

AC&C Newsletter



April, 2006

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SPECIAL—The next few month's cover stories are dedicated to those who have given years of dedicated service. These are their stories....

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In the Mind of a Care Giver, by Joyce Clemmons

How many times have you thought, "I could have done more?" Every four legged creature that crossed your path... "I have to help. Why are you alone? Did you eat? Have water? Where is your home?" These are the kinds of thoughts that crossed my mind as a child. "If I chase you, to help you, will I cause you harm in the process? Will you dart across the street in fear of me? Should I leave you alone and then lay in my bed wondering how you are doing? Did you reach your destination or will I find you dead in the street hit by a car, bus or something worse?" It would be my fault because I did not help. Those sad eyes...the memory of watching you take two hesitant steps forward to let me help you and then feel your body exhale and relax because you found someone you could trust. I can now care for you and share my food. Hence the mission begins...

Although I always felt drawn to help animals, I began working to save animals in earnest on September 5, 1978 at the ASPCA. I was only 18 years old and ready to save the animal world. My thought, go in to get experience that would prepare me to become a veterinarian. I was offered a choice of two positions; working in the Kennels or the Business office. I did not want to work with people. I wanted to be hands on with the animals. After all, those babies (my affectionate name for them) needed me. You see, I felt I understood them and I knew I had lots of love to give. In my neighborhood I was called, "That crazy kid who loves animals". So, of course, I chose to work in the kennels.

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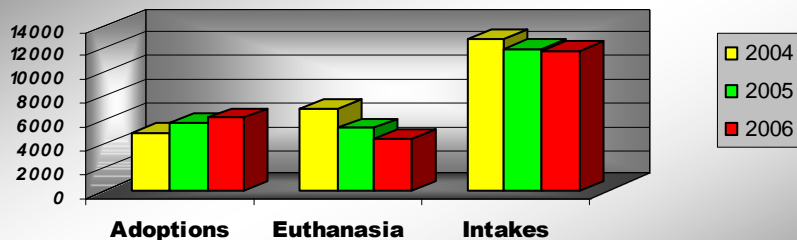
Making a Difference



Please, come make a difference! Join our Volunteer Program by emailing sarahbrown@nycacc.org. We always have a need for dedicated, caring and proactive people to join this amazing program! Find out more today!

Progress Snapshot

January 1 to April 30 (Cats/Dogs)



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Working in the Kennels was truly a challenge because my heart strings were constantly being pulled. So many animals. I can remember the early morning rescue missions, (so I thought) going in one hour before Euthanasia to hide as many animals as I possibly could. I did not want them to die. I thought by hiding them in different rooms; they would have another chance at life. I was only fooling myself. Three months of this drained me beyond belief. Many days of going home just to cry because I did not understand how this could be. My first adoption was a Chow mix I called Baby. He was a biter, but very much misunderstood. He bit several people, why? He protected the person who held his leash. This was my first exposure to understanding animal behavior. This was truly the beginning of a lifetime of devotion to the animals of New York City.



How many of you have been here? Do you ask yourself, what can I do to make a difference? What is my part? In my career of 28 years, 16 1/2 yrs at the ASPCA and the past 11 years with AC & C, I have held many positions. You see, there is so much that goes into giving our four legged babies, "Their best life". I was and still am too sensitive to pursue veterinary medicine but I learned that there are many ways to make a difference in the lives of needy animals. We, in this field often hear the question, "How could you work there". My answer to that is, "How could you not?" You say you care? What is your part?

Each individual at AC & C plays a critical role in the care of all of our babies. Employees and volunteers alike; we are a TEAM. You see, each of my staff and volunteers is a reminder of the miles I have walked in their shoes. They are a mirror of my life. Their laughter and tears; trials and triumphs; I feel their pain and their joy as intensely as if it were my own. You can never say you understand if you have not done the walk. We all at one point have broken down and cried in sadness and in joy. It is amazing how the lives of those we are entrusted to care for impact us.

Animal Care Officers (all levels), New Hope Liaisons and Coordinators, Vet Techs, Vets, Asst. Customer Service Supervisors, Volunteers, Behavior Evaluators, Assistant and Shelter Supervisors all have been exposed to so much sadness. The neglected, abused, injured, & frightened. Staff attempts to gain their trust to help and ease their suffering and fears. It can be very overwhelming. We understand that most of these babies have been in a home at one point, loved and cherished somewhere along the line but now they are lost or homeless. There are not enough of us to care for them the way we truly would like to. So we bond the best way we can knowing at one point we have to let go. Letting go is not always because they have been placed. Letting go sometimes means loss of life. The emotional drain can be enormous.

