



*your guide to*  
MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR:  
SHELTER PETS

*the* **GIVING BACK** *society*

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*your guide to*

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR: SHELTER PETS

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## THE PROBLEM:

"Adopt, Don't Shop!" You've probably heard the phrase or at least seen it floating around on social media, right? And you get it - adopt shelter pets instead of shopping at pet stores. But, why exactly do we need to do that? Well, there are a number of reasons, but we're going to stick with just one today. **The biggest problem is that the United States is killing 1.5 - 2 million cats and dogs each year because they have no place to call home.** Yes, you read that right - millions of cats and dogs per year. And that estimate is at the low end according to some experts, but even so, we're still talking about **5,500 animals per day.** <sup>1,2</sup>

**Not so fun fact:** Kittens are one of the most euthanized populations because of how much care they require<sup>3</sup>. A mother cat who gives birth to kittens will have slightly better odds as long as she takes care of them. But, motherless kittens are often brought into shelters and they need to be bottle-fed around the clock, cleaned and cared for at a level that many shelters and rescues cannot provide.

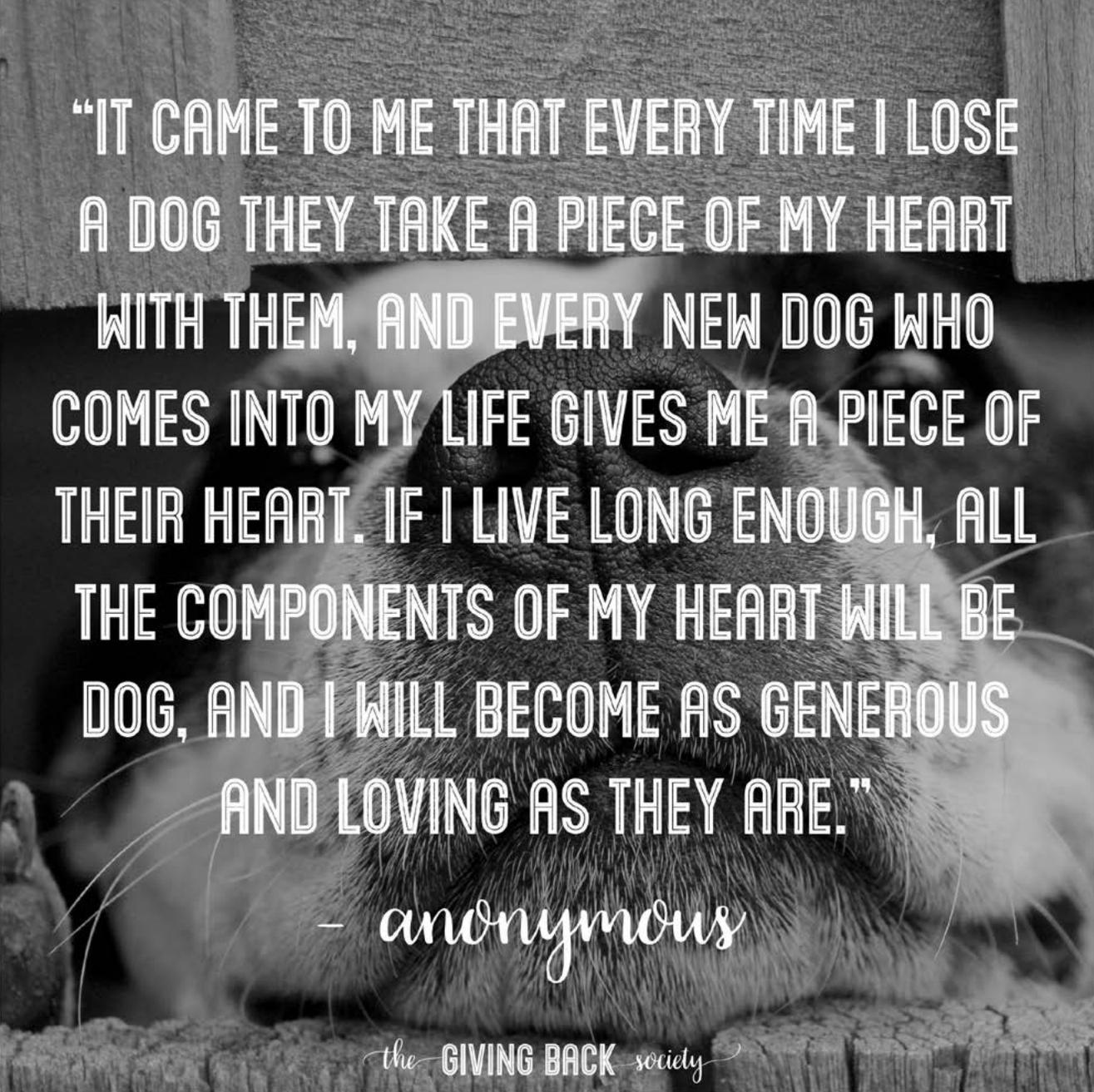
**You should know:** Pet rescue isn't limited to dogs and cats. They are the most popular, but you can also find rabbits, horses, ducks, ferrets and more awaiting forever homes.

