

# The Write Stuff

GETTING THE MEDIA TO SHARE YOUR STORY



Katie Pemberton

*Marketing & Communications Supervisor, Memphis Animal Services*

# What do I know?

---

- Bachelor's Degree in Communications/PR
- 20 years experience in Marketing & Communications, including:
  - 6.5 years of marketing & communications experience in a municipal shelter (Memphis Animal Services)
  - 4 years of marketing & communications experience in a nonprofit shelter (Humane Society of Memphis & Shelby County)
  - 3 years of experience at a PR firm, where I pitched media and media-trained clients across all industries
- Volunteered as dogwalker at local Humane Society for 3 years
- Fostered about 25 dogs
- Currently have three dogs & one cat (plus two kids!)



# Who is Memphis Animal Services?

---

- Animal control and sheltering agency for city of Memphis
  - Also take animals from Shelby County officers & citizens
- Constituents of 775,000+
- Took in 9000+ animals in 2022 & saved 86% of them









Memphis Animal Services  
**2022 Impact**



**9,030** Total Animal Intake

**85.92%** Total Animal Save Rate

**24.7** Animals entered MAS per day on average



**26,107**  
 Requests for Animal Control Assistance

**4,684**  
 Volunteer Hours

**292**  
 Dog Field Trips

**1,964**  
 Pets Fostered  
(up from 1,851 in 2021)

**30%**  
 Pets from MAS Lost/Found Reports Returned Home

**1,033**  
 Enforced Spay/Neuter Ordinance with Court Summons

**288**  
 Owned & Community Pet Spays & Neuters

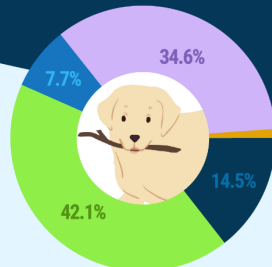


**4,288** Families Helped By Our Pet Resource Center

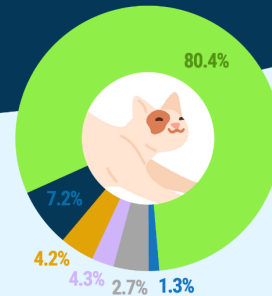
Helped **2,461 families** keep their pets | Helped **1,335 families** rehome their pets | Assisted **492 finders**

Who is in the audience?

**Outcomes**



Adoption  
 Return to field  
 Return to home  
 Transfer out  
 Died/Lost in care  
 Euthanasia





# Overcoming Media PTSD

---

- The media WANTS to help animals
- If they believe you do too, they'll help you
- Step 1 is building their trust



## Beat Them to the Punch

---

The first time they talk to you should NOT be when they call you because something's wrong!



# Give the media good experiences FIRST

---

Build partnership and trust by keeping them informed of the great things happening at your organization.



Even if they don't cover it, they're watching, noticing, and forming opinions.



# Here's a look at MAS' save rate amidst a protest

2022: Nearly 9,000 animals brought in

Avg. almost 25 animals per day

About 86% saved over last year

MEMPHIS 9:20  
CW30

01:01 / 01:23

In 2014, the save-rate at Memphis Animal Services was barely 50 percent. By 2023, the save-rate had risen 83 percent.



2014: Save rate barely 50%

Had to euthanize half of its animals

Now: Save rate 83.5%

## PROTEST AT MEMPHIS ANIMAL SERVICES

# How do you do that?

---

## **THE TOOLS**

**NEWS RELEASE**  
(aka press  
release)

**MEDIA ALERT**

**PITCH**



# NEWS RELEASE

*also called:  
Press Release  
Media Release*

Most formal type of media writing

Media should be able to copy and paste directly from your news release

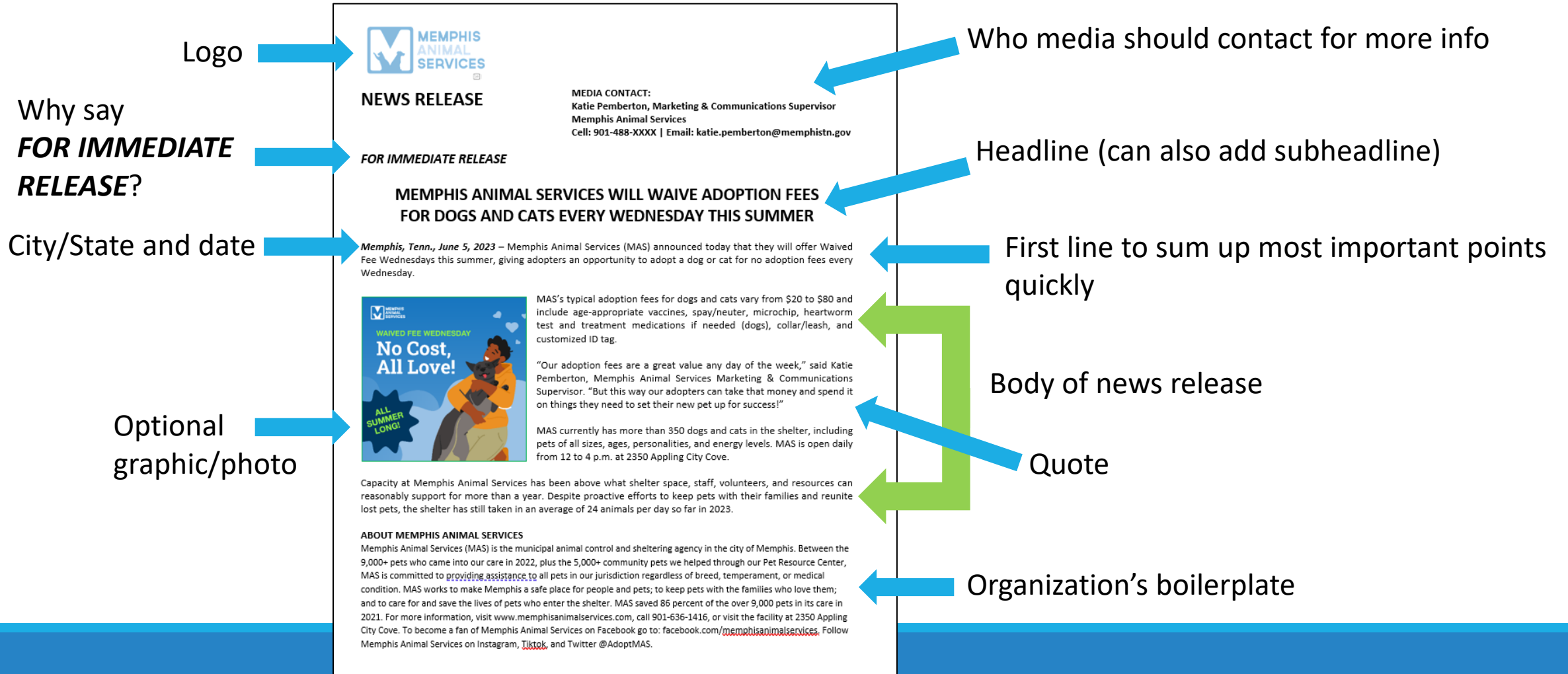
News releases should be used for *\*NEWS\**

Includes quote(s) from involved organizations

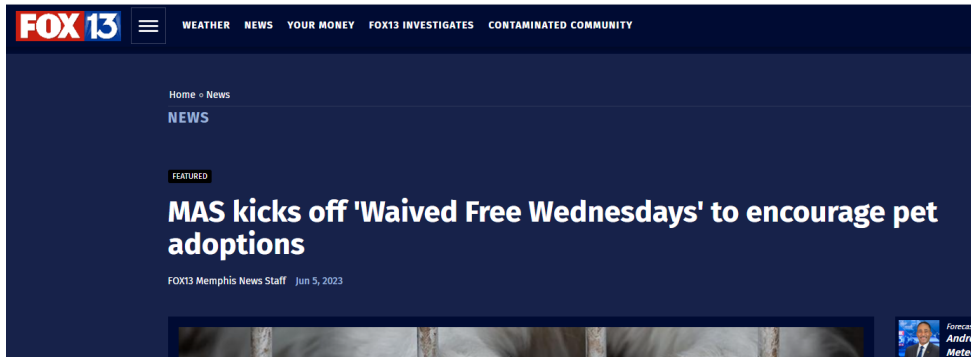
Can include photo and caption to help illustrate the story

Media know that you're sending a news release to all other media and don't expect it's just for them

# Tool: Anatomy of a News Release



# Results: News Release



MEMPHIS, Tenn. - Memphis Animal Services (MAS) announced they will offer Waived Fee Wednesdays this summer, giving adopters an opportunity to adopt a dog or cat for no adoption fees every Wednesday.

