

## **Open Annual Board Meeting, April 2018**

### **Questions and Answers**

#### **1. Is the number of cat releases inflating the lifesaving rate, and why are cat intakes going down?**

The overall intake from the public bringing stray cats to the shelter decreased by 700 from 2016 to 2017. Furthermore, the total number of owner-surrender cats also decreased by 1,405 during the same period. This is a direct result of the work ACCT staff is doing to divert intakes and help owners find solutions to keep their pets in their homes.

In addition, all cats brought in specifically for Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) surgery do not count as an intake and therefore do not affect ACCT's lifesaving rate, either positively or negatively as they are not counted in ACCT's system as 'strays'.

#### **2. What should volunteers do about dirty cat kennels when they see them?**

Volunteers should report any issues to the staff members that are working in that respective area. Also, we certainly encourage volunteers who spend time in the cat rooms to attend Cat Care Crew training to assist ACCT staff when they are in need of assistance.

#### **3. What is the status of the community cat program?**

The ACCT Philly Community Cat Program (CCP) is in operation and has a number of exciting upcoming projects. In addition to \$92,000 awarded for community cat surgery vouchers, ACCT Philly has an additional \$25,000 in grant funds from Best Friends to continue surgery of stray cats that have been turned in by citizens. We are currently conducting data mapping throughout the city, organizing volunteer job descriptions and events, and trap rentals. Additionally, we are exploring partnerships with other cat oriented organizations and building a complement of volunteer trappers utilizing ACCT's newly revamped volunteer program.

#### **4. Why were dogs transferred in from PAWS?**

In a recent case, PAWS accepted a dog from New Jersey from an individual who did not own it. They tried to locate the original owner, including contacting rescue shelters in New Jersey. After many unsuccessful attempts to return the dog, it was transferred to ACCT.

In another instance, a dog was brought to PAWS, but the agency did not have the resources or the network to get the dog placed with a family. As a result, the dog was brought to ACCT here experienced staff were able to care for it.

#### **5. Why are volunteers and rescues being banned?**

Individuals are banned from ACCT Philly for committing violations of the patron code of conduct. These include threats, whether direct or indirect towards staff, theft, acts of physical violence toward people or animals, or abusive behavior towards staff, partners, or volunteers. In some instances, volunteers or

transfer partners may be suspended or have a termination of their relationship with ACCT Philly as a result of violations of their volunteer or partner agreement. ACCT's volunteers and partners are asked to maintain a level of professionalism with staff and other visitors that is consistent with ACCT's core values, and to represent it positively, as partners are a direct reflection of the organization. If a partner or volunteer is suspended or terminated, they are still allowed to enter the building as a citizen or as a representative of another organization.

#### **6. How will the board be screening candidates for the executive director position?**

The board of directors is preparing a process to select the new executive director. This will include but is not limited to conducting a nation-wide search using a professional search firm if it is determined that will result in the board being able to find the best fit for the position.

#### **7. Why are animals still being euthanized and time stamped?**

As the main open intake shelter which holds the contract for animal control in Philadelphia, ACCT Philly must admit animals that are presented by the public who are stray or unwanted. We must admit animals when all of ACCT's holding kennels are full, if someone insists they cannot continue to house or care for their pet, or if a free roaming dog is causing a danger to residents of the city.

ACCT must make difficult decisions to responsibly manage its population when more animals are admitted than housing or medical resources can provide. ACCT strives to prevent euthanasia of all adoptable animals, so instead of simply euthanizing when we have run out of internal resources, we "advertise" that a savable animal is at risk of being euthanized. Our Lifesaving department and all of the networking animal welfare advocates on social media work to try to find a rescue who can accommodate the pet and provide the needed medical or behavioral care, or simply a safe place for the pet to live while a permanent home is found.

With a new use of existing technology, ACCT Philly has launched the "Love Local Portal" which is a way for the shelter to directly communicate with all rescue partners what animals are at risk of becoming urgent even before they are timestamped. ACCT's efforts have increased the Life-Saving rate from 11 percent in 2011 to 84 percent last year.

#### **8. Is the board considering a finance committee to develop a budget?**

The board is seeking more members, including someone with a finance background. Once that individual is confirmed by the Mayor's office we will be forming a finance committee.

