

Shelter Celebrates 40 Years of Helping Dogs

New York-based Kent Animal Shelter adopts out more than 600 pets each year.

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Kent Animal Shelter in New York has kicked off a year-long celebration to mark 40 years of helping homeless pets.

The no-kill humane society, established in December 1968, takes in abused and abandoned cats and dogs. More than 600 animals are adopted out into permanent homes each year, according to Pam Green, executive director.

During the past 40 years, Kent has expanded to offer a variety of programs, including pet therapy service, humane education, a retirement home for cats called Snowball's Place, and a low-cost spay-neuter clinic where more than 4,000 animals are sterilized each year. In addition, the shelter partners with the Animal Alliance of Long Island to help spay and neuter cats, preventing further spread of feral populations.

Through the pet therapy program, adoptable animals are taken to visit people in area medical centers and senior care facilities. In 2009, Kent plans to visit local schools regularly to teach children about how they can help homeless cats and dogs.

Green said the shelter also needs to upgrade its old facility with modern, comfortable living quarters for the animals. An architectural draft is in the works to design the new state-of-the-art shelter, which would provide 12,000 square feet of space.

"This new facility will be much more conducive to the mental and physical health of the animals," Green said, "and to their chances of being adopted."