coordinator for the cities of Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Duncanville, and Lancaster. She has served the Best Southwest Cities since January 2021. Before that, she worked in emergency management for Farmers Branch Fire Department. She has a Master’s degree in Homeland Security from Sam Houston State University and is an internationally designated Certified Emergency Manager (CEM). She has over 6 years of emergency management planning, response, and recovery experience at the local level with responses including tornadoes, a plane crash, an active shooter, a cyber-attack, and more.

Angelina Saucedo, Marketing Manager, Houston Humane Society

Angelina Saucedo is the Marketing Manager at the Houston Humane Society. As Marketing Manager, Angelina is responsible for building the brand, quality, and image of all Houston Humane programs and services. Angelina also oversees social media and highlights the importance of being inclusive, open, and honest in every interaction. Her efforts have led to national media coverage including Newsweek, Today Show, Inside Edition, MSN, Yahoo, and People Magazine. She takes pride in her team and their dedication to the animals and the community. At home, Angelina lives with her husband, their three cats - Firepit, Sneezy, & Twinkle, and 2 dogs - Clutch & Orbit.

Kasey Schwartzer, Animal Shelter Supervisor, City of Lampasas

Kasey Schwartzer began her journey with animals as a Veterinary Technician. She left that field to pursue a career in Law enforcement at the Lampasas Sheriff’s Office as a 911 Dispatcher / Corrections Officer. After a year, the Animal Control Position began available and she jumped to get back to helping animals. In 2009, Lampasas built the first Animal Shelter and Kasey knew that this was her calling.

Kasey has now been the Supervisor of the Lampasas Animal Shelter for almost 15 years. Kasey spends her free time helping other Animal Shelters and Animal Control Officers by volunteering with Humane HELP as a Peer Support Counselor/ Vice President. She is also a Girl Scout leader for her daughter’s troop and is a mom to three animal loving kids.

Tricia Sebes, CAWA, Senior Director, Northern Tier Shelter Initiative, ASPCA

Tricia Sebes, CAWA is the Senior Director and team lead of the ASPCA’s Northern Tier Shelter Initiative. Prior to her work at the ASPCA she held leadership roles at McKamey Animal Center and Humane Educational Society in Chattanooga, TN. She graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga with a Bachelor of Science in Human Services Management and is a Certified Welfare Administrator through The Association of Animal Welfare Advancement. Tricia serves as board secretary for ChattaNeuter a high-volume high-quality spay/neuter clinic in her hometown of Chattanooga where she lives with her three year old shelter dog and 14 year old cat.

Sheila Segurson, DVM, DACVB, Board Certified Veterinary Behaviorist, Director of Community Solutions, Maddie’s Fund

As the world’s first veterinarian who completed a post-graduate residency in Behavior with a focus
Dr. Segurson is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists with over 20 years of experience helping animal welfare organizations to improve welfare and outcomes for pets with behavioral concerns or challenges.

Dr. Segurson's interest in shelter behavior began in 1987 when she volunteered in the behavior department at the San Francisco SPCA. Over the years, Dr. Segurson developed a diverse skillset via experiences as a volunteer, student, dog trainer, foster caregiver, veterinarian, shelter veterinary behaviorist, consultant, teacher and leader. Dr. Segurson utilizes that background to help shelters maximize lifesaving and make appropriate outcome decisions for the pets in their care and people in their community.

Dr. Segurson has contributed to several online courses and textbooks. She was the first author of University of Florida’s Shelter Animal Behavior and Welfare course (online), contributed to IAABC’s Animal Behavior Consulting course, contributed to the Fear Free Shelter Course, and contributed shelter behavior chapters to Blackwell’s Five-Minute Veterinary Consult: Canine and Feline and BSAVA Manual of Canine and Feline Behavioural Medicine, Second edition.

Dr. Segurson has expertise in shelter behavior programs, including program structure and development, admissions, enrichment, behavioral evaluations, decision-making, behavior modification, foster care, adoption and pet retention programs for dogs and cats.

