

No Kill: 2 Words Which Either Explain or Inflamm

By Lorraine May, M.A.

Full disclosure: I am a No Kill Open Admission Shelter Advocate, co-founder and vice president of No Kill Colorado. I am writing this article because I believe that we owe it to our shelter animals to find a united way to follow the quickest, most effective programs to save their lives. I am convinced that the nationwide successes of the No Kill Equation (see box) can provide that path for Colorado. But like any true animal advocate, I am willing to investigate and accept whatever plan is most successful.

*Over 31,000 animals were destroyed in Colorado's shelter system in 2011.
Time is of the essence for each and every animal.*

No Kill Colorado was created to bring together a coalition of all rescues and shelters, individuals, businesses and organizations who envision a shelter system with measurable goals, open admission and saving a minimum of 90 out of every 100 animals. Animals would not be killed for any reason except euthanasia which means gently ending a life of unbearable suffering, or of aggression truly beyond rehabilitation.

*The first No Kill shelter was created in San Francisco in 1994.
Rural Tompkins County, New York became the second No Kill shelter in 2002.
Today there are 89 No Kill communities encompassing over 300 cities and towns.*

In this article I intend to give a genuine voice to the varied points of view of NO KILL OPEN ADMISSION Shelters, TRADITIONAL OPEN ADMISSION Shelters and NO KILL LIMITED ADMISSION Shelters (see Attribute Chart). It would be impossible to cover everything and represent everyone but hopefully the information provided will have educational and unifying value.

*Any shelter or group can call themselves No Kill just as any person can call himself a doctor.
These declarations always warrant further investigation to reveal the truth!*

Language Problems – What Does No Kill Mean?

NO KILL OPEN ADMISSION – No Kill succinctly and precisely describes the goal of not killing shelter animals. There are no deceptive or placating euphemisms.

TRADITIONAL OPEN ADMISSION– No Kill suggests that shelters who euthanize are 'kill' shelters which creates an unfair perception and an antagonistic relationship.

NO KILL LIMITED ADMISSION – No Kill means shelters do not kill animals except in extreme cases.

*Nationally, per capita (per individual animal) funding ranged from \$1.50 to about \$6.30.
Save rates ranged from 35% (\$2.00 per capita) to 90% (\$1.50 per capita), but their
lifesaving rates did not follow any predictable pattern. There were shelters with an 87%
rate of lifesaving spending only \$2.80 per capita, and shelters with a 42% rate (less than
half of the former) spending more than double that (at \$5.80 per capita). –
Dollars and Sense*

A Question of Resources

NO KILL OPEN ADMISSION – Money is often used as an excuse for failure by traditional shelters, although there is no correlation between a shelter's budget and its save rate. Killing costs money with

no possibility of generating revenue through adoptions. The shelters in Denver have assets ranging from a few million dollars to as much as 63 million dollars, annual revenues from under a million to 19 million dollars. You can compare self-reported save numbers on each shelter website with their assets at www.charitycheck101.org.

TRADITIONAL OPEN ADMISSION– The shelters which accept all animals brought to them have a great deal of expense: programs, fund raising, advertising, salaries, animal care, etc. They can only save animals as resources become available.

NO KILL LIMITED ADMISSION – Resources dictate how many animals they can accept.

Should the public be held to a higher standard of responsibility and compassion than shelters?

Pet Overpopulation

NO KILL OPEN ADMISSION - Pet overpopulation has been blamed on a public with virtually no access to free or low cost spaying and neutering until recent years. Until there is higher compliance with spay / neuter, and puppy mills are no longer profitable, the No Kill Equation, which includes low cost spay / neuter programs and is against puppy mills, offers a viable option rather than blaming the public.

TRADITIONAL OPEN ADMISSION– Spaying and neutering is the primary solution as well as legislating owner responsibility. There isn't any proven way to convince people to adopt when they would prefer to buy.

NO KILL LIMITED ADMISSION – Varies by individual shelter.

Consider that there are about 23 million households looking for a pet each year.

If about 4 million of those are likely to adopt, and about 2 million are predicted to buy, there are 17 million undecided households which could adopt the 3 to 4 million pets destined to be destroyed.

What if each of us decided to persuade that 1 in 5 households to adopt?

Our actions could save every shelter animal in the U.S.A.

Possible or Impossible?

NO KILL OPEN ADMISSION – 300 No Kill cities and towns of all kinds prove that routinely killing shelter animals is neither necessary nor merciful. No Kill believes that traditional shelters should study the successful tactics utilized by No Kill and implement them NOW.

TRADITIONAL OPEN ADMISSION– No Kill isn't possible. They are exaggerating or lying outright. No Kill is hoarding and warehousing, sending animals to other facilities to be killed, or prolonging suffering by not appropriately euthanizing.

