



# Quarterly Newsletter

3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr 2018

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**Contact Us:** [info@sheltervet.org](mailto:info@sheltervet.org)

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## Join the Conversation!

Be sure to join the community forums by using the [step-by-step instructions](#) and two short video [tutorials](#) on our website.

Also join the conversation on Facebook at this link [Active Veterinarian Facebook Group](#)

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## Humane Society Silicon Valley's Journey to Completing the Guidelines

By Cristie Kamiya, DVM, MBA



In July 2017, Humane Society Silicon Valley (HSSV) demonstrated and documented that it now meets all 543 “must, should, and ideal” standards set forth by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) in the *Guidelines for Standards of Care*, as confirmed by the Koret Shelter Medicine Program of the University of California at Davis.

HSSV is the first shelter in the nation to meet this remarkable achievement, which required a fully coordinated effort from the entire organization.

### Establishing the Guidelines

*The ASV Guidelines ensure that the welfare of animals inside shelters is not compromised.*

The ASV created the guidelines to protect homeless animals from suffering and disease and ensure that shelters provide the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare:

- Freedom from Hunger and Thirst: All animals have ready access to fresh water and appropriate diet to maintain health and vigor.
- Freedom from Discomfort: All animals have an appropriate environment to reside in, including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease: Preventative care and rapid diagnosis and treatment are made readily available.

- Freedom to Express Normal Behavior: Animals are given sufficient space, proper facilities and the company of animals of their own kind.
- Freedom from Fear and Distress: Conditions and treatment are ensured to prevent mental suffering.

Prior to the creation of the guidelines in 2011, there were few regulatory measures in place for animal shelters. There was a significant need for clearly defined standards to ensure that the welfare of animals inside shelters is not compromised. The guidelines give shelters guidance for creating optimal practices for individualized and population-wide medical care, behavioral and mental care, and facility design.

ASV guideline co-author Dr. Kate Hurley of the Koret Shelter Medicine Program at the UC Davis had this to say: “My colleagues on the ASV board and I crafted the guidelines in the unshakable belief that providing great care would amplify lifesaving in animal shelters. We needed a shelter to show not only that the standards exist as a model, but that they can actually be accomplished and maintained.”

Dr. Hurley was inspired to create the guidelines with her colleagues after a visit to a well-funded shelter for a consultation. While she was there, she saw a lovely, healthy dog named Nala who reminded her of a dog she once knew. Upon returning to the shelter weeks later, she saw that Nala had fallen ill while in care and did not survive. This motivated Dr. Hurley to help ensure that animals that come into animal shelters get the best care possible to allow them to thrive and stay healthy while awaiting adoption. When Dr. Hurley and others from the Koret Shelter Medicine Program came to audit HSSV for meeting the guidelines, there was in fact a dog named Nala in the shelter, who was adopted that day, bringing the ASV Guideline process full circle.

### **The Organization Taking on the Challenge**

*Humane Society Silicon Valley evolved over many years to meet the goals of the Guidelines.*

HSSV is an independent, privately funded, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that has served people and pets in Santa Clara County, CA since 1929, with the mission to save and enhance lives, both two and four legged. HSSV has always been an organization interested in innovative and proactive solutions to saving more lives, through adoption, preventing unwanted births, treating and rehabilitating animals, keeping pets in loving homes, and educating the public.



In 2009, HSSV had a lot of promise. The organization began leading a coalition of community shelters to work together more effectively. HSSV was adopting out over 2,000 animals, but had a far more restrictive adoption policy, which kept shelter guests here for a longer period of time. There was work being done to progressively achieve more spay/neuter surgeries, but only a small percentage were free for community members. While there was a solid veterinary team, the leadership didn’t know what Shelter Medicine was, let alone that it was a veterinary specialty.

Also in 2009, HSSV moved into a new, state-of-the-art Animal Community Center – the first gold-level, LEED certified Animal Community Center in the United States – with remarkable facilities that actualized a blueprint for the 21<sup>st</sup> century animal shelter. The organization was poised to improve mission results and wanted the work inside the building to match the building’s promise.

