

"5 Reasons You Should Appreciate Your Animal Shelter." *5 Reasons You Should Appreciate Your Animal Shelter* | *PetSafe® Articles*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 May 2017.
<http://www.petsafe.net/learn/5-reasons-you-should-appreciate-your-animal-shelter>

1. Some animals can be dangerous to people, wildlife, other animals and property.
2. Shelters also help to prevent and fight diseases that can spread from animal populations to humans
3. "shelters address the root causes of overpopulation and homelessness rather than simply dealing with the aftermath."

Ramos, Miriam. "Animal Shelters." *Animal Shelters* | *Learning to Give*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 May 2017.

<https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/animal-shelters>

1. Between 3-4 million animals are euthanized in shelters in the United States each year.
2. Private non-profit agencies depend on donations and grants for funding
3. Shelters can provide other services if they have enough resources, services may include exams and spay/neuter surgeries, behavior evaluations and training, and humane education,
4. Shelters for companion animals developed from the impoundments that were common in colonial towns and used to contain wandering livestock and strays.
5. It is estimated that each spay or neuter results in .72 fewer dogs and .57 fewer cats entering the shelter

"The Importance Of Animal Shelters." *Odyssey*. N.p., 06 June 2016. Web. 02 May 2017.

<http://www.theodysseyonline.com/the-importance-of-animal-shelters>

1. for every bit of praise given to shelters, there is also criticism.
2. "Although I strongly wish there could be a home for every animal currently in these shelters, these organizations are improving the lives of animals every day."

"Why Donate to the ASPCA and Local Shelters?" *CANIDAE®*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 May 2017.

<https://www.canidae.com/blog/2009/09/why-donate-to-aspca-and-local-shelters/>

1. No-kill shelters educate the public on the importance of responsible pet ownership to help people understand why they should help shelters
2. "Why donate to the ASPCA and local shelters? Because they need as much help as they can get to give lost or abandoned pets a temporary home until a responsible and loving home can be found."

Linmane123. "The Importance of Animal shelters and Rescues in the U.S." *Mountain View Mirror*. N.p., 05 Oct. 2015. Web. 02 May 2017.

<http://mtviewmirror.com/the-importance-of-animal-shelters-and-rescues-in-the-u-s/>

1. about 7.6 million (3.9 million dogs and 3.4 million cats) pets enter animal shelters every year according to the ASPCA
2. "I, along with many others, believe that animal rescues and humane shelters give the opportunity of a long and happy life to an animal that may have either lost, or never had a real home and give them every chance to find a home with a family that loves them and not only thinks of the animal as a pet but as a family member"

Writer, Leaf Group. "Pros & Cons of Animal Shelters." *Our Everyday Life*. Our Everyday Life, 04 Apr. 2017. Web. 02 May 2017.

<http://peopleof.oureverydaylife.com/pros-cons-animal-shelters-10034.html>

1. The decision to euthanize the animal depends upon the animal's temperament, health and the shelter's space and resources
2. Shelters lower the amount of animal attacks that would happen if all strays roamed free, and also give animals both food and shelter.
3. the shelter's cost allowing adoptions is much lower than the cost of resources required to house and feed the animals.
4. While workers typically have the animals' best interests in mind, the need for shelter workers can way outnumber the amount of people willing to volunteer.
5. Overcrowding in animal shelters leads to stressed animals, the spread of disease and animals fighting one another

Steinberger, Ruth. "Animal Shelter Numbers Tell Only a Part of the Story." *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 08 Feb. 2013. Web. 02 May 2017.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ruth-steinberger/spay-neuter-animal-shelters_b_2534069.html

1. many surplus pets never enter the shelter system.
2. Around eight million surplus animals will enter shelters in the U.S. this year according to Oxford Pets
3. Most pets taken to shelters originate in low-income communities and fewer than half will leave the shelters alive.

Admin. "Contact Us." *Citizen Voice Times*. N.p., 02 May 2014. Web. 05 May 2017.

<http://www.cvt-news.com/news/?p=7934>

1. Most people who adopt from shelters are likely to have animals which are surrendered or sent to a shelter once again.
2. "The Humane Society of the United States estimates that animal shelters care for about 8 million dogs and cats every year, yet about 5 million of these same animals die every year from euthanasia."
3. that rate has dropped to about 3% from about 25%

"The Importance of Volunteering and Donating to Your Local Shelter." *Animal Planet*. N.p., 05 Feb. 2017. Web. 05 May 2017.

<http://www.animalplanet.com/the-importance-of-volunteering-and-donating-to-your-local-shelter/>

1. "One of the most helpful ways to get a pet adopted is to have a great photo, showing off their looks and personality. Shelters are always looking for ways to get their pets into new homes, and your photography skills could do the trick."
2. Donating daily household items like old newspapers, paper towels, and soaps helps shelters keep their facilities clean.

Schenker, ABOUT Michelle. "How Your Pet Shelter Donations Can Help Pets in Need." *CanineJournal.com*. N.p., 15 Dec. 2016. Web. 02 May 2017.

