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Understanding Volunteerism in an Animal Shelter Environment: Improving Volunteer Retention

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UNDERSTANDING VOLUNTEERISM IN AN ANIMAL
SHELTER ENVIRONMENT: IMPROVING
VOLUNTEER RETENTION

By

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ABSTRACT
UNDERSTANDING VOLUNTEERISM IN AN ANIMAL
SHELTER ENVIRONMENT: IMPROVING
VOLUNTEER RETENTION

Volunteers are an essential part of any nonprofit organization. In many cases, volunteers play a vital role in the success of the organization in which they serve. Specifically, this paper focuses on the volunteers serving animal shelters: a place that does not always have a positive outcome for the animals. This research serves as a vehicle to determine what encourages people to begin volunteering in such an emotional setting and what motivates them to continue to share their time in the facility. The study serves to aid in the development of a volunteer program at the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC).

Based on individual interviews of current animal shelter volunteers, the study finds that MADACC is typically the first animal-centered volunteer experience for many people. Most volunteers focus on the welfare of the animals during their stay at the shelter and are dedicated to the animals they serve. Volunteers may experience joy and satisfaction from knowing that the animals make it out of the shelter alive. The consensus is that MADACC could spend more time and effort on marketing to help increase animal adoptions and transfers. To increase retention of volunteers, communication between supervisors and volunteers should improve. The results of this study may assist the volunteer manager at MADACC to increase volunteer recruitment and improve volunteer retention rates, thus helping the neediest animals in the county.

Keywords: volunteer retention, animal shelters, volunteerism

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Understanding Volunteerism in an Animal Shelter Environment: Improving Volunteer Retention

Millions of homeless domesticated animals have become a growing concern within our local communities and our nation. The animal welfare industry has grown tremendously in the past decade.

In the past century, and especially over the past 50 years, a growing emphasis has been placed on animal welfare around the world. In the United States, a very significant reason for this growing interest is a dramatic change in how individuals perceive animals.

(Medina, 2008, p. 105)

With this unrelenting growth, animal welfare volunteers struggle with placing animals in permanent homes. Milwaukee's local animal shelter deals with these issues on a daily basis.

An estimated 110 million dogs and cats are predicted to reside within the United States, although the number of households available to accommodate all of these nonhuman animals is inadequate. Approximately 3,500 to 5,000 animal welfare shelters across the United States have been grappling with this homeless issue for decades. Six to eight million companion animals are relinquished to shelters each year in the United States.

(McDowell, Burns, & Lepczyk, 2011, p. 322)

The Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC), like other shelters across the country, handles high numbers of animals including those from hoarding situations, neglect, abandonment, relinquishment, and strays.

Approximately 15 million dogs are either turned out as strays or released to animal-welfare agencies by their owners in the United States every year. These agencies, facing an endless influx of discarded pets, are able to place only a small percentage of homeless dogs. (Tuber, Miller, Caris, Halter, Linden, & Hennessy, 1999, p. 379)

MADACC employees do their best to reunite animals with their families, but in some cases, families are not looking for their animals, or they cannot afford the fees associated with reclaiming their pets. In these cases, the animals end up as the property of MADACC, and the shelter has to make decisions based on the welfare of the public as to which animals can be placed for adoption and which animals cannot.

With such high numbers of animals entering shelters every year, this problem is not just local to Milwaukee but nationwide. Without proper spay and neuter initiatives and better educational tools to help municipalities conquer the issue of homeless pets, animal shelters will continue to struggle to find adoptive homes. Most importantly, all people should be concerned, because innocent animals are being mistreated, are left homeless, and often are euthanized.

While there is an abundance of research on volunteer recruitment and retention in general, there is very little research focusing on animal shelter volunteers. Volunteers in an animal shelter environment experience emotional situations that are not found in other volunteer capacities. In an animal shelter setting, volunteers encounter an overabundance of clients (animals) on a daily basis. With such high numbers of animals, both staff and volunteers are overwhelmed. A common description of this type of overwhelming feeling is referred to as burnout. For the purposes of this research, burnout is defined as “a special type of prolonged occupational strain that results particularly from interpersonal demands at work and is characterized by exhaustion and withdrawal” (Gonzalez-Morales, Peiró, Rodriguez, & Bliese, 2012, p. 44).

Special care, like working with very nervous animals or animals with aggression issues, cannot be done, because the staff is too busy caring for the new arrivals. If animals with special needs cannot be tended, their chances of making it out of the shelter alive diminish, causing

higher euthanasia rates at the shelter. Volunteers also confront many cases of abuse and neglect in which they personally have to cope with the agony of knowing that an animal may have been through extensive pain and suffering. Further, volunteers must face the life and death of animals on a consistent basis. In other animal related organizations, volunteers give their time and energy to mostly happy conclusions where animals find their caring, permanent, adoptive homes. Many times, volunteers at open-admission animal control facilities spend time with animals that will never leave the shelter. Almost half of the animals that enter MADACC spend their last days there (MADACC, 2013c). See Appendices A and B.

Shelter animals need compassion from staff and volunteers. Volunteers bring new ideas and energy to shelters. This vigor should be embraced. The passion and desire of volunteers to find adoptive homes is necessary to create better programs for the animals in their care. For organizations like MADACC, volunteers conduct essential duties such as socializing animals prior to adoption (MADACC, 2013d). This volunteer involvement is important in decreasing euthanasia rates in Milwaukee County.

Purpose

The purpose of this research study is to enhance the current volunteer program at the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission. The study seeks to gain an understanding of what motivates people to volunteer in a setting like MADACC, the reasoning behind their return to MADACC for volunteer activities, and the methods that are effective in maintaining the volunteer morale in a stressful environment. By understanding these important factors, the volunteer manager can utilize this information to further develop the volunteer program at MADACC and to increase the retention rate of volunteers.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

What motivates volunteers to continue their relationships with the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission? What encouraged them to begin their volunteer relationship in the first place? Is good communication between the volunteers and the volunteer manager an essential element for maintaining a healthy relationship and volunteer retention?

Hypothesis One:

H₀: MADACC volunteers have not volunteered previously at other animal related facilities, such as an animal control environment or a local humane society.

H_A: MADACC volunteers have volunteered previously at other animal related facilities, such as an animal control environment or a local humane society.

Hypothesis Two:

H₀: MADACC volunteers do not value being part of the experience of an animal leaving the shelter with a new loving family.

H_A: MADACC volunteers do value being a part of an animal leaving the shelter with a new loving family.

Hypothesis Three:

H₀: MADACC volunteers do not struggle with the emotional aspects of volunteering in an animal control environment. Volunteers do not feel emotionally burned out, and burnout is not a motivation for volunteers to quit their volunteer duties.

H_A: MACACC volunteers do struggle with the emotional aspects of volunteering in an animal control environment. Volunteers feel emotionally burned out, and burnout is a motivation for volunteers to quit their volunteer duties.

Hypothesis Four:

H₀: MADACC volunteers do not want more frequent communication from supervisors in charge.

H_A: MADACC volunteers do want more frequent communication from supervisors in charge.

The following literature review provides a discussion of the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission, its relationship to the study, and the functions of the organization. Other topics covered in the literature review include volunteer statistics, volunteers in an animal shelter, animal control versus humane society, managing volunteers, volunteer recruitment, volunteer retention, volunteer burnout, and communication in volunteer programs.

Literature Review

Overview

Volunteers are abundant in our communities. They serve as a vital part of many organizations in our society. In the literature review, we look at statistics on volunteers in general; also, we look at volunteers that are found in an animal shelter setting. By understanding the profiles of people volunteering in an animal control environment, it may benefit the recruitment and retention of these volunteers in the future. To provide a deeper understanding about successful volunteer programs, the literature review also covers managing volunteers in general, which includes recruitment and retention techniques currently being used. Recognizing the scope of volunteer burnout and the steps other volunteer managers take to create successful programs is intended to aid in the development of recommendations for the volunteer manager at MADACC. Research exists on successful volunteer programs; however, research is limited on volunteer programs in animal shelter environments. Adapting the information available on

volunteerism in general may aid in the creation of an enhanced program at the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission.

Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission

This study was completed in conjunction with the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC), located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. MADACC is the local animal control facility for Milwaukee County, the most populous county in the state of Wisconsin. Governed by a Board of Directors and an Operations Committee (MADACC, 2013a), MADACC is an open admission, full service shelter that cares for approximately 13,000 stray, unwanted, abandoned, mistreated, and injured animals each year. MADACC began operation in 1999 and works with placement partners throughout the entire state. Its mission is to provide animal regulation and care services, which protect the health, public safety, and welfare of people and animals in Milwaukee County.

MADACC is the local facility that is responsible for rescuing thousands of lost and homeless animals. Sometimes, these animals have been neglected, abandoned, or subjected to abuse. Once an animal enters the shelter, it is scanned for a microchip and given a health exam and a clean kennel with food and water. Medical care is also given when needed. By law, the animals are held for seven days, giving the owners enough time to look and find their lost pets (MADACC, 2013a). If unclaimed, the pet will be made available for adoption directly from MADACC or will be offered to rescue agencies for placement in new homes. If the animal is deemed unadoptable, it will be euthanized as a last resort (MADACC, 2013a).

MADACC offers euthanasia services at a reduced cost for Milwaukee County residents. They also offer low cost vaccinations onsite. To spread awareness about what MADACC does and about the great animals they have that are looking for new homes, MADACC staff

occasionally takes part in community events. The staff also conducts educational seminars in local schools (MADACC, 2013b). One unique aspect that MADACC handles within the community is dog-fighting cases. In conjunction with the Milwaukee Police Department, MADACC is responsible for holding the animals involved in dog fighting court cases for the length of the investigation. In some cases, the dogs have lived at the shelter for over two years. Other cases have shorter time spans. This unique undertaking is not handled by any other government department within the county. MADACC staff and volunteers are exposed to this heinous crime, dog fighting, on a regular basis. MADACC provides basic needs for these dogs until the legal process concludes.

According to statistics found on the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission's website (2013c), in 2011, 12,723 animals arrived at the shelter. In 2012, there were 600 more than the preceding year. Of those animals, 6,269 were euthanized by the shelter in 2011 (48% of all intakes) and 5,357 were euthanized by the shelter in 2012 (43% of all intakes). In 2011, 1,654 animals were reclaimed by their owners, and 3,244 animals were transferred to affiliated facilities such as the local humane society. In 2012, 1,640 animals were reclaimed, and 3,732 animals were transferred to find new homes. Statistics posted through June 2013 indicate 5,290 animals were accepted into the shelter, 1,979 animals were euthanized by the shelter, and 1,661 animals were transferred to adoption facilities. Statistics are posted on a monthly basis on MADACC's website (MADACC, 2013c). These statistics not only help illustrate the overabundance of animals needing care each year, they also indicate the overwhelming number of animals that shelter volunteers help. Given the daunting responsibility of caring for nearly 13,000 needy animals, means that MADACC needs dedicated volunteers.