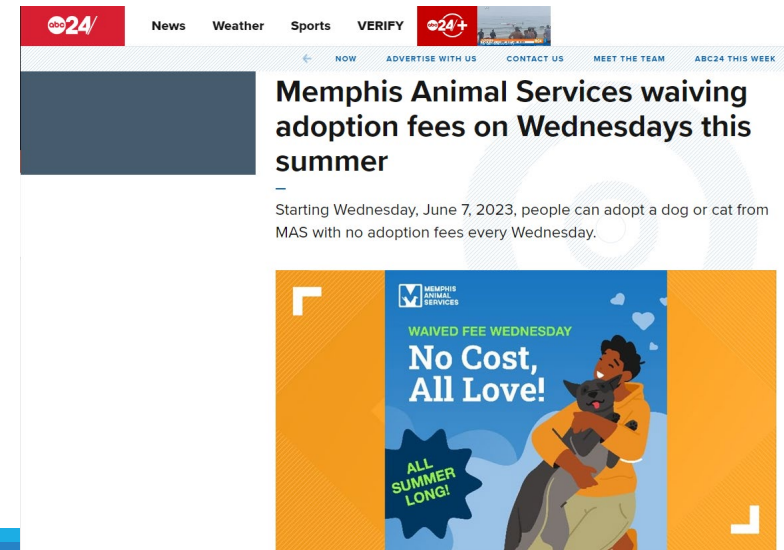
MAS will start the promotion on June 7.

MAS's typical adoption fees for dogs and cats vary from \$20-\$80 and include age-appropriate vaccines, spay/neuter, microchip, heartworm test and treatment medications if needed (dogs), collar/leash, and customized ID tag.

"Our adoption fees are a great value any day of the week," said Katie Pemberton, Memphis Animal Services Marketing & Communications Supervisor. "But this way our adopters can take that money and spend it on things they need to set their new pet up for success!"

MAS currently has more than 350 dogs and cats in the shelter, including pets of all sizes, ages, personalities, and energy levels.

MAS is open daily from noon-4 p.m. on Appling City Cove.





# Tool: Collaborative News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Memphis Animal Services Celebrates Animal Services Officer Lawrence Higginbottom's Selection by National Animal Care & Control Association as "Animal Control Officer of the Year"

**MEMPHIS, TENN. (November 4, 2022)** – The National Animal Care & Control Association understands that the work done by animal care and control professionals across the country is physically and emotionally demanding and requires individuals of the strongest character. NACA has been recognizing individuals, agencies, organizations, and state associations for more than 25 years on the national level for their service within the animal care and control field, and they recently announced the winners of their seven 2022 Annual Awards:

- **Animal Control Officer of the Year:** [Lawrence Higginbottom](#) (Memphis, TN)
- Humane Law Enforcement Officer of the Year: [Dany Flores-Lopez](#) (Deerwood, MD)
- Animal Care and Control Employee of the Year: [Jessica Every](#) (Land O'Lakes, FL)
- Bill Lehman Memorial Award: [Jacob Kamins](#) (Corvallis, OR)
- Diane Lane Memorial Award: [Andy Heuer](#) (Davenport, IA)
- Outstanding Animal Care and Control Award: [Stratford County Animal Control](#) (Stratford, CT)
- Outstanding State Association Award: [Louisiana Animal Care & Control Association](#) (LA)

"Officer Lawrence Higginbottom is a shining example of what an Animal Services Officer should be in a progressive animal services agency," said Jerrica Owen, NACA Executive Director. "NACA is proud to recognize an officer who so enthusiastically embraces the lifesaving elements of community-supported sheltering, like reuniting pets with their families in the field whenever possible."

Memphis Animal Services held a friendly competition in the summer of 2022 among its Animal Services Officers to see who could reunite the most pets in the field without bringing the pet back to the shelter, which is better for multiple reasons:

- It doesn't subject the pet to the stress of the [shelter](#)
- It doesn't expose the pet to the potential germs of the [shelter](#)
- It reduces the amount of time the pet parent spends worrying about their [pet](#)
- It eliminates any boarding fees the pet parent may have to [pay](#)
- It keeps kennels open at the shelter so there's more room to help incoming pets in [need](#)
- It helps keep officers connected with an uplifting, positive aspect of their job: keeping families [together](#)



Officer Higginbottom was the winner of this "Field RTO" competition, and he has said that one of his favorite parts of his job is being able to bring someone back their pet before they even step foot in the shelter.

"Growing up I was always taught to do something that you love, and it'll never feel like a job," said Officer Higginbottom. "I am very honored and thankful to receive such an award, doing something that I genuinely love doing."

Keeping pets with families is a major focus of Memphis Animal Services, and shelter leadership ensures that staff prioritizes it through programs like MAS's robust pet reunification program as well as its Pet Resource Center, which helps connect pet parents with resources they may need to keep their pets.

"It's no longer enough in animal welfare to only care about animals. You [have to](#) care about people too," said Alexis Pugh, Director of Memphis Animal Services. "And that's one of Officer Higginbottom's strengths. He's gifted with both people and animals, and he believes they both deserve our respect and compassion."

### About Memphis Animal Services

Memphis Animal Services is the municipal animal control and sheltering agency in the city of Memphis. As an open access pet resource center, MAS does not deny assistance to any pet in its jurisdiction regardless of breed, temperament, or medical condition. MAS saved 89 percent of the more than 8,000 pets in its care in 2021. For more information, visit [memphisanimalservices.com/](http://memphisanimalservices.com/), call 901-636-1416, or visit the facility at 2350 Appling City Cove. To become a fan of Memphis Animal Services on Facebook go to: [facebook.com/memphisanimalservices](https://facebook.com/memphisanimalservices). Follow Memphis Animal Services on [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), and [Twitter](#).

### About NACA

The National Animal Care & Control Association (NACA) is a non-profit organization committed to setting the standard of professionalism in animal welfare and public safety through training, networking, and advocacy. NACA was formed in 1978 to assist its members to perform their duties in a professional manner while upholding the principals of the human – animal bond. Animal care and control professionals perform a variety of services and are often a vital connection between people, animals, and the environment. NACA works to support animal care and control professionals by providing standardized trainings, resources and setting the standard for animal welfare field services. [nacanet.org](http://nacanet.org)

# Results: News Release



abc 24/7 News Weather Sports VERIFY 24+ 5PM

← NOW ADVERTISE WITH US CONTACT US MEET THE TEAM ABC24 THIS WEEK

ANIMALS

## National association names MAS employee 'Animal Control Officer of the Year'

Memphis Animal Shelter officer Lawrence Higginbottom holds one of only seven awards announced by the National Animal Care & Control Association for 2022.



METRO

## Memphis man named Animal Control Officer of the Year

By Don Wade, Daily Memphian Updated: November 07, 2022 10:32 AM CT | Published: October 31, 2022 3:51 PM CT

Lawrence Higginbottom, an employee of Memphis Animal Services, has been selected Animal Control Officer of the Year by the National Animal Care & Control Association (NACA).

This past summer, MAS held a contest among its animal services officers in an effort to increase the number of pets reunited with owners. Higginbottom also won that competition.

The renewed MAS emphasis on reuniting owners with their pets also was the subject of a story in The Daily Memphian story, and Higginbottom's work in the field was featured prominently.



Advertise with Us Bluff City Life Contests Chick-fil-A Community Champions FedEx St. Jude Championship YMCA Baseball

### ACTION NEWS 5

Watch Live Digital Desk Latest Video News First Alert Weather Sports Traffic Share Your Pics

## Memphis Animal Services officer receives national recognition for reuniting lost pets with owners



24 seconds left



BRIGHT SPOT  
MAS EMPLOYEE GETS BIG HONOR

OF QUIGLEY

MEDIA ALERT

# Tool: Media Alert (Event)

ALERT: Ribbon Cutting Saturday 1pm - new MAS play yards w/ Liberty Bowl turf



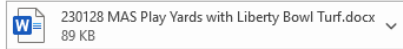
Pemberton, Katie

To newsdesk@localmemphis.com; sneely@abc24.com

Retention Policy 2 Years Policy (2 years)

CoM Public

You forwarded this message on 1/28/2023 9:12 AM.



☺ Reply Reply All Forward 📧 ⋮

Thu 1/26/2023 12:40 PM

Expires 1/26/2025

Hello!

This Saturday 1/28 at 1pm, Memphis Animal Services will celebrate the completion of our new and improved play yards (**featuring recycled turf from the Liberty Bowl!**) with a VIP ribbon cutting.

