



Brigid Wasson

President
Missing Pets Partnership

Brigid Wasson is a lifetime animal welfare professional and retired animal shelter director. She has held positions of leadership in both government and nonprofit animal service agencies, focusing on implementing lifesaving programs and increasing live release from as low as 60% to over 90%.

Brigid became interested in lost pet prevention and recovery in 2008 when she discovered Missing Pet Partnership, and in 2014 was invited to join the Board of Directors. She currently serves as President of the organization and manages the animal shelter initiatives including Mission Reunite, which teaches animal shelter/pound management, staff, volunteers, and community partners to work together to increase owner reunions and decrease shelter intake. Getting pets back home quickly saves resources that can be better utilized for animals truly in need of a new home such as cruelty or neglect cases. Brigid lives in Sonoma County, CA and is the CEO and Principal Consultant of The Path Ahead Animal Shelter Consulting.

Abstract

Lassie, Come Home: Five steps shelters can take to increase dog reclaims

Each year in the USA, only 10-20% of missing dogs are reclaimed by owners from shelters. Australian data shows an average of 46% reclaim rate for dogs. The rest are euthanized at great cost to taxpayers, or sit in adoption centers, draining the agency's resources for weeks or months. Shelters not embracing current best practices cannot improve because they are burdened beyond capacity every day with intake and population -- "We're full" -- and stressed out staff don't have the time or energy to be proactive. Should we be asking ourselves, "What are we doing that isn't working, and how can we improve?"

In this session, we will discuss the history of animal management and how dogs fit in. We will discuss the more recent historical handling of dogs in animal shelters and how these traditional practices and attitudes lead to ineffective practices today. Animal management and shelter professionals will learn five steps they can start taking today to improve dog owner reclaims and decrease intake.