MADACC's volunteer program began five years ago and has seen remarkable growth. New programs have been developed. New volunteer assignments have been established, and the program has a whole new look. The volunteer program was small and focused only on dog walking and cat kennel cleaning. The volunteers would sign in and out via a computer to track their volunteer time and would follow the protocol in place regarding which animals could be socialized. The volunteer program was limited. The volunteer program has grown over the past five years to include many different types of activities such as spay and neuter volunteers which assist in surgery of both MADACC owned animals as well as citizen owned animals. Expansion of the program includes:

- A foster program for cats and pit bull type dogs
- Off-site cleaning opportunities in which a volunteer will visit an off-site location where adoptable animals are kept and spend time cleaning, feeding, and watering the animals (just cats at this time)
- Pet photography to help assist MADACC in marketing the animals
- Kennel cleaning
- Laundry
- Other daily assignments.

Volunteers are used to cover duties that are considered less crucial to the everyday workings of the shelter, because other more vital responsibilities arise, such as an injured dog arriving at the shelter (MADACC, 2013d). Within the past year, a volunteer manager has been hired.

MADACC's volunteer program has increased opportunities for people, but some positions are still unfilled.

Volunteer Statistics

Volunteers in our communities have a major impact on the organizations they serve. Volunteers are found in many capacities and give at different levels. They serve in both the for-profit and nonprofit worlds. According to Stebbins (2009),

We define volunteer – whether economic or volitional – as someone who performs, even for a short period of time, volunteer work in either an informal or a formal setting. It is through volunteer work that a person provides a service or benefit to one or more individuals, usually receiving no pay. (p. 156)

People show their charitable ways every day through the sharing of their skills, their expertise, and their passion with organizations that help the needy. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013), about 64.5 million people volunteered through or for an organization at least once between September 2011 and September 2012. Women volunteer at a higher rate than men have across all age groups, education levels, and other major demographic characteristics. Married persons volunteer at a higher rate than those that are unmarried.

Individuals with higher levels of education were also found to volunteer on a more consistent basis than those with lower levels of education. It was found that volunteers spend a median of fifty hours on volunteer activities over the period that was studied. The report also concluded that most volunteers were involved in one or two organizations (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). If organizations focused their efforts on better recruitment strategies, they could see the benefits and rewards of having so many willing volunteers.

Not only does the service of volunteers have a major impact on completing successful programs within an organization, their service creates a positive financial impact on the organization. “Considering that the estimated value of a volunteer hour is \$17.55, it is obvious

that volunteers have an enormous financial impact on the fabric of the U.S. society” (Strigas, 2006, p. 26). Many organizations depend on volunteer help to accomplish their goals. “Assuming a full-time employee works 1,700 hours per year, volunteer hours were the equivalent of 8.8 million full-time employees. At average private wages, volunteer time was worth nearly \$283.85 billion in 2010” (Roeger, Blackwood, & Pettijohn, 2011, p. 6). Organizations should spend time gaining an understanding of the availability of volunteers and the value of their talent and desire to help.

Animal Shelter Volunteers

Volunteer programs are found in many shelters in the United States. Some are large scale and others small. In most cases, local shelters house animals that have been abandoned, mistreated, or are unwanted. The melancholy atmosphere at animal control centers is presumably more difficult for volunteers than humane societies that typically have high adoption rates and do not deal with mistreated animals. To understand the difficulty of maintaining dedicated volunteers in an animal shelter setting, it is important to uncover facts regarding the type of people that typically volunteer in this setting. By understanding the characteristics of those willing to spend their free time in this capacity, we may also develop better recruitment techniques. Studies that are specific to volunteers in animal shelter environments are limited. A study by Neumann (2010) determined the demographics of people involved in animal welfare volunteering.

The typical animal welfare volunteer is female, White, pet-owning, heterosexual, employed, childless, married or partnered, Democratic-leaning, between the ages of 40 and 59, has an income between \$50,000 and \$99,999, and is Protestant. Additionally, it

was found that animal welfare volunteers are primarily motivated by a need to act on important values relating to animals. (p. 363)

The knowledge of these demographics is essential in the development of an effective volunteer recruitment program. Being able to focus on a specific group of people, who are known to participate in animal-related activities, could make it easier to retain volunteers. If a person already has a passion for helping animals, there is a good chance he or she will be willing to help with necessary shelter activities.

Volunteers can take on many different roles in an animal shelter. Volunteer duties can range from simple tasks, such as paper copying, to life-altering behavioral training with the animals. Because of the high intake of animals, an animal shelter volunteer's duties never end. According to an article by Ebony Walmsley (2013), published in the *New Haven Register*, volunteers at the Guilford Animal Shelter help with socializing animals and cleaning kennels. Volunteers at that local animal shelter must be 18 years old, pass a background check, and have experience working with animals. The Glynn County Animal Shelter in Georgia recruits volunteers for various tasks, such as "to help walk dogs, take photographs of the animals, help out at events such as the Saturday mobile adoption unit, or by helping advertise our adoptable animals" (Adkison, 2012, p. 1). According to Hurley (2011), the Caliborne County Shelter staff is looking for volunteers to help with spay and neuter appointments. Volunteer tasks include "admitting the animals, weighing them, and getting them situated and comfortable" before surgery (p. 1). Volunteer duties do not end with the physical aspects of being in the shelter.

Volunteers serve an essential function in helping animals exit the shelter. By spending time with the dogs, shelter volunteers prepare them for new lives outside the shelter. A study was conducted by Coppola, Grandin, and Enns (2006), who looked at stress levels of dogs in animal

shelter environments when they had human interactions shortly after arrival. “The session involved taking a dog into an outdoor enclosure, playing with the dog, grooming, petting, and reviewing basic obedience commands. Each dog interacted with a human for approximately 45 minutes” (p. 538). It was found that dogs who engaged with humans had lower cortisol levels on day three than animals that did not. Cortisol levels have the ability to tell us about a dog’s stress level. “Cortisol is a good stress indicator for dogs” (Haverbeke, Diederich, Depiereux, & Giffroy, 2008, p. 59). The study concluded that a human interaction session could be beneficial to both animal welfare and adoption procedures. Human interaction with shelter dogs is essential for the animals’ well-being. The volunteer task of interacting with the animals can and does assist with the increase of adoptions and the decrease of euthanizing healthy adoptable animals.

Another study conducted by Tuber et al. (1999) suggests the same outcome as the Haverbeke et al. study. “Experience suggests human interaction and the application of basic conditioning procedures can reduce the impact of the shelter environment, and ease the transition into the adoptive home” (p. 379). Menor-Campos, Molleda-Carbonell, and Lopez-Rodriguez (2011) found that the dogs that interact with humans while in the shelter setting have lower levels of salivary cortisol and concluded that human contact reduces stress in these animals. Not only can volunteers help decrease stress levels in animals by spending time with them, but decreased stress can also make an animal more suitable for adoption. Interactions with people while at the shelter increases an animal’s chances of adoption.

While at the shelter, dogs experience kennel life, an experience typified by confined spaces, frequent barking, and minimal human contact. Shelter dogs learn to respond to humans in an aroused state, because their daily interactions with humans - kennel cleaning, feeding time, daily walks, and interaction with the public - are times of high

arousal for the shelter dogs. Socialization and training may minimize the adverse impact of the shelter and make dogs more adoptable. If dogs could gain experience exhibiting desired behavior in situations similar to the family home and away from the normal daily shelter environment, then they would appear more attractive to potential owners. (Thorn, Templeton, Van Winkle, & Castillo, 2006, pp. 25-26)

Aided by this information and with the desire of people to help animals in need, animal shelters could further develop their animal interaction programs within the shelter and may result in lower rates of euthanasia, because dogs and cats are then more adoptable.

This information is a major part in understanding the everyday workings of MADACC and similar shelters. Shelter staff is often overwhelmed with regular operational activities, such as guiding citizens in search of their lost pets and feeding all of the shelter animals, that they do not have time to spend with specific animals in need of socialization. “Shelter staff often has difficulty completing tasks beyond caring for the animals’ physical well-being” (Thorn, et al., 2006, p. 26). Volunteers could be utilized for these necessary tasks if the staff is working on another more important issue. By utilizing volunteers for particular shelter needs, they can feel fulfilled and needed, which is an important part of a successful program.

Animal Control versus Humane Society

It is important to note the differences between animal control facilities like MADACC and a typical humane society organization. Animal shelters are stray animal holding facilities, but a humane society is typically a viewing and adoption center.

The goal underlying public animal control agencies is the protection of human populations by enforcing animal ordinances and picking up or accepting stray or unwanted animals. Private humane societies focus on animal welfare and view their

shelters as refuges for companion animals that otherwise would be abandoned, abused, or inhumanely killed. (Shore & Girrens, 2001, p. 105)

Because humane societies normally do not have the animal control contracts with their municipality, they must acquire animals from animal shelters. They have the opportunity to choose which animals are best suited for adoption. Because of this process, animal shelters are left with the sick, unwanted, and undesirable animals. In most cases, animal control facilities face the necessary task of euthanizing animals to make room for more animals. Shelters like MADACC are open admission, which means that they accept all types of domesticated animals. They do not turn away an animal for any reason. Shelters like MADACC are inundated with animals that are considered unadoptable because of health related or behavior related issues, and they do their best to place those animals in loving homes. Humane societies choose animals that are found to be the most adoptable. Therefore, animal control facilities have different demographics of animals than humane societies.

An American study compared dogs admitted to two shelters: one run by an animal control agency dealing with strays picked up by animal control officers and one by a Humane Society that deals with private citizens. This study found that dogs admitted to the Humane Society primarily were surrendered and were comprised of greater proportions of puppies and senior dogs (aged 8 years or more) than those admitted to the animal control agency. The animal control agency admitted a greater proportion of male and adult dogs. (Marston, Bennett, & Coleman, 2005, p. 26)

Open admission animal control facilities do not have the luxury of placing all the animals that come through their doors due to the limited number of adoptive resources. Humane societies typically have successful outcomes with high numbers of adoptions while animal control

facilities face such high numbers of intakes that euthanasia is the only way to make room for the newcomers. Another major difference between a typical animal shelter and a humane society is that the animal shelter is usually a government run facility while humane societies are normally nonprofits. “Although animal control agencies and humane societies are similar in a number of ways, their mandates, funding, and activities in the community make them different in their activities, perception, and utilization by the public” (Shore & Girrens, 2001, p. 106). Animal shelters have different missions than humane societies, because their focus is on the safety of the public versus animal placement efforts.

