

# NO-KILL SHELTER - What does that mean?

Many in our county are proud to say that Nevada County is a no kill county. Well that's "almost" true.

In 2001 when the work of Sammie's Friends began the euthanasia rate was 68%. In 2006 the

Nevada County Animal Shelter achieved a euthanasia rate of 2 %. Today it is less than 1%

and has been since 2010. This is something the whole community can be mighty proud of. It took the teamwork of the whole county to get it this way.

In 2001 the animals were being euthanized for reasons of space/overcrowding and sick/injured animals were not receiving the care they needed to become adoptable rather than getting euthanized. We decided to work really hard through aggressive marketing and creating a large pool of volunteers to help in this effort to get the animals out of the shelter before they were euthanized. To this day the no-kill trend continues through practice and the philosophy of Sammie's Friends, not through county policy. Sammie's Friends non-profit was created to pay for medical care of the shelter animals, so they would not be euthanized. In addition the community programs were started to keep animals out of the shelter. The community programs pay for s/n of about 1,000 animals every year so they are not reproducing and we assist another 600 animals in our community with veterinary care keeping them out of the shelter and avoiding euthanasia.

Now to the "almost" part. In the vernacular of shelters - they are declared no-kill when they have a 90% live release rate. Whatever isn't live released is euthanized. At Sammie's Friends we truly do have a less than 1% euthanasia rate, but even we are "almost". We mercifully euthanize a small number of animals too sick/injured to be helped. In addition over the past 12 years we have euthanized 3 dogs who viciously attacked people and caused

serious damage. There was no other alternative.

As I mentioned above it takes the whole community working together to ensure that we continue to save all animals that can possibly be saved. Sammie's Friends raises and spends an incredible amount of money to keep our shelter a no-kill. Many of the animals need veterinary care. We have a dog behaviorist and a group of volunteers who work very hard to rehabilitate dogs with poor behavior. As well we have those who work with our cats and we have hired horse trainers to work with unruly horses.

The employees and volunteers of Sammie's Friends work hard to adopt the animals as quickly as possible into good homes. We work hard to raise funds for our community programs to keep animals out of the shelter, keeping it at a manageable level.

"No-Kill" does not mean a free for all, where at any time, for any reason you can drop your pet off at the shelter and be done with it. The owner is responsible for their pet. **It is your pet!** That means if your pet has behavior you don't like you take the time to teach it to be a better behaved pet. There are many resources to help you with that. If your pet is vicious and has harmed someone and you are in legal jeopardy or you are seriously afraid your pet will even more seriously injure someone, it is your responsibility to euthanize your pet. If you are moving and cannot take your pet with you it is your responsibility to "rehome" your pet. There are resources to help you with that too. From the first moment you learn you are moving and can't take your pet begin the process of rehoming. Do not wait until the day before, thinking you can just dump it at the shelter at the last minute, because you can't. The same with bad behavior, as soon as you see it address it. The shorter period of time your pet has a bad habit the quicker and easier it is to correct it.

Sammie's Friends and all those who help in so many ways have really stepped it up in the past 20 years. More is also required of pet owners. Most are up to the challenge. Working together we can continue to accomplish the goal

of "NO MORE HOMELESS PETS IN NEVADA COUNTY." Many thanks to all who have committed to this goal and helped make it a reality.