<https://www.caninejournal.com/pet-shelter-donations/>

1. the number of resources the shelters have are much less than the amount of resources they need
2. when you give money, you can write off the tax-deductible donation, and the organization can use the money where it is most needed within the shelter or organization
3. "After all, that toy your dog no longer shows interest in may be the best thing a shelter pet ever had to play with."
4. Some pet shelters have thrift stores where you can donate items you no longer need to be sold to cover the costs of running the shelter.

Be a Hero for Animals with a Charity Tax Deductible Donation - HSUS. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 May 2017.

https://secure.humanesociety.org/site/SPageServer?pagename=splash_research&s_src=ad_gg_search_charityresearch_010117&gclid=Cj0KEQjw6LXIBRCUqIjXmdKBxZUBEiQA_f50PrekISi3NylZP06HhEFXrO3mciacP8y4p_gQKNPi3KcaAkJI8P8HAQ

1. 83% of funding comes from donations and grants
2. 79% of the money donated to charities goes to animal protection programs while another 18% goes into fundraising
3. The remaining 3% of funding goes to management and general.

"Five Reasons Why Donating Dog Food to a Shelter Makes a Difference." *DOGSBLOG*. N.p., 08 June 2015. Web. 05 May 2017.

<http://blog.dogfordog.com/five-reasons-why-donating-dog-food-to-a-shelter-makes-a-difference/>

1. shelters can get donations of dog food from community members or companies but sometimes the food has expired, was not made in the USA, or is lower quality and not as healthy.

2. "One bag of food means a dog has a full belly, is vetted to stay healthy, gets socialized and also gets to meet prospective families. It is a mighty bag of food because it saves and makes lives."
3. Some shelters have programs that assist pet owners struggling financially and think surrendering their animal is the only option.

"Animal Shelters – What They Are and Why We Need Them." *Cart*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 May 2017.

<https://halopets.com/animal-shelters-what-they-are-and-why-we-need-them/>

1. many shelters have limited resources, especially space and food, and must decide which pets are most likely to be adopted and euthanize others in order to make room for the increasing numbers of stray animals.

"Information, Facts About Animal Shelters, Help Shelter Pets." *Global Animal*. N.p., 09 Sept. 2013. Web. 02 May 2017.

<http://www.globalanimal.org/2013/09/09/throw-local-animal-shelters-a-bone/>

1. shelters are necessary in our societies because of uncontrolled breeding and irresponsible pet guardians
2. The shelters with poor conditions provide unhealthy environments for animals and can be exposed to neglect or abuse.

"Pets by the Numbers." *The Humane Society of the United States*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 May 2017.

http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/pet_overpopulation/facts/pet_ownership_statistics.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/

1. Data reflecting shelter/rescue animal populations is not necessarily accurate due to a lack of reporting requirements
2. The HSUS is working to update their data through the [Shelter Animals Count](#), an initiative formed to create and share more accurate sheltered animal statistics, providing facts and enabling insights that can help to save animal lives.
3. The HSUS advocates for a trap-neuter-return approach to [humanely managing community cats](#).

"Pet Statistics." *ASPCA*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 May 2017.

<https://www.aspca.org/animal-homelessness/shelter-intake-and-surrender/pet-statistics>

1. 34% of dogs are purchased from breeders, while 23% of dogs and 31% of cats are obtained from an animal shelter

2. Around 27% of cats are acquired as strays, down from 35% in 2012.
3. According to the [ASPCA's National Rehoming Survey](#), discord between owners and their pets are the most common reason that owners rehome their pet, 47% of rehomed dogs and 42% of rehomed cats.

"Facts About Animal Sheltering." *Petfinder*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 May 2017.

<https://www.petfinder.com/pro/for-shelters/facts-about-animal-sheltering/>

1. Less than 2% of cats and only 15-20% of dogs are returned to their owners, and most were identified with tags, tattoos or microchips.
2. Estimates for stray cats within the U.S alone range up to 70 million.
3. The average cost of basic food, supplies, medical care and training for a single pet is \$400 to \$700 per year
4. The cost of spaying or neutering a pet is less than the cost of raising puppies or kittens for one year.

It is well known that when someone loses a pet, one of the first places to look is an animal shelter. It is also well known that when you find a stray animal or a lost pet and don't know its owner, one of the first places to take it is also the shelter. What many don't know is that shelters might not always be able to take care of the animal you are giving to them. The overcrowding of animals at shelters and the lack of funding given to them are all topics that are not often spoken about. However these issues do not only have an impact on the animals and pet owners, but also on the overall public.

Animal shelters began as a way to contain wandering livestock and other strays and hold them until their owners could pick them up. Unfortunately, because they did not serve to make any profit, many companion animals were not collected by their owners and were put down by the impoundments. Later in the mid-1800's, various organizations began to form with the goal of protecting animals and caring for their well being. These organizations included the ASPCA (the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) and the Women's Humane Society (Ramos). Over time many other organizations such as the HSUS (the Humane Society of the United States) and various SPCA organizations arose and branched off with similar goals in mind, creating the systems of animal shelters we know today.