People’s perceptions of the two institutions are very different. Commonly referred to as the pound, animal shelters have a negative stigma attached to them. Humane societies are usually seen in a more positive light. They advertise their adoptions, and people take note of the positive results.

Volunteer Managers

Volunteer managers are responsible for the difficult task of handling many different aspects of an organization: recruiting people, developing programs for those people, and understanding the needs of the organization as well as the volunteers. Having a certain skill set that includes creativity in recruiting and strong leadership abilities are sought after for volunteer managers. D. A. Dolan’s study found that “after fundraising and grant writing, volunteer administration was the third most frequently reported area of training need” (Leonard, Onyx, and Hayward-Brown, 2004, p. 205).

With ready and willing managers who have the right tools to run a program, the organization will profit from the skills and talents provided by the volunteers. Volunteers will have a difficult time producing results if the manager is not equipped with the right information.

Studying volunteer management and developing skills to utilize in their programs is essential. Managers can take information from organizations already in full force and apply it to their own programs. “In an era of declining volunteerism, it is critical to examine alternative approaches to volunteer management that may better promote engagement and address common barriers to volunteering” (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009, p. 169). By understanding available research, building upon these studies, and putting new spins on previously suggested strategies, managers of animal shelters can be successful in developing a solid program.

Volunteer Recruitment

Recruitment is a key part of volunteer management. With good recruitment techniques, one has a better chance of achieving higher retention rates. Getting the right people from the beginning can prove to be the most beneficial for an organization. Volunteer programs cannot prosper if people do not set foot in the door. Good recruitment policies and techniques applied to the animal shelter setting create a successful program. A variety of methods for volunteer recruitment has been identified by research studies. These methods can be applied by volunteer managers of animal shelters.

Peterson (2004) conducted a research study using a mail survey, measured with a Likert Scale, to determine recruitment strategies for encouraging participation in corporate volunteer programs. While this study focuses on corporate volunteer programs, it also gives us insight into certain recruitment strategies that can be used in non-corporate settings. Peterson (2004) found that...

The most effective strategies for initiating participation in volunteer programs may not be the same as strategies that are most effective in terms of maximizing the number of

volunteer hours contributed by employees. More importantly, the results suggest that the most effective recruitment strategies depend on the age of the employee. (p. 371)

Armed with this information, a volunteer manager can focus on the community to find volunteers that may fit the organization based on age. Older adults and those that are retired typically have more time to share. Age may be the determining factor to gaining dependable volunteers with the time to give.

Looking at the other spectrum of age when it comes to volunteers, Shields (2009) focuses on young adult volunteer motivations in her research.

Young adults are more likely to volunteer to benefit their own self-interests and concern for their own personal advancement. Thus, a concern for their own advancement would be a strong motivator for young adults to volunteer their time and to remain involved with an organization. (p. 144)

When recruiting, volunteer motivations should be characterized. Age has an influence on the needs and wants of each volunteer. Understanding those needs and wants can create better relationships potentially increasing recruitment of capable people.

In a study of parks and recreation volunteers by Strigas (2006), it was found that “it is important for the park and recreation professional to develop the profile of the leisure and recreation volunteer” (p. 28). Strigas suggests that these profiles could help make recruitment easier for leisure-type volunteer needs. Better marketing schemes may be a way to attract the right people for the job. By linking better marketing with a focus on the type of person that has free time to donate, managers may see an increase in the recruitment of volunteers.

Shin and Kleiner (2003) recommend several strategies to boost recruitment and maintain volunteer satisfaction. These strategies include a) develop and articulate well-defined

organizational goals and objectives, b) develop and share with prospective and existing volunteers a vision regarding individual and organizational success, c) match assignments with the specific skills and abilities each of the volunteers possess, and d) monitor and control the workload for each of the volunteers. The volunteer manager must keep communications open with the volunteers and align their skills with the correct tasks while monitoring the workload, because increasing demands for help from the same volunteer may force that volunteer to drop out. Shin and Kleiner (2003) indicate ways to recruit volunteers and to increase volunteer retention, which include a) creating opportunities for volunteer appreciation and recognition, b) allocating resources for the development of written materials, c) involving volunteers in the evaluation process and assessing them on their performance, and d) attracting volunteers whose personal values relate to those of the organization. With all of these tactics, volunteer managers should be better prepared to increase recruitment of new volunteers and be able to encourage veteran volunteers to continue their service.

Volunteer managers should also take into account people's motives for establishing any type of volunteer relationship with an organization. Barnes and Sharpe (2009) look at motives of volunteers for an urban park in Toronto, Canada. They used a case study approach to research the volunteers' contributions to the park since it had been nationally recognized for its history of community engagement. Barnes and Sharpe (2009) wanted to determine how volunteer involvement was initiated and if it was a contributor to the park's success. What they discovered was that the volunteers' decisions to become involved and remain involved with the park was ...

Tied to the ability of the volunteer to integrate the work in the park with their personal lives, interests, and vocations. In terms of personal life integration, most volunteers had

already been connected to the park, mainly as a visitor or user, prior to becoming more actively involved as a volunteer. (p. 176)

By focusing on people in the community that already have some link to an organization, whether it is direct or indirect, there may be some inclination for that person to begin a volunteer relationship with that organization. Connecting with local agencies that have similar goals within the community and seeking out people from those organizations may garner some new volunteer relationships.

Equipped with these strategies and realizing that motives differ depending on a person's background, age and other characteristics, a volunteer manager can focus on people who may be better suited for specific activities within the organization. Recognizing that good recruitment techniques improve relationships with volunteers for the organization is essential. Developing strategies that recruit people based on their needs and wants as well as realizing the differences in people is important in growing a program with new and talented volunteers.

Volunteer Retention

Boosting volunteer retention is the main goal of volunteer managers. "Because volunteers do not depend on the organization for a paycheck, their commitments must come in different ways" (Garner & Garner, 2011, p. 814). It is important to keep volunteers happy in their duties as well as to keep their morale high. Many organizations struggle with retention of volunteers for a variety of reasons. For some, it is a poorly run program or a discouraging environment, and for others, it comes down to bad management practices of inadequate communication, ineffective training, and a poor attitude. Research gives us insight into both reasons for low rates within organizations and provides strategies aimed at improving volunteer retention.

Strigas (2006) offered some strategies that many organizations can implement to ensure that retention rates increase. He suggests a) developing well-defined organizational goals and objectives, b) creating and sharing a vision with volunteers, c) matching assignments with specific skill sets that volunteers possess, and d) monitoring and controlling the work load for each volunteer so that he or she is not overwhelmed or feels under used. Volunteer managers can take these suggestions, build upon them, and mold them to fit their organizations.

Garner and Garner (2011) conducted research with nonprofits in Southern California to look at volunteer satisfaction and the relationship with retention. Their findings indicate, “Satisfaction would be positively related to retention, and satisfaction with integration showed such positive effects” (p. 821). With this information, volunteer managers can initiate activities that keep volunteers happy and excited to be a part of the organization while increasing volunteer retention. Shields (2009) finds that “volunteer retention rates are also influenced by several factors perceived by the individual. Specifically, volunteers express high levels of connectedness, uniqueness, and power” (p. 142). Focusing on volunteer satisfaction will prove to get results when attempting to retain volunteers.

McCurley and Lynch (1996) determined that the first six months of the volunteers’ experience is critical toward their retention, with the greatest personnel loss occurring during this period. Communicating with new volunteers and developing relationships have been found to foster volunteer retention. Continuing with the recognition that satisfaction and retention rates are directly correlated, Vecina, Chacon, Sueiro, and Barron (2012) look at volunteer satisfaction and the direct link it has on retention. Volunteers participated through an anonymous online questionnaire, and the results indicated, “Engagement is more closely related to satisfied motivations (affection) than to satisfaction with the organization’s management (evaluation)” (p.

138), which conflicts with previously noted research. Vecina et al. state, “Engagement significantly predicts intention to remain, and volunteer satisfaction also predicts intention to remain” (p. 140). Volunteer managers should concentrate on enriching the experience of volunteers and making the assigned tasks worthwhile and rewarding. Matching volunteer skills with specific opportunities can also prove to be beneficial to an organization. Placing volunteers in positions in which they both enjoy and can feel a sense of accomplishment is also essential. Volunteers are searching for a meaningful work experience and dedication to an organization. The duty itself should be one that promotes motivation and encourages volunteers to continue their work. Millette and Gagne (2008) studied volunteers’ commitments to an organization and the effect that job characteristics have on retention. They found that “job characteristics were positively related to autonomous motivation” and concluded, “it may be useful to redesign volunteer jobs. This endeavor is likely to increase people’s sense of interest and enjoyment in their work” (p. 18). A happy and encouraged volunteer is more likely to remain for a longer term.

Recognition of volunteers is important in retention rates. Volunteer recognition is also an important factor in a well-rounded program. Related to being motivated and encouraged, volunteers desire to be valued. Their work is essential to maintaining a smooth-running program, and they need to be appreciated as much as a full time employee is. Volunteers are a key resource to any organization and are often times the forgotten link between success and failure of an organization. Their valuable contributions can be shown in a multitude of ways. Volunteer appreciation parties, individual recognition, or just a simple thank you can go a long way toward improving volunteer motivation and retention.

A successful volunteer program begins with the proper training, which results in satisfied, appreciated volunteers. Volunteers do not need extravagant parties to feel appreciated. Sometimes, a simple email letting the volunteer know that he/she is an asset to the organization is the right approach. Recognition of the volunteers' hard work and commitment must be noted and communicated. Their time and dedication should be celebrated. According to Jacobsen, Carlton, and Monroe (2012),

Rewarding volunteers through recognition is one way an organization expresses thanks for donated time, energy, and expertise. It tells volunteers that their efforts are appreciated...This verbal reinforcement and positive feedback tends to increase intrinsic motivation, which help volunteers continue their role...Celebrations of small accomplishments or the completion of tasks can reinforce a feeling of appreciation and value. Volunteers need to feel their work is significant. (p. 64)

Meaningful recognition leads to increased gratification, which leads to increased volunteer retention. Positive volunteer experiences improve the chances of positive program outcomes.

