#ThanksToMaddie Times (Almost) 2 Million!

How many ways can we find to thank the little dog who has inspired so much good for so many animals? 1,960,878, to be exact.

More than 1,400 North American animal shelters came together to save a total of 1,960,878 cats as of June 30, 2019. During the month of July, that number rolled past the 2 million mark. Without the generosity of Maddie’s Fund and the inspiration of the spirit of Maddie, literally millions of cats would not now be snoozing in the sun, snuggling in a lap, or giving hope and love to a person in need of a companion.

Let’s look at those beautiful numbers:

Out of approximately 3.2 million cats who enter shelters in the US each year, nearly 50% went through MCC shelters (1,584,281)

Baseline euthanasia for Challenge shelters in 2012 was 834,794.
In 2018 it was 239,869.
A decrease of 71%.

"You started a pilot program that turned into a miracle of saving lives, and everyone did this together, bringing life, peace, and companions to so many. We are proud to say we are a small part of the huge impact the Million Cat Challenge has made."

– Karen Gregory, President Board of Directors Livingston County Humane Society Pontiac, Illinois

1,960,878 LIVES SAVED through June 2019
Last year we launched what we refer to internally as Million Cat 2.0, or more formally #allthecats, which means the right outcome for every cat who comes to a shelter and the right care for every cat every day in the shelter.

This means lost cats go back to their families, cats who have lost their homes are placed in new ones, and cats who are thriving in the community are spayed or neutered and returned there if possible, or placed in a working home or adopted if not. It means that for cats whose suffering can’t be remedied any other way, euthanasia will be available with the most kindness and comfort that can possibly be provided. And for a great many cats, this means we’ll help them to stay safe in the community rather than ever having to come in to a shelter at all.

“The cats deserve nothing less. The people who work in shelters deserve nothing less. The communities we serve deserve nothing less. And the very best name we could come up with for that is #allthecats”

– Dr. Kate Hurley
Kitties who spent their days hiding in a litter box all of a sudden got to move into the penthouse suite. It often allows cats to come out of their shell, and definitely increases their adoptability! It has also allowed for great conversations with the public around the importance of enrichment and proper housing. Our adopters come into the space and see happy and playful kitties.

- Kathy Pitman-Feltham
Oshawa Animal Services
Oshawa, Ontario

The Bad Cat Housing Challenge

#allthecats means that cats who do enter the shelter are housed, handled, and cared for in a manner that relieves stress, prevents illness, and provides for their wellbeing. This commitment inspired us to develop and execute a large-scale feline housing exhibit, which launched at Animal Care Expo in New Orleans in April 2019.

The exhibit, designed pro bono by Animal Arts Design, first routed attendees into a space created to give them an idea of what it would be like to have to eat, sleep, and spend 24 hours a day in an airplane-sized bathroom – a similar experience to one faced by many cats in shelters every day.

After surviving the bad, participants emerged into life-size examples of good cat housing configurations for both individual and multiple cats. The whole experience added up to what Dr. Kate Hurley called “IKEA showroom meets cat sheltering.” The housing units were provided by the Mason Company, Shor-Line, TriStar Vet, Cnjo, Kuranda, Snyder Manufacturing, Kitty Kasa, and Tomahawk Live Trap. They were donated to local animal shelters when the conference was over. The space was donated by HSUS, and sponsored by Petco Foundation, Vetoquinol, and the Michigan Pet Fund.

This first-of-its-kind educational experience was a huge success with both conference attendees and animal welfare and shelter medicine experts – so much so that we created a compact travelling version, which debuted at the Best Friends Conference in Dallas in July 2019.

Expo was also the site for the launch of The Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters, a new book authored by Dr. Sara Pizano and edited by Dr. Hurley and Dr. Levy. The Playbook enshrines the same key initiatives that have powered the Million Cat Challenge since its inception, and will help reinforce the process of their institutionalization.
Shelter Consultations and Mentoring

The Million Cat Challenge provided Community and Shelter Assessments focused on helping shelters with the most potential to increase lifesaving. In conjunction with these assessments, the Shelter Assessment Mentorship Program provided training in the assessment process for veterinarians and shelter leaders who are on a career development path for shelter consultation. Veterinary mentees received veterinary continuing education credit for their participation.

Forty-three mentees applied for the program, twice the number we had spaces for. In fact, so many applied that we had to close the application period early!

A holistic approach to the assessment was done through review of current available programs in the community, state laws, local ordinances, municipal contracts, the organizational chart, website and social media activity, and chain of command. During the research phase, local decision makers were identified and in-person meetings scheduled ahead of time. This included mayors, commissioners, municipal attorneys, county administrators, shelter managers, and members of boards of directors.

