



New York's Kindest

BY CARRIE ALLAN

New York: If you can make it there, you'll make it anywhere, goes the song—but now the city's animal care and control agency is reminding locals that there's more to New Yorkers than toughness.

"You have New York's finest, New York's bravest, New York's strongest, and now New York's kindest," says Richard Gentles, director of development and communications for New York City Animal Care & Control (NYCACC).

Playing off the famous nickname of the New York City police, the ads show a variety of people affiliated with the agency—adopters, a volunteer, donors—with adorable animals from the shelter.

A group of volunteers with backgrounds in PR and marketing offered their help to create the campaign. Nicki Gondell, a marketing and design consultant who helped organize the effort, got interested in the shelter back in 2007, when a friend of hers who was volunteering there called to say she'd found the perfect dog for Gondell. Gondell went on to adopt the dog, now named Jojo, and says he's now the de facto mayor of the Upper West Side.

NYCACC gave the group the information and background materials that would help them develop the concept. "When I first saw the ads, honestly, I got goosebumps," says Gentles. "It fits so nicely into New York, and it's such a great message."

Launched in October 2012, the campaign has run in subway stations and subways themselves, and even had a home on a billboard near Citi Field, home of the New York Mets.

The ads not only play off an already-well-known slogan, they appeal to people's desire to be seen a certain way. So many products people buy have a cachet that attracts them—often subconsciously, because

As seen in



of what the product will convey about them. With this campaign, NYCACC has put that front and center. "The kindest—that's the public at large, that's the community," says Gentles. "We wanted to make sure that was understood, that we weren't saying we were kind—although the staff and volunteers

NEW YORK'S KINDEST

AL, FOSTER caregiver
with Jojo

Meet Al, one of New York's Kindest. When Al walked into our shelter on East 110th Street, he certainly didn't expect to leave with a small fluffy dog. But Soldier did everything in his power to get Al's attention. Love's funny that way.

Our nonprofit organization rescues thousands of New York's homeless and abandoned animals each year. Our goal is to place every dog, cat and bunny in a new loving home. But we can't do it without your help.

BE ONE OF NEW YORK'S KINDEST: ADOPT • VOLUNTEER • DONATE

nycacc.org

Animal Care & Control - NYC
OUR CITY. OUR SHELTER.

New York City Animal Care & Control's "New York's Kindest" campaign has run in the subway system, and appeared on a billboard near Citi Field, home of the New York Mets.

here are kind, of course. We wanted the community to feel that they were part of it, that they were participating. Asking them: Are you one of New York's kindest? Do you want to be one of New York's kindest?"

The message seems to be getting through, Gentles says. He's heard from staff and volunteers that traffic into the shelter has increased since the ads started running, with more people coming in both wanting to adopt and wanting to help out by volunteering or donating. At press time, the shelter was planning to beef up the campaign closer to summer—just in time for New York's kindest to help the agency cope with kitten season. ■