**Cindy Smiley, Esq.**

Cindy Smiley is an Austin attorney, born in Houston, Texas, who has enjoyed a variety of roles in her legal career, including work as an in-house counsel for a major corporation, followed by work as an attorney for the Texas environmental agency in Austin, and by years of work in Austin law firms. In 2012, Ms. Smiley ventured into the solo/small firm world with the formation of Smiley Law Firm, where she continues to practice environmental law and water law for a wide array of clients. Apart from environmental law, Cindy devotes her time to volunteer activities, serving as a board member for the Texas Humane Legislation Network, as an advocacy leader for the Hill Country Chapter of Canine Companions, and as a Council member of the State Bar’s Animal Law Section. Inspired by her experience as a volunteer puppy-raiser for future service dogs owned by Guide Dogs for the Blind and for Canine Companions, Cindy is passionate about legal issues associated with service dogs and the importance of their work for people who depend upon these amazing animals.

**Chelsea Staley, Director of Lifesaving, Petco Love**

Chelsea Staley joined the Petco Love team as the Director of Lifesaving in May 2020. An animal welfare professional, Chelsea has been dedicated to saving the lives of shelter pets since losing a newly adopted puppy to parvo in 2011. Chelsea oversees Petco Love's grants team and supports animal welfare organizations nationwide. Before joining Petco Love, Chelsea served as the Executive Director of Kanawha-Charleston Humane Association. Under her leadership, KCHA transformed from a rural, poverty-stricken shelter to one whose approach to lifesaving was celebrated nationally. Staley is an alumna of West Virginia University where she earned a bachelor's degree in Consumer Sciences, and the University of Charleston where she earned a Master of Business Administration. Prior to her career in animal welfare, Chelsea held several roles in sales and marketing. She lives in San Antonio, TX with her six dogs.

**Meaghan Swan-Wilson, Data and Logistics Senior Manager, Operation Kindness**

Meaghan Swan-Wilson joined Operation Kindness, a nonprofit animal welfare organization that provides lifesaving programs to assist both pets and people, as senior manager of data and logistics in July 2021. With more than 12 years in the field of animal welfare, Meaghan has extensive experience in shelter operations, population management, animal data, and analysis with animal welfare organizations in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. In Meaghan’s current role, she leads efforts to align, maximize, and streamline shelter operations by generating plans and reporting for animal movement within each department. Working with operational teams, Meaghan has developed reports that have helped to increase operational efficiency and decrease shelter animals’ length of stay, and she looks forward to speaking about how other shelters can do the same.
Audrey Tamez, Director of Legislative Engagement, ASPCA

Audrey Tamez directs the ASPCA’s Legislative Engagement Team and strategizes development of direct citizen lobbying across the country to support needed policy change on a local, state and federal level. She oversees the ASPCA’s Government Relations team’s three volunteer programs and travels the nation training advocates to use their voices to help animals. Audrey has spent the past decade developing these programs and networks of community leaders and animal welfare professionals across the nation to support the advancement of key legislative goals aimed at achieving greater animal welfare. She joined the ASPCA from The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), where she was a legislative coordinator for the Federal Affairs team. Audrey graduated Cum Laude from the University of Georgia in 2012 with a degree in Journalism and earned her master’s degree from Harvard in 2019. She lives in Austin, Texas with her rescue English Bulldog, Stetson, French Bulldog mix, Miss Peaches, three human children and husband.