This new facility and HSSV’s talented team is what attracted me to join the organization as the Chief of Shelter Medicine in December 2012. My participation with ASV meant that I was well aware of the guidelines and that allowed me to present the guidelines to Carol Novello, HSSV’s President. After careful consideration, Carol and the leadership team saw that with the resources available and with strong donor support, there was no reason

not to move forward and strive to provide the best care possible within a shelter environment for these animals.



The team went to work with the guidelines broken down to a checklist and were supported by a dedicated project manager hired specifically to complete the guidelines. Each operational department was challenged with annual, achievable goals to evaluate every protocol, procedure, and housing space, and assess its compliance with the guidelines.

Holes were cut into cat holding cages to allow separation between food and litter boxes for any cat staying with HSSV for more than 24 hours. Adoption and holding spaces were measured to ensure ample room for multi-animal housing. The building's HVAC system was tested repeatedly to find the best way to maintain the correct temperature for shelter animals. Better sanitation solutions and equipment were purchased and put into immediate effect. Quarantine protocols were tightened and improved. The team even walked around the building with a decibel meter to ensure that the noise levels were optimal for the animals in care.

Organizationally, there were some shifts in mindset. The volunteering program, made up of 1,300 active volunteers, was restructured to better serve the needs of our animals as opposed to serving volunteer preferences foremost. Staff had to spend more time writing standard operating procedure documents than they ever wanted, but it's critical to ensure continued compliance long term. When we have high energy dogs that need additional stress relief that we could not provide, our team learned to trust the public and began letting community members take our dogs for long walks and hikes away from the shelter, with much success.

What has resulted is not only a higher save rate for animals (at 94%), but also in the process of reducing the likelihood of animals becoming sick while in care, there has been a reduction in the average length of stay and an increase in intake. That intentional intake increase includes kittens transferred in with ringworm and URI, and puppies with parvovirus – animals that HSSV is fully capable to treat without risk of affecting overall herd health. The general operations of the shelter have evolved into cohesive animal flow with clear standard operating procedures and improved communication between each operational department.

### **Inspiring Others**

*It's not enough to achieve the guidelines. We must also help our colleagues aspire to do the same.*

HSSV is committed to sharing knowledge and best practices within the industry to help save more animals across the country. Carol Novello, President of HSSV, says, "HSSV is not only positioned to save more lives in our community but also to help other shelters improve the quality of care for homeless animals."

This work has already begun. In 2017 we started hosting the Maddie's Kitten Lifesaving Apprenticeship in partnership with Maddie's Fund. Through this program, employees from animal sheltering organizations around the country come to HSSV for a week to learn how each year, we're able to save 90% of our 2,500 incoming kittens, an extremely vulnerable population with a naturally high mortality rate. The apprentices then take what they learned back to their home shelters to implement the techniques to ultimately save more animal lives.

The leadership team has spoken at an HSUS conference, and HSSV is allowing other shelters to come visit the facility and observe how the guidelines are being achieved and maintained. We have visited our rescue partner shelters in the Central Valley of California to better assist them with understanding their capacity for care, improving animal flow, and educating on improved biosecurity measures to reduce the spread of parvovirus,

distemper, and pneumonia through their shelters. In doing so, we're helping those shelters save far more lives, and addressing a root cause concern for destination shelters who are transferring these animals into their care.

HSSV's community has been wildly supportive of this process as well. With the research and data to support the decisions being made within the shelter, donors, volunteers, and adopters alike have been eager to offer more funds, time, and enthusiasm to support such a high level of care.

### Conclusion

HSSV's goal with this achievement is not only to save the lives in Santa Clara County, but to inspire colleagues to new standards of care, for an impactful, participatory, and effective way for the sector to move forward. There was a significant need for clearly defined standards to ensure that the welfare of animals inside shelters is not compromised. The Association of Shelter Veterinarians put in countless hours of work to create these standards. And we volunteered to be the first shelter to implement them, to prove it can be done.

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## 4 Easy, Affordable Self-Care Ideas

By Jessica Dolce, MS

[Self-care](#) isn't that complicated and it's critically important. So why do so many of us have a hard time actually doing it?

Some of us are convinced it's not really necessary.

Let me tell you, it is.

Or we're telling ourselves that we'll get to it when we finish our to-do list.

We won't.

