



City of
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Oakland Animal Services Saves Record-high Number of Animals in 2015

Significantly fewer animals euthanized than any year prior

Oakland, CA — Despite a projected 10 percent increase in animal intake compared to last year, Oakland Animal Services has saved a record-high number of dogs, cats and rabbits in 2015—**85 percent** and counting.

A shelter’s “live release rate” is the percentage of animals returned to owner, adopted into the community or sent to partner rescue groups. (An 85 percent live release rate means 15 percent of animals are euthanized). By contrast, the shelter’s live release rate was 64 percent two years ago, and 56 percent in 2011. Just five years ago, Oakland was putting down almost 70 percent more animals than it does today.

Shelter Director Rebecca Katz is pleased with the numbers and grateful to community partners. “It sounds trite, but it’s true – it takes a village to save lives. So many of us at the shelter, in the Oakland community, and beyond our borders work determinedly to find Oakland’s most at-risk animals new homes and new lives,” says Katz.

Katz was hired in November 2014 and tasked with completing the transition of Oakland Animal Services from the Oakland Police Department to a stand-alone department, a move championed by Mayor Libby Schaaf. The transition has not been easy and, Katz admits, “It has taken a lot of passionate dedication of our staff, volunteers and community partners to reform this beleaguered organization.”

Since she assumed the director role, the shelter has started a new dog foster program, and expanded its partnership with Cat Town and others for more cat rescue. “Cat Town wouldn’t be able to have the impact it does were it not for having a true partner in OAS,” says Ann Dunn, Executive Director and Founder of Cat Town.

“Thanks to our nonprofit partner Friends of Oakland Animal Services, we are also raising more funds to treat puppies with parvo and mange so they can live long and healthy lives,” explains Katz. Previously these two medical conditions were not treated and dogs with parvovirus were automatically euthanized.

In the coming year, Director Katz hopes to increase adoptions, decrease intake through humane education and spay/neuter efforts, and continue to raise the shelter’s reputation in the community. Director Katz hopes Oakland Animal Services will soon be seen as a resource for animal welfare and a place the community seeks out to find a beloved new family member. “This is really about a cultural sea change,” says Katz.

“These numbers are so gratifying knowing the shelter is saving more lives,” says Nicole Perelman, director of PALS East Bay, a rescue partner. “With new leadership, dozens of progressive policy changes and promising new programs like the foster program, it is all making an impact. Shelter partners know the OAS of today is dramatically different than the shelter we knew just one year ago.”

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