I'd like to invite your team to cover the event. See attached news release. See below for a screengrab from our security camera showing an aerial view of the status of the play yards this morning where you can see the Liberty Bowl football field markings on the turf. **Note: this photo is just for your reference and is NOT an official photo for release.**

**Event date/time:** Saturday 1/28 from 1-2pm

**Event location:** Memphis Animal Services, 2350 Appling City Cove, Memphis, TN 38133

**Visuals:** Dogs playing in new yards; ribbon cutting with MAS and possibly other city staff, adoptable dog, and several Tiger football players and Tiger football cheerleaders; guests including MAS volunteers and donors

**Interview opportunities:** Memphis Animal Services Director Alexis Pugh

**Event contact:** Katie Pemberton, Marketing & Communications Supervisor, Memphis Animal Services

**Event contact cell:** 901-████████

**Event contact email:** [katie.pemberton@memphistn.gov](mailto:katie.pemberton@memphistn.gov)





# Results: Media Alert (Event)

Search

About Us | Contact Us | Email Preferences | Help



MEMPHIS EVENTS METRO BUSINESS OPINION SPORTS ARTS & CULTURE FOOD SUBURBS NEIGHBORHOODS PODCASTS

CITY OF MEMPHIS SHELBY COUNTY STATE GOVERNMENT EDUCATION CRIMINAL JUSTICE ELECTIONS SPIRIT OF MEMPHIS THE EARLY WORD

SPRIT OF MEMPHIS

## Memphis Animal Services debuts play yards with stadium AstroTurf

By [Alicia Davidson](#), Daily Memphian

Updated: February 07, 2023 8:19 AM CT | Published: February 05, 2023 4:00 AM CT



Memphis Animal Services officially opened dog play yards updated with recycled AstroTurf from Simmons Bank Liberty Stadium, Saturday, Feb 4, 2023.

A ribbon cutting included a special appearance by members of the University of Memphis football team and cheerleading squad.

Improvements to MAS' new play yard include replacing the grass and mud areas with recently removed Liberty Stadium AstroTurf, installing two new shade structures and replacing the gravel walkways with concrete paths.

[Animal lovers hopeful about proposed changes to city ordinances](#)



University of Memphis football coach Ryan Silverfield and others play with shelter dogs on new astro turf play yards at Memphis Animal Services on Saturday, Feb. 4, 2023. (Ziggy Mack/Special to The Daily Memphian)

# Tool: Media Alert (Media Opportunity)

---

National Puppy Day at MAS tomorrow



Pemberton, Katie

To  desk@wmctv.com

Retention Policy 2 Years Policy (2 years)



CoM Public



You replied to this message on 3/23/2023 1:47 PM.



2023 MAS National Puppy Day.png  
938 KB



Wed 3/22/2023 3:09 PM

Expires 3/22/2025

National Puppy Day is tomorrow, March 23, and Memphis Animal Services would love to celebrate by getting LOTS of the nearly 100 puppies in our care adopted! We're offering \$5 adoptions for puppies under 5 months for the next 5 days! \$5 puppy adoptions will be available through end of day on Monday, March 27.

We are available for interviews and puppy B-roll for the rest of the day today as well as intermittently in the morning. Please call or text my cell at 901-██████ if you'd like to set something up!

Thanks!

**Katie Pemberton (she/her)**

*Marketing & Communications Supervisor*

# Results: Media Alert (Media Opportunity)



## Memphis Animal Services offering \$5 puppy adoptions through Monday



Puppy for adoption at Memphis Animal Services (MAS) (Action News 5)

By Lydian Kennin

Published: Mar. 23, 2023 at 7:55 PM CDT



MEMPHIS, Tenn. (WMC) - It's National Puppy Day!

Memphis Animal Services (MAS) is celebrating by offering \$5 adoptions for puppies under five months of age Friday through Monday.

Nearly 100 puppies are currently in the shelter's care.

"If you're not ready to commit permanently to adopting a puppy, we need puppy fosters," said MAS director Alexis Pugh. "We have bottle baby puppies, we have puppies that eat gruel that can eat on their own, but they need a little bit of extra care, and then we have older puppies as well."



## Puppy-palooza! For 5 days, get puppies 5-months and under for \$5 at Memphis Animal Services

In honor of National Puppy Day, MAS is offering puppies under five-months-old for just \$5 through end of day on Monday, March 27.





PITCH










# Tool: Pitch

pet story idea for May/June

 Pemberton, Katie  
To  editor@focuslgbt.com

Retention Policy 2 Years Policy (2 years) Expires 3/20/2024

 CoM Public

  Reply  Reply All  Forward  

Sun 3/20/2022 12:13 PM

Hello!

I handle marketing/communications for Memphis Animal Services, and I was just reviewing your media kit. I noticed that it said you frequently cover pet topics, and I wanted to introduce myself and offer us as a resource! As the city's animal control and sheltering agency, we saved about 89% of the 8000 pets we took in last year, and we helped another several thousand families keep their pets through our Pet Resource Center. We have many lifesaving programs from of course pet adoption to fostering and volunteering, as well as the efforts I mentioned to keep pets with their families. We were happy to be contacted by Tricia Dewey for the pandemic puppy article she did a while back!

I'm not sure if you're still planning your May/June issue, but one topic I think might be fun would be Kitten Season! It is the time of year (spring and summer) that shelters around the country are inundated with kittens, from newborn orphaned kittens that must be bottle-fed every 2-3 hours like a human baby, to "toddler" kittens that are eating on their own, to nursing mothers with their babies. Last year MAS took in about 600 orphaned newborns and another 600 "toddler" kittens. We really rely on the community's help to save these tiny babies, from foster families to care for them to supporters who can donate the supplies we need, like special kitten formula. Is this a story you think could be a good fit for Focus? I already have many cute photos, and I'd be happy to put you in touch with kitten fosters for interviews—I feel confident I could line up a few fosters who belong to LGBT+ community as well. If you're interested and you'd like me to write it, I'm happy to, but I understand if you prefer for your writers to represent the LGBT+ community.

# Results: Pitch

---



## Kitten Season: Fostering Saves Hundreds of Lives

© Katie Pemberton 📅 May 2022

Last year at Memphis Animal Services, the city of Memphis's municipal animal shelter, everyday people volunteering as foster parents saved the lives of nearly 600 newborn orphaned kittens. Without foster families, these tiny felines, often affectionately referred to as "bottle babies," would die, because they're too little to eat or eliminate on their own.

"On a practical level, they're a lot like human newborn infants who have to be fed every few hours and have their 'diapers changed'," said MAS Cat Shelter Supervisor Dani Rutherford. "The best caretaker for them is Mom, but in situations where Mom isn't available, we rely on foster parents to step in to save their lives."

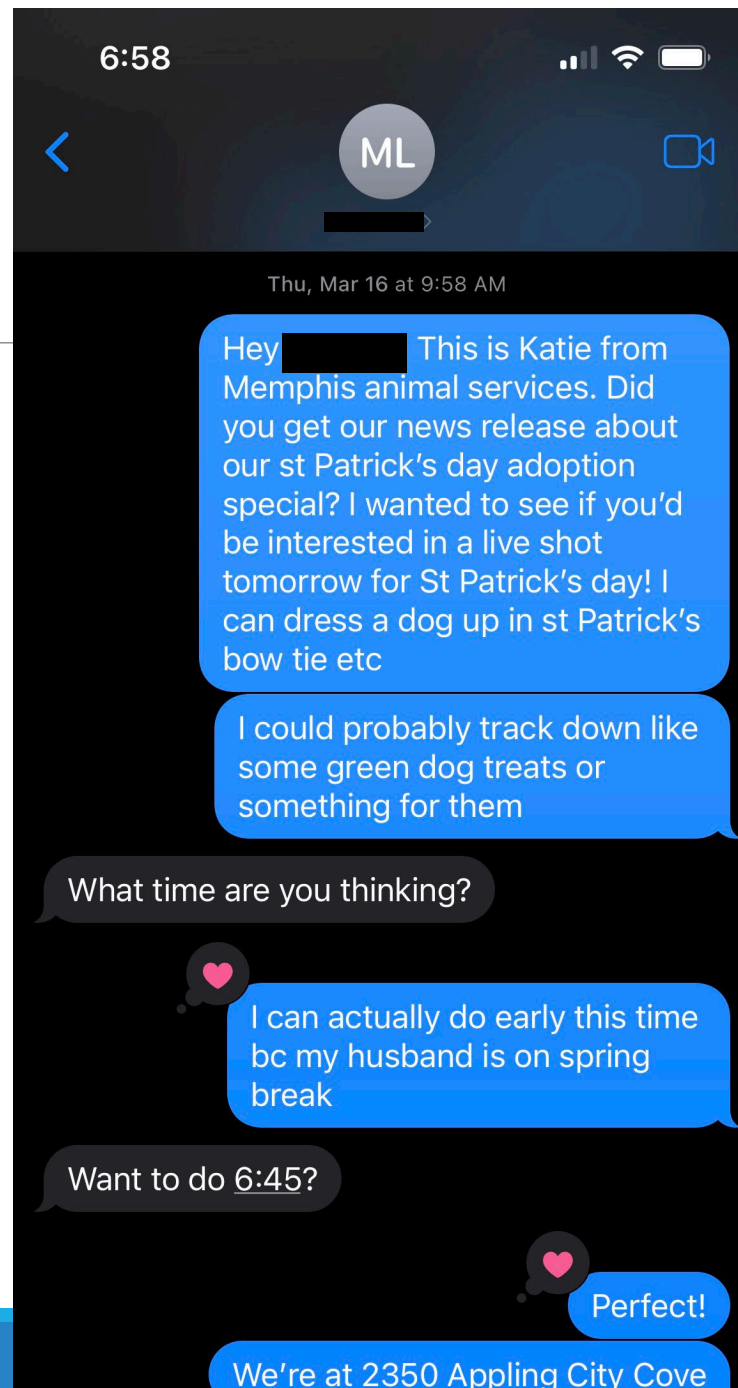
These kittens are often the unintentional offspring of community cats who have not yet been humanely trapped, spayed/neutered, and returned to their outdoor habitats. Nature can be harsh, and there are a number of reasons a cat may be forced to abandon her kittens, from lacking maternal instincts to getting injured and others.