Lots of us have tried to do some self-care in the past, but aimed way too high and it didn't stick.

It's the New Year's Resolution approach and it rarely works for any of us.

So whether you "failed" at self-care in the past or just feel too overwhelmed to do it in general, I want you to take inspiration from a wise little boy named Bart Simpson who once declared, "I'm an underachiever and proud of it."

When it comes to incorporating some self-care into your busy life, underachieving is the way to go.

Here's why: when we aim low, we're much more likely to succeed. When we succeed at self-care, we feel better. That's the positive reinforcement we need to do even more self-care.

Over time, these small gains will add up to big changes.

Not sure where to start? Here are some of my favorite, simple self-care practices that take very little time or money to do:

**1. Can't stop your mind from thinking about a client or patient? Use positive distraction.** Rumination is rarely productive and it's very draining, so if you're stuck in overthinking try using constructive distraction as a way out.

The key is to choose something totally engrossing AND positive – fun or relaxing – to distract your mind.

This might look like watching a funny [TV show](#), going for a very challenging hike, or listening to a nail-biter of a podcast. Have you listened to [Steal the Stars?](#)

It doesn't matter what it is, as long as it fully absorbs you (and doesn't harm you).

Not only will laughing or sweating stop you from obsessing, but the positive emotions you generate from this activity will lift your mood and broaden your thinking. Afterwards you might find it's easier to solve that problem, let it go, or finally fall asleep.

Speaking of sleep...

**2. Can't get yourself to bed at a reasonable hour? Create a bedtime ritual.** Find something that you love and incorporate it into your bedtime routine as a motivator to get off your phone and into bed a little earlier.

My favorite way to do this is a good book and an [aromatherapy diffuser](#) with lavender oil.

Buying one of those inexpensive gadgets changed my life three years ago. When I first got a diffuser, I couldn't wait to go to bed because I really wanted to use it. Being bathed in a fog of relaxing lavender mist while reading felt like a tiny spa-vacay. It helped me shift my nightly routine permanently.

This might be a simple way to motivate yourself to turn off the TV or disconnect from emails 30 minutes earlier than usual.

What would you enjoy so much, it would motivate you to go to bed earlier? New sheets? Comfy pajamas? A soothing play list?

**3. Can't leave work behind at the end of the day? Shake up your commute.**

Most of us need some help to transition from our work life to our home life (and vice versa). Use your commute, no matter how long it is, to support you in that transition.

This will look differently for everyone. Some folks talk with a friend on their way home in order to process their day, while others let off steam by singing out loud in the car.

One of my favorite ways to use my commute as self-care is to give myself a few minutes to think about the day and then let it go by listening to a story that isn't related to work in any way.

You might subscribe to a podcast (did you know there's [Reading Rainbow](#) for adults now?!) or download a free audiobook.

Something simple like this can help you mentally decompress before you walk through the door at home. Not to mention it makes the commute a pleasure, instead of one more chore you have to do.

In my private Facebook group, The Compassionate Badassery Collective, we just started a book club and we're currently reading *The Hate U Give*. Some of us are reading, but lots of people are listening to the book. [You're all welcome to join us!](#)

**4. Feeling overwhelmed? Do nothing.** When we're feeling totally overwhelmed, we tend to work even harder in an attempt to relieve the stress.

Remember those Chinese finger traps from when we were kids? The more you struggle, the more stuck you become.

If that's you right now, the best way out is to stop. Treat yourself to some rest.

Sit down, be still, and breathe for 5 minutes (or more). Allow yourself some quiet time. Listen to the birds. Be present to the moment and let the rest go.

Trust that taking a time out will restore you, soothe your nervous system, and help you come back to the issues with a clearer, calm mind.

Cultivating calm is excellent self-care.

You can use these simple [guided breathing exercises](#) or tune into Calm.com if you're not sure how to start.

These are just a few things that can replenish and sustain you. Maybe you prefer knitting cat sweaters or going roller skating. Whatever it is, make it easy to succeed at and plan to do it.

Self-care doesn't have to be Instagram-worthy or overwhelming. But we do need to make a plan and stick to our commitment to ourselves, so we don't let weeks and months go by without taking care of our own needs.

