
How to Organize Your Own Week for the Animals

By Gregory Castle



A simple guide for a state, city,
or neighborhood program



Best Friends
ANIMAL SOCIETY

About Utah's Week for the Animals

When all the humane groups in the state work together, it's amazing what can be achieved for the animals.

Utah's Week for the Animals is the nation's first statewide week dedicated to animals.

It brings together people and groups from all over the state – humane societies, shelters, animal welfare organizations, schools, corporations, animal lovers, and local government – to help build a better world for animals.

The week includes:

- **Governor's Proclamation.** Utah's governor has always been delighted to put Utah's Week for the Animals on the official state calendar.
- **Pet Adoption Fairs.** These are held in malls, stores and parks.
- **Discount Spaying and Neutering.** Veterinarians all across the state offer discounts of up to 50% on spaying and neutering.
- **Children's Art and Literary Contest.** Thousands of youngsters express their caring for animals and compete for cash scholarship prizes in different grades and categories.
- **School Programs.** Videos and booklets on animal care and kindness are distributed throughout the state as learning aids.
- **More Fun and Furry Kid Stuff.** Museums keep kids busy all week with special programs.

- **Seminars for Teachers and Youth Leaders.** The seminars give educators a strong foundation to help build a more humane community.
- **Awards for Distinguished Service to Animals.** This gala event recognizes special people in the state who have helped ensure a better future for companion animals.
- **Public Awareness Campaign.** Through extensive TV, radio, and print media coverage, the Week for the Animals helps to promote awareness of animal welfare issues across the state.



You can do it in your community, too.

Utah's Week for the Animals is a model of what can be achieved in any community when the animal organizations work together.

On the following pages, you'll find an outline of how the program works, so that you can do something similar in your own state, city, or neighborhood.

How to Organize Your Own Week for the Animals



Overview

Utah's Week for the Animals (UWA) was started in 1994 as a statewide program to bring humane organizations and caring individuals together to work on issues concerning the welfare of companion animals.

UWA has since become the most comprehensive program on the state's calendar of activities benefiting animals. The program can be duplicated in any state, city or neighborhood. UWA brings together humane societies, shelters, animal control agencies, veterinarians, educators, media outlets, government agencies, businesses, students, and animal lovers in a variety of programs.

The Programs

Your Week for the Animals can include a variety of programs and activities. Here are a few suggestions:

Humane education programs.

- Presentations in schools across the state.
- Materials distributed to all schools in the state.

- Special presentations at children's museums, boy's and girl's clubs, libraries, and stores.
- Children's art and writing contest. A contest for students across the state on the theme "Honoring the Animals."
- Seminars on humane education for teachers, scout and club leaders.

Statewide network of veterinarians.

- Enlisting the support of the veterinary community in offering discount spay/neuter services and microchipping.

Adoption fairs.

- Scheduled adoption events at shopping malls and pet supply stores around the state.

Media campaign.

- Enlisting the support of the local media in spreading news about the week and covering the events.

Awards for Distinguished Service to Animals.

- Honoring and rewarding individuals and organizations for exemplary contributions to animal welfare.

- A dinner and ceremony to celebrate the week and the award recipients.

Special events.

- A walk-a-thon or other events to celebrate and enjoy the animals while raising funds for their welfare.

Participation

You'll want to involve a wide variety of agencies and individuals. Here are a few suggestions for groups you'll want to consider:

Government. The governor, the state office of education, the state legislature, county commissions, and animal control agencies.

Humane Organizations. All principal humane societies in the state, and many smaller, specialized rescue groups.

Veterinarians. Veterinarians, clinics, and animal hospitals.

Businesses. Large corporations may provide sponsorship and volunteer teams for the events of the week. Many small businesses, such as printers, graphic designers, advertising agencies, restaurants, and supermarkets, may donate goods and services.

Media. TV, radio, and newspaper outlets play a major part in bringing public attention to animal issues. You'll want to get feature stories in the newspapers, as well as events listed in their calendar sections. Public service announcements, interviews and event coverage on TV and radio stations are highly effective ways to get the word out.

Educators. Teachers, scout leaders and other youth group leaders, religious leaders.

Animal Lovers. The many members of the public who love their pets and care about animals. Don't forget the Internet and e-mail networks as a vehicle for spreading the word.

Implementation

Utah's Week for the Animals can be duplicated in other states by following these specific steps, preferably in order:

- 1 Ask the governor of the state (or mayor of the city) to sign a proclamation officially naming the week and sanctioning its purposes.
- 2 Contact humane organizations and animal control departments to request their involvement.
 - Form a steering committee comprised of representatives from various active humane organizations, and meet monthly to discuss programming for the week.
 - Devise programs in which organizations and the public at large can participate. (Refer to the listing of suggested programs above.)
- 3 Contact sympathetic educators to create a basis of support in the schools.
 - Make use of contacts from other participating organizations.
 - Devise programs for students that are fun and involving (e.g., a contest, service learning projects).



4 Seek support in the professional community: media experts, advertising and PR agencies, business people.

- Ask for pro bono help.
- Form an advisory board of professionals, which meets quarterly and provides ideas and advice.

5 Send a letter to all veterinarians in the state asking for their involvement in a discount spaying and neutering program.

- Offer the participating veterinarians something in return (e.g., their name on literature promoting the program, referrals).
- Set up an 800 number hotline to inform people of their closest participating vet.
- List participating veterinarians and relevant details on your website.

6 Find sponsors for the program – businesses and individuals who will donate cash, paper suppliers, printers, and media sponsors to provide advertising.

7 Create a special website for the week, or include details on your organization's website. List events, programs, participating organizations, veterinarians, sponsors, and details of how people can participate in the week. Include your web address in all your publicity for the week.

8 Maximize free media coverage by contacting all newspapers, TV, and radio stations in your area.

- Call media representatives to make personal contact.
- Send news releases to follow up on calls.
- Ask for appearances on local news and community service programs. Take an adoptable animal on the air with you.
- Send PSAs to all radio stations, and display ads to all newspapers for filler space.

• Ask a popular local TV news anchor or radio personality to host or appear at your events.

9 Mail a brochure about the week and its activities to as many animal lovers as you can identify.

- Make use of participating organizations' mailing lists and dog licensing lists.
- The mailer should contain information about the programs and the purpose of the week and should ask for support – financial and volunteer help.

10 Build a force of volunteers to do simple jobs such as placing posters, contacting their veterinarians, contacting local media, helping plan and run events, delivering literature to schools, and contacting stores to set up displays promoting the week. (Don't wait for volunteers to come to you – go out and ask them!)

11 Plan an event to act as a fun celebration of the animals and the week.

- This event can be a fundraiser for your organization's programs, or for the week. For example: a fun run with dogs, a dog Olympics, a concert, a day in the park for the animals, a walk across the state.
- Make it fun, make it photogenic, and get the media along to promote the cause.

For More Information

Contact us and we'll put you in touch with your regional Best Friends representative.

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