Regardless of the reason, orphaned newborn kittens need a lot of support to survive, and that's where foster families come in, says Rutherford.

"We provide everything you need from the kitten formula to the training on how to care for the babies," Rutherford said. "Although there's no replacement for Mom, our foster parents do everything the kittens need— from bottle-feeding them and helping them eliminate every

# Tool: Pitch

---



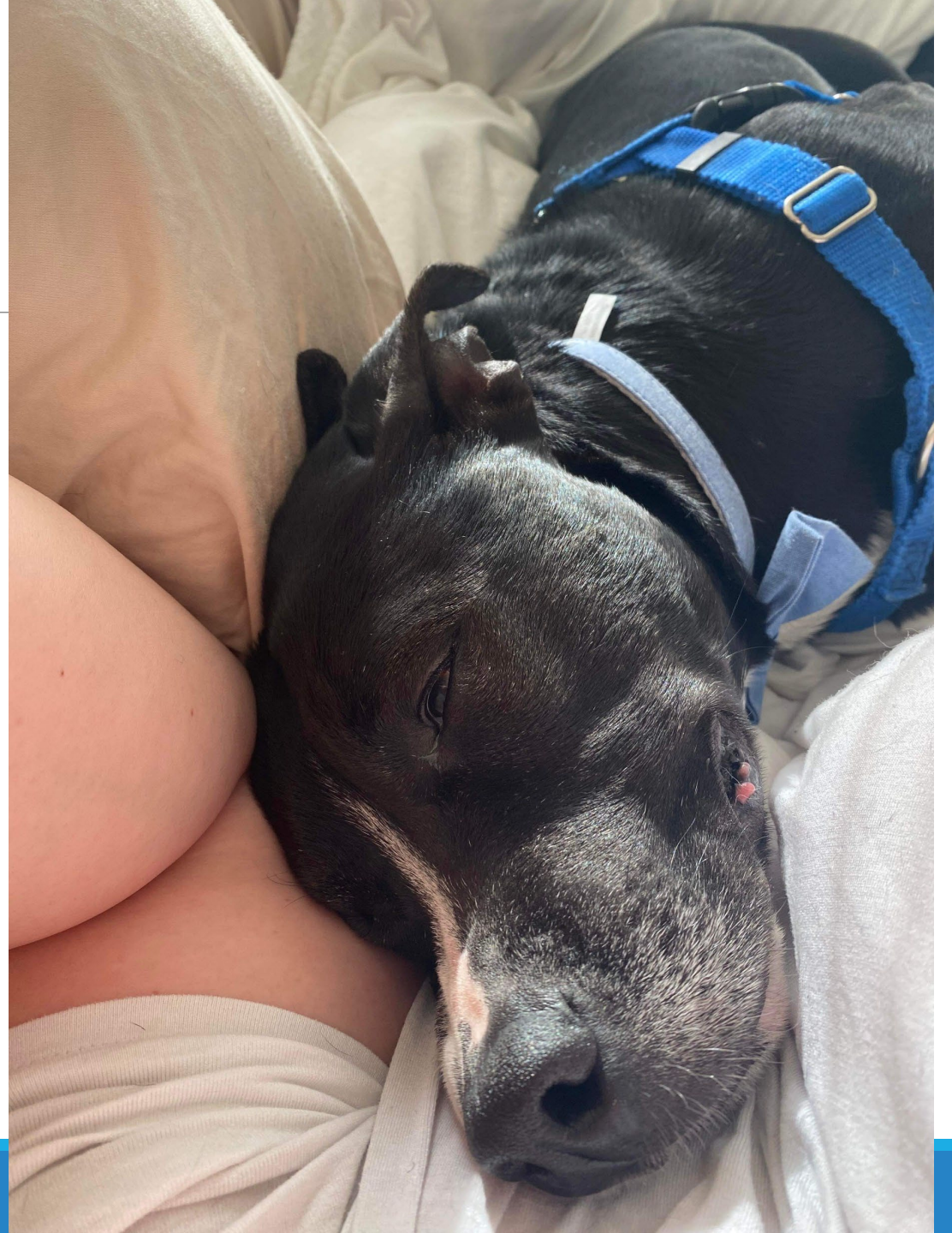


# Results: Pitch

---



This amazing dog  
(Lander) got an  
amazing home!





# Keep the long game in mind

## MY SECOND DAY AT MAS

[Home](#) >

### Memphis Shelter's New Vet Comes From Front Lines

By Bill Dries

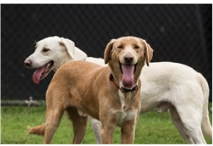
[Tweet](#) [Recommend 322](#) [Share](#)

[Print](#) | [Front Page](#) | [Email this story](#) | [Email reporter](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

The new veterinary medical director of Memphis Animal Services has taken in a lot of abused animals, working on some of the worst cases of animal abuse in recent years.

Dr. Mary Manspeaker, who came to the shelter about two months ago, admits the post is different.

She comes to the city division from being medical director for field investigations and the response team of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Before that, she was a veterinary professional responder for ASPCA starting in 2012. She has also coordinated relief veterinary services to 40 hospitals in three states.



Memphis Animal Services posted an 84 percent live release rate in November, a record for the city agency.

(Daily News File/Andrew J. Breig)



Dr. Mary Manspeaker

"We weren't in one place for very long and almost all of our animals were part of cruelty investigations," Manspeaker said. "We're a little bit different from your traditional sheltering. ... Comparing the two is kind of difficult.

"What I'm used to is not traditional sheltering. As far as the overall health in this shelter, I would say we are right on par with the ability to control

Pitched a local business paper on our new veterinary medical director

## THREE MONTHS LATER

[Home](#) >

### New Face of Memphis Animal Services Begins to Show

By Maria Zoccola

[Tweet](#) [Recommend 954](#) [Share](#)

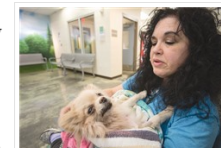
[Print](#) | [Front Page](#) | [Email this story](#) | [Comments \(8\)](#)

When you walk through the doors of Memphis Animal Services, you may not recognize the place. Euthanasia rates are low. Relationships with local rescue groups are strong. Community outreach is booming. And there's a new director at the helm: [Alexis Pugh](#), a fresh pair of hands for a shelter that has had a rocky past.

And there's no getting around that rocky past. Even as recently as 10 years ago, the shelter was euthanizing more than 80 percent of the animals that walked through its doors. At its lowest point, MAS made national news in 2009 when the shelter was raided on animal cruelty charges.

"We were the BP after the oil spill," Pugh said. "We had a brand issue. We have a long way to go to hit the goals that we want to achieve, but a lot of it starts with just changing a negative cultural perception of who we are and what we do."

And that change is coming. The end of February put MAS at a save rate of well over 80 percent – an impressive figure considering that MAS takes in about 9,000 animals every year.



Tails of Hope Dog Rescue foster mom Ginger Natoli recently visited Memphis Animal Services to pick up a sleepy Pomeranian that arrived at the facility the previous day.