So before any more time slips by, brainstorm a few easy ways that you'll care for yourself in the coming weeks and make it happen. You deserve it!

Bio: Jessica Dolce, MS is a certified compassion fatigue educator who helps animal care and welfare professionals navigate compassion fatigue and cultivate resilience, so that they can make a positive impact for animals and feel good while they do it!

Jessica brings more than fifteen years of experience working with companion animals to her online classes, workshops, and private coaching. Her 8 week online course, [Compassion Fatigue Strategies](#), starts September 24<sup>th</sup> through The Maddie's® Shelter Medicine Program at the University of Florida.

She can be found online at [jessicadolce.com](http://jessicadolce.com)

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# Rodent Control in Animal Shelters

By Uri Donnett, DVM



Whether you primarily house your population indoors or outdoors, rodent infestations can be costly, damaging to the facility, and detrimental to animal and public health. Due to the large amount of food, animal waste, and oftentimes access to the outdoors, pest control is an essential and difficult task for animal shelters. The ASV shelter guidelines state that “if a shelter is experiencing a problem, solutions must be humane, safe, and effective.” Unfortunately, it can be difficult to determine what is the most humane, safe, and effective method. Due to the public nature of the animal shelter facilities, there is not only the concern for diseases carried by rodents that can be transmitted to people, but also that control methods be safe for both companion animals and people as well as humane for the rodent populations involved. For

assistance with this then, both the Center for Disease Control and the National Parks Service can provide guidance.

For those with a current infestation, it is important to consider what forms of trapping and removal will be safest and most humane. Remember that rodenticide toxicity in your dogs or cats can be deadly, require expensive emergency treatment, and is totally avoidable. It’s also important to keep in mind that while the cats or dogs you house might not have direct access to the poisons, consumption of poisoned rodents can cause relay or secondary toxicity. It may be most cost effective and efficient for the shelter to partner with an outside company in order to remove the pest problem but this partnership should involve direct communication and planning with the shelter in order to protect the public and the pet population.

Like most challenges faced by shelters, prevention is really the key to success. Even if the current resident rodents are removed, without preventive strategies in place, the infestation is likely to reoccur. Whether you house animals indoors or outdoors, properly storing and handling food, water, and garbage, as well as denying rodents access to facilities and nesting material is essential. When denying rodents access to food and water, it is important to make sure that food is in rodent-proof containers, that the appropriate amount of food is fed to pets to minimize the amount of waste food left for rodents, and that food is picked up from kennels and washed out of drainage systems. It’s important that your staff also secure any human food in areas where rodents cannot access it. It’s also important to think about how garbage is stored and how close bins and dumpsters are to the shelter building. Even when food appears to be rodent proof the labels, boxes, and other packaging can serve as nesting materials.

Finally, it’s important to deny the rodents access and hiding places within the shelter. Essentially, going on a scavenger hunt to find access points and hiding places may also assist you in finding where wear and tear now requires some facility upkeep. It’s important when examining your facility to remember that mice can fit through cracks the size of a nickel and rats need only slightly larger holes. It definitely helps to recruit extra eyes for this facility assessment. Even a newer facility will still suffer from the wear and tear of cleaning, animals, and human foot traffic. This is a great opportunity to identify areas needing repair. Always remember that once you’ve addressed your problem, continue to assess how effective you were in each of the seasons. While rodents may spend more time out of your shelter in the warmer months, making it look like the problem is solved, the cooler months will be a better test of your success.



An area on a metal door where mice escape into the walls of a shelter.

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# Please Join Us!

We hope you can attend this year's ASV Member Reception! It will be held from 6:30-9:00 PM on Thursday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, in conjunction with the ABVP Symposium in Tampa, Florida. The reception will be held in the Waterfront Room at Jackson's Bistro, 601 S. Harbour Island Blvd, which is a short 5-minute walk from the Tampa Marriott Waterside.

At the reception, we'll introduce the new members of the ASV Board and reveal the winner of this year's Meritorious Service Award and recognize the Shelter Veterinarian of the Year!

RSVP to [sonya.hennessy@shelternvet.org](mailto:sonya.hennessy@shelternvet.org)



Please join us to meet new colleagues and catch up with friends, while enjoying delicious food and drinks.