Organizations that are interested in retaining volunteers must do a multitude of things to keep volunteers satisfied. Recognizing that volunteers play a vital role in the success of the program is a critical organizational component. Providing training and development opportunities as well as support mechanisms for volunteers will assist in improved retention rates. Volunteers must feel wanted and recognized for their contributions to the organization. The volunteers' time, talents, and dedication should be respected by the volunteer manager and the organization as a whole.

Volunteer Burnout

Burnout in volunteers is a complex issue for the volunteer manager. “Burnout is the occupational stress that results from demanding work-related tasks and relationships” (Allen & Mueller, 2013, p. 140). These demanding tasks can come in many different forms.

Burnout is a special type of prolonged occupational strain that results particularly from interpersonal demands at work and is characterized by exhaustion and withdrawal.

Exhaustion is the basic burnout experience: individuals feel overextended and perceive their emotional and physical resources to be depleted. (Gonzales-Morales, Peiró, Rodriguez, & Bliese, 2012, p. 44)

Organizations rely on volunteers in many capacities, but managers must keep the volunteers’ duties at a level where they are still enjoyable and achievable. Volunteers may feel tempted to quit if they are overwhelmed with their duties, which can negatively affect an organization.

Volunteer turnover is a byproduct of having a volunteer workforce, but high rates of turnover can be detrimental to the organization by hindering the chance to provide quality services. To counteract the effects of turnover, an organization must know the sources of turnover. (Allen & Mueller, 2013, p.140)

Managers must consider the impact that burnout can have on a volunteer, because retention is critical to a successful volunteer program.

Volunteers become burned out for many reasons. It may be an overabundance of work, a vision that their time is not making a difference, or it could be a direct impact of the assigned task itself. In animal shelters, people work with animals that may not safely make it out of the shelter. Burnout may stem from an overpowering sense of emotion and sadness. DeMello (2012) found,

No matter how hard rescuers and animal advocates work, the animals just seem to keep coming, with no end in sight. For these volunteers, sometimes the fatigue of knowing how many animals continue to be abandoned and euthanized feels overwhelming. Known as compassion fatigue, animal rescuers are at risk for being overwhelmed and traumatized by the constant animal suffering, and the knowledge that what they do is never enough. Many rescuers are depressed, and deal with that depression in unhealthy ways.” (p. 222)

Animal shelters are not the only organizations that may deal with volunteers who feel overwhelmed with emotions. This phenomenon may also occur in volunteers who deal with death and dying in humans, as identified in the research by Andrea Skoglund.

Skoglund (2006) looks at the challenge of volunteer retention for volunteers that work with sick and dying individuals. She interviewed volunteers working with Caring Hearts, a bereavement program based out of a military hospital in Texas. The organization is solely operated by volunteers. Caring Hearts witnessed a decline in volunteers, which prompted the research. A significant finding was that volunteers felt alone in their work.

First, those who participated in the Caring Hearts evaluation said that they often feel alone in their volunteer work. Many volunteers said that there is limited contact among the program’s volunteers, creating a sense of isolation. Furthermore, in the light of the type of service being performed by the volunteers, feeling alone is particularly difficult because what the volunteers encounter when working with the bereaved can be heavy on one’s heart. After leaving the room of the bereaved, some volunteers may not know how to work through their own emotions regarding what they just experienced. Respondents said they would appreciate and benefit from the opportunity to meet with other volunteers

in a support group setting. They said that this opportunity would help them process, evaluate, and share their experiences of being on call and working with the bereaved. Listening to other volunteers' stories could have the potential for both renewal and motivation, encouraging volunteers to maintain their commitment to Caring Hearts. (p. 219)

It is essential that volunteer managers address the emotional stresses of volunteer duties and the effects on volunteers. These emotional effects are referred to as compassion fatigue.

Compassion fatigue has often been referred to as the emotional cost of caring for others and has led professionals to abandon their work with traumatized victims in their care. It is portrayed as a stress response that emerges suddenly and without warning and includes a sense of helplessness, isolation, and confusion. (Slocum-Gori, Hemsworth, Chan, Carson, & Kazanjian, 2013, p. 173)

If volunteers are feeling saddened by the environment or disheartened with no assistance or support from the organization, they may be inclined to leave the organization. It would be detrimental for an organization to lose an experienced volunteer over something that can be remedied.

Rank, Zaparanick, & Gentry (2009) performed a study on animal care professionals. These caretakers work in areas, such as animal lab testing, veterinary medicine, and animal control facilities, and experience a consistent amount of compassion fatigue. People in these positions have the responsibility of caring for sick animals. Many times, an animal that they have bonded with must be euthanized. The study aimed to "investigate what effect, if any, the tailored nonhuman-animal care compassion fatigue modules had on compassion fatigue symptoms" (p. 48). The authors wanted to determine the effectiveness of a training module to deal with

compassion fatigue. One of the common themes studied was the impact that euthanasia had on workers. They discovered that “training-as-treatment intervention had a statistically significant effect upon the negative symptoms of the nonhuman animal care professional” (p. 40). Training and development of tools to help with this issue must be developed and used by managers to keep people from leaving the field. It is important to realize the similarities of nonhuman animal professional caregivers and the volunteers that spend time in animal shelters. The same type of emotional pain that these employees experience can also be seen in volunteers that work in these related areas. Compassion fatigue and retention rates can be studied together to see if there is any correlation to volunteers stepping down from their responsibilities.

Additional research studied the association between volunteers quitting and their exhaustion from dealing with difficult aspects of their duties. Through an online survey of volunteers working in an animal welfare organization, Allen and Mueller (2013) conducted a study seeking to clarify the reasons for volunteers expressing their intention to leave the organization. They looked at whether burnout was a precursor to a volunteer’s intention to quit by focusing on both perception of voice and role ambiguity. It was found that “burnout had a significant positive correlation with intentions to quit” (p. 147). Based on this research, managers should consistently check in with volunteers to determine if they are satisfied with their work or if they have any feelings of being overwhelmed. The best way to avoid losing volunteers is to take a hands-on approach to battling this byproduct of volunteering.

Communication

Communication is a key measure of a volunteer program. Keeping volunteers apprised of opportunities, new policies, or success stories will make volunteers feel as if they are an important part of the organization. Communication should begin immediately when a new

volunteer starts with an organization. Orientation or training sessions for new volunteers provides an overview of the organization and indicates how the volunteers can fill the organization's needs. "An effective orientation and training of a program's volunteers will engage participants in a way that results in volunteers' willingness to participate in the agency's volunteer program for a significant period of time" (Skoglund, 2006, p. 217). The strength of the organization's program is important to both a new volunteer and a veteran volunteer. Pascuet, Beauchemin, Vaillancourt, Cowin, Ni, and Rattay (2012) studied volunteers at a pediatric palliative care hospice and learned that volunteers who had good communication with the hospice volunteer manager tended to volunteer for a longer period of time.

Follow-up is also an important component of keeping volunteers feeling they are valued. Volunteers want to be a part of program development and have management recognize the legitimacy of their ideas. They want to feel needed and secure that their time spent at the organization is important. Strong communication between program managers and volunteers will create strong bonds, which will then increase retention rates.

Methodology

Project Overview

The purpose of this research study is to enhance the current volunteer program at the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission. The study searches for an understanding of what motivates people to volunteer in a setting like MADACC, what is the reasoning behind their return to MADACC for volunteer activities, and what methods are effective in satisfying volunteers' needs in a stressful environment. By understanding these

important factors, the volunteer manager can utilize this information to develop further the volunteer program at MADACC and to increase the retention rate of volunteers.

Research Design

Data for this project was obtained through individual interviews. All current volunteers at the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission received an email from Jessica Huber, volunteer coordinator at MADACC (see Appendix C). The email addresses for the current volunteers were from the MADACC volunteer database. The email explained the research project, included an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix D), and asked those who were interested in participating to contact the researcher directly at her email address. The researcher then contacted the interested volunteers to establish an interview time and place. The participant chose his/her preferred interview location, either the MADACC facility or the Starbucks Coffee Shop, located near the shelter. The interviews consisted of seven questions and lasted approximately fifteen to thirty minutes, depending on the length of each interviewee's responses. Interviews were digitally audio recorded for accuracy and were transcribed by the researcher.

Sample

All participants in this study are volunteers for the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission. All MADACC volunteers complete an initial orientation and background check. Volunteers must be at least 18 years old. Once accepted to work with MADACC, the volunteers have a multitude of options from which to choose. Duties range from dog walker to cat socializer to spay/neuter assistant. Eight volunteers participated in this study and completed the interview process. Their experience as volunteers at MADACC ranged from four months to four years. There were seven female participants and one male participant.

Informed Consent

All volunteers received a copy of the informed consent form along with the initial email from the volunteer manager (see Appendix C). Prior to the actual interview, the informed consent form was reviewed with each participant. The researcher answered any questions regarding the research project. Each participant signed the informed consent form prior to the start of the interview.

Confidentiality

To provide confidentiality for the participants, the researcher assigned each participant with a letter designation – Participant A, Participant B, etc. The designations were assigned randomly. The letter designations do not relate to the names of the participants or the order in which they were interviewed. The tape recordings and notes are stored in a locked file, which are maintained by the researcher.

Interview Questions

The interview consisted of both direct and open-ended questions in hopes that both types of questions would capture the true feelings of the interviewee regarding their volunteer experience at MADACC. Based on the participants' responses, strategies could be suggested to enhance the volunteer program, improve retention rates, and attract new volunteers.

To delve into the volunteer experience at MADACC, the following questions were asked of each volunteer in the interview:

1. How long have you volunteered for MADACC?
2. Have you volunteered at other animal control facilities or humane societies? If so, was/is there a difference in experiences?
3. What encouraged you to become a volunteer at MADACC?

4. What do you value most about your volunteer work at MADACC?
5. Are there suggestions that you have about the program that you have not shared with a supervisor? If so, what are those suggestions?
6. What motivates you to continue your volunteer work at MADACC?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

The next section provides the participants' responses, research results, discussion, and recommendations for MADACC.

Findings

This study has given insight into the lives and feelings of those involved in volunteer activities at the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission. Each participant has given his/her thoughts and opinions about each interview question in order to help the program grow and become greater. The researcher discovered many important concepts about volunteers and their duties at MADACC.

Participants' Responses

The summarized responses to the seven interview questions appear in Table 1.