Melissa Taylor, CBCC-KA, CSB-C, Behavior and Training Manager, Friends For Life Animal Shelter

Melissa Taylor, CBCC-KA, CSB-C is the Behavior and Training Manager at Friends For Life Animal Shelter, a progressive animal welfare organization in Houston, Texas. At FFL, Melissa heads a comprehensive, animal-centered behavior program which includes in-house animal care, community outreach, and inter-shelter consultation. Melissa has logged more than twenty years in shelter animal behavior, starting with an internship at the ASPCA’s Animal Behavior Center in New York City. She developed a lasting love for cooperative care from training livestock and wildlife as the coordinator of the Behavior and Training Department at the Houston SPCA, and applies the same principles to the dogs, cats, exotics, and humans she works with now at Friends For Life. Melissa is happiest when she has a chance to use data to create innovative projects to improve the lives of shelter animals and the people who care for them. For example, she started the Fraidy Cat Program to reliably shape and generalize prosocial behaviors in undersocialized cats. Melissa’s non-compulsive, choice-based training and behavior modification program is associated with a 67% drop in the number of long-stay dogs at Friends For Life. Over the course of her career, Melissa has focused on the development of shelter programs related to animal behavior. She has partnered with other shelters locally and around the world to start behavior volunteer, fearful cat socialization, enrichment, and animal-centered staff training initiatives. Melissa was awarded the 2022 Member of the Year Award by the Association For Professional Dog Trainers due to her work as co-chair of the APDT Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee examining the experiences of BIPOC members of the professional dog training community. She is passionate about the role that social justice issues play in the advancement of animal welfare.

Tiffany Tobaben, DVM, Chief Veterinarian, Operation Kindness

Dr. Tiffany Tobaben is a caring and passionate veterinarian that enjoys surgery, dentistry, internal medicine, and preventative medicine. As Operation Kindness’ Chief Veterinarian, she oversees all medical treatment and surgical protocols for the animals entering the shelter. Dr. Tobaben attended Texas A&M University where she earned a bachelor’s degree in biomedical science, a bachelor’s degree in veterinary science, as well as her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree. Prior to joining Operation Kindness in 2006, Dr. Tobaben worked at private practices, KittiCo, Spay Neuter Network, and Dallas Animal Services. The mission of Operation Kindness is very dear to Dr. Tobaben’s heart. Dr. Tobaben enjoys spending time with her thee-legged rescue dog, named Trinity. Cooking, reading, painting, and biking are a few of her hobbies. She also enjoys volunteer work and devotes time to help with surgeries and other procedures at In-Sync Exotics.

Brent Toellner, Senior Director, Lifesaving Programs, Best Friends Animal Society

Brent Toellner is the Senior Director, Lifesaving Programs, for Best Friends Animal Society. In this role Brent oversees the programmatic work in the central region and the Best Friends Network Partner Program.

Brent joined Best Friends in 2016 as the Regional Director of the South Central and Great Plains Regions and was responsible for connecting, consulting and collaborating with animal shelters, advocates, spay/neuter groups and rescues across the 11 states in the two regions.

Prior to joining Best Friends, Brent, his wife Michelle
co-founded the Kansas City Pet Project (KCPP). In July 2011, they formed KCPP to bid on the contract to run the Kansas City, Missouri, pound — a place where, for decades, more animals died than were saved. After KCPP took over in January 2012, adoptions increased by more than 200% and helped elevate KCPP to a live release rate of more than 90% for seven consecutive years while remaining an open-admission shelter, making KC Pet Project one of the largest open-admission no kill shelters in the nation.

Brent has a Bachelor’s in Journalism from the University of Missouri and a Masters in Marketing Communication from the University of Kansas. Brent lives in Kansas City with his wife Michelle and share their home with both dogs and cats. His outside interests include hiking, bicycling and photography.

Lara Tomlin, Esq.

Lara has been with the Denton County DA’s office since February of 2010. She has been in the Appellate division since September of 2012, before that working in the trial and intake divisions. In addition to her appellate duties, Lara handles all of the office’s animal seizure hearings and a majority of its animal cruelty cases. Lara is board certified in Criminal Appellate Law. She has a BA in International Studies from the University of North Texas and a JD from Texas Tech School of Law.

Randy Turner, Esq.

