

October 30, 2013

News Release

*For Immediate Release*

### **Animal Shelter, rescue partners hit 2-year dog adoption milestone**

The Springfield Animal Shelter and its rescue partners today reached the milestone of two full years of getting every adoptable dog out of the shelter and into “forever” homes.

In total, more than 2,480 stray or unclaimed dogs have been rescued during that time thanks to the ongoing efforts of the shelter’s partners – primarily Springfield-based C.A.R.E., Collins-based Halfway Home, and animal advocate Kristy Ritter. The Springfield Animal Advocacy Foundation’s SAAHouse spay/neuter clinic is another key partner that helps ensure animals are “fixed” and thus more attractive for adoption.

“When this ball started rolling two years ago, we were just pleased that we had gone several weeks in a row without putting down a dog that we really didn’t have to put down,” said Karen Prescott, Environmental Health Administrator, who oversees Animal Control. “We challenged ourselves and our partners: ‘Let’s keep this going and see if we can do it for a whole month.’ One month became three and three became six, and six months turned into a year. Now we sort of expect to hit this goal every week, though we certainly don’t take anything for granted.”

“Adoptable” dogs are those that are not sick, not vicious and not pit bulls or pit bull mixes, which under City ordinance cannot be sent to rescue. The euthanasia rate for all dogs has dropped from more than 50 percent in 2006 to close to 10 percent today. About 200 dogs were euthanized at the shelter in 2012, compared to more than 1,400 in 2006. The efforts of the last two years have helped solidify this five-year trend.

Animal Control also had success recently by raising more than \$5,600 in donations from the public for the \$8 “pull fee” rescue agencies must pay to take unclaimed animals from the shelter and place them for public adoption. The fee is an attempt to recover some of the \$25 cost for services provided to animals that come into the shelter, while also keeping the financial barrier as low as possible for rescue agencies. Those services make the animals healthier and more adoptable, and include microchipping, vaccinations for rabies and six other diseases, worm treatments and prevention, and grooming and other care.

Donations can still be made online at <http://health.springfieldmo.gov/helpanimals> or by sending a check to City of Springfield, attn: Pull Fee Donation, 320 E. Central St., Springfield MO, 65802. Any amount of money can be donated. The money is set aside in a fund that is used only for the purpose of paying for animal pull fees. The public can donate other items as well, including food, towels, collars and even beds.

Latichia Duffey of Halfway Home will be at the shelter at 8 a.m. Thursday morning, Oct. 31 to pull dogs for rescue. She and Animal Control staff will be available to media. Outlets interested in an interview can contact Mike Brothers, Public Information Administrator, (417) 874-1205.