



County of Los Angeles
Department of Animal Care and Control
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END OF YEAR MESSAGE

As 2017 draws to a close, we want to share some highlights of what has been accomplished by DACC staff, volunteers, and Community Partners this year:

Saving Lives

We are now at an 84% live release rate for dogs! Sixteen years ago, that number was only 38%. By strengthening our relationships with adoption partners, using transports to send animals in need of homes to other areas in the country, benefiting from volunteers to help facilitate adoptions at our seven Animal Care Centers (ACCs) and at community events, , and the support of the Los Angeles County Animal Care Foundation through its [Dreams Come True](#) and [Grooming Gives Hope](#) programs, and many other efforts, together we have achieved this incredible transformation. This is especially remarkable because we are an open door animal welfare organization, meaning that we will accept those pets that are too ill, injured, or temperamentally unsound to place into new homes.

Our cat live release rate doubled, from 20% to 40%! Cats pose a unique challenge because many that arrive at our ACCs are feral, or the underage offspring of stray cats, and their placement options are extremely limited. Different strategies are called for to address the needs for cats. The increase in cat live release rates can be credited to the free cat adoption grant subsidy provided by the [ASPCA](#) (yes, cats are still adopted at no cost), our Pee Wee pilot program, a kitten foster program to save the lives of vulnerable kittens at the Baldwin Park ACC, and adding cats to our transports to other cities and states for adoption

Our Pee Wee pilot program at Baldwin Park's ACC has been a tremendous success! This program has saved more than 1,000 kittens since its inception in April, 2017 and shows great promise for replication at our other ACCs. In the Pee Wee program, kittens that can eat without assistance but are still too young for adoption (and therefore would otherwise be euthanized) are placed into foster homes where they are raised until they are old enough for placement. In partnership with the [Kitten-Garten](#) at the [Pasadena Humane Society & SPCA](#), these Pee Wees receive the extra care and TLC they need at this young age and are then placed into permanent, loving homes.

Speaking of cats, one of the most important ways to increase their live release rate is to reduce the number of incoming cats to begin with. The best way to accomplish this is through aggressive spay/neuter in the community, so the number of unowned or feral

cats is reduced. We have engaged in an exciting partnership with the Coalition for Pets and Public Safety and [Spay4LA](#) to provide [mobile spay/neuter services](#) in underserved communities. Mobile clinics bring these important services for both cats and dogs (along with vaccinations and microchipping) to areas with a lack of available veterinary resources. The surgeries are performed at no cost, so low income pet owners can also obtain these important services for their pets.

New and Expanded Functions

We have also established a critical live saving division - our new Animal Behavior and Enrichment Division. This Division supports all seven of our animal care centers. Its primary purpose is to attend to the mental and behavioral well-being of all animals. Animal Care Centers are stressful environments for pets. Pets that are stressed often do not show their true personalities and may be overlooked by adopters. Stress compromises immune systems, causing illnesses in cats and dogs that can be difficult to manage in a shelter environment. Our Animal Behavior and Enrichment Division is implementing a variety of programs and environmental improvements to reduce stress levels and increase wellness in animals under our care.

One such program that is already having a positive impact on dogs in our care centers is the “Dogs Playing for Life” Program developed by Dogs Playing for Life (DPFL), a nonprofit organization that trains staff and volunteers to run playgroups for dogs. Playgroups allow dogs to express normal behaviors and socialize with other dogs, resulting in reduced stress and a better understanding of the personalities of the dogs in our care.

This program will allow us to better evaluate the temperaments of dogs in our care so they may be more thoroughly assessed for placement. We will also carefully evaluate ways in which we can reduce stress for the animals in our care. This includes installing portals in cat cage banks to give cats expanded housing options, and providing species-specific housing. We have installed music in the animal housing areas that play music specifically designed to reduce animal stress.

The expansion of our volunteer program has been, and will continue to be, a key factor in our ability to continue and expand programs. Volunteers are the key, vital factor that allow us to expand beyond our existing capabilities. These selfless individuals donate their time, hard work, and goodwill to help us continue to help the animals and people who depend on us. We are deeply indebted to them for all they do to help us meet our mission!

Community Support

The special assistance we have received from the ASPCA , [Captain Care](#), the [Lange Foundation](#), and the [Wallis Annenberg PetSpace](#) and our 200 adoption partners have also all contributed greatly to assist us in saving the lives of more animals than ever. Our own [Los Angeles County Animal Care Foundation](#) has donated thousands of dollars to support DACC needs, such as facility renovations; cat scratcher toys for the cats; grooming and medical care for animals; purchasing supplies and equipment; beginning a

Compassionate Euthanasia Program so pet owners can be with their beloved pets at the end of their lives; and so much more. All our supporters are so appreciated for all they do to help us succeed!

Protecting the Public

DACCs work, of course, is not only about animal welfare but also about protecting public safety. We have had many ground breaking cases this year that have exceeded anything we have seen before. DACC was the lead animal agency in the largest cock fighting raid in U.S. history, seizing more than 7,800 fighting birds from a property in Val Verde. This unprecedented case required more than 100 personnel from various agencies and took more than four days to complete.

DACC also handled a highly unusual, and frightening, case of a reptile hoarder with more than 100 venomous reptiles, alligators, parrots, and other animals. The reptiles included cobras, puff adders, Gaboon vipers, rattlesnakes, Gila monsters, Mexican Beaded Lizards, and others. Thanks to the outstanding work of reptile experts from the [Los Angeles Zoo](#), assistance from the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#), alligator housing provided by the Pasadena Humane Society & SPCA, and the support of local law enforcement agencies, all animals were safely removed without injury to themselves or people. The reptiles were all placed with zoos and reptile sanctuaries.

Of most recent note, the Creek and Rye fires proved to be some of the most frightening and saddening fires we have seen. Sadly, many horses lost their lives due to the fast moving fires, owner failure to evacuate in time, and inability to reach the horses in time. Despite these tragic losses, DACC staff showed remarkable heroism, compassion, and dedication in rescuing a number of animals that otherwise would have died as well. Our volunteer Equine Response Team and DACC horse volunteers manned emergency sheltering sites 24 hours/day for six days, providing care and comfort to traumatized horses who were rescued. DACC staff managed Ani-Safe trailers (emergency mobile pet shelters) co-located at Red Cross shelters so owners could remain with their domestic pets.

Facility Improvements

DACC also made many improvements at its six older animal care centers. The [Portraits of Hope](#) civic art project revitalized the care centers into bright, cheerful places to visit. We have heard from many people who never realized they were animal care centers until the artwork caught their attention. The County also invested in renovations at the care centers to create safer and healthier environments for the animals in our care and the public who visit.

As we look to 2018 we will continue to rely upon and expand our relationships to serve people and homeless animals, and to create a safer Los Angeles County. We at DACC wish everyone the very best for 2018, and that it be filled with good health, happiness and blessings for you and your loved ones.