Mentees participated by conference call prior to the onsite visit to review pertinent research, joined the team during the scheduled onsite assessment period, and took part in follow-up conversations to support the shelter in its implementation of recommendations.

Each of the following organizations was the site of a Million Cat assessment:

- Walton County Animal Shelter
  Defuniak Springs, FL
- Panhandle Animal Welfare Society
  Fort Walton Beach, FL
- Santa Rosa County Animal Services
  Milton, FL
- Montgomery County Animal Services
  Dayton, OH
- Manatee County Animal Services
  Palmetto/Bradenton FL
- Animal Welfare League of Charlotte County
  Port Charlotte, FL
- Citrus County Animal Services
  Inverness, FL
- Pinellas County Animal Services
  Largo, FL
- Animal Friends Humane Society
  Hamilton, OH
- City of Tracy Animal Services
  Tracy, CA
- Tallahassee Animal Services
  Tallahassee, FL
- Suncoast Humane Society
  Englewood, FL
- City of Dallas Animal Services
  Dallas, TX
- Humane Society of Yuma
  Yuma, AZ
- Madera County Animal Services
  Madera, CA
- East County Animal Services
  Dublin, CA
- Pasco County Animal Services
  Land O Lakes, FL
- St. Joseph’s Bay Humane Society
  Port St. Joe, FL
- Montgomery County Animal Care & Control
  Clarksville, TN
- City of Fresno
  Fresno, CA
- San Francisco SPCA
  San Francisco, CA
- SF Animal Care & Control
  San Francisco, CA
- Front Street Animal Shelter
  Sacramento, CA
- Sacramento SPCA
  Sacramento, CA
- Villa Michelle
  Mayaguez, PR
- Centro de Control de Animales-Municipio de Carolina
  Carolina, PR
- Santuario de Animales San Francisco de Asís
  Boqueron, PR
- Humane Society of Puerto Rico
  Guaynabo, PR
- Centro de Control y Adopción de Animales - Municipio de San Juan
  San Juan, PR

This past week has been so educational and inspirational. I already feel the change happening through the staff and volunteers. The cultural mindset has changed and within the first two hours after the team had left, some staff members and I diverted one cat from intake and quickly identified two cats that could be returned to field and one cat that had been surrendered that we could possibly reunite with its family and we can assist with medical care.

- Annette Lagunas
  Humane Society of Yuma
  Yuma, Arizona

I learn so much from each assessment. I find ways to better my own shelter and by doing one assessment you are able to save thousands of lives!

- Kim Sanders
  Anderson County PAWS
Discussion

The Million Cat Challenge discussion group established our presence on Maddie’s Pet Forum, recruiting 138 members, and engaging in 43 discussions in our first year. The goal of the group is to provide a private, thoughtful place for shelter leaders to meet colleagues, ask questions and exchange insights. Our message to participants is simple: "Whether you are embarking on your very first initiative or honing in on going from good to great, you are not alone."

From sharing feline intake forms to deciding the right age to sterilize a kitten, Challengers came to the forum to find answers, support and engagement.
Bootcamp

Onsite assessments can be extraordinarily powerful catalysts for change, but they are resource-intensive for both the consulting team and the shelter. Capacity for Care Bootcamp is our solution to bringing cost-effective and lasting change to shelters in a format that is scalable. The online course is based around a curriculum of videos, readings, and quizzes designed to help shelters discover, reach, and operate according to their individual Capacity for Care. Twice-weekly video conference calls allow them to receive personalized advice from shelter veterinarians, report progress, describe challenges, and share experiences and information with fellow bootcampers.

#ThanksToMaddie, these nine MCC shelters attended C4C Bootcamp in early 2019 at no charge to them. From initiation of a new Return to Field program to a more streamlined foster system allowing more kittens to be served, the lifesaving impact is already being felt at the bootcamp shelters.

California

- Antioch Animal Services
- Marin Humane
- Solano County Animal Services
- Stockton Animal Services
- Tony La Russa ARF

Canada

- Edmonton ACCC
- Fredericton SPCA
- SPCA de’Outaouais
- Winnipeg Humane Society

This course and the presenters are knowledgeable, resourceful, positive and compassionate for what they are teaching. This bootcamp has inspired me and has lit a flame that has been dull for many years due to being a shelter worker who always felt that these animals deserve so much more than what we were providing them with. All shelters need to strive/fight for the "Gold Standard" so we see it across the USA...We have already made some major changes and many more are in the works. Thank you all for giving us this opportunity. You are not only helping animals, but you have helped my staff. I am already seeing a different outlook.