Table 1

Research Questions and Participants' Responses

| Question | Participant | Response |
|--|-------------|---|
| 1. How long have you volunteered for MADACC? | A | Oh, I would say about four months. |
| | B | I started my fourth year on August 14. |
| | C | Since January 2011, so that is 2 ½ years or so. |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|--|-------------|---|
| 1. Continued. | D | I have been volunteering at MADACC for about 2 ½ years. |
| | E | I have been a volunteer at MADACC for about 2 ½ years. |
| | F | I think it is 3 ½ years. |
| | G | I think it has been about 2 ½ years. |
| | H | I have been volunteering on and off for a year and a half, two years. |
| 2. Have you volunteered at other animal control facilities or humane societies? If so, was/is there a difference in experiences? | A | I have not. MADACC is the first place. I have done volunteer work before but never for a humane society. |
| | B | I currently volunteer at the Wisconsin Humane Society as well as at MADACC. The difference is that MADACC is friendlier than Wisconsin Humane Society. I think it is because there is so much business at the Wisconsin Humane Society. I like the system now at MADACC that you have to be there at a certain time. At Wisconsin Humane Society, I can only volunteer at one place at one time. If I miss my Friday at 8 o'clock, I cannot go for another week. There is no flexibility in the schedule there. I did learn a lot at Wisconsin Humane Society that I have brought to MADACC. I have brought a lot of the Cat's Voice stuff to MADACC. |
| | C | I have not. |
| | D | No actually, this is the only shelter where I have ever volunteered. |
| | E | No, MADACC was the first volunteer experience I had |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|---|-------------|---|
| 2. Continued. | F | I have not. |
| | G | I tried to volunteer at Wisconsin Humane Society on a couple of different occasions. A representative even came to my home to check if it was suitable for fostering kittens. My volunteer experience is different at MADACC, because the other volunteers are so encouraging. Tom Hare got us on board, and we came religiously for the first couple of years of dog walking. |
| | H | I have not. |
| 3. What encouraged you to become a volunteer at MADACC? | A | <p>I have many pets, and I show dogs in obedience. I am involved in the opposite world. We get our dogs from breeders, and I have been showing in AKC obedience all over the country for 15 years.</p> <p>I am a nurse and like helping people as well as animals. I have very limited time to volunteer, so I wanted to volunteer where I am needed My time is very valuable to me like it is to everyone. I work 50 hours a week so I wanted to volunteer at a place where my heart was, and that is with animals. I started looking at volunteer opportunities in different venues. Some of the shelters had many volunteers that were not being utilized. At MADACC, there were only three of us. I thought this is where I need to be. Long story, but that is what encouraged me.</p> |
| | B | When I started four years ago, the program was just beginning. I like being in at the beginning. I am retired so I need something to fill up my days. I love dog walking. I cannot have a big dog where I live so I get the dog fix. |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|---------------|-------------|---|
| 3. Continued. | C | I was looking for something new to do in life to be honest. I met the girl that started the volunteer program at MADACC, and I helped her with a fundraiser. Then I decided to volunteer. I knew I wanted to help with dogs. I knew that the girl from MADACC was also involved with a side group, the Battle Against Dogfighting, so I was also interested in helping with that. |
| | D | I do not remember if there was anyone specific that pushed us in that direction, or if it was more so hearing about the animals in need, and MADACC needed volunteers. Before we started volunteering, we adopted our American Bulldog puppy from a backyard breeder. That was more of a push to see what is in Milwaukee. |
| | E | What encouraged me to become a volunteer at MADACC is when I got Mack, our bulldog. He was a puppy, and I put his pictures online. Someone asked, "Oh, where did you get the puppy?" I said that one of my friends had puppies, and my dog just died. I went over there to look at them, and I ended up with one. Well, she let me have it, because she said that there are all these dogs dying, and she was an animal advocate. She said there probably is a shelter within a mile of your house that is killing dogs, because there is no space for them. The dogs need homes. I was shocked to hear that, because I did not believe that was going on. She was right. It is the reason I volunteered. Now, we have Mack and foster two dogs from MADACC. I also volunteer to walk dogs. |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|--|-------------|--|
| 3. Continued. | F | I finished grad school, and I needed something to do. I went to Volunteer Forums on the Internet. I clicked on animals. Then, I went to the Wisconsin Humane Society, and they said they did not need me. To find MADACC, I probably Googled it on the web. I knew you should adopt animals, but I did not understand how serious it was until I went to MADACC. I ended up volunteering at MADACC and took an active role as a volunteer. |
| | G | I was familiar with MADACC, because I had taken strays to MADACC. I knew that Wisconsin Humane society no longer accepted strays. A woman that moved into our neighborhood fostered pit bulls, she also did dog sitting. When we went on vacation, we asked her take care of our dog, and she told us about the volunteer program at MADACC. |
| | H | One of my good friends was volunteering at MADACC, and she told me about the volunteer program. I grew up with animals, and I love them. I have two cats. I live in a one-bedroom apartment and cannot have dogs. Volunteering gives me my dog fix without having to move and find a new place to live. I just want to be around dogs. |
| 4. What do you value most about your volunteer work at MADACC? | A | It is very satisfying. I am trained in tier one, which means that as a volunteer I do laundry and dishes. What I value most is the feeling that I am making a difference, because MADACC is always in desperate need to have someone helping. |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|---------------|-------------|---|
| 4. Continued. | A (cont.) | <p>I have had several of the animal care attendants tell me when I am here that we are so grateful that you are here. Thanks for coming. Even an hour or two of doing laundry, getting things folded helps us when it is separated. A surgical tech runs in and says, "Oh, my gosh, you have folded the towels." These things make volunteers feel that they are needed.</p> |
| | B | <p>I feel like I am making a difference, especially with the cats. Cat's Voice has been huge; I think we are really getting to educate people about cats. So I feel appreciated, because I am at MADACC a lot.</p> |
| | C | <p>Getting the dogs out of the kennels is probably the simplest thing that I can do for the dogs, and it is probably the biggest deal to them, when it is just 15 minutes or so of my time. Being out there with them is what I value. I also value hearing that a dog that I know has been adopted or has been fostered. That is definitely a perk, knowing that I may have helped the animal become adoptable. I also post the dog on Facebook and share anything about them. I have also learned about the stereotyping of pit bulls. I share this information with others so they can better understand this type of dog. I value the education I have received from MADACC. In addition, everyone helps each other, which is very important to me.</p> |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|---------------|-------------|---|
| 4. Continued. | D | <p>The love and affection of the animals, that is key. The time we get to spend with the animals, anything we get to do with them in general is valued. Sometimes I work with the dogs to exercise them and to teach them to sit and stay. Just cuddling with them out on our walk in the grass is valued.</p> |
| | E | <p>What I value most is the interaction with the animals, the ability to get them out of their kennels and to see them get some exercise. These exercises give the dogs a little piece of mind away from the barking, shrieking, and other sounds that they have to endure in there all day long. They get outside, they get a break from that, and they get to do their duty outside.</p> |
| | F | <p>The things that I value the most about my volunteer work are my videos. I get positive feedback that the videos are helping people. I know that people have looked at them and decided to adopt a dog or decided to foster a dog. Because the videos help the animals, I stopped dog walking and just do videos. The other thing that I value about my volunteer work is the fact that Jessica and Karen are open with me. I have volunteered here long enough, and I have proven to be reliable enough to be discrete when necessary. I have become more of an advocate for Jessica and Karen as people, because I understand what they are going through. I have been there to see so many animals surrendered and so many dogs neglected.</p> |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|---|-------------|--|
| 4. Continued | G | I value feeling that I am helping the animals, feeling if I take good care of them that they will have a better chance of finding a good home forever. |
| | H | My time with the animals is what I value. I guess I really just like seeing the dogs. I thought about cat socializing, but I have my two at home. I selfishly want to hang out with the dogs more. My heart is broken knowing that they do not get to go outside very much. Sometimes, they just get out for 15 minutes a day, and they are the lucky ones. Just seeing the joy in the animals while you are taking them out is valuable to me. |
| 5. Are there suggestions that you have about the program that you have not shared with a supervisor? If so, what are those suggestions? | A | I am excited to be here. However, I have only been trained for tier 1. I have requested training in level two and in level three. I would also like to do the concierge. I do education and training in my job for work, and I am very good with the public. I like doing the laundry, but I would like to have more involvement with the animals or serve in another capacity. My supervisor said there is a volunteer position that they talked to us about at orientation, but the position has not been developed yet. It is very frustrating for a volunteer who wants to do more to get the appropriate training |
| | B | Every suggestion I have I have shared, because Jessica and I are close. I am at MADACC four days a week, and she is a former teacher. We were both in MPS so we have that bond. |
| | C | I would like to see the volunteers be more involved in marketing the dogs. MADACC's actual website does not really seem to have much. |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|---------------|-------------|--|
| 5. Continued. | C (cont.) | <p data-bbox="907 310 1422 520">Showing the dogs up for adoption on the website would be helpful, and could be done by a volunteer. If it cannot be on the website, a link to another site might work. Not everyone is on Facebook, but you might use YouTube.</p> <p data-bbox="907 527 1422 884">The pictures on the website are not very good, and the pictures are there for you to find your lost animal. We need to show the animals that need adopted or placed in foster care. Volunteers could take the pictures and upload to the website, Facebook, or YouTube. On MADACC's Facebook page, it is difficult to find the dogs that are available for adoption.</p> <p data-bbox="907 890 1422 1213">If the volunteers could be used to help people coming into the center to adopt an animal, we might be to place more animals. The staff seems to be very busy, and they are not always available when someone comes into adopt an animal. Volunteers could be very greeting the public and helping with adoptions.</p> <p data-bbox="907 1220 1422 1577">Some of the volunteers get frustrated due to lack of communication. People who are walking the dogs or taking care of the cats would like to be kept up to date on the status of the animals – adopted or fostered. They feel a connection to the animals and are concerned about them. The lack of information may be a reason volunteers leave the program.</p> <p data-bbox="907 1583 1422 1726">At meetings, the staff asks for suggestions from the volunteers; however, when suggestions are given, they do not seem to be initiated.</p> |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|---------------|-------------|---|
| 5. Continued. | D | <p>Most of my suggestions I have shared with the supervisors. Most of them say that it is a good idea, but then they never go ahead with anything. They do not seem to care enough to put it into place when they know that many people have repeated the same things to them: ways to take better care of the animals, better ways to market the animals, ways to get volunteers in, and ways to push the animals out the door versus the last resort. The supervisors act as if they are open to suggestions, and they are open to hear what you say, but are not open to do anything about it. They are going to do what they want to do, and they will lie to the public if need be.</p> |
| | E | <p>I have shared some things with supervisors, but they were ignored until recently. Now, there is a schedule, but the original idea was to have a placard with the days of week, and people would write their names and time available on the board. The volunteers could also send an email to the supervisor about their time availability, and the supervisor could add them to the board. A dry erase board could be used. When volunteers come in they could check the board, if there are days that no one has signed up for dog walking, they might be able to change their schedule to fill in those times. Now, there is no way to tell if someone is coming in or not. There is no schedule posted anywhere.</p> <p>We need to have our own Facebook page, and communicate with each other on who is walking dogs on a particular day. We could have our schedule on Facebook.</p> |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|---------------|-------------|---|
| 5. Continued. | F | <p>The volunteers feel like the communication is bad. I think that there is a lack of communication and a resistance to change. I feel like everyone expects the supervisor to get back to him or her immediately. When the supervisor does not get back to them right away, the volunteers have negative stuff to say.</p> <p>We need to market our dogs more and our cats. We are not using our 4,000 people on Facebook who all share their Facebook page to up to 20,000 people. We should be using the 4,000 people to help sell our dogs.</p> <p>I would like to see our foster program for dogs get going again. I feel like it has stalled out. We do not have enough foster homes.</p> |
| | G | <p>There is only one person who is friendly towards me. Most of the people are very unfriendly. I foster cats, but sometimes it is very difficult to get the staff to provide more foster cats after the original foster cats are returned.</p> <p>I think there should be a monthly meeting for the dog walkers. It would give us a chance to share our experiences.</p> <p>It seems like this volunteer stuff is new to the staff. I think they would prefer not to have it.</p> |
| | H | <p>I like and dislike the new schedules for volunteers. Sometimes I do not know when I am supposed to come in. Sometimes, it does not work, and then you feel guilty. Other times I show up before that, and there are six of us here to walk three dogs. It is nice to have a schedule, but sometimes it can be restrictive.</p> |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|--|-------------|---|
| 5. Continued | H (cont.) | I am not a marketing person, but we need to get the message out about MADACC. I have seen many people lately on the news with their dogs, and I think that is positive. However, I hear so much more about the humane society than MADACC. It would help to find ways to get people more involved. |
| 6. What motivates you to continue your volunteer work at MADACC? | A | I just want to help. I never realized, until I went online, how huge the issue of unwanted pets is, and how important the spaying and neutering is. I understand why this place exists versus the Wisconsin Humane Society, because I did all the research first. I have no issues. |
| | B | The positive changes that are made. Four years ago, it was good, then it was not so good, and it has gotten better. I want to be part of all of it. I would do more if I could. If I want to do some weekend thing, I can. If I do not, that is okay too. My heart is right where it is. |
| | C | I guess you know straight up, just like being kissed by a dog, you know. Seeing them so happy and their tails wagging makes me happy. It is even better when you find out that they went to a family. I keep spreading the word about MADACC. I cannot tell you how many people stop me and ask about my dog, and I tell them she was a stray on the streets. They cannot believe it, because they think she is a specially bred dog. I keep trying to get the word out to more people about MADACC and their adoption program. |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|---------------|-------------|---|
| 6. Continued. | D | Everything is about the animals. As hard as it can be, stressful, sad, and frustrating, the animals are what matter. I do not care about the people there. The animals are number one. If we all get upset, decide to quit, stop volunteering, or go on strike, who suffers? The animals suffer ... so there is no point to that. |
| | E | I am motivated by the interaction with the dogs. I like to meet all those different dogs. That is what I love. I love all of the dogs I walk, and I think about them a lot. I am motivated when I learn that a dog that I have walked gets a foster home. |
| | F | I think what motivates me is getting dogs adopted or fostered ... getting them out of the shelter. Another thing that motivates me is informing people about MADACC, because so many people do not know about MADACC. |
| | G | I have thought a great deal about not volunteering here anymore, especially when CUFA was so quick with my kitties. The reason I keep volunteering here, instead of going to CUFA, is there is a need here. Not only is it a disservice to the animals, it is a disservice to the other volunteers. I could not do that to the people, because I would be letting them down as much as the animals. |
| | H | Hanging out with the dogs. I have fun with them. Even though, some days I do not want to walk the dogs because it is so hot outside, I go anyway, because I am going to be so happy after walking the pups. |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|--|-------------|---|
| 7. Is there anything else you would like to add? | A | I appreciate the opportunity to work here, to volunteer here. I wish I had more time to do it. It is very enriching. People say that they are too busy to volunteer, because they have dogs, college kids, high school kids, or exchange students. I am in school, so you have no excuse not to volunteer. I feel passionate about the animals, so it gives me the opportunity to give back and to help. |
| | B | I was meant to do this after retiring. MADACC is like my second home. I feel comfortable there, I feel appreciated, and I love the staff that works there. It is wonderful. |
| | C | The only negative experience I have had with MADACC recently is when the administration changed. There was an informative meeting, and there were many good ideas about all the new things they were going to do with the volunteer program, new positions, and new opportunities to help. They sounded awesome; however, only about three out of twenty of the things have happened. One of the staff used a definite tone with me that made me feel bad about volunteering. I am volunteering my time to help the organization and to help the animals. Her attitude was unprofessional. |
| | D | I am not sure what else I can add. The way they handle the public is not good. |

