

## **“WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A "NO KILL" SHELTER?”**

### **April 2018**

Sammie's Friends is one of the few shelters in the U.S. that really never gives up on an animal. Giving up means euthanizing the animal when things get too difficult. Operating a no kill shelter is not for the faint of heart. It's a very tough thing to pull off. Animals die in shelters because they come in faster than they get adopted, the space fills up and then what? Another reason animals die in shelters is that the city or county caps an amount they will spend on the animal for medical care. If the cost is more than that amount then the animal is euthanized. Most shelters establish a maximum dollar amount of \$500 or less. For a seriously neglected or ill animal this often is not enough. There are also animals with behavior problems which make them not good candidates for adoption. There are solutions to all of these problems. We have found those solutions.

Since most animals at Sammie's Friends come to us as strays we do not have a choice about who we accept into our program. We are left to work with difficult animals and sick/injured animals that have been under socialized and often neglected or abandoned or even abused. Sammie's Friends was started in 2004 to pay the medical costs of the shelter animals. Later this program was expanded to community animals to keep them out of the shelter. By keeping animals out of the shelter you lessen the number you must take in and then find a way to get them adopted. We also have a very extensive spay/neuter program which lessens the number of animals born which then contributes to keeping the numbers down in the shelter. Last year we spayed/neutered nearly 2,000 animals in our community and of course the 1923 that came to our shelter were also spayed/neutered. It's a simple numbers game. The name of the game is to "get them out faster than they come in". To complicate that, of course, we need to adopt them to the right people or they will end up in the same condition again, or worse.

By raising private funds Sammie's Friends is able to provide the

medical care that each animal needs to get them back on their feet and become adoptable. We also have a dog behaviorist and a cat socializer to help our animals become adoptable from a behavioral point of view. Most behavior problems have been developed as a lack of socialization for the animals. These people are miracle workers. It is so satisfying to see our animals get better and go home with their new family and lead happy lives.

It takes a lot of work, time and money to get all of our animals adopted. We have less than a 1 % euthanasia rate and have saved the lives of 25,000 animals since Sammie's Friends has been involved with the Nevada County animals. A giant thank you to our community for all the love and support they have given over these many years.

Come to our town hall meeting at the Foothill Event Center on April 25, Wednesday at 5:30 and learn all about what is happening with Sammie's Friends and our local shelter.

***Cheryl Wicks is the Co-Founder and President of Sammie's Friends***