



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

Workshop - Tear down the walls: Identifying and removing barriers to owner reunion

Every year in the United States, approximately 5.7 million missing pets end up in pounds and shelters. 5.1 million will never see their owners again. Is it because owners are irresponsible and uncaring? With a national average dog reclaim rate of just 20% and cat reclaim rate of 2% (and Australian studies showing a 46% average reclaim rate for dogs and 1% average reclaim for cats), progressive animal management and shelter leaders are asking themselves, "What are we doing that isn't working, and how can we improve?"

In this workshop, we will discuss the top five barriers to owner reclaim and how they can be addressed. We will also discuss creating, training, and managing a volunteer lost pet prevention and recovery (LPPR) team. The primary audience for this workshop is management and staff of animal management departments; however, nonprofit shelters, rescue groups, and other community partners also play important roles in getting – and keeping – stray pets back in their loving homes. Animal management agencies making these positive changes are seeing their reclaim rates double and triple and their intake and euthanasia rates lowered significantly. Attendees will be shown steps they can take right away as well as more involved improvements they can plan for in the future.