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Spring is here...And so are the kitties

New Yorkers are out on the streets these days, basking in the beautiful weather, smelling the flowers and enjoying all the other good stuff that we associate with spring. Everybody seems happy and excited to be alive. But for those of us who work in animal shelters and for the cats we care for, the feeling is different.

Usually our stomachs begin to knot up about March 1st. We start looking at cage capacity, and stocking up on clean bedding, formula and bottles. We do this because we know that within days the kittens will begin to show up at our door or outside it, in boxes, bags and dumpsters, inside parked cars, boats and sheds- any place a pregnant cat can feel safe enough to queen (give birth).

Those of you not in this business might say, "Oooh how sweet, baby kitties! Is there anything cuter?" They ARE cute; fuzzy little fluff balls that bounce instead of strut, and practice purring in fits and starts. But the sad fact is that many, many kittens will be born this spring and there are simply not enough people to care for tiny babies and not enough homes to ensure that every kitten will find a home for life. Too many kittens isn't cute it's sad.



To add to that problem, when kittens flood the shelter, few people look at our lovely adult cats and so they are forgotten until summer is over.

Our poor city kitties face another danger when spring rolls around. When the weather is nice, New Yorkers open their windows and guess who falls out if screens are not in place. Yep, that's right, the cats. And all that talk about their having nine lives is just another urban myth. Here's a news flash: kitties will fall out of your window and they will not land on their feet; they land on their faces causing horrifying high-rise injuries and often death.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP!

1. Donate: Give money to pay for veterinary costs, kitten formula and other supplies.
2. Spring Clean: Give us your old towels and baby blankets, old shoe boxes for kittens to nest in.
3. Educate: Tell your neighbors, friends, anyone who will listen, to spay or neuter their pets. Better yet, if you can, offer to pay for someone who cannot afford this service. Nothing will help more than this.
4. Be responsible: Make sure your screens are secure and remind others to do the same.
5. Microchip: Give your pets permanent identification. Microchips for cats make the most sense; collars get lost regularly. If you can keep your kitties inside where little harm can come to them, they will have the very best chance of living to a ripe old age.
6. Volunteer: Foster kittens who need time and attention to get big enough for adoption. Spend time in your local animal shelter socializing with the kitties. They need quality time too, and your companionship will make them more adoptable.

If you would like to help us help the kitties in our care please call: 212-788-4000.



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Our job does not stop at caring for animals. Our mission is to protect people as well as animals. It is our job to step in when it appears that no choice is available but to give up a beloved pet. There are times when our role is one of problem solver and nothing gives us greater pleasure than to find a solution that allows the human animal bond to remain intact, to make that Lost and Found match that allows for a joyous reunion. That instead of giving up a pet, a solution is found and the relationship is salvaged. It is our job to educate the public so that we can achieve our ultimate goal a "Forever Home".

On those days when we are feeling that we cannot do it anymore because it hurts too much, we all draw from the memories that give us strength. The extra love that restored trust, the food and medicine that restored health, the attention to detail that tracked down a misplaced owner; the happy endings that help us balance the sadness.

To my team, I love you all and appreciate your hard work and dedication to give every single baby their "Best Life". Thank you for your dedication and for allowing me to revisit my journey when I look at your own; your work is a constant reminder of who I am and how I got here. To the public; thank you for caring and for not forgetting that our babies need your help. Without you, the picture is not complete. If the picture is not complete, the dream will never be fulfilled.



Adoption Success Story

I adopted a pit bull mix from the AC&C shelter on 110th St. in January 2003. I grew up with cats and was always a cat person. But after moving to the East Village in NYC, I was a bit lonely and felt that it might be nice to have a companion animal to spend my time with. When I went to the shelter, I buckled at the knees and became so distraught looking at the multitude of dogs and cats that needed homes. My head turned every which way, trying to decide how I could possibly pick one dog over the next one. They were all looking for attention and a human to reach out to them. They stuck their paws through the cage bars to touch my hand, stuck their tongues out to lick me. One of the women working at the shelter brought me into the medical department because she said she might have the perfect dog for me. There was another couple there who were also looking for a dog and another shelter worker was about to show them this same dog in the intensive care unit. She had a temporary name like "Tootsie" or "Caramel". I walked through the doors of medical and before the woman pointed out the puppy, I was on my hands and knees cooing. The couple standing there said that they saw her first, and that they wanted her. But when the shelter worker opened the cage to allow the puppy to visit with both the couple and I, the puppy ran right past the couple, jumped into my arms, smothered me with kisses, and wouldn't let me go. It was love at first sight..



