

# Emerging Models for Animal Accommodations in Homeless Services

International Veterinary Social Work Summit  
October 4-6, 2018

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# Overview

- Different models for different program types
- No best practices, emerging models instead
- Emerging Models:
  - On-site Co-Sheltering
    - On-site kennel space
    - Co-Sleeping “Integrated/least restrictive type”
  - Off-site
    - Foster care
    - Boarding



\*(Sheltering Animals and Families Together, 2012)



\*(San Francisco Chronicle, 2015)

# Introductions

My Dog Is My Home



Janet Hoy-Gerlach



William Gilles



# Spirit, Kyya and Miniaga



# Sheltering Animals of People Who are Homeless: Off-Site Model

Janet Hoy-Gerlach

LISW-S, PhD

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## What is an “off-site” model?

- Person resides in a temporary housing shelter/facility that does not permit companion animals
- Person's animal resides in a temporary location until permanent housing for the person and animal is obtained
- The goal is reunification

## Possible community partners - “off-site” temporary shelter for animals

- Animal sheltering/rescue organizations
- Veterinary practices
- Boarding facilities





## Example: Toledo Area Humane Society

- Case by case basis – shelter can be contacted by various human service entities with requests
- Must be approved by shelter director or designated representative
- *“Animal homelessness prevention”* = congruent with shelter’s mission
- Person with animal needing shelter must sign release form
- Animal may be placed at shelter facility or with foster home, depending on shelter space and animal’s needs
- Visits occur at shelter facility

## Strengths of an off-site model

- No additional facilities or equipment needed
- Human health and allergy concerns are not an issue
- No additional health codes or other operations issues related to co-sheltering animals with people are triggered

## Weaknesses of an off-site model

- Arranging intake of animals to off-site location requires additional logistical planning
- Coordination between animal shelter and human shelter services may be fragmented
- People may have minimal access to their animals due to lack of proximity of facilities
- Extended separation can be stressful for both animals and people
- People may refuse to be separated from their animals

# Example: Diane and Cow

<https://www.toledoblade.com/local/2016/09/18/Newly-homeless-woman-struggles-to-rebuild-life-nbsp-without-losing-dog.html>



# WisCARES: Boarding and Foster model Veterinary collaboration

Madison, Wisconsin

Williams Gilles, DVM  
Co-Founder and Director of WisCARES  
University of Wisconsin - Madison

# Main Characteristics

Entry through Veterinary/Human-Animal Bond Focused organization (not traditional social service or animal shelter)

Frequently first stop for newly homeless pet owners

Multiple options for intervention

Goal is protection of Human-Animal Bond (reunification OR agency in decision-making)

Will discharge an animal into homelessness

Visits allowed and encouraged

# Types of Intervention

Boarding - 2 weeks, kennel-type situation, similar to off-site boarding

Foster - up to 3 months (or more) placement with family/household

Non-boarding but housing related interventions offered:

Provide food and supplies - support a friend or family member to care for pet with offsetting cost of food or supplies

Landlord advocacy

# Opportunities

Entry point into human social services

Establish ongoing relationship with veterinarian for patient care (continuity)

Facilities on-site and program part of main mission of organization

Variety of approaches allow for creative problem solving

Used for access to shelter system, human healthcare, mental healthcare

“One Health” on a local level



# Challenges

Medical management of veterinary patients - communication, consent

Education of potential partners and collaborators

Visits possible but not frequent

Allows options beyond boarding separately or no assistance

Animals benefit behaviorally from foster placement

Still some whose needs are not met

# CO-SHELTERING in LOS ANGELES

- The Importance of Local Government Buy-In



# PATH: Co-Sleeping

- Cubicles or own room



# Why It Works

- Individual Spaces
- Not too many animals in the facility in total





# Challenges

- No doors, animals can get out
- Noise may be an issue
- Allergies



# VOA - Co-Sleeping in Open Floor Plan

- Open Floor Plan with Cots
- Overnight Only



Millennium Middle School, Tarmac Florida during Hurricane Matthew.