Hope to see you there!

Erin Doyle, President

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## ASV Student Chapter Project Highlights

MADE POSSIBLE BY  
A GRANT FROM THE **ASPCA**



## The University of Florida



The University of Florida Student Chapter of the Association of Shelter Veterinarians held 3 “wet labs” this year for our veterinary students, two neuter and one flank-spay lab. Between both neuter wet labs, we had 30 veterinary students participate and 67 community or shelter cats. During the flank spay lab, we had 20 vet students and 27 stray cats. In each of these labs, students were able to practice their spay or neuter techniques under the supervision of a veterinarian. In total, our veterinary students sterilized 94 stray cats, directly impacting the homeless pet population in Gainesville and surrounding areas. If each of these homeless cats had about 5 kittens in the next 6 months to 1 year

(hypothetically), these labs prevented the birth of roughly 470 homeless cats. If the future offspring of those kittens were taken into account, the impact of the sterilization of these cats during our annual wet labs is exponential.

The grant money received from ASV will help defray the cost of our wet labs. Our annual wet labs offer invaluable surgical experience to our veterinary students as well as exposure to the need for TNR (trap neuter return) in community cats, and the importance of sterilization in animals.



## Colorado State University

This year’s conference was a huge success! We increased our attendance to over 100 people, including veterinary students and staff from Colorado State University, and animal welfare professionals representing 14 different animal rescue organizations, which collectively serve well over 60,000 animals annually. The topics aimed to improve shelter animal health and welfare, and support the well-being of the people who devote their lives to animal rescue. This year’s lectures were as follows:

- Saving Animals in Shelters Through Teaching and Studies
  - Collaboration between CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital and local shelters
  - Provides free surgeries to complicated cases



- Works with shelters to perform clinical research studies aimed at improving shelter animal welfare
- Ophthalmologic Diseases
  - Common eye problems seen in shelter animals
  - Techniques for diagnosis and treatment in a shelter setting
- Disaster Preparedness
  - Preparing for and responding to a variety of disasters that can compromise the safety of pet and wild animals
- PetSmart Charities: The Future of Non-Profit Medicine
  - Current challenges associated with providing veterinary services to underserved populations
  - How animal welfare professionals can collaborate to help solve these problems
- Intake Procedures in Colorado Animal Shelters
  - Current statistics on infectious disease prevalence in Colorado shelter animals
  - Future implications on shelter protocols for disease screening and treatment
- Compassion Fatigue in Veterinary Medicine
  - Mindfulness and identifying everyday signs of stress
  - Techniques for maintaining positive health and wellbeing so we can continue to give our best to the animals in our care



116 animal welfare professionals were in attendance including veterinary students, veterinarians, and other animal care staff from various animal rescue organizations.

## Auburn University

Each quarter approximately 600 animals come through the doors of the Lee County Humane Society. All of these animals need to have their weights recorded and a large number of them have some ailment that requires

microscopic evaluation. With the grant funds awarded from the ASPCA and ASV, the shelter vets club bought a scale and microscope for LCHS. The scale and microscope have already been of use at our biweekly rounds. Being able to get an accurate weight is beneficial to both our physical examinations during shelter rounds, as well as the shelter's daily functions. The microscope has been of great help especially since so many animals come into the shelter with dermatologic disease. The new microscope helps us to accurately make a diagnosis so that these animals can receive the proper medications, and can be isolated when the risk of disease spread is a concern.



Additionally, we hosted a board certified shelter veterinarian from Nashville, Tennessee to present at the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Cannon spoke about population control, ways to get involved in shelter medicine, and controlling feline URI's in the shelter to 47 veterinary students. With the grant funds, we were able to pay for her expenses and food for the meeting. She graciously donated her speaker fee back to us and we used the remainder of the funds to transfer seven animals from the Lee County Humane Society to a rescue organization.



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## Upcoming Educational Opportunities

ABVP Symposium – Don't forget to register for the ASV Shelter Medicine Track at ABVP!  
<https://abvp.com/symposium/conference-schedule/>

Be sure to check out additional educational opportunities on the Event Calendar available to members only at [this link](#). Please remember, you must be signed in to view the events on the calendar.

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