- Renee Gutierrez
Solano County Animal Services
Fairfield, CA

We are starting our own C4C bootcamp with the Ops team. We’ll be having them watch the videos, then chat at the weekly meeting and go through the Epic Action List to track ideas, priorities, and status. We found the information so useful, we want to spread it more widely.

- Ashley, Marin Humane
Novato, CA
It’s still hard to believe how much the Million Cat Challenge has been able to accomplish #ThanksToMaddie. Not only have 2 million cats been saved, but the key initiatives of the Challenge are rapidly becoming institutionalized in animal shelters across North America. This never would have happened without the support of Maddie’s Fund, and all of us in the Challenge (and 2 million of our closest friends!) will be furever grateful!
Appendix

Conference Presentations, Exhibits, & Professional Service

Seminars and conferences:
1. American Board of Veterinary Practitioners Conference seminars:
   a. FeLV/FIV Testing in animal shelters. or not
   b. Not another blue dot: Advances in FeLV & FIV testing
2. American Pets Alive conference seminars:
   a. FeLV: What you need to know for shelter decision making
   b. FeLV Lunch and Learn
3. Animal Care Expo Daylongs and sessions:
   a. Spayathon for Puerto Rico: An unprecedented collaboration to save lives
   b. Coping with kittens: #allthecats kitten summit
   c. Expanding the shelter leader’s capacity for care: A workflow management boot camp
   d. Dream big, start small: Sustainable shelter design on a budget
   e. Foundations for behavioral wellbeing
4. HSUS Animal Care Expo Exhibit: The Bad Cat Housing Challenge
5. Florida Animal Control Association seminars:
   a. The State of the State in 2019: Florida’s animal sheltering trends and the road ahead
   b. Managed intake at Florida’s municipal shelters: Positive approaches to preventing animal homelessness, optimizing outcomes, and serving communities
6. International Society for Companion Animal Infectious Diseases seminars:
   a. Feline leukemia virus infection: New diagnostic perspectives (Portland)
   b. Prospective evaluation of feline leukemia virus status relative to first antigen screening test
7. Webinar presentation for industry experts: Feline Leukemia Virus Infection: New diagnostic perspective
8. Animal Care Conference, Santa Clara, Calif.: Kitten summit!
9. VMX seminars:
   a. Cat portals: The gateway to better welfare in animal shelters
   b. Shelter housing for dogs and cats: Practical tips & tricks for a healthy stay
10. Maddie’s Fund Saving Nevada’s Pets Conference: Rethinking the shelter’s role in community cat management
11. 2019 Feline Symposium: Partnership to save kittens’ lives
12. Best Friends Summit: Leveraged strategies to keep shelter animals healthy and happy
13. Universidad Ana G. Méndez, Gurabo, PR: Preventive health care for shelter animals: How to keep them healthy for a home

Professional service:
1. Best Friends Animal Society, National Steering Committee
2. Florida Association of Animal Welfare Organizations, Advisory Board
3. IDEXX Key Opinion Leaders: Feline Retrovirus Roundtable
4. Operation Catnip, Board of Directors
5. Shelter Animals Count, Board of Directors

Media Coverage

County animal shelter’s philosophy change well underway
Ocala StarBanner
July 23, 2019

Santa Rosa County will evaluate animal shelter operations
Pensacola News-Journal
August 10, 2018

Coming soon, KittyCon — a convention for feline fanatics
Orlando Sentinel
Sept. 5, 2018

Are you a crazy cat person? KittyCon is in Tampa Bay right meow!
WTSP Tampa
Sept. 11, 2018

Tampa’s first KittyCon is coming, and cat lovers are purring
Tampa Bay Times
Sept. 11, 2018

Critics target Montgomery Co. Animal Resource Center for animal deaths
Dayton Daily News
Oct. 7, 2018

The plight of Okaloosa’s unwanted cats and dogs
WEAR TV
Oct. 27, 2018

Saving dog and cat lives focus of Milton event
WEAR TV
Oct. 30, 2018

Dr. Kate Hurley’s Cat Advocacy
The Best Friends Blog
Nov. 7, 2018

County gets advice on improving animal shelter
Navarre Press
Nov. 8, 2019

Portal Grants 2018 Winners
Ontario Shelter Medicine Association Newsletter
Nov. 10 2018