Randy Turner spent much of his childhood in Egypt, Ethiopia, and Germany. He practices animal law in Fort Worth and is a co-founder and past chair of the Animal Law Section of the State Bar of Texas. He has been a member and avid supporter of THLN since 1987 when he served a term on its board. Randy has served on the boards of directors of animal welfare organizations in Texas and has worked as a volunteer in Borneo, Indonesia on orangutan rescue and rehabilitation, Kenya on elephant conservation, and Zimbabwe on black rhinoceros conservation. He has been representing animal welfare and rescue organizations, wildlife sanctuaries, animal rights activists, and animal owners for over 30 years. Randy has tried numerous animal cases to a verdict and has handled several animal cases on appeal at various appellate courts around Texas, including the Supreme Court of Texas. He is a frequent lecturer on animal law and has testified several times at the Texas legislature on bills affecting animals. Randy divides his time between Fort Worth and a mountain cabin in Colorado with his wife, Patti, two rescue dogs, and three rescue cats.

Valarie V. Tynes, DVM, DACVB, DACAW, Shelter Veterinary Behaviorist, SPCA of Texas

Dr. Valarie Tynes is a native Texan and received her DVM from Texas A&M University. She worked in private practice for 14 years before beginning her residency in clinical animal behavior at the University of California at Davis in 2000. She has been a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists since 2003 and is also Board Certified in Animal Welfare. Her special interests are the behavior and welfare of pet pigs, exotic pets and zoo animals. She has been actively involved in the Fear Free initiative since its inception and serves on the Fear Free Speakers Bureau. She is a frequent speaker at veterinary meetings around the world and author of numerous articles and textbook chapters. She currently serves as the Shelter Veterinary Behaviorist for the SPCA of Texas in Dallas.

Karen S. Walsh, CAWA, LVMT, CFE, Senior Director of Animal Relocation, ASPCA

Karen S. Walsh, CAWA, LVMT, CFE is the Senior Director of Animal Relocation for the ASPCA, the former executive director of the McKamey Animal Center in Chattanooga, TN and served as a Program Manager for the PetSmart Charities Rescue Waggin’ program. She graduated from Blue Ridge in Virginia with a degree in veterinary technology and has achieved designations as a Certified Animal Welfare Administrator and a Certified Compassion Fatigue Educator. Karen has held leadership positions in both veterinary and animal welfare organizations and was appointed to serve on the Tennessee state Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners. She founded ChattaNeuter a high-quality high volume spay neuter clinic located in Chattanooga. Karen lives in Tennessee with her husband, Tom, their children, and a menagerie of furry and feathered family members on their small but beautiful farm.

Nick Walton, National Shelter Support Senior Manager, Best Friends Animal Society

Nick Walton is the National Shelter Support Senior Manager for Best Friends Animal Society and works with officers and shelters nationwide to implement progressive, community-focused practices that support lifesaving within the shelter, as well as increase officer safety and efficiency.
Nick started his journey in animal welfare at a pet boarding facility where he was the designated “poop scooper”, and shortly thereafter transitioned to a dog-trainer role within the facility. This naturally led him to devote the next few years of his life to becoming a professional dog trainer in the metro-Atlanta area. While working in Atlanta, he would regularly drive by dogs that needed some help and this led him to Fulton County Animal Services. Nick committed himself to a community-oriented approach to animal welfare enforcement with the goal of changing how the community viewed animal services and its officers. Commonly referred to as the “dog food man” within the inner city of Atlanta, Nick was instrumental in developing trust within the community and becoming a welcome sight throughout underserved areas of the city. Prioritizing this philosophy, as well as utilizing resources such as Pets For Life, allowed Nick to save more lives by keeping pets in their homes and out of the shelter. As a Field Training Officer, he would train new employees on the philosophy of community-engagement, further solidifying this mindset into the culture of FCAS. Working in Fulton County afforded Nick many diverse experiences as an ACO and resulted in his instrumental role in a number of large-scale cruelty cases from voodoo cases to circus animal cruelty. The lifesaving techniques that Nick developed and championed at Fulton County Animal Services represent the next step for animal control field services: a proactive solution-based approach to animal issues with an emphasis on building a supportive and safe community.