Sources:

1 <https://www.asPCA.org/animal-homelessness/shelter-intake-and-surrender/pet-statistics>

2 <http://bestfriends.org/our-work/no-kill-initiatives>

3 <http://www.kittenlady.org/kittencrisis/>



“IT CAME TO ME THAT EVERY TIME I LOSE  
A DOG THEY TAKE A PIECE OF MY HEART  
WITH THEM, AND EVERY NEW DOG WHO  
COMES INTO MY LIFE GIVES ME A PIECE OF  
THEIR HEART. IF I LIVE LONG ENOUGH, ALL  
THE COMPONENTS OF MY HEART WILL BE  
DOG, AND I WILL BECOME AS GENEROUS  
AND LOVING AS THEY ARE.”

- *anonymous*

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*okay i'm in*

WHAT CAN I DO?

## 2 MINUTE ACTION PLAN:

The good news is that there is plenty we can do to help shelter pets! Let's start small and work our way up.

**Click for good.** Start by visiting The Animal Rescue Site (<http://theanimalrescuesite.greatergood.com/clickToGive/ars/free-ways-to-help>) and click on the big purple button. You just helped feed shelter pets! Don't underestimate this - last year visitor clicks funded the value of 56 million bowls of food.

**Bonus:** Another way to use your mouse for good is to visit Petfinder (<https://www.petfinder.com/>) and plug in your zip code to find a local animal rescue/shelter near you. Follow them on Facebook and share their posts. Liking and commenting is great, but it's sharing that actually gets them in front of new people.

## 30 MINUTE ACTION PLAN:

**Let's Get Crafty.** Shelter pets need stimulation and exercise so providing them with new toys can make their stay that much nicer. View the next two pages for how-to instructions of toys you can make and donate to your favorite shelter. *Tip:* Start with ones you can make from supplies kicking around the house like the water bottle/sock toy or the yarn balls.

**Bonus:** Make a party of it -- invite some friends to come over and help, too. When we were on the board of a local nonprofit we were tasked with throwing an event that gave back and this is what we did! It was crafty, fun for everyone and great for kids to get involved with, too.

**One more thing:** When you're delivering your newly crafted toys, toss any old towels, blankets and pillows into your car as well -- shelters always run low on cuddly items for the animals.

# 1. POM POMS

SUPPLIES: YARN

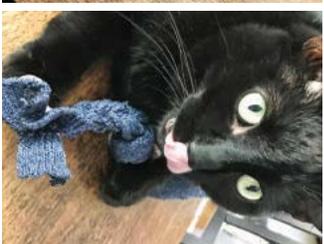
INSTRUCTIONS: TAKE SOME YARN AND WRAP IT AROUND YOUR HAND. YOU'LL WANT TO WRAP IT AROUND PLENTY OF TIMES IN ORDER TO GET A FLUFFY POM POM WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED. NEXT, TIE A PIECE OF YARN AROUND THE MIDDLE OF THE YARN LOOPS. MAKE SURE YOUR KNOT IS TIGHT! LASTLY, CUT THE ENDS OF THE LOOPS AND FLUFF OUT THE YARN POM POM. REPEAT TO MAKE A BUNCH! MIX AND MATCH COLORS IF YOU'D LIKE!



# 2. SOCK TOYS

SUPPLIES: SOCKS, EMPTY WATER BOTTLE, STUFFING, CATNIP

INSTRUCTIONS: WE HAVE TWO SOCK PROJECTS TO MAKE. FIRST, A DOG CHEW TOY -- SIMPLY SLIP THE WATER BOTTLE INSIDE THE SOCK AND TIE THE SOCK CLOSED. SECOND, A CAT KICKER TOY -- FILL THE SOCK WITH STUFFING AND A FEW PINCHES OF CATNIP. YOU DON'T HAVE TO OVER-FILL. THEN TIE IT SHUT. GET CREATIVE AND CUT THE TOP OF THE SOCK FOR FRINGE OR A BRAID IF YOU'D LIKE!



# 3. TENNIS BALL WRAP

SUPPLIES: TEE-SHIRT, TENNIS BALL, FABRIC TIE

INSTRUCTIONS: TAKE A TEE-SHIRT AND CUT OUT A 16" SQUARE (APPROXIMATELY). WRAP IT AROUND THE TENNIS BALL AND TIE IT WITH A STRIP OF FABRIC. NEXT, CUT THE "TAIL" INTO STRIPS AND BRAID IT OR WHATEVER YOU THINK WOULD BE FUN!



## 4. TENNIS BALL PULL TOY

SUPPLIES: FLEECE, TENNIS BALL

INSTRUCTIONS: PREP YOUR TENNIS BALL BY PUNCHING HOLES IN EITHER SIDE. (STABBING IT WITH SCISSORS WORKS WELL -- BE CAREFUL!) NEXT, CUT A PIECE OF FLEECE INTO THREE STRIPS. FEEL FREE TO MIX AND MATCH COLORS! TIE ALL THREE PIECES TOGETHER WITH A KNOT AT ONE END. BRAID THE FLEECE. BEFORE TYING THE CLOSING KNOT, SLIDE THE BALL ONTO THE BRAID. KNOT THE END AND YOU'RE DONE!