| Question | Participant | Response |
|---------------|-------------|--|
| 7. Continued. | E | I want to be the adoption coordinator. They do not really have one, and they do not have any way of matching people up with the right dogs. I do not want to see a dog that I walked come back in here, because the wrong people took it, and it did this or that. The evaluators do not use a standardized form to match the animal with the new owner or foster caregiver. Many dogs return due to mismatches. |
| | F | I cannot think of anything else to add. |
| | G | I have met so many awesome people through this organization and through volunteering. The volunteer at MADACC have such good hearts. You do not find these type of people in many organizations. I am glad that you are doing this. I hope it helps everybody. |
| | H | I do not think so. Everyone here is very pleasant and that helps. |

Results

Hypothesis One.

H₀: MADACC volunteers have not volunteered previously at other animal related facilities, such as an animal control environment or a local humane society.

H_A: MADACC volunteers have volunteered previously at other animal related facilities, such as an animal control environment or a local humane society.

The data from the interviews support the null hypothesis. In fact, it was found that some volunteers had attempted to volunteer at other local humane societies in which they were told

that their services were not needed. The humane society had filled all of their volunteer spots. Subject F stated, "I went to the Wisconsin Humane Society, and I talked to them. They didn't want me, they didn't need me." Only one volunteer out of eight was currently volunteering at another local humane society and had been doing so for quite some time before beginning the relationship at MADACC. Participant A explored the option of both MADACC and another local humane society, and she ended up with MADACC. Subject A stated,

I need to be needed, because I have very limited time. I did not want to be put on a list or be told I am sorry the dogs were all walked today, and that is what Wisconsin (Humane Society) said. My volunteer orientation had 25 (participants) at Wisconsin Humane Society. The next week I came here, there were three of us, and the one person said I do not think I can do this. So I thought this is where I need to be.

Many volunteers did not even know that MADACC existed prior to beginning their search for volunteer activities. Half of the participants found out about volunteer opportunities from friends and neighbors, which created their interest in volunteering.

Hypothesis Two.

Ho: MADACC volunteers do not value being part of the experience of an animal leaving the shelter with a new loving family.

HA: MADACC volunteers do value being a part of an animal leaving the shelter with a new loving family.

The results support the alternative hypothesis. MADACC volunteers will help the animals in any way possible in order to aid them to leave the shelter through adoption or fostering. The volunteers feel a sense of satisfaction and elation when an animal is adopted or fostered. Participants discussed their experiences helping the dogs both in and out of the shelter.

Participant C stated, “I would love to walk the dog around. If I was there on the day that somebody saw that dog and adopted it, I would feel like I did something.” Subject F describes her duties as a videographer.

The things that I value the most about my volunteer work are my videos. I know that people have looked at them and decided to adopt a dog or decided to foster a dog.

Because the videos help the animals, I stopped dog walking and just do videos.

Volunteers also expressed the feelings they get when they help an animal leave the shelter. Participant E became attached to a dog that she had worked with for a considerable amount of time. She helped to match the right owner with the right animal. She indicated, “I just really loved her (the dog). I will do that (find the right match) whenever I can.” Volunteers are dedicated to doing whatever is needed to help an animal find a home. When specifically asked what she values most about her work at the shelter, Participant G described her part in fostering animals prior to them being adopted. “Feeling that I’m helping the animals, feeling that if I take good care of them that they’ll have a better chance of finding a good forever home.” The personal contributions that MADACC volunteers noted in their interviews related to being a part of animals finding homes, which coincides with relevant literature on this topic.

This is one example of the devotion of the staff at the sanctuary to the animals in their care. They see themselves as doing a good job with the resources they have. Considering the number of animals - stray or unwanted - nationwide, they have no illusions about their contribution being anything more than a drop in the ocean. However, they believe that their small contribution is a valid one. As one sanctuary manager explained, “Even if I’ve only homed one dog to a good home this year, it is one dog who’s better off, and that makes my job worthwhile.” (Taylor, 2004, pg. 326)

All of the participants expressed feeling a considerable degree of personal satisfaction when they contribute to animals finding forever homes.

Survey question 5 asked: Are there any suggestions that you have about the program that you have not shared with a supervisor? This question sparked volunteers to talk about their ideas on how to help the animals leave the shelter for forever homes. Many suggestions were made on how to increase adoptions and better market animals so that they can find homes. Participant F indicated,

My suggestion is that we need to market our dogs more and our cats. We need to market everybody more. We are not using our 4,000 people on Facebook who all share to then 20,000 people. I think that is frustrating. I am glad that we are using that page to show our events and that kind of stuff, but we should be using those 4,000 people to sell our dogs.

Better marketing strategies were identified by participants in their interviews. Subject C stated,

I guess, just in general, it is just marketing the adoptable dogs a lot more. It does not have to be on one person. I think there should be an adoptable marketing committee. We can meet; we can talk via email. If it is stuff that has to be approved by somebody, fine, there will be one person that runs it past the person that needs to approve it for MADACC, and we will go from there.

Hypothesis Three.

Ho: MADACC volunteers do not struggle with the emotional aspects of volunteering in an animal control environment. Volunteers do not feel emotionally burned out, and burnout is not a motivation for volunteers to quit their volunteer duties.