Animal shelters provide a service to society in multiple ways. First, by taking potentially dangerous animals off of the streets, the amount of potential animal attacks against humans are generally lowered. Secondly, by caring for the animals in the shelter and taking injured and sick animals off of the street, it helps to prevent diseases that can move from the animal population to the human population, diseases that can be dangerous or deadly such as rabies (5 Reasons). Not

only do shelters indirectly help keep people safe and healthy, they can also provide for emotional health through the introduction of pets and by protecting lost pets and returning them to their owners.

Unfortunately, these same shelters are suffering from a lack of funding which means that they are unable to take care of many animals who may be in need of their help. One of the reasons these shelters are financially unable to care for these animals is because of overcrowding. Roughly eight million animals are entered into shelters each year, of that amount around three to four million of them are euthanized (Admin). This is because these shelters simply lack the resources required to care for them. Most shelters are part of nonprofit organizations whose only source of income comes from the donations of the public. This means they depend on others to make these donations, but if too few people step forward to do so they have no means of caring for so many animals.

One of the things that contributes to overcrowding is the amount of animals that are not fixed by their owners. Many people do not understand the importance of preventing their pet from reproducing and this results in many unwanted and unplanned litters entering the population. As it stands, it is estimated that there are roughly seventy million stray cats in the United States alone, granted that the number may not be all that accurate due to insufficient data collected from surveys to accurately make the estimation, but still it is an unprecedented number (Facts). It is believed that if more pet owners were to have their pets fixed, the number of strays would decrease dramatically by roughly .72 fewer dogs and .57 fewer cats entering the shelter for each spay and neuter (Ramos).

Many people the best way to help animal shelters is to adopt from them, however that is not necessarily true. It is common for most people who adopt from these shelters return their pets after a short period of time. Roughly 47% of rehomed dogs and 42% of rehomed cats are returned to the shelter due to complications between the owner and pet. Furthermore most pets aren't even adopted from the shelter as only 23% of dogs and 31% of cats are obtained from an animal shelter (ASPCA). Much better alternatives are to donate to shelters, volunteer and to educate more people about the importance of shelters and responsible pet ownership.

When people donate to shelters, they are not only providing for the direct health of an animal, but they are also raising their chances of being adopted and overall living conditions. By providing a single bag of food for a shelter, someone can provide meals to several animals for a few days. Considering that the combined costs of food and medical care for one animal alone can range from \$400-700, every donation helps (Facts). The donation of other materials such as cleaning supplies and towels can also help to keep the shelters clean and sanitary. Not only does this help the workers manage the facility, but it also helps stop the spread of diseases and increase the living conditions of the animals kept there. Furthermore, it can improve the image of the shelter and the animal themselves. The people at Animal Planet claim that "One of the most helpful ways to get a pet adopted is to have a great photo, showing off their looks and personality. Shelters are always looking for ways to get their pets into new homes, and your photography skills could do the trick." The image of the shelter can greatly affect how potential pet owners chose to adopt their future pet.

Because I have realized donations to be such an important contribution to the funding and wellbeing of shelters, I organized a drive to collect the contributions of the people in my neighborhood and surrounding areas to donate much needed supplies and money to the Wake county SPCA, a local organization dedicated to protecting animals. In doing so I was able to collect quite a few cans of food, bags of cat litter, paper towels, soaps, detergents, and other such items. Working together with the community I was able to contribute to the solution of providing homes and resources for animals. By involving others, I was able to draw awareness to the issue and gather more resources than I would have been able to on my own.

Despite our efforts, however, the issue of overcrowding and a lack of resources is still presence. Our approach offers a temporary solution with long lasting effects overall, however there is still much that needs to be done in order to make a permanent change. There are several things that everyday people can do to help the cause. The simplest thing that can be done as I have previously mentioned is to donate to the shelter. If someone doesn't want to go out and purchase supplies, you can donate used items or even simply donate cash for the shelter to use where it sees fit. Beyond that, you can go so far as to even donate your time to a shelter, and help to manage and take care of the animals through volunteer work. Both resources and staffing are scarce in shelters so either would make a helpful contribution.

Another way others can help is to adopt animals from the shelter and to have any current pets fixed if they haven't been already in order to keep the rates of stray animals from increasing. For anyone concerned about the costs of the surgery, it costs less to have a pet fixed than it does to take care of a kitten or puppy within their first year (Facts). Furthermore, spreading awareness

and educating others about the importance of responsibility for pets and donating to shelters is always helpful as it can lead to more contributions from others and overall better care for animals.

Overall, the overcrowding of animals and the shelters' lack of resources is a societal problem with several solutions which anyone can help contribute to. Help is always welcome in the form of donations, volunteering, adopting and educating. Any way you can provide will be appreciated as every bit helps to solve the problem.

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Be a Hero for Animals with a Charity Tax Deductible Donation - HSUS. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 May 2017.

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