That was a frigid day in early January 2003, when the puppy was 5 months old. Now, her name is Patti Smith (named after the punk rock musician) and she is 3 1/2 years old and we are a happy couple! She has changed every aspect of my life for the better. I cannot express how much I love my dog, almost as much as she loves me. We do everything together, and my parents even call Patti their grandchild. My sisters call Patti their "niece." She goes with me on road trips, on vacations, shopping, and we have become part of the subculture of people who spend their days living at the dog runs and parks. Patti has friends at doggie daycare and even has her own webpage. Patti gets a new toy almost daily, and loves to play fetch. Her favorite toys are the squeaky destructible kind, and she performs surgery on her toys. She amputates all appendages right away, and then begins to kill the squeaker. She is also a lapdog...at 55 pounds!

Nobody has the heart to tell her that she is actually quite a large dog! If someone is sitting down, no matter where we are, she immediately tries to sit on their lap and cuddle with them.

When I first got her, everyone assured me that she was most likely a Jack Russell terrier. Overnight, she started to develop into a pit bull! She entertains all the children that live on my block. She snuggles into my armpit when we go to sleep at night, and licks my feet to wake me up in the morning. When I need to go somewhere and Patti cannot come with me, everyone around the neighborhood comes outside to ask me where Patti is! I cherish every minute that I get to be a part of her life. I have now become actively involved in trying to rid the population of the negative stereotypes that surround the pit bull breed. It is pit mixes that show up in the shelters, and so many that are euthanized because of their undeserved reputation. I can't imagine my life without her.



Thank you from the bottom of my heart, Amy Calmann (and Patti Smith the pit bull)

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**Animal Care & Control
of New York City**

**We create happiness
by bringing pets and
people together.**

**We're on the web:
www.nycacc.org**

HOW YOU CAN HELP MAKE NEW YORK CITY A NO-KILL COMMUNITY

Did you know AC&C needs your help? AC&C rescues 42,000 lost and homeless dogs and cats and over 2,500 wild, exotic and farm animals every year. That is over 120 animals every day! 100% of your tax deductible donation is directed to AC&C's life saving programs, including:

- STAR Program:** provides medical treatment to injured animals rescued by Animal Care & Control.
- SAFETY NET:** Helps pets and people stay together during difficult financial times.
- BIG FIX:** Provides free neutering services for the pets of New York's low-income residents.
- TLC:** A Youth Program for Inner City Kids (14 – 20 yrs old) interested in a career in Animal Care.

Please provide the following information:

NAME _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____

E-MAIL _____

Please apply my donation to the Fund Checked above or to the CARE FUND if you want your donation applied to the area with the need. _____

Send your donation to: 11 Park Place, Suite 805 NY, NY 10007 Attn: Development Department

CASH/CHECK Amount: _____ CREDIT CARD Amount: _____

Credit Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Name as it appears on the card: _____

Signature _____

AC&C is the largest 501c3 non-profit animal welfare organization in New York City.

**AC&C Pet
Adoption Centers**

Looking for that special someone in your life? Come to any one of AC&C's Pet Adoption Centers to find unconditional love in every shape and size. Adoptions hours are 7 days a week from Noon till 7:00 pm.


Manhattan Animal Care Center
326 East 110th Street, Manhattan

Brooklyn Animal Care Center
2336 Linden Boulevard, Brooklyn


Staten Island Animal Care Center
3139 Veterans Road West, Staten Island

Biscuits and Bath
1535 1st Avenue @ 80th Street, Manhattan

PETSMART (Open During Store Hours)
7 Route 9, Manalapan, NJ
1520 Forest Avenue, Staten Island
88-25 Dunning Road, Middletown, NY
438 Route 22 East, Union, NJ ♠



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Call 212.788.4000 or 3-1-1 for more information or visit www.nycacc.org*