## 5. FISHING POLE CAT TOY

SUPPLIES: WOODEN DOWEL, RIBBONS, FELT, TAPE

INSTRUCTIONS: START BY CUTTING MULTIPLE PIECES OF RIBBON (APPROX. 24" IN LENGTH). THEN ATTACH THEM TO A WOODEN DOWEL WITH DUCT TAPE. (GET CREATIVE IF YOU WANT AND DESIGN A PATTERN GOING UP THE DOWEL WITH THE TAPE.) NEXT, TAKE SOME FELT AND CUT OUT A VARIETY OF FEATHERS OR ANY OTHER SHAPE. THEN TIE THE SHAPES TO THE ENDS OF THE RIBBONS.



## 6. FELT CATNIP TOYS!

SUPPLIES: FELT, STUFFING, CATNIP, NEEDLE & THREAD  
INSTRUCTIONS: CUT OUT TWO PIECES OF FELT IN THE SAME SHAPE (JUST A COUPLE OF INCHES TALL AND WIDE). SEW THEM 3/4 OF THE WAY AROUND WITH A SIMPLE LOOP STITCH (AROUND THE OUTSIDE EDGE). THEN FILL WITH STUFFING AND A COUPLE PINCHES OF CATNIP AND SEW THE REST OF THE WAY CLOSED!



## 1 HOUR ACTION PLAN:

**Take a hike.** With a shelter dog, that is. Many shelters, especially municipal animal shelters, struggle to find volunteers to spend quality time with the animals. Walking a dog is healthy (for both of you) and great for the dog to work on socialization (which can make or break potential adoptions). If you work near a shelter, schedule this in on your lunch break. Or make it your regular Saturday afternoon exercise with your kids.

**Alternative:** Not feeling energetic? How about reading to shelter pets instead? It helps to relax as well as socialize them and is a great activity to do with the whole family. There are programs popping up all around the country of kids reading to shelter pets because it provides a non-judgemental audience for someone who is just learning to read or is dealing with a fear of speaking out in public.

## LET'S GO ALL IN:

**Foster Kittens.** Talk about a cute way to make a difference in the world! Shelters have a tough time giving kittens the extra care that they need, so they often ask for foster families to step in and take them. It's a temporary gig for a few weeks and then the grown kittens go back to the shelter to find forever homes. Reach out to your local shelter to see if they need help. Spring and summer are usually the most popular times (also known as Kitten Season).

**Tip:** There's a big difference between fostering a pregnant cat (or one that just gave birth) compared to fostering motherless kittens who need to be bottle fed and taken care of by you. Learn more from The Kitten Lady (<http://www.kittenlady.org/gettingstarted>) who specializes in just this thing. She's not only an expert who is constantly fostering kittens in her home, she also lectures and teaches kitten care at shelters and facilities around the country. Her work is having a real impact.

**Trending:** Another movement gaining speed with kitten fostering is in senior care facilities. It's the perfect combination of people who have the time and love to give, combined with helpless tiny lives that need to be cared for. This makes our hearts happy to see!

what else

CAN I DO?



GIFTS THAT  
GIVE BACK

**Lil Bub Store** This adorable kitty is an advocate for homeless and special needs pets all over the world (or universe if you ask her). A portion of the proceeds from her store helps shelters care for special needs pets. To date she has helped raise more than \$200,000 while spreading awareness about the importance of adoption as well as spaying and neutering your pets. Go shop: <https://store.lilbub.com/>

**Shop at the Shelter** Many shelters have items for sale that benefit their rescue efforts - think teeshirts, calendars, artwork and more. Check with your local rescue before hitting the mall. (Don't know any local shelters in your area? Visit [Petfinder.com](http://Petfinder.com) to find some).



WHO WE  
LOVE

**HeARTs Speak** is a nationally recognized 501c3 nonprofit organization that's uniting art and advocacy to increase the visibility of shelter animals. First impressions are their specialty and they're dedicated to inspiring change for shelter pets across the globe through a variety of programs that leverage creativity and collaboration. Learn more about their innovative programs and support their growth here: <https://www.heartsspeak.org/>

**Best Friends Animal Society** Best Friends is one of many groups promoting a no-kill future for animal shelters. They've set their sights on making our country no-kill by 2025 and are making great strides in accomplishing that goal. Learn more at <http://bestfriends.org/>

**Cat Cafes** These are popping up all over the globe (<http://www.meowparlour.com/>, <http://ladydinahs.com/> & <https://catcafemelbourne.com/> for starters) and we couldn't be happier. Enjoy your latte while adoptable kitties roam all around you. Perhaps you'll even take one to go -- it's up to you if you choose another coffee or a cat.

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hmmmm

## WHAT'S NEXT?

### Join our mailing list.

Sign up to get our next set of action plans delivered right to your inbox.

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### And keep in touch on social media:

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### **Thanks for checking out this week's action plan list!**

*We're excited to continue making it easier for busy people with big hearts to make a difference.*

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