

Coffee Break



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What is your favorite part of the workday?

That was the question we asked you for this issue's Coffee Break. You told us the things that can make you smile during a rough day—holding cuddly puppies, seeing animals go to new homes, and knowing that you're helping reduce pet overpopulation.

My favorite part of my workday is when I get to drive animals to and from the vet for their spay and neuter surgeries. I enjoy it because it's probably the single most important thing I can do toward the mission of working myself out of a job, which is my goal each and every day. I wish I had started counting 20 years ago—I wonder how many animals I'm partly responsible for sterilizing.

—Monica Gates, Operations Manager,
Humane Society of Waupaca County,
Waupaca, Wisconsin

My favorite part of the workday is when I'm working at my desk and I look over to see the dog I have brought from the back to spend the day with me playing with a toy, chewing on a bone, or sleeping on the bed I've made for him. He's basically just acting like a pet in his home. I get to see what he'll be like if he's lucky enough to get a home, and he gets to have a little bit of home now.

—Brook Goodbar, Animal Control Director,
Forrest City Animal Shelter,
Forrest City, Arkansas

The best part of my day is the kennel check first thing in the morning. That is when I come in, speak to all the dogs, do a poop-check, and make the medical list. I know this is my chance to improve the health and lives of these babies.

—Vicki Morgan, Director, Monroe County
Animal Shelter, Madisonville, Tennessee

There are those animals who have been with us for too long—the ones who have just a few extra quirks or who need just the right person to see their beauty. The staff and volunteers, of course, know that this dog is a calm and obedient sweetheart outside of the run, or that this cat with only one eye is the best lap cat in the world. We come to champion these animals and form a strong emotional connection with them. It just makes my day to hear over the PA system in the shelter, "Eddy has been adopted and will be going home in 15 minutes. Any staff and volunteers who would like to say goodbye should come to the adoption desk now. Eddy has been adopted."

—Adrienne McHargue, Director of
Communications, Humane Society at
Lollypop Farm,
Fairport, New York

I spend my days on the computer away from our animals, so the highlight of my day is spending time with our pets-in-waiting. Just spending a few minutes nuzzling with an affectionate kitten, handing out biscuits to eager dogs, or—my favorite—getting a dose of puppy breath from a wriggling, licking puppy refreshes me and reminds me why I do the work I do. Interacting with the animals infuses my articles, grants, and donation requests with a truth, emotional honesty, and stark reality that only vulnerable animals can convey.

—Kris King, Development Coordinator,
Stafford Animal Shelter,
Livingston, Montana

I carry the emergency cell phone for Retrieve a Golden of Minnesota (RAGOM). All of the more than 5,000 dogs we have placed since 1985 are in our database. When the cell phone rings and someone has found one of our adopted dogs, I ask if the dog has a tag with his chip number. If he does, I find it on our list and then I can get him home to his adoptive family. If the dog doesn't have a chip tag but has a RAGOM tag, we have such a wonderful group of volunteers that I can make several phone calls and rely on the fact that someone will step up to pick up the dog and have him scanned for a chip. My favorite part of the day is getting the dog returned safely to his family.

—Jane Nygaard, Founder and Board Member, Retrieve a Golden of Minnesota, Inc., St. Louis Park, Minnesota

After taking a few sips of coffee, feeding the brood of foster kittens, and letting the dogs out, I go upstairs to the "cat room." This is where I socialize feral kittens who are not beyond socialization. I bring breakfast and spend time with them, touching and playing. We work on coming out of our hiding places to eat on our own, and then we play with toys. The little steps are satisfying, since I know even if they do not become adoptable, they learn to trust humans. This allows me to place them with a farm family with a barn that will allow them inside and outside access, along with the care they deserve.

—Susan Ford, CORE Program Coordinator, PACT Humane Society, Schaumburg, Illinois

I like taking some treats back to a dog in the stray area who has been put on the euthanasia list because he is very fearful. These are usually the scared little dogs who are surrounded by large, noisy, barking dogs. There is nothing better than to get one of these little dogs to come to me and trust me enough to let me pet or hold him. Once I am able to do this, I take his picture and work on getting him to rescue. There is no greater reward than to see one

of these frightened dogs get the opportunity to leave the shelter, go to a foster home, and blossom into the dog I knew he was deep down inside!

—Rayne Coleman, Animal Services Office Assistant, City of Salinas Animal Services, Salinas, California

The best part of my day is when I pick up a feral cat at the vet after he has been neutered and release him back to his colony. As he scampers off to the rest of the group and they sniff, bump heads, and interact with one another, I get the most proud feeling that I'm making a difference, one cat at a time.

—Sheila Westerveld, Volunteer, Animal Life Savers, Inc., Stamford, Connecticut

Nothing makes me happier than walking through our shelter's veterinary suite and seeing all of the animals who are now spayed and neutered. Putting together a spay/neuter suite took a lot of time and energy, and it's all paying off! There is absolutely no better feeling for me than knowing our adopted animals will not contribute to overpopulation.

—Barbara Hays, Executive Director, Thomas J. O'Connor Animal Control and Adoption Center, Springfield, Massachusetts



EAGLE EYE IMAGING

Animal Sheltering congratulates Rayne Coleman of Salinas, Calif., whose submission was selected in a random drawing from those published in this issue. City of Salinas Animal Services, where she works, will receive a free coffee break: a \$50 gift certificate to a local coffee shop. "Bone" appetit!

Our next question: What's your favorite book or movie about animals—and why do you like it?

Please submit your responses (150 words or less) at animalsheltering.org/coffeebreak, e-mail them to asm@humanesociety.org, or send them to Editor, *Animal Sheltering*/HSUS, 2100 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20037. **Your answer may be printed in a future issue of *Animal Sheltering*.** If your response is chosen for publication, you will be entered into a drawing to win a **free coffee break (valued at \$50)** for your organization. No donation or purchase is necessary to win; see animalsheltering.org for contest rules, or send an e-mail or letter to the above addresses to request a printed copy.