(Daily News/Andrew J. Breig)

Same paper published a story showing faith in our new administration

From: Pemberton, Katie  
 To: desk@wmctv.com  
 Subject: Holiday adoption promotion at Memphis Animal Services  
 Message: 161219 Memphis Animal Services Holiday Adoption Special.docx (201 KB)  
 POSTER - 31 Through the 31st.jpg (184 KB)

**Dec. 19**

Hello all!

Please see attached release with information about the \$31 Through the 31<sup>st</sup> adoption promotion that Memphis Animal Services is hosting starting Tuesday, Dec. 21.

Let me know if you have any questions, or if you'd like to set up a time for us to bring a dog or cat in-studio to discuss the promotion.

Thanks!

From: Pemberton, Katie  
 To: canewsphoto@gmail.com; john.sale@commercialappeal.com; Callahan, Jody; jacinthia.jones@commercialappeal.com; kayleigh.skinner@commercialappeal.com; craig.collier@yahoo.com  
 Subject: Help us reach 5,500 adoptions in 2016

**MEMPHIS ANIMAL SERVICES ASKS COMMUNITY TO HELP REACH 5,500 ADOPTIONS FOR 2016**

December 29, 2016 - As of yesterday, Memphis Animal Services has adopted out and/or transferred 54 animals. There are three days left in the year, and we are reaching out to the media and to the community to help reach 5,500 adoptions/transfers before the year is out.

We invite *The Commercial Appeal* and other media to come to our facility at 2350 Appling City dogs and/or cats and share information with your readers about our \$31 Through the 31<sup>st</sup> adoption promotion.

Memphis Animal Services has improved our live release rate (the number of animals who are adopted, transferred to a rescue group or other shelter, or returned to owner) this year in working with MAS Administrator Alexis Pugh of eventually not having to euthanize animals for space. In November, our live release rate was at an all-time shelter high of 84%. December has been a much more difficult month in terms of adoptions, and we need the public's help to place as many animals as possible.

Media are invited to visit anytime during our business hours to film adoptable animals and/or cats. Thursday, Dec. 29, from 1 to 7 p.m.  
 Friday, Dec. 30, from 12 to 5 p.m.  
 Saturday, Dec. 31, from 12 to 4 p.m.

**Dec. 29**

Please call or text my cell at 901-██████ to set up an appointment time if you plan to cover the promotion. My cell is available and here.

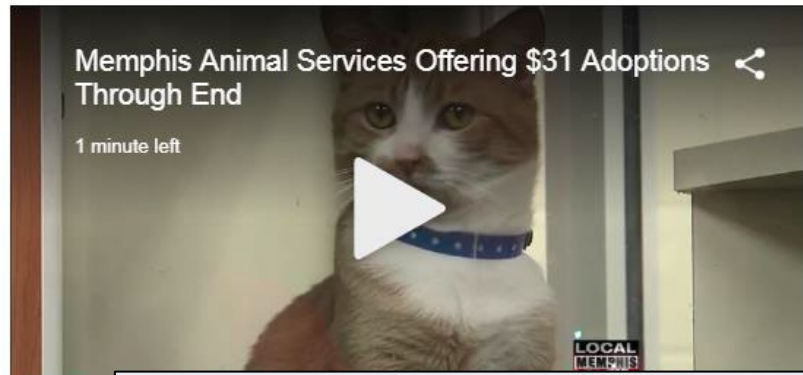
If you prefer for me to provide graphics and/or photos, I can certainly do that as well—just let me know what you need.

Thank you for your support!

Katie Pemberton  
 Community Engagement Specialist  
 Memphis Animal Services

Local News  
**Memphis Animal Services Offering \$31 Adoptions Through End Of Year**  
 By: Kim Chaney  
 Posted: Dec 29, 2016 07:48 PM CST  
 Updated: Jan 01, 2017 07:13 PM CST

**Dec. 29**



From: Pemberton, Katie  
 To: newsdesk@localmemphis.com  
 Subject: update on MAS goal of 5,500 adoptions for 2016

Hello!

I wanted to update you on the story you ran last night about our race to complete 5,500 adoptions/transfers in 2016. Yesterday we had 39 adoptions/transfers, so that brings our total to 54 adoptions. We hope to complete today and tomorrow.

We truly appreciate your support on this effort as we work toward our short-term goal of reaching 5,500 for 2016 and our long-term goal of improving our live release rate. You can play a major role in saving lives by helping us get our adoption message out to the community, and you did that when you showed up for these pets yesterday. Truly, thank you. You don't get thanked enough.

Today we close at 5pm, so I can let you know our total from today before 6pm, and I can speak to the clerks about letting me know the Saturday total (we close at 4pm on Saturday).

Thanks!

Katie Pemberton  
 Community Engagement Specialist  
 Memphis Animal Services

**Dec. 30**

**Dec. 31**



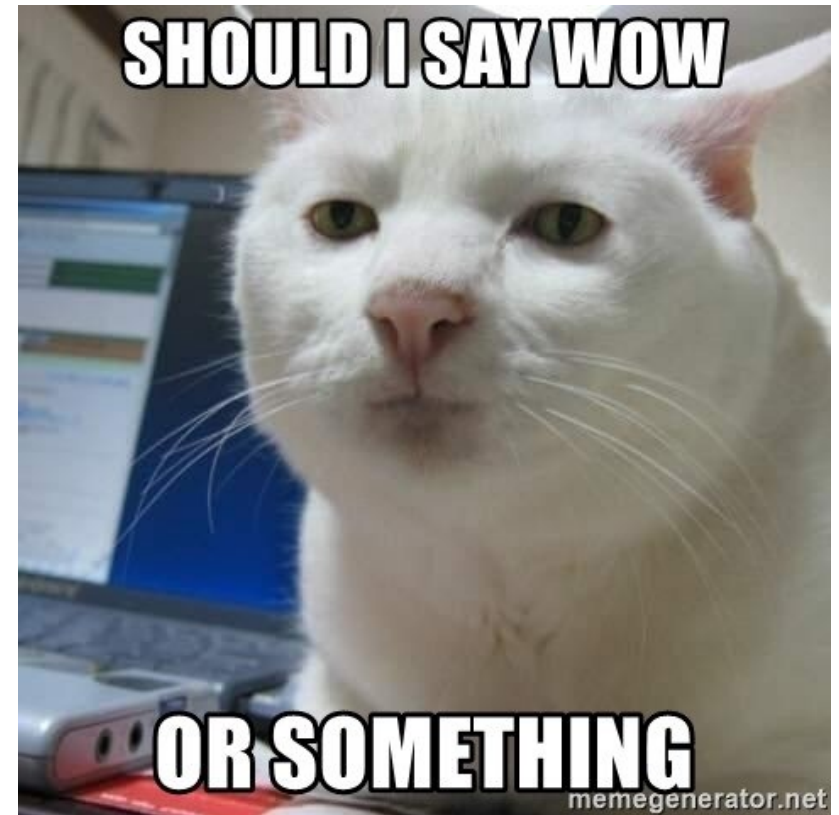
But the short game saves lives, too!

---

This media outreach led to:

**41% increase in  
adoptions**

**132% increase in  
rescue transfers**



# Rule #1 of PR

---



Don't be dishonest or unethical!

Then you'll never worry about media finding out about something.



