



May 12, 2010

Louis Fortis, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief  
Shepherd Express  
207 E. Buffalo St. Suite 410  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Mr. Fortis:

We read with interest the article, "A Safe Haven for Animals: A Community of Forgotten Pets," and appreciate the opportunity to clarify the information presented in the article regarding the Wisconsin Humane Society (WHS).

First, Ms. Putz's claim that "A representative for the WHS declined to comment on preliminary questions for this article" is incorrect. Nastassia Putz never disclosed that she was working as a journalist on an article. She told us she was working on "a school project on ways to reduce euthanasia rates." We receive a large number of student inquiries about nonprofit management, animal welfare, animal testing and the like, and we told Ms. Putz we are unable to respond to all student requests. We were never offered any opportunity to respond to the mistaken allegations in the article. It is our understanding that Karen Sparapani, the executive director of the Elmbrook Humane Society, was also misled about Ms. Putz's intentions.

Ms. Putz argues that WHS has "closed its doors to the public's stray domestic animal population." This is simply untrue. We go to MADACC every business day to pick up animals for adoption, and so far in 2010 have taken almost as many stray animals from MADACC (386) as have been taken by all other receiving shelters combined, according to MADACC's most recent reports. We are proud that our resources allow us to take sick and injured MADACC animals that other shelters are unable to treat – and find happy homes for those animals once they recover. We also receive animals from other Wisconsin shelters and from animal control facilities in other states that have extremely high euthanasia rates, some as high as 95%.

In addition to our commitment to the stray population, we keep our commitment to a community MADACC cannot serve: the hundreds of families each year who surrender companion animals for adoption. Many of these animals are adult animals and Pit Bull Terriers. WHS placed 10,000 animals last year alone. Since January 1, 2010, 59% of our adopted dogs and cats have been adults; 41% have been puppies or kittens under 1 year old. Regarding adoptions of Pit Bull Terriers or Pit Bull Terrier mixes, we regularly have this particular breed up for adoption. In 2009, we found homes for 156 Pit Bull Terriers or Pit Bull Terrier mixes, and 64 more so far in 2010.

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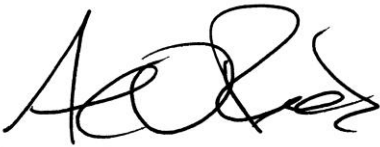
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In short, WHS is proud not only of our record but of our leadership in saving Milwaukee's companion animals, whatever their breed and however they became homeless. In our 130 years, WHS has been a leader in the animal welfare community, not only offering adoption services, but educational programming for at-risk children, training classes based on positive reinforcement training, spay/neuter services for low-income families, and the largest wildlife rehabilitation center of its kind in the state. The entire local shelter community has been instrumental in improving the landscape of animal welfare in Milwaukee; we applaud the efforts of everyone invested in saving lives and are proud of our own role.

We will continue to work with MADACC, other animal control facilities, animal shelters, and breed placement groups to improve the lives of animals in our community. We all fill an important niche in the animal welfare community and ultimately, we are all united in a common goal: to save lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Reed', with a stylized, cursive script.

Anne Reed  
Executive Director  
Wisconsin Humane Society