We made it! Our first week "back to work". It was great to see some of you this week. Personally, I had a pretty tough week. There is so much going on in the world, and we all made another adjustment by returning to the shelter. We are learning yet another way to do our jobs and help as many animals as we can. I am sure that we will need to make adjustments along the way, so please let me know if you have a particular challenge that needs to be addressed or if you have an idea for a better way to do something. It's hard, and I don't know about all of you, but I am mentally exhausted. And you know what? That's ok. It has helped me to stay away from the news and social media most of the time, and do the things that bring some calm and enjoyment to my life. I planted flowers, hung out with my dogs and horses, exercised every day and listened to music that makes me happy. I implore all of you to do the same. We are functioning on overload, and it's really important to take a break from that when you can. Your mental health is as important as your physical health, so please be kind to yourselves and others. Everyone has different challenges in their personal lives right now along with a host of new ways of doing things at work and we are all navigating those the best that we can. Please remember there are resources to help you should you need them. Some of you have suggested a virtual happy hour for us to talk (not about work!) and laugh and just decompress at the end of the week, and I think that is a great idea. Please let me know if you are interested and I will get a zoom meeting set up. I thought Friday at 7 pm should work for most of us, but we are open to other options! I would also like to find a way to do some fun team building stuff, so if you have ideas for that, please pass them along.

I know communication is still a struggle, and will be as long as we are working in teams and not all together every day. I highly encourage everyone to attend our virtual huddle on Thursdays at 11 am. We cover lots of important info in those sessions, and work through solutions to any challenges that come up. Jennie will also be uploading a copy of these weekly email updates to the employee portal and will keep it active for a month for your reference. Please make sure you are checking your work email every day that you are scheduled as well, since email is our best form of mass communication right now. We will be scheduling a virtual all staff meeting in the near future, and attendance will be required. Please let me know if you have other ideas for keeping everyone up to date on the information you need. I would rather over communicate at this point!

Here are the updates for this week:

ADOPTIONS:

Our adoptions by appointment are going well. Hold onto your hats for next week when we have 30 puppies available!

ADMITTING:

We are taking new animals by appointment and also beginning to take transfers from other shelters that need help.

FOSTER:

We are starting to get more kittens, which makes our foster families happy. We are still sending a large percentage of all animals to foster homes rather than keeping them at the shelter.

TRAINING CLASSES:

Our dog trainers are working on a modified class schedule for adult dogs starting in July. We will have details on that very soon. They are also working on plans for puppy classes that are included in the puppy adoption fee, and will have those ready for puppy palooza next week-we will get you details in the next couple of days.

STAFFING CHANGES:

We lost 3 employees over the course of the shut down: Calla, Tanelle and Claire. We will not be filling those positions as of right now. Sydney has moved to full time for animal care. Jim will be off through the end of June. If we have things that need immediate repair, please let Stephanie or I know. Tania will be on maternity leave until the beginning of August.

HSUS CONFERENCE:

The HSUS conference will be held virtually this year, at a very reasonable cost. This is a great animal welfare conference and covers every department at the shelter. If you are interested in registering, please let me know.

EDUCATION AND VOLUNTEERS:

Camp starts next week! We will be sticking with virtual camps for the summer, and adding some "fun days" for the kids to come into the shelter in small groups since that is now allowed. Some adoption counselors will be returning next week on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. We will continue to integrate volunteers as we go along. Volunteers can also come and take a dog for a "dog day out". Staff will put the dogs out in the kennels and volunteers will pick up and return them there. All volunteers that come into the building will be scheduled in teams, required to follow all of our guidelines, and are required to fill out the health pre-screening form before their shift.

DEVELOPMENT:

The development team is continuing to work on donor meetings, mailings to donors, grant writing and finding alternate ways to make money. Parker is always in need of content for social media, so if you have ideas or cute photos/videos, please send them to her.

GENERAL INFO:

Please remember on the days that you work at the shelter that there should only be 1 person  eating lunch in each designated space at one time. Options include the breakroom, the training room kitchen, the training room, picnic tables outside, your office or your car.

The future of sheltering:

There is a big national movement right now to shift the way animal shelters operate. We have all seen how quickly, and for the most part successfully, shelters have moved to housing most animals in foster, doing virtual adoptions, etc during the pandemic. The goal is to operate animal shelters the same way human social services function, and in some cases, in conjunction with human social services. Animals are part of the family, and every effort should be made to keep them in their homes whenever possible by providing the resources people need. I am attaching the current 10 items that are being discussed along with the goals that shifting to an "animal support services" model would accomplish. We will be starting to have this discussion at our all staff meetings so we can put a proposed plan together for how our organization would like to move forward and what it will take for us to get there. Your input will be very important, so start thinking about what that might look like.

As always, please let me know if you have questions, need more information on something, have an idea that would make one of our current processes function better, or anything else you need. A huge thank you to each and every one of you for putting the animals first while the whole world is going crazy. I appreciate you!

Best,

Holly

**THE FUTURE OF ANIMAL SHELTERING**

There has been much discussion about how animal welfare moves forward after the COVID 19 pandemic. A national conversation has been ongoing during this time about what that might look like. Most progressive shelters know that this is a great opportunity to change the way we operate and improve our services to help both people and animals. Here are the 10 proposed initiatives and list of goals:

Shelter provides emergency care and short term housing for pets with urgent needs.

 Public can reach the shelter quickly and easily using remote technology like text, phone and web chat.

Volunteers are involved in every aspect of the organization, including field services and outreach.

Telehealth services for possible surrenders, fosters and finders of sick/injured animals.

Outcome pathway is defined before or at the time of intake to decrease length of stay.

Vast majority of animals are housed in foster and adopted directly from there.

Animal caregivers can access pet support including housing, medical/behavior services, food, and supplies as needed.

Staff is trained as case managers helping provide resources and to assist with rehoming if needed.

Organization operates a comprehensive reunification program to find a stray animal's owner without the pet entering the shelter.

Human social services, rescues, shelters and community partners work together to keep animals in their homes as part of the family.

**Goals:**

Supporting both ends of the leash

Reduction of animals entering the shelter by 50%

Decrease length of stay

Reduction of number of animals housed in the shelter

Reduction of customer service complaints and increased employee morale

Lifesaving is maintained or improved