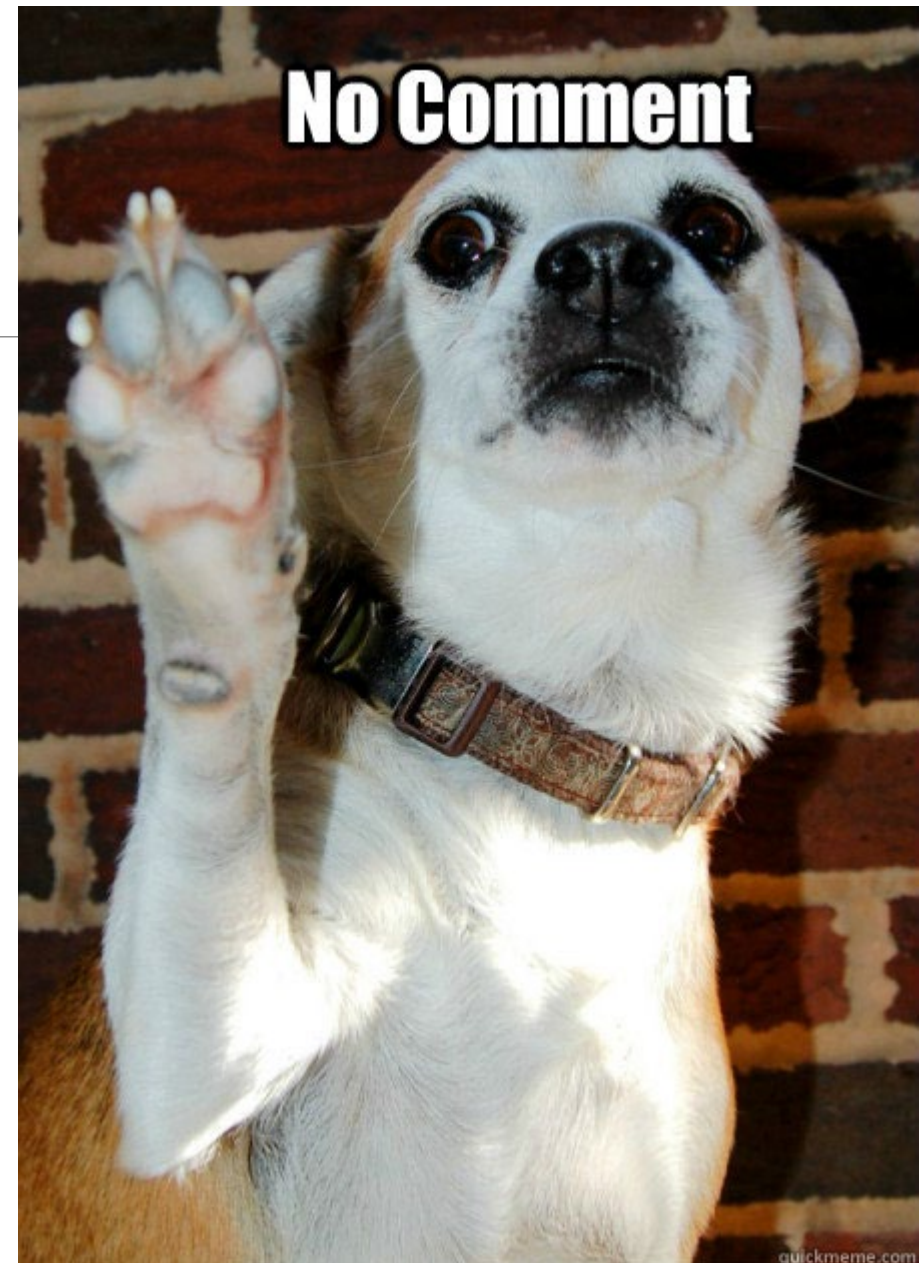
## Rule #2 of PR

---

Unless you've been ordered to  
by an attorney,

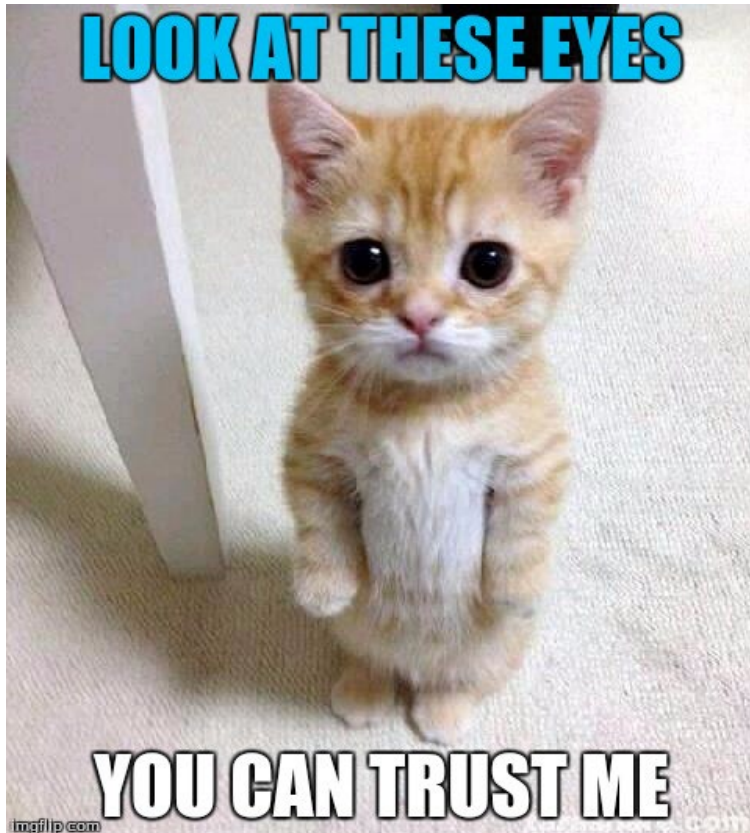
**NEVER SAY  
"NO COMMENT"**

They hear, "I'm hiding  
something!"



# Build Mutual Trust

---



- Know what your goal is and share that with the media and in interviews
- Be upfront about how close you are to reaching your goal (or how far)
- Tell them what you don't want to happen
- Tell them what you need!

# Turn “Oh no!” into “YES!”

Oh no! A media call about euthanasia!

From: Pemberton, Katie  
To: 'Kimberly Wheeler'

Subject: RE: Information Request from Local 24 News

Hi Katie! We are seeing talk on social media about several dogs set to be euthanized tomorrow, if not adopted. Also, saw the post below from Critical Memphis Animals. Can you tell us how many animals could be put down tomorrow? Are you or Alexis available for an interview regarding this?

[Critical Memphis Animals](#)

[53 mins](#) ·

CRITICAL MEMPHIS ANIMALS, YET AGAIN.

▶ PER MAS 12/13, ▶

There are a lot of dogs on here for no reason except the length of time they have been here. There are a lot of staff favorites on this page. The numbers coming in have us backed against a wall and incredibly tough decisions are having to be made. The nicer the dog is, the longer they tend to stay, both in terms of towards people and towards dogs. Please help us avoid running euthanasia tomorrow. This week has been awful. We are running euthanasia again today and still will not have enough kennels for the animals already physically in our building.

[https://www.facebook.com/CriticalMemphisAnimals/?\\_tn\\_=-kC-R&eid=ARCXtTuqzFp4zSdOBxLfFJzFQzPj5-DWPj51vKJ7HBvYrGolRL3eiqtpMuPz9jz3sCw18HJfCHTckoG&hc\\_ref=ARTBTDExehaoHCglFvqfQ1ju1CyQtcXLPutd85bci2tbgvh03SaO4zKx0K7wJKKLWzM&fref=nf&\\_xts\\_\\_\[0\]=68.ARA3XKJTWZo4p7sKjmdj6-R6\\_WVSnR2Ym3P\\_N4ezUHpFJF1k7Pnmb3cZefB6NaMs5FZd4NRN-ij41v--d5rHg3ryT-XLsZhmslw7j5MTtoPMjGqZYIdUAOJAUw\\_k1Fkp8QT6vykgha0nRIpugvF40YKCF71viTe90hFsk-VDJa5LM1OBEIcqMUixrdQ0iceZ0t3rz8TOBvwVrA1C-gpPzVm19CO4S0dBySKP-uj7\\_RCJ1XbubSj6dFt0fyN-h3JNKk5xe-hLNO0Wq77vcmigKVlksd10NDiD\\_uxa9dRT3Lohs1V6LB5fHkc3j9BDAADplTz6KeUWZ8ouz](https://www.facebook.com/CriticalMemphisAnimals/?_tn_=-kC-R&eid=ARCXtTuqzFp4zSdOBxLfFJzFQzPj5-DWPj51vKJ7HBvYrGolRL3eiqtpMuPz9jz3sCw18HJfCHTckoG&hc_ref=ARTBTDExehaoHCglFvqfQ1ju1CyQtcXLPutd85bci2tbgvh03SaO4zKx0K7wJKKLWzM&fref=nf&_xts__[0]=68.ARA3XKJTWZo4p7sKjmdj6-R6_WVSnR2Ym3P_N4ezUHpFJF1k7Pnmb3cZefB6NaMs5FZd4NRN-ij41v--d5rHg3ryT-XLsZhmslw7j5MTtoPMjGqZYIdUAOJAUw_k1Fkp8QT6vykgha0nRIpugvF40YKCF71viTe90hFsk-VDJa5LM1OBEIcqMUixrdQ0iceZ0t3rz8TOBvwVrA1C-gpPzVm19CO4S0dBySKP-uj7_RCJ1XbubSj6dFt0fyN-h3JNKk5xe-hLNO0Wq77vcmigKVlksd10NDiD_uxa9dRT3Lohs1V6LB5fHkc3j9BDAADplTz6KeUWZ8ouz)

**Kim Wheeler**  
Assignment Manager  
WATN-TV Local 24  
WLMT-TV CW 30 Memphis  
Memphis, TN  
901-321-7668 Assignment Desk  
901-321-7520 Direct  
[kwheeler@localmemphis.com](mailto:kwheeler@localmemphis.com)  
[newsdesk@localmemphis.com](mailto:newsdesk@localmemphis.com)  
[www.localmemphis.com](http://www.localmemphis.com)

# Transparency: Don't be afraid to let them help!

---

From: Pemberton, Katie  
To: 'Kimberly Wheeler'  
Cc:  
Subject: RE: Information Request from Local 24 News

Sent: Thu 12/13/2018 11:3

YES!

