

The 5-Minute Indy No-Kill Initiative Primer

Presented by the Indy No-Kill Initiative

It reads like some author's horrifying view of the future: Stray cats overrunning apartment complexes; packs of stray dogs roaming wooded and vacant lots and industrial parks; front-page news stories of small children being bitten or attacked by the neighbor's chained dog; and social workers telling stories of young men street-fighting their dogs. But that's only the most obvious part of the horror story.

The more sinister story is of a failing, 30-year struggle to control a community's animal woes in the most simplistic and brutal ways – reaction instead of prevention; tradition superceding innovation; and torture and destruction termed as compassion. At the forefront are agencies with ideals that have changed little since the 19th century when the concept of the *dog catcher* was formed. Despite ever increasing pressures to show results, the animal issues have seen very modest improvement.

“Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” – Albert Einstein

Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, the city of Indianapolis has new leaders, facing new challenges, and presented with new opportunities. As Mayor Ballard notes in “The Ballard Rules,” “Local government officials should make financial decisions based on the welfare of the city 10 - 50 years out.” Reducing the number of animals needing to be impounded, surrendered, and ultimately destroyed is an excellent example of such decisions.

Becoming a leader in animal welfare initiatives means adopting methods and ideals that have tamed the animal problems of cities like San Francisco in less than a decade. This will translate into Indianapolis having a better public safety image and being a more desirable community to both families and to businesses.

Abundant and effective alternatives to killing shelter animals are available today disproving the age-old excuses of *too old*, *too sick* or *too many*, used freely to justify mass killings in area shelters. The solutions are readily available and cost-effective. Failing to seek available alternatives gives some the impression that we lack the courage, vision, and compassion that distinguishes some of the truly great cities.

How do we make our city that great place we know it can be?

There is no single, simple thing that undoes decades of misguided indifference. It requires effort by the community – from the citizens to the leaders – and the courage to know that we can change!

- **Learn how communities can care for animals without killing. Then use your skills to make change.**
 - Visit the national No Kill Advocacy Center at www.nokilladvocacycenter.org and
 - the Indy No-Kill Initiative at www.indynokill.org
- **Have all of your pets spayed and neutered. Encourage your neighbors, family and friends to spay and neuter their pets!.**
 - Talk to your own veterinarian
 - Spay/Neuter Services of Indiana: www.spayneuterservices.org / 317-767-7771
 - FACE Low-Cost Spay/Neuter clinic: www.facespayneuter.org / 317-638-3223
 - Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic (Noblesville): www.lowcostclinic.org / 317-706-0537
- **Encourage your veterinarian to perform pediatric (juvenile) spay and neuter surgeries. Cats and dogs as young as 2 months can be safely spayed or neutered. The practice is endorsed by many animal welfare and veterinary professional associations:**
 - AHA – American Humane Association
 - AKC – American Kennel Club
 - ASPCA – American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
 - AVMA – American Veterinary Medical Association
 - CFA – Cat Fanciers Association
 - HSUS – Humane Society of the United States
 - Texas A&M
 - Video available for veterinarians: www.calf.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/
- **Talk to your city-county councilor. Express your concerns to them about the continued killing of shelter animals. Try to inform them and encourage them to become involved in making decisions about animal welfare.**
 - Find your councilor:
www.indygov.org/eGov/Council/Councillors/my-councillor.htm
 - Some sample text for a letter/e-mail to your councilor:
I volunteer within the animal welfare community and am one of your constituents. I live in district # _____ at _____ address. I am concerned about the pet overpopulation problem and the numbers of animals killed in our shelters due to lack of space. We have a FABULOUS opportunity right NOW to make great change with the new administration and city-county council. I want Indianapolis to become one of the first cities in the Midwest to become a NO KILL CITY

- **Attend monthly public meetings at Indianapolis Animal Care and Control to speak on behalf of the animals. Encourage the IACC board and administration to seek the counsel of animal welfare experts within the community. There are many professionals within the community with great passion, energy and expertise. They already have a strong commitment to the welfare of the community's animals and just want a voice.**
 - Board meetings are the second Wednesday of every month at 5:30pm at the IACC facility at 2600 S. Harding Street.
 - The schedule and changes are posted here:
<http://webpp01.indygov.org/scripts/publish/webevent.pl?cmd=openca&cal=cal15>
 - Call 317-327-1397 to confirm the schedule, if you have any questions.
- **Promote education about the behavior, characteristics and needs of animals BEFORE adoption. People who are educated about their pets have more realistic expectations, and are less likely to surrender or abandon pets out of frustration.**
 - http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_adoption_information/
- **Spread the word that adopting an animal is a commitment to provide comfort and care for the life of the pet. Pets give us so much...do we owe them any less?**
- **Pets purchased from pet stores are often raised in “puppy mills” where the treatment is barbaric. Backyard breeders (who run ads in the paper, or on the internet) usually have no understanding or concern for the health or well-being of the animals they breed. Purchasing such animals perpetuates these inhumane practices. Pets adopted from a shelter or rescue group are no less special, and every pet adopted from a rescue group or shelter makes room for one more animal's life that can be saved! Read more about how adoption of pets saves lives here:**
 - www.bestfriends.org/theanimals/pdfs/allpets/adoptdontbuy.pdf
- **The next time you or your friends, family or co-workers are thinking about getting a pet, adopt that pet from IACC or a local rescue group. Every pet adopted from a shelter or rescue makes space for another animal to be adopted, saving even more lives!**
 - Indianapolis Animal Care & Control, 2600 S. Harding Street
 - ARPO: www.adoptARPO.org / 317-774-8292
 - Southside Animal Shelter: www.ssasi.org / 317-710-2831
 - Cats Haven: www.catshaven.org / 317-925-7001
 - PetFinder: www.petfinder.org
 - Humane Society of Indianapolis: www.indyhumane.org / 317-872-5650
 - Local stores that partner with rescue groups or shelters such as Petsmart, Petco and Pet Supplies Plus stores

- **Donate your time or financial support to animal welfare groups that represent your interests in caring for the community's animals. Many grass-roots groups exist and provide amazing effectiveness. Several organizations are listed above, and here are some more:**
 - Feral Bureau of Indiana: www.feralbureau.org / 317-863-1290
 - Friends of Indianapolis Dogs Outside: www.fidoindy.org / 317-592-9616
 - IndyFeral: www.indyferal.org / 317-596-2300
 - Indy Pit Crew: www.indypitcrew.org / 317-592-9614
 - Move to Act: www.movetoact.org / 317-298-0992

- **Consider the ideas Nathan Winograd presents in his No Kill Equation. They have proven to be successful and practical for other cities in similar situations as Indianapolis**
 - www.nathanwinograd.com
 - www.nokilladvocacycenter.org
 - www.nokilldeclaration.org
 - Nathan Winograd's book "Redemption" is available at the Indianapolis/Marion Co. Public Library:
<http://catalog.imcpl.org/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=web&uri=link=3100020~!1925547~!310001~!3100002>