

New Project Increases Dog Adoptions

The ASPCA Mission: Orange program has increased cat and dog adoptions in Tampa, Fla., by 37 percent so far this year.

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The Hillsborough County Animal Services (HCAS) of Tampa, Fla., reported a significant increase in the number of cat and dog adoptions over the last several months after joining a special project from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) that aims to increase pet adoptions in a handful of cities nationwide.

The project, ASPCA Mission: Orange, was organized to create change by channeling the majority of its resources into a few communities at a time. Each program will be tailor-made to target specific areas, and the ASPCA will invest up to \$200,000 in each community towards its animal welfare programs.

The project launched this year, and the HCAS reports its cat and dog adoptions have increased by 37 percent from February to July, as compared to the same time last year.

"Tampa's continued efforts to improve the lives of animals make it a model not only for ASPCA Mission: Orange communities," says ASPCA President and CEO Ed Sayres, "but also for the entire nation."

The increase in cat and dog adoptions is attributed to rescue groups transferring healthy shelter animals out of the HCAS for adoptions elsewhere, a volunteer program, a "Pet Telethon" fundraiser and a large scale adoption event at the Florida State Fairgrounds, according to the ASPCA.

In addition to Tampa, other communities picked to join the program this year are Austin, Texas, Gulfport-Biloxi, Miss., Philadelphia, and Spokane, Wash. The ASPCA will partner with these cities for three years, and begin to search for other communities to join the program in 2008.