Hey Kim!

Thank you so much for reaching out. **We would love to do an interview about this and get the word out about the need for adoptions.** I just looked at our numbers and for December, we've taken in 48% more adult dogs (our most at-risk category) than December month-to-date last year. Our adoptions are up too (10% in the adult dog category) but it's not enough to keep up with this crisis-level intake. We have euthanized for space this week and we still don't have enough space. ANY large adult dog in a stand-up kennel getting adopted or rescued buys more time for dogs on the urgent list. I know yall just did the story about our \$18 adoptions (thank you by the way), but this story might be another way to let the public know about that and get some adopters in here.

I don't know if Alexis is available but I'm available anytime today.

Thanks!

Katie Pemberton  
Community Engagement Specialist  
Memphis Animal Services



# Transparency: Don't be afraid to let them help!

YES!

24% YOY increase in adoptions for the week following the story

Local News

## Memphis Animal Services In Desperate Need Of New Homes For Animals

By: Kim Chaney



Posted: Dec 13, 2018 05:17 PM CST

Updated: Dec 13, 2018 05:17 PM CST



MEMPHIS, Tenn. (localmemphis.com) - Extreme overcrowding at the Memphis Animal Services shelter results in deadly decisions. Several animals, mostly dogs, are being put down because the shelter is way over capacity.

Reps say the lack of space is odd for this time of year because a lot of people adopt around the holidays.

We're told the shelter took in about 220 animals just in the past week.

Adoptions are up, but not enough to keep up with the number of pets being taken in.

"Good dogs are losing their lives, which we never want," says Katie Pemberton, MAS' Community Engagement Specialist. "Pet owner populations is a problem that starts in the community. So we need the community to get involved to save these animals."

The shelter says it has no idea of how many animals will have to be put down. It says to help, you can volunteer, donate, adopt, or be a responsible pet owner and not contribute to the number of pets going into the shelter.

Right now, a discount is being offered on adoptions. [LEARN MORE HERE.](#)

# Turn “Oh no!” into “YES!”

## Oh no! A HUGE unplanned intake...and no kennel space!

### commercial appeal

#### Memphis Animal Services 'begging' for help after 40 abused dogs seized from home

Micaela Watts, Memphis Commercial Appeal Published 2:02 p.m. CT June 7, 2019 | Updated 5:29 p.m. CT June 7, 2019



Gretchen is among the 40 dogs seized from a Berclair residence on June 6. (Photo: Memphis Animal Services)

The kennels at Memphis Animal Services were already full when Memphis police met MAS employees at a Berclair residence on Thursday.

But when the two agencies discovered 40 dogs living on the property, most of them trapped in cages with thick layers of feces coating the bottom, MAS went from full to bursting with canines needing temporary and permanent placement.

"In my experience, these were some of the worst conditions I've ever seen," said MAS Director Alexis Pugh, who was on site for the rescue.

Pugh said the Memphis Fire Department had to come to the residence and place industrial fans in the doorways to reduce the odor from ammonia and feces before rescuers were even allowed inside the house.

#### 40 dogs kept in 'torture' conditions



# Turn “Oh no!” into “YES!”

ASK FOR HELP!

**URGENT**

CRUELTY CASE  
BRINGING 35 DOGS  
TO ALREADY FULL  
SHELTER

**Memphis Animal Services**  
Published by Katie Pemberton [?]  
Page Liked · June 6 · 🌐

🔥🔥🔥 URGENT: PLEASE SHARE 🔥🔥🔥

We have a cruelty case tonight with 35 dogs coming in to an already full shelter. We need help! Can you foster a dog for a few days or more? If so PLEASE come in tomorrow during our adoption hours of 12-4pm.

Or if you're ready to adopt, remember all dog adoptions are just \$19 through Sunday!

📍 Tag Photo 📍 Add Location ✎ Edit

👍👎👏 156 148 Comments 1.5K Shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share 🗨️

Most Relevant ▾

**Christopher Teague** Seriously, there's people requesting specific breeds and pictures? What does it matter, these dogs

Write a comment...

# Turn “Oh no!” into “YES!”

## ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU REALLY NEED IT

From: Pemberton, Katie Sent: Fri 6/7/2019 8:23 AM  
To: desk@wmctv.com; kellyroberts@wmctv.com; aherrera@wmctv.com; jpeterson@wmctv.com; kanthony@wmctv.com; kdowning@wmctv.com  
Cc:  
Subject: ALERT: MAS removed 40 dogs from cruelty case into already full shelter

Dear partners in media,

MAS is in crisis mode, and we need your help.

As you hear us say all the time, we are ALWAYS full in our large adult dog kennels. Every day is a scramble for space in those areas, doing everything we can not to euthanize for space. Your partnership has helped us avoid euthanasia so many times, and we are incredibly thankful for you all.

Last night, we removed 40 dogs from a cruelty case where they were living in horrific conditions. Even though we were full, we could not in good conscience leave them there despite the fact that we only had FOUR open kennels.

In order to save the lives of many dogs who were already here at the shelter, we need help getting the word out to the public about how they can help them:

ADOPT: All dog adoption fees are \$19 [through Sunday!](#) (see attached graphic)

FOSTER: We will be making a number of current-resident dogs available for foster. If people can foster even for a few days or a few weeks, it would save lives.

DONATE SUPPLIES: Go to [memphisanimalservices.com/donate](http://memphisanimalservices.com/donate) and click on [DONATE NEEDED ITEMS](#) to see what items we need and even a link to our Amazon wish list.

If you would like someone to go on-camera today, we would love to! Please call or text my cell at [901-636-1413](tel:901-636-1413) to let me know what time you'd like to send someone.

Many thanks,

Katie Pemberton  
Community Engagement Specialist  
Memphis Animal Services  
[901-636-1413](tel:901-636-1413)  
[katie.pemberton@memphistn.gov](mailto:katie.pemberton@memphistn.gov)  
[www.memphisanimalservices.com](http://www.memphisanimalservices.com)



# AND THEY'LL PROBABLY HELP!

**Memphis Animal Services asks for help after they receive 40 dogs due to animal cruelty case**

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Memphis Animal Services has asked for help after they say an animal cruelty case brought in 40 dogs to their already full shelter.

Memphis Animal Services Director Alexis Pugh says the dogs were kept in horrible conditions in a Berclair home, but investigators don't know how long the abuse has been

**Memphis Flyer News Blog**

**MAS Offers \$19 Dog Adoptions After Cruelty Case Yields 40 Intakes**

POSTED BY MAYA SMITH ON FRI, JUN 7, 2019 AT 10:32 AM



**WMC5 NEWS WEATHER SPORTS INVESTIGATIONS BLUFF CITY WEEKEND**

**Adoptions help animal shelter after taking in hoarded dogs**



**NEW DETAILS**  
MID-SOUTH STEPS UP TO HELP OVERCROWDING  
MEMPHIS ANIMAL SERVICES

Adoptions help animal shelter after taking in hoarded dogs

By WMCActionNews5.com Staff | June 10, 2019 at 5:44 AM CDT - Updated June 10 at 5:17 PM

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (WMC) - A woman accused of hoarding 40 dogs inside a Berclair home is due in court Monday morning.

Bonnie Maher-Hazel, 59, is facing a felony animal cruelty charge in a case officials said was the worst they've ever seen.

**FOX 13 WEATHER NEWS INVESTIGATES SEEN ON 13 SPORTS ZONE WATCH CONTESTS BIDS MORE**

**MAS in 'crisis' mode after rescuing 40 dogs**

Updated: Jun 7, 2019 - 4:20 PM



MEMPHIS, Tenn. - Memphis Animal Services needs your help. They are in 'crisis' mode after taking in dozens of dogs from "horrific conditions" in Memphis.

"Last night, we removed 40 dogs from a cruelty case where they were living in horrific conditions. Even though we were full, we could not in good conscience leave them there despite the fact that we only had

**WMC5 NEWS WEATHER SPORTS INVESTIGATIONS BLUFF CITY WEEKEND**

**Woman charged after MAS, MPD rescue nearly 40 dogs from animal hoarding situation**

**NEWS 3 WEATHER SPORTS**

**Woman arrested with 40 dogs in home claimed to be rescuing them**

POSTED 6:24 PM, June 7, 2019 BY MAYA SMITH, UPDATED AT 6:58 PM, June 7, 2019

**40 dogs seized during police investigation**

**BREAKING NEWS ALERT**  
40 DOGS SEIZED DURING POLICE INVESTIGATION  
BERCLAIR

By WMCActionNews3.com Staff | June 6, 2019 at 10:05 PM CDT - Updated June 7 at 10:57 AM

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (WMC) - A woman has been charged in an animal cruelty case in the Berclair area.