NO KILL LIMITED ADMISSION – Individual shelters often help local traditional shelters become No Kill by accepting as many animals as they can.

In Williamson County, Texas, a No Kill community that served almost 8000 animals in 2012 with a save rate of 94%, the average shelter stay until adoption was 15 days for cats and 11 days for dogs.

Personalities and Passions

NO KILL OPEN ADMISSION - Nathan J. Winograd's 2007 book, [Redemption](#), revealed to the public that shelters and national organizations consider the routine killing of shelter animals an acceptable solution to pet overpopulation, medical and behavior issues and inconvenience. These same national animal welfare organizations often direct their attacks at messenger Winograd, not his message.

TRADITIONAL OPEN ADMISSION– Traditional shelters, along with other national animal welfare organizations are not impressed by Winograd's revelations. They maintain that euthanizing shelter animals is a merciful, necessary and viable solution. They are doing the best they can.

NO KILL LIMITED ADMISSION – Limited Admission shelters seem unaware of Winograd, have not read his writings and are not aligned with the national movement. They don't euthanize because they believe it is wrong.

Status Quo versus Change

NO KILL OPEN ADMISSION – The shelter system is archaic and not accomplishing the job of sheltering that it was meant to do. What could be more stressful in an environment, or contribute more to the deterioration of spirit, health and behavior, than to smell the death of your fellow beings? A shift in perspective, an acceptance of a new paradigm, and the hiring of people who refuse to destroy 3 to 4 million animals annually nationwide is needed. The public does not want animals killed; they do want No Kill shelters.

TRADITIONAL OPEN ADMISSION– We have made steady progress for many years. It's the public which needs to become more responsible owners. Our directors are compassionate and do what they have to do to keep the animals from falling into the hands of abusers, dog fighters and laboratories. We focus on all of the good that we do.

NO KILL LIMITED ADMISSION – Created as an alternative to the traditional shelter system, these facilities are strongly committed to not using euthanasia as a solution.

Ultimately, public pressure with donation power, will decide which shelters will survive as they are and which will need to change to meet the animal loving public's expectations.

Vote for the Animals with Your Donations.

To get to the heart of 'who' your shelter truly is, ask the following questions of the Board of Directors:

- What is your **total** annual revenue?
- How many animals do you currently save out of each 100 that come to you?
- How many life-saving programs, such as those described in the No Kill Equation, have you implemented? How do you measure their success?
- Do you accept every animal that is brought to you or do you have limitations and restrictions?
- Are you committed to a Colorado where a minimum of 90 out of every 100 shelter animals is saved? If so, what is your organization's target date to reach this? If not, what are your measurable goals?

Attribute Chart

	No Kill Open Admission	Traditional Open Admission	No Kill Limited Admission
Admissions:			
Animal Control contract	Possible	Yes, typically	No, typically
Owner relinquishment	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strays	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sorts for adoptables	No	Typically evaluates by temperament testing for adoptability – failures may not be relinquished by owners	Varies by shelter
Transfers from other shelters	Yes	Yes	Yes, typically
Policies:			
Euthanasia	Only for severe suffering or dangerous aggression	Possibly for time or space, medical or behavioral issues, evaluation as unadoptable, lack of resources	No, except for extreme cases
Puppy Mills	Against	Against	Against
Spay / Neuter	Supports	Supports	Supports
Use of Resources Toward Save Rate Goal	To adopt a minimum of 90 out of 100 animals	Varies by shelter: typically to adopt the adoptables, transfer of less adoptables, euthanize unadoptables	To adopt 100%
Programs and Services:			
Focus & Philosophy	Shelter Improvement – how can we change?	Public Responsibility – how can we educate them?	Saving 100%
Leadership & Accountability	Taking the lead by providing the No Kill Equation with measurable goals	Varies by shelter - may form alliances for transfers and collaborations	Varies by shelter
Operations	No Kill Equation implemented simultaneously and comprehensively	Varies by shelter - some CO shelters offer no adoptions or have no volunteer or foster programs	Varies by shelter

Box 1

No Kill Equation: must be implemented simultaneously and comprehensively for best results

