



Equity in Access: Inclusive Solutions for Companion Animal Challenges

10th National G2Z Summit & Workshops
16-18 September 2025 Online



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Dr. Aimee Dalrymple is a shelter medicine specialist located in the Boston, Massachusetts area. She earned her DVM from the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine and her MS in Shelter Medicine from the University of Florida. Dr. Dalrymple is a Diplomate of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners in Shelter Medicine Practice. Her practice focuses on shelter medicine consulting, education, and research. Learn more at shelternetcare.com.



Nina Stively

MS, CAWA

Nina Stively is the Director of Loudoun County Animal Services in northern Virginia, the division of Loudoun County government which oversees the public animal shelter and a team of sworn humane law enforcement officers. Nina is a Certified Animal Cruelty Investigator, a Certified Animal Welfare Administrator, and an Animal Control Officer in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Contact for Tag! You're Home! program details at nina.stively@loudoun.gov



Rachael Kreisler

VMD, MSCE, DACVPM (Epidemiology)

Rachael Kreisler is an Associate Professor of Shelter Medicine and Epidemiology and Director of Outcomes Assessment at Midwestern University's College of Veterinary Medicine. She is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine (ACVPM) as well as the ACVPM's Epidemiology specialty. Her research is devoted to supporting veterinary clinical decision-making, particularly in the fields of animal sheltering and community medicine.

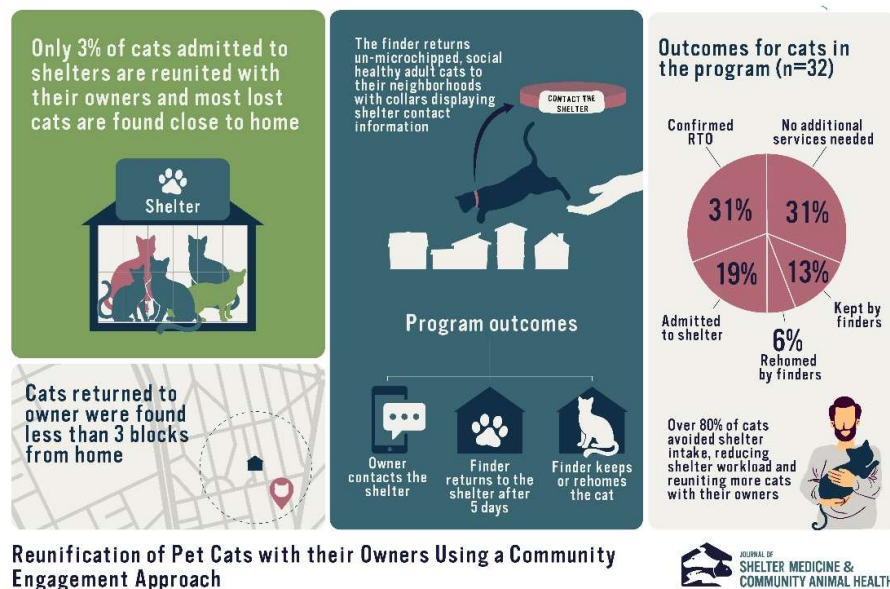


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Abstract

Return to Owner (RTO) rates for cats in shelters are reported as low as 5.3%. However, the percentage of recovered pet cats located within their own neighborhoods is much higher. Loudoun County Animal Services, an open-admission shelter with an annual intake of 2,300 animals (46% cats), developed the Tag! You're Home! Program (TYHP). This program encourages finders to return un-microchipped healthy social adult cats to their neighborhoods with a collar containing the shelter's contact information. Finders can return them for intake after 5 days. Between 7/1/2022 and 12/31/2023, 476 stray cats were admitted, 253 (53%) of which were adults. Of the 32 cats enrolled in TYHP as an alternative to intake, 31% were confirmed RTO via owner contact, 31% did not require additional services, 19% were brought back for intake, 13% were kept by finders, and 6% were rehomed by finders. For the cats admitted, the adult RTO rate was 28%. Cats returned to owners through the shelter were found a median of 0.27 km (interquartile range 0.07–2.5), or approximately 2.7 city blocks, from home. Over 80% of TYHP cats did not require shelter intake, with a 31% confirmed RTO rate. The TYHP reduced the intake of adult stray cats by 9% while maintaining similar RTO rates.



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