**MeLissa Webber, Director, Dallas Animal Services**

Bio Coming Soon!

**Laura Welsh, Assistant Animal Services Manager, Tri-City Animal Shelter/Cedar Hill Animal Services**

Laura Welsh is the Assistant Animal Services Manager for Tri-City Animal Shelter & Adoption Center and Cedar Hill Animal Services. She has served Cedar Hill, Duncanville, and Desoto (which form “Tri-City”) since September 2022. Prior to this, she spent 15 years working for Fort Worth Animal Care and Control, ending her career there as Intake/ Customer Service Supervisor, although she was able to gain experience in multiple areas of the shelter and field. She completed her Master’s of Science in Criminal Justice from the University of North Texas in June 2023 and holds a Bachelor’s in the same field with a minor in psychology. She has nearly 20 years of experience in animal welfare, shelter management, and field operations.

**Roberta Westbrook, DVM, Chief Animal Welfare and Medical Officer, Houston SPCA**

Dr. Roberta Westbrook is an experienced, motivated, and passionate veterinarian with an extensive background in Small Animal General Practice, Shelter Medicine, and instruction in Veterinary Technology. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Prairie View A&M University in 2000 where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. Dr. Westbrook went on to receive her Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine from the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri in 2004. Dr. Westbrook spent the first 3 years of her veterinary career in a progressive, small animal hospital in North Houston. It was here that she realized her passion for spay/neuter surgery and working to prevent the pet overpopulation problem that was rapidly growing in the city. In 2007, the Houston SPCA became the avenue through which she would cultivate her passion for animal sheltering. After 2.5 years serving in Animal Welfare at the Houston SPCA, Dr. Westbrook served for almost 9 years as a formal Instructor of Veterinary Technology at the Vet Tech Institute of Houston. Dr. Westbrook returned to the Houston SPCA in 2019 to settle into a permanent career in Shelter Medicine. She is the current Chief Animal Welfare and Medical Officer at the Houston SPCA, where she leads the Veterinary Services, Animal Care, and Adoptions teams. As an adjunct professor at Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biological Sciences, Dr. Westbrook co-teaches the Spring Shelter Medicine elective course and facilitates the fourth year, two-week clinical rotation in shelter medicine. Dr. Westbrook serves her community as the 2024 President of the Harris County Veterinary Medical Association, and a proud board member of the Association of Animal Welfare Advancement.

**Tyler Winckler, Senior Coordinator, Law Enforcement Training Center, Humane Society of the United States**

Tyler is the Senior Coordinator for the Law Enforcement Training Center and a law enforcement trainer with the Humane Society of the United States. He joined HSUS from Texas where he served as an enforcement officer in several municipal agencies. During his time as a district relations officer with the City of San Antonio Animal Care Services, he focused on building meaningful relationships between an
underserved community and the shelter, spending his time getting to know the people in these neighborhoods and offering resources and support to pet parents. Tyler also regularly collaborated with their investigations team, assisting with numerous large-scale animal cases, to include puppy mills and animal fighting rescues. A Texas native, Tyler is no stranger to natural disasters and was involved in multiple regional responses, including developing plans and assisting with evacuation shelters. Most recently, Tyler served as the field operations supervisor for the El Paso County Animal Welfare Department where he managed operations for 8 officers who serviced over 1,000 square miles. During his time with the county, he was integral to the development of comprehensive departmental standard operating procedures that will support the organization for a long time to come.
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Please visit www.texasunites.com to register or complete one form for each person attending the conference.