1. TNR or Trap-Neuter-Return allows feral cats to continue to live in their communities rather than being killed as unadoptable in shelters.
2. High-Volume, No and Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Programs increase the number of animals sterilized and reduce the number of animals entering the shelter by removing the primary barrier of expense.
3. Transfers to Rescue Groups free up kennel space, reduce expenses and afford the animals more stress-free care.
4. Foster Care is a way of increasing a shelter's capacity while providing care for sick and injured animals and training for behaviorally challenged animals.
5. Comprehensive Adoption Programs are geared toward the public and include customer service, more convenient hours, offsite venues and incentives. Current studies show that the public adopts dogs from shelters only 15 percent of the time and cats only 10 percent of the time.
6. Pet Retention requires shelters to embrace innovative strategies for keeping people and their companion animals together by addressing issues such as excessive barking or litter box avoidance.
7. Medical and Behavior Prevention & Rehabilitation requires thorough vaccination, handling, cleaning, socialization, and care policies to prevent illness and also rehabilitative efforts for those who arrive sick, injured, unweaned and/or traumatized.
8. Public Relations and Community Involvement increase adoptions, donations and other support.
9. Volunteers improve the quality of life for shelter animals.
10. Proactive Redemptions increase the number of lost animals returned to their families by matching reports of animals in the shelter, rehoming animals in the field and using technology to post animals on the Internet.
11. A Compassionate Director, the most important No Kill element, refuses to utilize killing as an answer. He or she sets the standard and the tone for each shelter, inspiring the staff, volunteers and community to save every life.

Box 2

Join the No Kill Colorado Coalition

Our monthly meeting is the second Thursday of each month.

June 13: a celebration of shelters and rescues who participated in Just One Day Denver.

www.nokilldenver.org

<https://www.facebook.com/#!/NoKillColorado>

<http://www.meetup.com/No-Kill-Colorado/>

<https://twitter.com/nokillcolorado>

P.O. Box 100613, Denver, CO 80205

Box 3

No Kill Colorado's Just One Day petition, with over 6500 signatures, presented to Governor Hickenlooper on March 30, asked the Governor to declare June 11 a day of no shelter killing of savable animals. All resources would instead be dedicated to rehabilitation and adoptions. You can still sign the petition at http://signon.org/sign/tell-colorado-governor.fb23?source=s.fb&r_by=7012541

Box 4

Just One Day Denver Community Festival and Adoptathon

When: June 11 from 3-8pm at City Park, Denver

Needed: Volunteers, sponsors, vendors

Free to all rescues and shelters who sign up for Just One Day: 10x10 area plus a portion of the proceeds

As we go to press, the following shelters and rescues have signed up to participate for 'just one day' or 'forever'. You can still sign up at <http://justoneday.ws/>

4 Paws 4 Life Dog Rescue
Almost Home Adoptions for Rescued Cats
Animal House Rescue & Grooming
Animal Rescue of the Rockies
Apple Wood Rescue
Black Forest Animal Sanctuary
Breeder Release Adoption Service
Cayleb's Kindred Senior Dog Rescue
Chihuahua & Small Dog Rescue
Cisco's Den
Colorado Aussie Rescue
Colorado Basenji Rescue
Colorado Canine Rescue
Colorado Fox Terrier
Colorado Greyhound Adoption
Colorado House Rabbit Society
Colorado Saint Bernard Rescue
ColoRADogs
DMK Rehoming
Dalmatian Rescue of Colorado
Demi's Animal Rescue
Denkai Animal Sanctuary
Denver Afghan Hound Rescue
Evergreen Animal Protective League
Every Creature Counts
Fort Collins Cat Rescue and Spay / Neuter Clinic
Front Range German Shepherd Rescue
German Shepherd Rescue of Central Colorado

German Shepherd Rescue of the Rockies
Grand Valley Pit Crew
Happy Cats Haven
Happy Pet Initiative
High Country Bassett Rescue
Hobo Care Boxer Rescue
Hope for Animals
Humane Society of South Platte Valley
Knick O Time Horse Rescue and Rehabilitation
L.O.L.A.'s Rescue
Longmont Humane Society
Lucky Day Animal Rescue of Colorado
Lucky Dog Rescue, Inc
Majestic Canine Rescue
MaxFund Animal Adoption Center
Misha May Foundation Dog Training and Rescue
Mountain Dog Rescue
Mountain Pet Rescue
Norbulingka Dog Hospice
Pagosa Animal Advocates
Peanut's Place Bully Rescue
Perfect Union Animal Rescue Foundation, Inc.
Rangely Animal Shelter
Retriever Rescue of Colorado
Rifle Animal Shelter
Rocky Mountain Collie & Sheltie Rescue
Rocky Mountain Great Dane Rescue, Inc.
Rocky Mountain Siamese Rescue
Roice-Hurst Humane Society
Ruff Rescue
San Luis Valley Animal Welfare Society
Save the Giants
Second Chance Animal Rescue Foundation
Shiba Scout Rescue
Spring Creek Horse Rescue
Summit Dog Rescue
Sunrise Foundation, LTD
The Gabriel Foundation
The Way of the Paw
Tinker's Dream
Western Colorado Potbelly Pig Education Health Center/Pig-A-Sus Homestead Sanctuary
Wild Blue Animal Rescue and Sanctuary