Memphis Animal Services worked with Memphis Police to rescue about 40 dogs from an animal hoarding situation on Zelds Lane, near Waring Road on Thursday night.

**LOCAL 2 NEWS WEATHER SPORTS COMMUNITY MARKETPLACE LOCAL MEMPHIS LIVE CONTESTS**

**Memphis Animal Services needs foster homes & adopters after 40 dogs found in "horrific" conditions**



by Staff  
Posted: Jun 7, 2019 / 03:00 PM UTC / Updated: Jun 7, 2019 / 06:16 PM UTC

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (localmemphis.com) - Memphis Animal Services say they are desperate for help after removing 40 dogs in an animal

**Woman charged after 40 dogs found in home**

**Give us another shot. Preferably a close-up.**

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Just a day after 40 dogs were rescued from a local woman's home, Memphis Animal Services is pleading for help from the community as their shelter has already reached capacity.


Bonnie Maher-Hazel was arrested and charged with neglecting 40 dogs, and neighbors in

**FOX 13 WEATHER NEWS INVESTIGATES SEEN ON 13 SPORTS ZONE**

**Memphis Animal Services needs 40 dogs from home**

By Tom Clark  
Posted: Jun 7, 2019 / 10:23 PM UTC / Updated: Jun 7, 2019 / 11:59 PM UTC

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (fox13memphis.com) - A 59-year-old woman is charged with aggravated animal cruelty after 40 dogs were found at her home last night in the Berclair area. Memphis Animal Services rescued the dogs, but the shelter is full. Now they need help to keep them.



MEMPHIS, Tenn. — According to documents, Memphis Animal Services informed police about a complaint of potential animal abuse on June 6, in the 4300 block of Zelds Lane.

According to officers, when they arrived on the scene, they heard dogs barking from the inside of the home and a detached garage.

**2019 DODGE CHARGER**

PERFORMANCE STYLE TECHNOLOGY

PERFORMANCE TECHNOLOGY IS JUST THE BEGINNING. THE AVAILABLE SCIENCE SYSTEM CAN HELP YOU COMMUNICATE, NAVIGATE AND STAY CONNECTED.

# The positives of this negative situation

---

- Got the community actively involved
- Thousands of dollars in donations
- Hundreds of items donated
- We reached even more people with the message of our transformation
- Opened up more kennel space than ever before!
- ZERO dogs were euthanized for space as a result of this intake (**but they would have been IF NOT for this intake**)

# The positives of this negative situation

---

**WHY?**

SAME OLD "WE'RE FULL, INTAKE IS HIGH"  
= NOT NEWS, NO ATTENTION

ESPECIALLY BAD SITUATION = ATTENTION  
THIS IS NEWS!



# The positives of this negative situation



**Memphis Animal Services**  
Published by Katie Pemberton [?]  
Page Liked - June 11 · 🌐

🥁🥁🥁 Drumroll, please... 🥁🥁🥁

Today our staff is celebrating! Dog Room A is COMPLETELY empty! (Not pictured, among many other employees, are our two full-time vets who could not leave the clinic because they were doing surgery on all these pets who got adopted!)

After Memphis Animal Services had an emergency cruelty case intake of 40 dogs (with only 4 open kennels), the Memphis community stepped up in a HUGE way to help. In the last four days, we have had 221 pets leave be rescued, adopted, or fostered!

Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU to every single person who has played a role in helping so many animals over the past few days.

📍 Tag Photo 📍 Add Location ✎ Edit

👍❤️🥰 9.4K 849 Comments 3.9K Shares

❤️ Love 💬 Comment ➦ Share 🗨️

Most Relevant ▾

**Cassandra Gibbons** Awesome news! So thankful to all who helped in the name of...

Write a comment... 😊 📷 GIF 🗨️

Our most interacted-with Facebook post EVER, reaching 440,000+ people!



# Don't be a press pest

---

- Don't call during crunch times or deadlines
- Be brief, especially on the phone
- Know what is and is not newsworthy
- Don't pester them to cover something that isn't newsworthy



# Be the press's best

---



- "We're full" isn't news if you're full all the time (and they've already covered it several times).
- You have to find a newsworthy hook. Dig into your data!
  - Intake is up XX% over last year
  - XX more dogs have tested positive for heartworms
  - Brought in XX% more cruelty cases
  - XX% more pets surrendered due to housing issues

# The need for speed

---

When you control the timing:

- Make sure your spokesperson is available for interviews when you send out your outreach
- Be ready to do interviews the day you send it



# The need for speed

---

Be able to respond to media ASAP:

- Have cell phone numbers of all your spokespeople and subject matter experts
- Have news desk and/or reporter numbers on your cell phone
- Have cell phone numbers of all PIOs in related departments
- If you can, get a mobile login for your shelter software
- Have more than one media-trained person
- Respond to requests to let them know you're working on it
- Ask what their deadline is and meet it



## The need for speed vs. Work/Life Balance

It's ok to respond to a text or call and let them know you're not working and will get back to them.

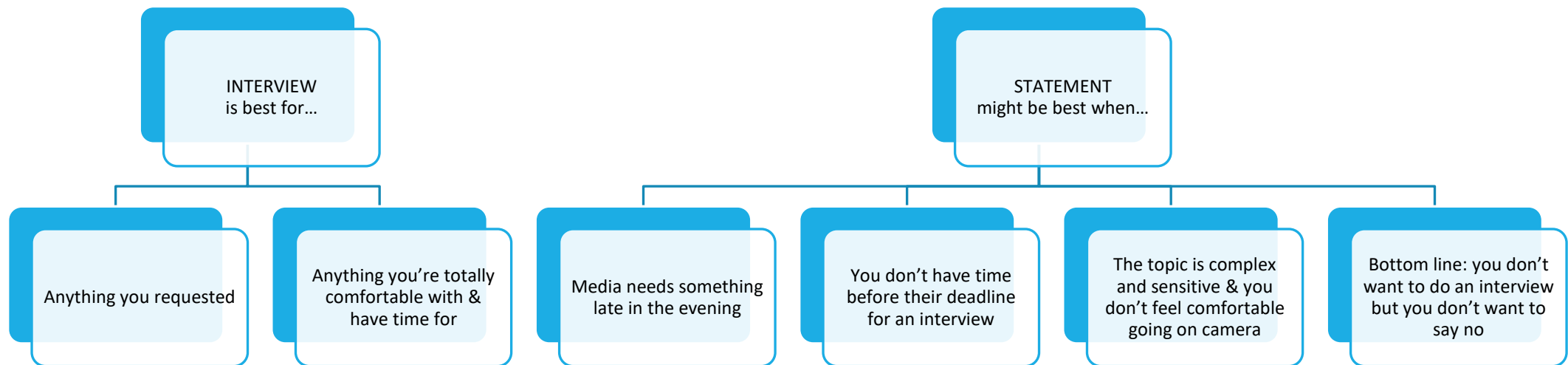
Some of our team has an out-of-office during their off days so contacts know not to expect a response

This is ultimately going to be a judgment call every time.

- Do you need to prioritize work/life balance or your shelter's reputation more in that moment? This may be different each time.

# Interview vs. Statement

---



Media believes  
you are the  
expert

Media may hear a rumor (i.e. pandemic pets being returned), wonder if it's true, and look to you as the expert to give them more info.

Even if you feel like they want you to say something in particular, you need to say what you \*know\* is true.

# Resources

---

- Maddie's University (sign up for free at [university.maddiesfund.org](http://university.maddiesfund.org))
  - How to Get Your Story Told: Effective Engagement with the Media
  - Compassionate Communication webinar
  - Soooo many others!
- To send video to media
  - Record with your phone
  - Upload to Youtube (need a free account) as an Unlisted video
    - Send link to media
    - They can download from there
  - You can also send limited amounts from Dropbox, Google Drive, and WeTransfer



# Resources

---

- AI tools like ChatGPT for writing
  - They can help you write in a news release, media alert, or pitch format quickly
  - Always proofread your results
  - Never use AI to write something that you are “guest writing” for a media outlet
- Phone apps
  - Text Art: quickly make graphics on your phone
  - Videoshop: intuitive video editing app for phone
  - Canva: has phone and desktop version for quick and easy graphic design. Nonprofit pro version

# Resources

---

- [Google Drive Document](#) with:
  - Examples of:
    - News releases
    - Media alerts
    - Pitches
  - Links