Name:______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Title:_______________________________________  Org./Agency:___________________________________________________

Address:________________________________________ City:___________________ State:_____ Zip:_____________________

Phone:_________________________________________  E-Mail:_____________________________________________________

REGISTRATION

Please Circle Your Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EARLY (through Feb. 29)</th>
<th>REGULAR (March 1 to April 5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conference Registration (Saturday - Monday)</td>
<td>$255</td>
<td>$285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADD Animal Control Officer Basic Training</td>
<td>$355</td>
<td>$385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADD &quot;Laws for Paws&quot; Animal Law Track</td>
<td>$355</td>
<td>$385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADD Shelter Medicine Track</td>
<td>$325</td>
<td>$355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Control Officer Basic Training (Friday - Saturday)</td>
<td>$225</td>
<td>$255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Laws for Paws&quot; Animal Law Track (Friday Only)</td>
<td>$155</td>
<td>$185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter Medicine Track (Sunday Only)</td>
<td>$155</td>
<td>$185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Registration Single Day (Saturday Only)</td>
<td>$135</td>
<td>$165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Registration Single Day (Sunday Only)</td>
<td>$135</td>
<td>$165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Registration Single Day (Monday Only)</td>
<td>$85</td>
<td>$105</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ABOUT YOU!

Is this your first Texas Unites for Animals Conference?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No

What kind of organization do you represent?

[ ] Municipal Shelter  [ ] Non-profit Shelter
[ ] Veterinary Hospital/Clinic  [ ] Corporation - Animal and/or Shelter Services and Products
[ ] Rescue Group  [ ] Other ________________

What is your role in your organization?

[ ] Senior Leadership  [ ] Manager/Supervisor
[ ] Customer Service  [ ] Marketing/Development
[ ] Other ________________

How did you learn about the conference?  Select all that apply.

[ ] Colleague  [ ] Direct Mail  [ ] Newspaper/Magazine
[ ] Email  [ ] Social Media  [ ] Other ________________
THE REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 2024.

Registrations received after the April 5th deadline are subject to an additional $10 late registration fee. There is a $25 service charge for cancellations.

NO REFUNDS AFTER APRIL 5, 2024.

PAYMENT INFORMATION

MY TOTAL (from pg. 48): __________

_____ Check enclosed (payable to Operation Kindness)

_____ Please charge: _______Visa       _______Mastercard       _______American Express       _______Discover

Name on Card: ____________________________________________________________________________

Card Number: _____________________________________________________________________________

Expiration Date: ________________     CVV: __________

Billing Address: ___________________________________________________________     Billing Zip Code: __________

Authorized Signature (for credit cards): ___________________________________________________________________

CONTACT INFORMATION

Register online at www.texasunites.com or return completed registration form (pgs. 48-51) with payment to:

Mail: Texas Unites
c/o Operation Kindness
3201 Earhart Drive
Carrollton, TX 75006

Contact: Rebecca Langevin
Senior Manager - Texas Unites
Operation Kindness
rlangevin@operationkindness.org

LODGING

Renaissance Austin Hotel
9721 Arboretum Boulevard
Austin, Texas 78759
1-800-468-3571

Texas Unites Room Rates are $199 per night through Thursday, April 4, 2024. To receive this exclusive rate, you must use the special link on the Texas Unites website to make your reservation, https://www.texasunites.com/travel-info/, or call 1-800-468-3571 and mention “Texas Unites.”

Rooms are limited at this rate, so reserve yours today!

