

WHY ISN'T THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY SPCA A "NO-KILL" SHELTER?

Because if we were a "No-Kill" shelter, we may have had to turn this little guy away.



The term "No-Kill" is very confusing. "No-Kill" policies at animal shelters sound appealing, but unfortunately these shelters often have to turn away those animals who are most in need. That's because a "No-Kill" shelter's sole purpose is to find a home for each animal they take in. "No-Kill" shelters are often overcrowded and have long waiting lists for acceptance into their facilities. So they make a decision as to which animals they feel are adoptable and they limit the number of animals they will admit. They may turn away animals with health or behavioral problems. They may not take in lost, sick, or injured animals. They may also turn away an animal if they don't think he is attractive enough to find a home and they don't want to shelter him forever. They may have turned our little guy away.

This refusal to accept an animal has caused hardship for some counties because the community may be required to build a municipal shelter to accept the overflow from "No-Kill" shelters.

This is where the luckiest of those animals who don't meet standards may end up. The unlucky ones may be dumped on the streets where they may be injured or killed by traffic. They may freeze in the winter or die of heatstroke in the summer; they may starve to death.

"No-Kill" advocates criticize open admission shelters for having to euthanize animals. But the sad fact is that "No-Kill" shelters don't prevent animals from dying—they just make sure that it doesn't happen in their shelters.

Let's face it—no one likes euthanasia. But there is another approach to reducing euthanasia. It is the approach that is used by shelters that call themselves Open Door or Open Admission shelters. It is the approach we choose to use.

We control euthanasia with a pro-active formula. We have known for years that there are too many animals and not enough available homes. We have taken great strides in reducing the unwanted pet population.

- ❖ We have an aggressive spay/neuter program for our sheltered animals. No adopted animal leaves our shelter without being spayed or neutered. We also have an early-age spay program. We assist feral cat rescue groups by altering cats that go back to cat colonies.
- ❖ We are proud of our extensive adoption program. People from within and without the County know how carefully we tend to our animals and choose to come to us to adopt. This keeps our kennels empty our adoption rate high and our euthanasia rate low. We work with many animal rescue groups.
- ❖ We reach out to our communities through our Humane Education Programs.
- ❖ We work with an animal behaviorist to rehabilitate animals with behavior problems.
- ❖ We help lost animals find their owners.
- ❖ Our veterinarians care for the sick and the injured animals that come to us for help.

That's why the Montgomery County SPCA is proud to be an OPEN DOOR shelter. If there is anything that you can take away from this article, it is that our doors are always open to every animal that comes to us for help. We believe that every animal should be admitted and given the chance to be evaluated, treated, cared for, loved and sooner or later, find a caring new home. And we don't impose time limits on how long this may take.

And our little guy? We took him in, shaved off his matted fur, fattened him up and gave him lots of love and attention. Then we answered the pleading question in his eyes by finding him a home.

Is there a better feeling than that?

The answer is no. There is no better feeling.

And that's why we feel proud about ourselves, and that's why the Montgomery County SPCA is proud to be an Open Door shelter.

Carmen J. Ronio
Executive Director