#### **9. Is there a fundraising committee?**

The external affairs committee has fundraising under their scope. The board is seeking more members to create a robust sub-committee dedicated to fundraising. We have two candidates from the meeting that will be joining the external affairs committee to help form the fundraising committee

#### **10. How are the board seats being filled?**

Board members are typically appointed by the Mayor's office. We are finalizing a process to nominate new board members for consideration by the mayor by the end of the month and then we will then start the search.

### **11. Can ACCT have a Young Friends group?**

The board will work in conjunction with Audra to see if this is a program that can be implemented at ACCT.

### **12. What is the status of the neonatal kitten grant?**

The neonatal kitten grant, known as the "Milk Man" grant will be implemented spring 2018. Supplies are being purchased which will complete kits to hand out to citizens who find orphaned litters of kittens so that they can be immediately fostered without having to come to the shelter. Volunteers will be assembling the kits and they will be available over the counter and can also be delivered in the field by Animal Control Officers starting in May.

### **13. Will the board have other public meetings?**

The Board will continue to provide the public with opportunities to meet and address questions with members. Residents are encouraged to attend the Breakfast with the Board, May 19, at ACCT Philly. Additionally, the Board welcomes feedback and questions via email to [acctboard@acctphilly.org](mailto:acctboard@acctphilly.org)

### **14. Why aren't dogs being promoted?**

The vast majority of dogs at ACCT Philly are promoted. With the implementation of the Love Local Portal, most dogs are visible on ACCT's website and social media pages either as an available adoptable pet, or in the portal which displays all dogs that are not on hold. Bite case dogs are reviewed case by case, and if the owner does not reclaim and the circumstances of the bite and known history of the dog are not so severe for the dog to be determined by ACCT Management as unsafe to return to the community, we will promote them for rescue.

### **15. Why can't bite dogs be shown to the public?**

Under Pennsylvania law, animals that have bitten or scratched a person must undergo a 10 day quarantine. During that time, they cannot have any physical contact with people or other animals. Once their quarantine is up they can be further evaluated for placement on a case-by-case basis and eventually promoted.

### **16. Why are the gender of animals being misidentified?**

Animal shelter employees are human and sometimes make errors in data entry. With more than 19,000 animals having entered the shelter in 2017, it can be anticipated that some of those intakes will have errors. The staff corrects these errors when they are discovered and also encourages volunteers to bring them to ACCT's attention immediately. We have also assigned nursing staff to assist with the intake process during our busiest intake times, allowing for us to collect more accurate information as well as vaccinate animals at the earliest opportunity.

### **17. Can ACCT hire new/more vet staff?**

ACCT Philly has shifted from the older model of having two full time veterinarians, who only overlapped one day a week, to now having two veterinarians in the building nearly every day. This has been achieved through the thorough use of contract doctors and ACCT's relationship with the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary medicine. We also have rotating volunteer veterinarians who are a great assistance. However, ACCT's medical team could always use more members. We are constantly

looking for ways of increasing our budgetary resources, which will in turn allow them to hire more veterinary staff.

### **18. Can ACCT hire trainers to save more dogs?**

ACCT works with three trainers on a voluntary basis and is currently developing a structured program where volunteers can act as mentors for each other and "train the trainers" while working with its dogs.

### **19. Why were off-site events stopped?**

Off-site events were stopped for a period of time at the request of ACCT's insurance company. ACCT cannot host offsite events without a separate rider from its insurance company which they had stopped approving. Now that some time has passed without any incidents, the insurance company has started slowly allowing ACCT to participate in more off-site adoption events. This is an avenue we will continue to pursue as these events are popular and successful with engaging the community.

### **20. Why aren't people allowed to foster through ACCT anymore?**

ACCT still has a robust foster program that focuses primarily on cats needing medical treatment and kittens or puppies that are not weaned or large enough for spay/neuter. In some cases the animal may require more care and resources than ACCT can provide, so those animals are promoted to rescue if they are stable enough and do not have a behavioral history that would exclude them from placement. In its foster program, ACCT is still responsible for providing treatment for ill or injured animals and may not have the equipment or funds to do so with certain animals. Additionally, ACCT's insurance restrictions limit the type of animals that are able to go into foster care due to possible liability. This means that the animals placed into fosters are only animals our trained staff has deemed suitable for our adoptions program.