TExAS UNITES 51
Please Select the sessions you would like to attend. Your selections will be used to estimate the attendance at each function. However, you are free to attend different workshops if you change your mind.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 26**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 AM - 5:00 PM</td>
<td>[ ] &quot;Laws for Paws&quot; Animal Law Track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 AM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>[ ] Animal Control Officer Basic Training Course (Day 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 PM - 8:00 PM</td>
<td>[ ] Exhibit Hall Opening &amp; Welcome Reception</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SATURDAY, APRIL 27**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30 AM - 8:30 AM</td>
<td>[ ] Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 AM - 5:30 PM</td>
<td>[ ] Animal Control Officer Basic Training Course (Day 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 AM - 9:30 AM</td>
<td>[ ] Opening General Session</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Present by Petco Love</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:30 AM - 12:00 PM</td>
<td>[ ] Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Designing for Healthy Animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intake Diversion Best Practices in Action: The Austin Pets Alive PASS Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recent Texas Cases Involving the LINK: The Basics on Recognizing and Investigating the LINK between Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence and Prosecuting an Animal Cruelty Case Under Texas Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grant Writing Boot Camp</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Testicle Talk: Not Your Traditional Customer Service Class</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Back to Basics – Animal Sheltering Fundamentals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 PM - 3:30 PM</td>
<td>[ ] Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curbing of Disease and Outbreak Prevention as Intake Rises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Release The Hounds! Building and Growing Short Term Foster Programs To Turbo Boost Long Term Lifesaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letter of the Law and Spirit of the Law: Balancing Compliance and Compassion in Animal Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slow the Flow: Creating Community-Focused Collaborative Lifesaving Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legislative Update: The Future From the Rearview Mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Back to Basics - Return to Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 PM - 5:30 PM</td>
<td>[ ] Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outside the Box: Where Shelter Medicine &amp; Elevated Quality of Care Meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advancing Your Community Cat Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Officer Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Back Your Lifesaving Power: How to Deal With Backlash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emergency Temporary Sheltering for Disasters &amp; Large Scale Intake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Back to Basics - 10 Customer Service Training Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 PM - 7:30 PM</td>
<td>[ ] Exhibit Hall Networking Event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Sunday, April 28**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30 AM - 8:30 AM</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 AM - 5:30 PM</td>
<td>Shelter Medicine Track</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM | General Session: Growing Expectations of Animal Services  
Presented by Best Friends Animal Society |
| 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM | Workshops  
- It Was Us; We Were the Problem! Learn from Our Oversights: A Shelter’s Self-Evaluation in Disease Prevention to Increase Life Saving  
- Interfacing with Adopters Using the Science of Online Dating  
- Community Policing and Animal Protection: Considerations for Enforcement Agencies  
- Bridging the Gap: Results, Analysis & Discussion of 2022 RTH National Survey  
- Back to Basics - Every Dog, Every Day! |
| 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM | Workshops  
- On-Leash Reactivity Case Files  
- Tales from the Barkside: Working with Municipal Shelters 101  
- Tactical Animal Handling  
- Puppy Mills in Texas: What You Can Do to Combat Them in Your Community  
- Is Your Team Ready for Change, More Importantly Are You?  
- Back to Basics - Essentials to Unlock Your Shelter’s Potential (Before the Word Basic was Featured in Urban Dictionary) |
| 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM | Workshops  
- Shelter Dog Activity: What are They Doing When Nobody's Looking?  
- Placement & Shelter Programs Workshop: Details Coming Soon!  
- Why Can't We All Just Get Along? A Proactive Approach to Resolving Human/Wildlife Conflicts  
- Pro Tips! Media Q&A Panel  
- Flow Matters: Is Your Data Making an Impact?  
- Back to Basics - Intake Best Practices for Disease Prevention |
| 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM | Cocktail Hour - Meetup |

**Monday, April 29**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30 AM - 8:30 AM</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8:30 AM - 10:00 AM | Workshops  
- Reducing Shelter Cat Length of Stay: A Behavioral Approach  
- Accessible Pet Training Resources for Marginalized Communities  
- Serval, and Tegus, and BEARS, OH MY!  
- Se Habla Españóil (and Other Helpful Lessons in Involving Your LatinX Community in Life Saving)  
- DEI: How and Why: Strategies to Embed DEI into Animal Welfare Organizations  
- Back to Basics - Where’d All the Adopters Go? |
| 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM | Workshops  
- Health & Behavior Track Workshop: Details Coming Soon!  
- Thinking Outside the Kennel: How to Maximize Your Life Saving Impact with Retail Adoptions  
- Mitigating Outdoor Cat Complaints  
- COOP Planning: Cats, Dogs, and Unusual Emergencies  
- Unleashing Compassion: Revolutionizing Accessible and Scalable Community Clinics  
- Back to Basics - Leveling Up your Foster Program |
| 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM | Closing Event |
SPRING NOW!

Join us April 26-29, 2024, in Austin, TX