H_A: MACACC volunteers do struggle with the emotional aspects of volunteering in an animal control environment. Volunteers feel emotionally burned out, and burnout is a motivation for volunteers to quit their volunteer duties.

Based on the participants' responses, the null hypothesis is supported. Participants did not specifically state that they felt burned out. Further, none of the participants indicated that they intended to stop volunteering at MADACC based on being burned out or emotionally exhausted.

In a similar context, Participant D did mention that even though the work is ...

hard, stressful, sad, and frustrating, it's the animals that matter. It's the animals that are number one. If we all get upset, decide to quit, stop volunteering, (or) go on strike, who suffers? The animals, so there is no point to that.

This expressed sentiment is reflected in the research.

Even when conflicts arose between officers and other volunteers, their commitment to the cats kept many volunteers on the job. The volunteers that Alger and Alger studied displayed similar feelings in that if people were in it for the animals, other discrepancies could be overlooked. (Taylor, 2004, p. 335)

Volunteers' dedication to the animals is clear and apparent.

Hypothesis Four.

H₀: MADACC volunteers do not want more frequent communication from supervisors in charge.

H_A: MADACC volunteers do want more frequent communication from supervisors in charge.

The alternative hypothesis is supported. The participants' answers indicated a belief that there is a need for better communication. Volunteers are looking for improved communication when it comes to both foster animals as well as the animals within the shelter that they serve.

Subject F stated, “I feel like the volunteers here feel like the communication is bad, and they get kind of angry.” Many of the volunteers understand that communication is an issue for people in all endeavors, not just volunteering. On the topic of communication, Participant C indicated,

I think most people just get frustrated. There does not seem to be regular enough updates. I think that could be a reason why people leave. They feel like they committed all this time to these dogs, and then they cannot even get an answer about what happened to a particular dog.

The well-being of the animals is important to dedicated volunteers. Participants’ responses gave a clear indication of the importance placed on consistent and regular updates. They believe that a positive outcome, a permanent home for the animals, makes them feel that their efforts were worthwhile.

Participants also suggested ideas for better communication. Participant C stated, There does not seem to be regular enough updates on the animals for the volunteers. I guess it would be a lot better to make it (animal update) a regular thing so everyone sees it. Maybe it could be posted on that page (Facebook). I know sometimes it is, but just a little more consistency, Let’s do a Monday update.

The MADACC staff should provide consistent updated communications on the status of the animals, because volunteers care so deeply about the animals at the shelter.

Discussion

The information gathered from the interviews provides some common views of the participants. Volunteers discussed elements of the experiences that they enjoyed and things that they thought could be improved. This study may be beneficial to the volunteer manager to enhance the program and increase retention of dedicated volunteers. It is clear that the participant

volunteers are dedicated to the animals. This fact provides a starting point for the volunteer manager. Creating additional duties and expanding the program cannot be accomplished alone; the volunteer manager can and should include the volunteers in the development process in order to promote buy-in and to improve organizational engagement.

The research also provides insight into other issues that MADACC participant volunteer's experience. Some common themes presented themselves throughout the interview process. First, a number of volunteers feel that the MADACC staff is unfriendly, which negatively affects the volunteers' experience at the shelter. Second, many of the volunteers' suggestions had not been recognized or implemented. Participants did not explain any of the suggestions that were previously given to supervisors. Volunteers spent additional time developing ideas that would be helpful for the animals and felt their time and input were going unnoticed. Third, MADACC volunteers stressed the importance of educating the public on the plight of these unfortunate animals and the importance of spaying and neutering animals to prevent similar situations in the future. Lastly, volunteers mentioned that they enjoy telling others about MADACC and the animals in need. Certain participants, if willing, can serve as MADACC's voice and connection to the community.

A proposal that arose in two interviews was that MADACC should employ an adoption coordinator. Whether it is a paid position or a volunteer position, it is felt that that specific position is needed within the shelter to help more animals find forever homes. It was also suggested that MADACC could hold monthly meetings for dog walkers similar to the meetings held for the volunteer caregivers for shelter cats, through The Cat's Voice. These monthly meetings will allow the volunteers to share ideas and strategies to support the dog population of MADACC, while still abiding by policies in place. By developing meaningful relationships with

the volunteers and listening to their ideas regarding the programs, it is possible that they will remain volunteers for a longer time, and retention rates will increase. A strong relationship between the volunteers and the volunteer manager can prove to be beneficial to the animals and to MADACC.

Recommendations

Based on the information obtained from the interviews, the following recommendations are intended to assist the volunteer manager in enhancing the volunteer program and increasing retention rates. The interviews identified that MADACC was each of the participant's first animal-related volunteer experience. Based on this information, it is important for MADACC to enhance and continue its community outreach activities in order to expand the familiarity of MADACC with the community, which may turn into more volunteers. It was also found that most volunteers did not know of MADACC's purpose in the community prior to beginning their volunteer activities. The MADACC staff should develop ways to expand their outreach events as well as develop relationships with current volunteers so that they feel a stronger connection to the organization. This action might encourage volunteers to spread the word about MADACC's need for volunteers. In addition, participating in both animal-related and non-animal related community events might garner volunteers with a wide range of skill sets.

A recommendation, based on research by Barnes and Sharpe (2009), might be to have MADACC focus recruitment efforts aimed at the people who visit the shelter to drop off an animal they found or pick up their lost animal. These people should be targeted, because they have experienced the shelter environment at least once. Developing an information board with volunteer opportunities would allow shelter visitors an opportunity to learn about MADACC and its volunteer program while waiting for service by the staff. A pamphlet on volunteer

opportunities could be given to visitors with their retrieval packet. These measures may encourage visitors to participate in MADACC's volunteer program. Research suggests that these recommendations currently may be missed opportunities at MADACC.

Another potentially overlooked opportunity to increase the number of volunteers is the development of relationships with AKC groups or animal rescue agencies. MADACC may find potential volunteers in people who already dedicate some of their time to animals and who may be willing to spend time in the shelter. For example, Participant A had worked with AKC groups and show dogs, and her expertise and passion for animals would make a great networking opportunity. As she stated in her interview, Participant A deals with the other side of the spectrum when it comes to animals. She works with breeders and presents dogs for show. This is a totally different association relating to animals. By honing in on Participant A's experience with dog trainers and other animal related activities, a new set of volunteers and duties could be introduced to the program.

Some MADACC volunteers have attempted to volunteer at other humane societies, and they have been turned away due to an overabundance of volunteer applicants. MADACC should begin a working relationship with these local organizations to refer these willing volunteers to MADACC. Similar organizations may be understandably unwilling to give up volunteers, but if they have interested applicants, and do not have a place for them, suggesting MADACC might be a viable option. The humane society and MADACC have a common goal ... helping animals in need.

Connecting the passion that many volunteers have regarding the animals that they serve with the research demonstrates that animals have a better chance of being adopted if they are socialized, MADACC might adopt a stronger focus on dog walking and dog socializing.

Socializing not only consists of walking, but also includes all aspects of training. Experienced volunteers could be utilized to help a dog interact with a cat or another dog; some households have more than one animal. For this type of pet owner, an animal that has learned to adapt to the company of other animals might improve its adoptability. Volunteers have indicated that they are anxious to see an animal leave the shelter, they would be more satisfied with their duties if they knew that their socialization session helped that animal to be adopted.

Volunteers want to be appreciated. Creating an encouraging environment surrounded by positive people might improve volunteer productivity, and thereby, provide an increased benefit to the organization. Demonstrating that MADACC values volunteers and their service is something that MADACC could concentrate on in the future. Showing appreciation for volunteers creates a sense of value that encourages volunteers to continue serving the organization.

In conjunction with improved recruitment strategies, finding and connecting with people's passions is vital. Understanding each volunteer's personal goals may be a fundamental ingredient to better recruitment and improved retention. Visiting a pre-veterinary program and making connections with the students may provide a source for new volunteers; these individuals are already interested in working with animals. Focusing on groups who are dedicated to animals and who plan to build their careers around animal-centric organizations is a means of increasing both recruitment and retention.

Conclusion

Research Limitations

While the study provided a lot of useful information that the MADACC staff can utilize in developing the volunteer program, there are some limitations to consider. One limitation of the study is that volunteers that were no longer involved with MADACC were not contacted. These former volunteers may shed some light on why they had left and what would encourage them to start volunteering again. Another limitation might be the strong feelings of the primary researcher and the methods employed to overcome potential bias. A third limitation is that this study is limited to only eight participants. If time permitted, more volunteer feedback would have been helpful in developing plans for the volunteer coordinator at MADACC.

Future Studies

Future studies might include gaining some insight into those people who began volunteer activities with shelter organizations and decided to end the relationship. Understanding the reasons they terminated their volunteer relationships with MADACC would assist the volunteer coordinator with retention rates.

In addition, further research could also identify the types of volunteer activities that are most beneficial to animal shelters. Some shelters across America have very high adoption rates and understanding the duties that volunteers are handling at these shelters could prove beneficial. If these high adoption shelters trust their volunteers to handle certain tasks, and it is having an impact on the adoption rates, other shelters may wish to follow suit.

Concluding Remarks

The value of volunteers is immeasurable. Their duties, particularly in an animal shelter, are both emotional and rewarding, and it takes a special person to understand the needs of such

an overlooked population. The dedication of their free time and talent to voiceless animals should be applauded. The job is not for just anyone.

Successful nonprofit organizations utilize volunteers in many different ways and spend time developing their programs. Every attempt should be made to support volunteers in their duties whether their function is major or minor. A successful volunteer program is dependent on effective recruitment and retention of those volunteers, and this can be difficult in an animal shelter setting. Developing the right tools to make volunteers feel like their work is making a difference is crucial in creating an effective and prosperous program. When the program is effective in helping the neediest animals, volunteers will remain dedicated.

