

Thank you for being here and allowing me to speak with you this evening. You are here for the same reason I am because you care about the animals in our community.

My name is Pearl Sutton. I am president of Humane Net a coalition of animal shelters and rescues in the Tri County area. Humane Net was formed in 1999 to address animal issues in our community, it is our belief that by working together we can make a difference in the lives of many homeless, abused, and abandoned animals in the Tri County. I also serve on the board of South Carolina Animal Care and Control and the advisory committee for Trident Veterinary Technician Program. I am employed by Charleston Animal Society as Senior Director of Animal Services. I have worked for over 30 years as an animal advocate.

In 2013 over 20,000 animals were taken in by shelters in the Tri County area according to data collected from Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester County. Charleston Animal Shelter took in 8,858 animals, spayed and neutered 11,304 animals, adopted 5,128, treated 480 dogs for heartworms spending \$1,000 dollars a week on immiticide. The euthanasia rate for Charleston Animal Society in 2013 was 8%. State wide according to Pet Point a data collection program used by sixty three animal organizations in South Carolina 148,914 animals were brought into shelters and 32.6% of these animals were euthanized. That means 48,545 animals lost their lives in South Carolina because there were not enough homes or shelters simply could not afford to treat and place these animals. Many shelters do not collect data so these numbers only represent those shelters collecting data and reporting it to Pet Point.

The National Council on Pet Population recently did a study to explore the reasons for pet relinquishment to animal shelters. It determined that nearly a third of the dogs and cats entering shelters were animals that did have a homes but whose owners had relinquished them to a shelter. Most of these animals were not kittens and puppies, but adult dogs and cats whose chance for adoption from shelters were diminished. It was clear if these animals could have been kept in homes, and the human/animal bond strengthened the euthanasia rate could be reduced significantly. According to the research dogs and cats most likely to be relinquished were sexually intact and without veterinary care.

#### THE TOP FIVE REASONS WE GIVE UP OUR PETS

##### Dogs

1. Moving
2. Landlord issues
3. Cost of Pet maintenance (veterinary care)
4. No time for pet
5. Inadequate housing

##### Cats

1. Too many in house
2. Allergies
3. Moving Too
4. Cost of pet maintenance (veterinary care)
5. Landlord issues

The Humane Society of the United States reports that in 1970 animal shelters in the US were euthanizing about 15 million pets each year, we

are now down to close to 3 million every year. That is tremendous progress that's been made over the last four decades. But that is 3 million too many. During that same period, the number of dogs and cats in the US increased from 64 million to more than 160 million.

We work with many families and have learned that many times families calling actually don't want to relinquish their pet they have just had a temporary financial or other challenges they are dealing with. The challenges are many and often times heart wrenching. An owner who had to flee from her home due to domestic violence taking her pets with her to save both her life and theirs. We were able to give her pets the medical care they needed and help find foster care until she is able to care for herself and her pets. Saving lives and keeping families together is a vital part of what we do.

When an animal crosses into our care, no matter what care they may need whether it's medical, behavior, or other we are committed to saving its life. Please help us to continue these lifesaving efforts so that in 2015 48,545 animals in South Carolina will not lose their life.