



SHELTER EXPANSION SLATED FOR THE FUTURE

You've most likely heard the adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." And being familiar with Seattle Animal Shelter (SAS), you'd probably think that it's one place where the saying would apply since SAS is one of the most respected and innovative municipal animal welfare agencies in the nation. After all, SAS has a wonderful staff of caring animal control and animal care officers, over 300 foster care families, an aggressive adoption program and a nationally recognized volunteer program with over 600 dedicated volunteers serving the welfare of Seattle's homeless and orphaned animals. So what could there possibly be to fix?

According to SAS Executive Director Don Jordan, there is room for improvement. "We've grown from being "the pound," from being an agency focused mainly on public safety, to a community-based organization that has embraced the humane movement in terms of aggressive adoption programs, rehabilitation programs for sick and injured animals, as well as one that provides tremendous opportunity to the community to assist in building relationships between people and pets. We're now more of a global organization, a service provider, an animal welfare organization in the true sense of the word," Jordan says. "And we've outgrown our building. It wasn't designed to accommodate what we've become." Thus, Jordan has proposed a 4600 square foot expansion of the present shelter facilities. Recently, SAS just completed an expansion of the adoption center but the main focus of the proposed \$3-4 million dollar project would be a new regional training and education center. This new space would provide much needed facilities for the volunteer and foster care programs enhancing services and programs provided to people and animals in Seattle.

The expansion would provide space for volunteers to meet and organize special events, such as the annual Furry 5K Fun Run and Walk and Guardian Angel Day, which raises money for the Help the Animals Fund. Regional animal welfare conferences and meetings could be held here, as could humane education classes for children and adults. It would also allow for indoor dog and cat obedience training and on-site adoption events. Plus, the new space would be disaster-ready to house an overflow of shelter animals should the need arise. "The sky's the limit in terms of what we could do if we were to expand the shelter," says Jordan. "Summer day camps for children replete with animal care education could soon become an important part of our animal welfare program. For foster care and adoption events the expansion would provide a more sanitary and less stressful environment. The possibilities are endless!

Animal Care Supervisor Virginia Dalton feels that the shelter expansion would allow SAS to get more involved in public education, such as humane education, pet obedience classes and first aid, which in turn, would decrease the number of pet surrenders the shelter sees. "The expansion would help us increase our public education so that we would be able to assist with behavioral issues and help prevent pet guardians from dumping their pets. This would greatly reduce the number of animals we see coming into the shelter," Dalton says. "We'd no longer have to be a last resort. The expansion would allow us to be proactive; to help people turn their pets into real family members."

The shelter hasn't changed much from when it was built in 1982, when the focus of Seattle Animal Control (it has since been renamed Seattle Animal Shelter) was on public safety as it related to animals, rather than on adoption and rehabilitation of companion animals. In 1996, under new leadership, the focus of SAS switched to animal welfare rather than merely "animal control," and since 1996, adoptions have increased from 1,339 to 2,852 in 2006. That increase can be largely credited to the extraordinary volunteer program. In 2007 alone 600 volunteers donated tens of thousands of service hours; the equivalent of 38 full-time employees. But the size of the building hasn't kept pace with the rapid evolution of the SAS volunteer program. The increasingly crowded facility doesn't provide adequate meeting space, and there's little room for volunteer training sessions, volunteer orientations for potential newcomers, fundraising activities or other related activities. Many activities must be held off-site and away from the shelter those very activities support. "Simply put, we've just grown past what the present shelter can accommodate," says Jordan, a dynamic, innovative leader for Seattle's animal welfare cause. "When the expansion is complete we will be able to hold many more events right here."

The expansion project, initially slated to begin in 2009 but now delayed pending a capital campaign to raise the funds, would add a new building adjacent to and connected with the current shelter at 2061 15th Avenue West in Seattle. It would be built over the existing parking lot, adjacent to the ground floor of the shelter, creating 4600 square feet of activity space. "It's important to note that construction would be funded one hundred percent by community contributions. Our agreement with the City of Seattle is that we will not break ground until we've raised all of the estimated construction costs in today's dollars," says Jordan. "This reduces any risk to the tax payers."

A Shelter Expansion Fund has been created which states that if this project did not happen or if there were any remaining funds after completion, then that money would be diverted to the Help The Animals Fund. But, we're very excited and optimistic and we think it's a realistic goal. After all, since 1996, the community has given more than \$1 million dollars to Seattle Animal Shelter through donations and bequests. We also receive support from many local corporations in our community; and that's indicative of the community's high level of enthusiasm for Seattle Animal Shelter."

Donations to the Shelter Expansion Fund are tax deductible and may be made payable to:
(please consult your financial advisor)

Seattle Animal Shelter Expansion Fund
2061 15th Avenue West
Seattle, WA 98119