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Appendix A: 2011-2012 MADACC Animal Admissions & Dispositions

Table A1

2011 – 2012 MADACC Monthly Animal Admissions & Dispositions

| December 1 st – December 31 st | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------|----------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|----------------|------|
| | Admissions | | Retained | | Adoptions | | Died DOA | | Died in Kennel | |
| | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 |
| Bird | 12 | 33 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cat | 365 | 289 | 118 | 87 | 48 | 59 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 3 |
| Dog | 401 | 359 | 133 | 159 | 24 | 25 | 10 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 66 | 4 | 41 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| Total | 844 | 655 | 293 | 247 | 78 | 87 | 20 | 19 | 7 | 3 |
| % of Total | | | 26% | 24% | 7% | 9% | 2% | 25 | 1% | 0% |
| % Change | -22.39% | | -15.70 | | 11.54% | | -5.00% | | -57.14% | |

| December 1 st – December 31 st | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|------|------------------|------|-----------|------|-------------|------|--------|------|
| | Euthanized Owner Request | | Euthanized Other | | Reclaimed | | Transferred | | Total | |
| | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 |
| Bird | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 2 | 13 | 3 |
| Cat | 6 | 55 | 120 | 161 | 12 | 20 | 183 | 133 | 494 | 474 |
| Dog | 20 | 23 | 126 | 130 | 110 | 80 | 107 | 98 | 530 | 528 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 16 | 4 | 78 | 9 |
| Total | 26 | 28 | 247 | 293 | 127 | 100 | 317 | 237 | 1115 | 1014 |
| % of Total | 2% | 3% | 22% | 29% | 11% | 10% | 28% | 23% | | |
| % Change | 7.69% | | 18.62% | | -21.26% | | -25.24% | | -9.06% | |

Note: Statistics from Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (2013c)

Appendix A: 2011-2012 MADACC Animal Admissions & Dispositions

Table A2

2011 – 2012 MADACC Year-to-Date Animal Admissions & Dispositions

| January 1st – December 31 st | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|-------|----------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|----------------|------|
| | Admissions | | Retained | | Adoptions | | Died DOA | | Died in Kennel | |
| | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 |
| Bird | 161 | 126 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 26 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| Cat | 6819 | 6468 | 118 | 87 | 348 | 380 | 139 | 128 | 56 | 31 |
| Dog | 5278 | 5327 | 133 | 159 | 282 | 262 | 131 | 171 | 13 | 10 |
| Other | 465 | 187 | 41 | 0 | 13 | 23 | 67 | 7 | 18 | 5 |
| Total | 12723 | 12108 | 293 | 247 | 654 | 691 | 341 | 307 | 92 | 49 |
| % of Total | | | 2% | 2% | 5% | 6% | 3% | 2% | 1% | 0% |
| % Change | -4.83% | | -15.70% | | 5.66% | | -9.97% | | -46.74% | |

| December 1 st – December 31 st | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|------|------------------|------|-----------|------|-------------|------|--------|-------|
| | Euthanized Owner Request | | Euthanized Other | | Reclaimed | | Transferred | | Total | |
| | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 |
| Bird | 0 | 2 | 15 | 6 | 26 | 8 | 102 | 80 | 164 | 127 |
| Cat | 181 | 139 | 4236 | 514 | 181 | 246 | 1686 | 2061 | 6945 | 6586 |
| Dog | 222 | 234 | 1921 | 1783 | 1422 | 1375 | 1256 | 1466 | 5380 | 5460 |
| Other | 7 | 3 | 97 | 54 | 25 | 11 | 200 | 125 | 468 | 228 |
| Total | 410 | 378 | 6269 | 5357 | 1654 | 1640 | 3244 | 3732 | 12957 | 12401 |
| % of Total | 3% | 3% | 48% | 43% | 13% | 13% | 25% | 30% | | |
| % Change | -7.80% | | -14.55% | | -0.85% | | 15.04% | | -4.29% | |

Note: Statistics from Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (2013c)

Appendix B: 2012-2013 MADACC Animal Admissions & Dispositions

Table B1

2012 – 2013 MADACC Monthly Animal Admissions & Dispositions

| June 1 st – June 30 th | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------|----------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|----------------|------|
| | Admissions | | Retained | | Adoptions | | Died DOA | | Died in Kennel | |
| | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| Cat | 678 | 640 | 264 | 281 | 29 | 90 | 13 | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| Dog | 515 | 491 | 167 | 152 | 25 | 6 | 16 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 56 | 31 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| Total | 1249 | 1162 | 449 | 441 | 59 | 98 | 29 | 27 | 2 | 5 |
| % of Total | | | 27% | 29% | 4% | 6% | 2% | 2% | 0% | 0% |
| % Change | -6.97% | | -1.78% | | 66.10% | | -6.90% | | 150.00 | |

| June 1 st – June 30 th | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|------|------------------|------|-----------|------|-------------|------|--------|------|
| | Euthanized Owner Request | | Euthanized Other | | Reclaimed | | Transferred | | Total | |
| | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| Cat | 24 | 13% | 411 | 320 | 17 | 19 | 175 | 131 | 934 | 867 |
| Dog | 27 | 20 | 182 | 142 | 130 | 159 | 121 | 134 | 668 | 628 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 34 | 16 | 65 | 34 |
| Total | 51 | 33 | 599 | 465 | 148 | 179 | 330 | 281 | 1667 | 1529 |
| % of Total | 3% | 2% | 36% | 30% | 9% | 12% | 20% | 18% | | |
| % Change | -35.29% | | -22.37% | | 20.95% | | -14.85% | | -8.28% | |

Note: Statistics from Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (2013c)

Appendix B: 2012-2013 MADACC Animal Admissions & Dispositions

Table B2

2012 – 2013 MADACC Year-to-Date Animal Admissions & Dispositions

| January 1 st – June 30 th | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------|----------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|----------------|------|
| | Admissions | | Retained | | Adoptions | | Died DOA | | Died in Kennel | |
| | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| Cat | 2874 | 2549 | 264 | 281 | 107 | 193 | 49 | 67 | 3 | 10 |
| Dog | 2606 | 2590 | 137 | 152 | 121 | 108 | 76 | 97 | 3 | 1 |
| Other | 158 | 151 | 18 | 8 | 24 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 9 |
| Total | 5638 | 5290 | 449 | 441 | 252 | 305 | 128 | 167 | 11 | 20 |
| % of Total | | | 8% | 8% | 4% | 6% | 2% | 3% | 0% | 0% |
| % Change | -6.17% | | -1.78% | | 21.03% | | 30.47% | | 81.82% | |

| January 1 st – June 30 th | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|------|------------------|------|-----------|------|-------------|------|--------|------|
| | Euthanized Owner Request | | Euthanized Other | | Reclaimed | | Transferred | | Total | |
| | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| Cat | 82 | 54 | 1214 | 1086 | 103 | 80 | 1171 | 862 | 2993 | 2633 |
| Dog | 100 | 112 | 864 | 878 | 693 | 706 | 717 | 698 | 2741 | 2752 |
| Other | 2 | 2 | 36 | 15 | 6 | 10 | 106 | 101 | 200 | 152 |
| Total | 184 | 168 | 2114 | 1979 | 802 | 796 | 1994 | 1661 | 5934 | 5537 |
| % of Total | 3% | 3% | 36% | 3% | 14% | 14% | 34% | 30% | | |
| % Change | -8.70% | | -6.39% | | -0.75% | | -16.70% | | -6.69% | |

Appendix C: Email to Potential Participants

Dear Volunteer,

I am currently undertaking a small-scale research project for my master's degree in Public Service. I was wondering if you would be willing to participate in an interview as part of that research. The interview should take no longer than 30-45 minutes with a possible 15-minute follow-up interview for clarification purposes. The interview will take place at either Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC) or Starbucks Coffee Shop on Miller Park Way in West Milwaukee.

The purpose of this research project is to gather information about the volunteer program at MADACC in order to provide staff with the tools to enhance the volunteer experience. Please contact me, at rebecca.andersen@marquette.edu, if you are willing to participate. At that time, we will set up a time and date to meet for the interview. Your participation is confidential. A copy of the consent document is attached to this email. Please review the consent form if you are willing to participate. At the time of the interview, you will be requested to sign the consent form.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to help me with my research. If you have any questions concerning the nature of the research, or are unclear about the extent of your involvement in it, please contact me via email at rebecca.andersen@marquette.edu.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request, and I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Davis
Principal Researcher
Marquette University, School of Professional Studies

Appendix D: Consent Form**MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY
AGREEMENT OF CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

College of Professional Studies – Marquette University

You have been invited to participate in this research study. Before you agree to participate, it is important that you read and understand the following information. Participation is voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this research study is to enhance the current volunteer program at the Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission (MADACC). The study goal is to understand what motivates people to volunteer in an animal shelter setting (MADACC) and strives to understand the reasoning behind people's return to MADACC for volunteer activities. The goal is to help develop the volunteer program in the shelter setting and improve the retention rate of volunteers. You will be one of approximately eight participants in this research study.

PROCEDURES: I understand that I will be audio taped during the interview portion of the study to ensure accuracy. The tapes will be transcribed later and destroyed 3 years after the completion of the study. For confidentiality purposes, my name will not be recorded.

DURATION: I understand that my participation will consist of one approximately 30-45 minute interview conducted in a professional setting (office or conference room) at MADACC or at Starbucks Coffee Shop located at 1501 Miller Park Way in West Milwaukee and potentially one 15-minute follow-up review of the transcribed interview to ensure accuracy. I understand the interviews will be performed at a time that is convenient for my schedule.

RISKS: I understand that the risks associated with participation in this study are no greater than would be encountered in everyday life. The interview questions are limited to reflecting on my volunteer shelter experiences. I can skip any questions that make me uncomfortable.

BENEFITS: I understand that there are no direct benefits associated with participation in this study. However, participation may help provide a better understanding of the challenges facing shelter volunteers, aid in the retention of current volunteers and improve the current volunteer program.

CONFIDENTIALITY: I understand that all information I reveal in this study will be kept confidential. All my data will be assigned an arbitrary code number rather than using my name or other information that could identify me as an individual. When the results of the study are published, I will not be identified by name. I understand the data will be destroyed by shredding paper documents and deleting electronic files three years after the completion of the study. Audio recordings will be transcribed and immediately destroyed. Transcriptions will be kept on a password-protected file and will be destroyed three years after the completion of the study. My

research records may be inspected by the Marquette University Institutional Review Board and (as allowable by law) state and federal agencies.

INJURY OR ILLNESS: Marquette University will not provide medical treatment or financial compensation if you are injured or become ill as a result of participating in this research project. This does not waive any of your legal rights nor release any claim you might have based on negligence.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION: I understand that participating in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I understand that at any time before, during or after the interview, I may request to withdraw from the research study. I also understand that after June 30, 2014, the research study will be submitted and I will not be able to withdraw from the research study after that point. If I withdraw, all audio tapes and transcriptions will be immediately destroyed.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If I have any questions about this research project, I can contact Rebecca Davis at 414-795-6721 or rebecca.andersen@marquette.edu.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact Marquette University's Office of Research Compliance at (414) 288-7570.

I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THIS CONSENT FORM, ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT, AND AM PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT.

Participant's Signature

Date

Participant's Name

Researcher's Signature

Date