



**HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**
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News Release

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New Partnership Improves Kent County Animal Shelter for Adopters and Cats

Grand Rapids, MI –Kent County Animal Shelter (KCAS) and Humane Society of West Michigan (HSWM) will begin changing the way they take in stray and/or unwanted cats, giving them a better opportunity at getting a second chance. Starting August 17, KCAS (our government-funded, open admission shelter) will only be accepting stray cats; HSWM will only be accepting owner surrendered cats. HSWM and KCAS expect this change will positively affect the live release rates of Kent County and continue to collaborate to improve the outcome for all animals brought to them.

In the last few months, KCAS and HSWM, the two largest shelters in Kent County discussed community statistics on feline euthanasia and feline intake into both facilities. HSWM has been successful with placement of owner surrendered cats, but does not have the kennel space and set up for holding stray cats. Often, KCAS is near- or at- capacity for cats due to a mandated stray hold. If space is limited, owner-surrendered cats aren't placed for adoption; they are euthanized. Historically, the majority of KCAS's cat intake has been stray cats and HSWM's cat intake has been owner surrendered.

"Communities that have a municipal and non-profit shelter working side by side sometimes find it beneficial to enact policies and procedures to direct all owner surrender cats to the non-profit shelter while the municipal shelter only takes in strays," said Carly Luttmann, Program Supervisor at KCAS. "We are hopeful that by implementing this strategy, we will see a higher success rate for placement of adoptable owner surrender cats at HSWM and a high success rate for placement of adoptable stray cats and more successful return to owners of stray cats at KCAS. It also makes sense for the public to just have one place to go looking for their lost cats."

With the new BISSELL Cattery Enrichment Center, HSWM has seen an increase in the amount of owner surrendered cats who are able to be adopted. "Typically cats coming into a shelter situation need some time to adjust," said Namiko Ota-Noveskey, Director of Animal Behavior and Care. "We have been successfully able to place cats that are a bit shyer and just need some time to get used to their new surroundings."

HSWM manages their admission and asks the public to schedule an appointment before bringing any animal. Appointments can be made by contacting via phone at 616-453-8900 or via email, admitting@hswestmi.org. Hours of intake are Tuesday-Friday 10am-5pm and Saturdays, 11am-4pm. For more information on intake policies, visit www.hswestmi.org.

KCAS accepts animals during open hours, Monday-Friday 9:30am-1pm and 2pm-6:30 pm. For more information on intake policies, please visit www.accesskent.com/kcas or call 616-632-7300