County looks ahead after embattled animal shelter director’s job ends
Dayton Daily News
Dec. 11, 2018

County animal center report: ‘Avalanche of negative consequences’
Dayton Daily News
Dec. 27, 2018
Appendix

Webinars:

1. Saving Cats—What Comes After a Million? Dr. Julie Levy and Dr. Kate Hurley
2. Yes and... Managed Intake and Restructuring the Budget. Seth Montgomery, Metro Nashville Animal Care and Control, and Natalie Corwin, Pet Community Center
3. Saving Cats out of Shelters. Monica Frenden, Austin Pets Alive!
5. Helping vs Enabling Shelly Simmons, Greenville County Animal Care
6. Albuquerque Case Studies: Going Big With Community Cat Programs. Desirée Triste-Aragon, Best Friends Animal Society
7. The ‘Care To Program. Cal Poultou, Winnipeg Humane Society
9. Outsourcing Kitten Rearing for Life-Saving Success. Katie Ingram, Placer County Animal Services
10. Foster on Deck. Erin Doyle, DVM, DABVP, ASPCA
11. Fighting Fungus with Facts. Laura Mullen, SF SPCA
12. A Playbook Approach to Saving Lives in Animal Services. Dr. Sara Pizano, Million Cat Challenge, Shelter Team USA

Shelter Assessment Mentee Program Participants:

Assessment site: Montgomery County Animal Resource Center, Dayton, OH
- Dr. Kim Sanders, Director and Veterinarian, Anderson County PAWS
- Becca Boronat, Project Manager, No Kill South Carolina, Charleston Animal Society

Assessment site: Dallas Animal Services, Dallas, TX
- Dr. Ariella Samson, Medical Director, Humane Animal Rescue
- Dr. Louiza Chan, Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor, University of Florida

Assessment site: Humane Society of Yuma, Yuma, AZ
- Dr. Nancy Bradley-Siemens, Assistant Professor, Shelter Medicine at Midwestern University College of Veterinary Medicine
- Dr. Hillary Herendeen, Assistant Professor, Shelter Medicine at Midwestern University College of Veterinary Medicine
- Cathy Overfield, Funder, Best Friends Animal Society
- Jennifer Adkins, Funder, Best Friends Animal Society

Assessment site: Santa Rosa County Animal Services, Santa Rosa County, FL
- Dr. Meaghan Mielo, UF Shelter Medicine Intern, University of Florida
- Dr. Meaghan Mielo, UF Shelter Medicine Intern, University of Florida

Assessment site: Madera County Animal Shelter, Madera County, CA
- Dr. Sheila D’Arpino-Segurson, Director of Research, Maddie’s Fund
- Dr. Cristie Kantiya, Chief of Shelter Medicine, Humane Society of Silicon Valley
- Taylor Sharp, Maddie’s Leadership Fellow, Humane Society of Silicon Valley
- Dr. Tyler Junco, Veterinarian Intern, San Diego Humane Society
- Dr. Alison Lindsay, Veterinarian Intern, San Diego Humane Society

Assessment site: East County Animal Shelter, East County, CA
- Elena Battles, Shelter Luv Team Member, Shelter Luv
- Dr. Tyler Junco, Veterinarian Intern, San Diego Humane Society
- Dr. Alison Lindsay, Veterinarian Intern, San Diego Humane Society

Assessment site: Animal Friends Humane Society, Butler County, OH
- Dr. Erica Wright, Veterinarian Intern, San Diego Humane Society
- Dr. Abigail Fosdick, Veterinarian Intern, San Diego Humane Society
- Dr. Jeff Forbat, Veterinarian, Animal Shelter Consults, LLC
- Aimee St. Arnaud, Funder, Best Friends Animal Society

Media Coverage

Kettering to vote on new partnership with SICSA for stray cats
Dayton Daily News
March 2, 2019

Paws for Thought: The million cats’ meow
Davis Enterprise
March 12, 2019

Interview! Kate Hurley, DVM, Director of U.C. Davis Koret School of Veterinary Medicine and Co-Founder of Million Cat Challenge
Community Cats Podcast
April 13, 2019

Animal advocates seek solutions, not ‘last resorts’
Herald-Bulletin
April 14, 2019

All the Cats: The Million Cat Challenge
Steve Dale Pet World
April 24, 2019

Madera Animal Shelter Sees Huge Decline In Euthanasia Rates
Sierra News
April 24, 2019

Goal is saving a million cats
Michigan Times
April 28, 2019

Royle humane society’s save rates are better than ever
Advocate-Messenger
May 10, 2019