# Why it works and Challenges



- It doesn't work
- Many challenges
  - Staff capacity
  - Don't own their space
  - Overnight shelter only



# Weingart - Co-Sleeping and Dog Park

- Individualized Rooms
- Dedicated Dog Park





# Why It Works

- Individual spaces
- Different programs on each floor
- Limited amount of animals
- Animal behavior training



# Challenges

- No pets! Just Emotional Support Animals and Service Animals
- Densely populated area
- Cases of animal abuse





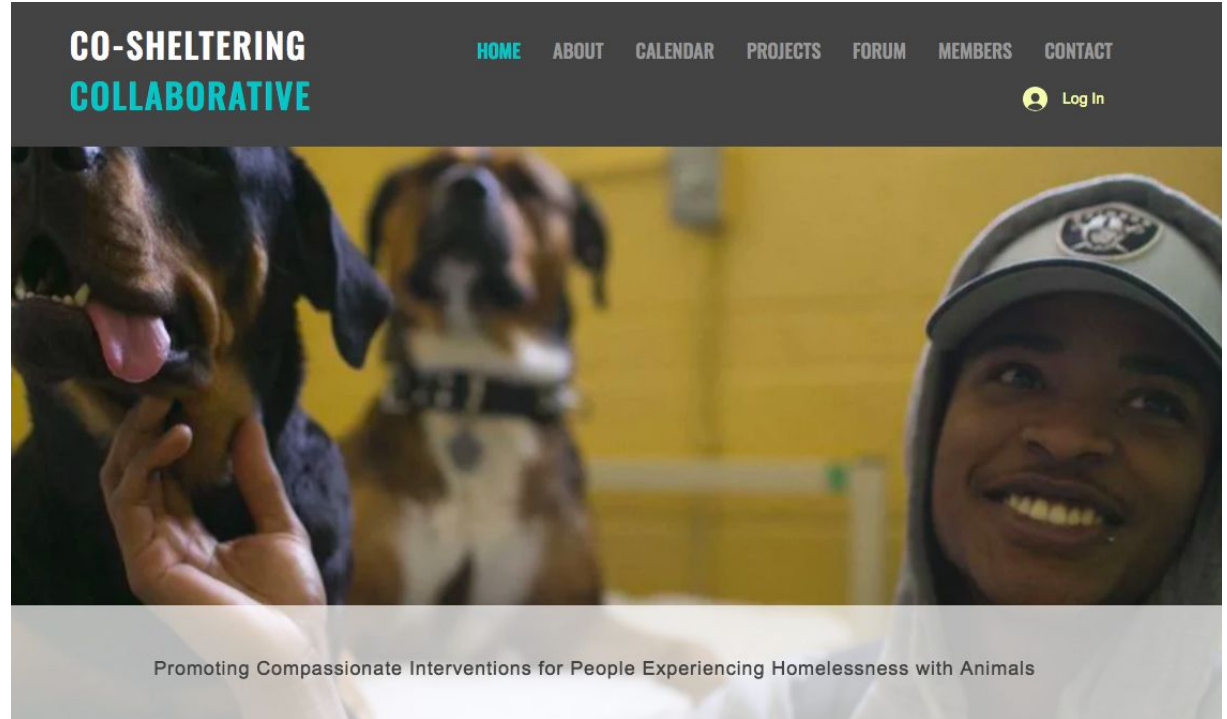
# Takeaways from Los Angeles

- Misplaced Fear of Inundation
- Staff Capacity
- More time to address this issue



# CALL TO ACTION

- Challenges
- One Health & Collaboration is Key
- My Dog Is My Home  
Co-sheltering  
Collaborative



[www.co-shelteringcollaborative.org](http://www.co-shelteringcollaborative.org)

# THANK YOU

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