

A Few Tips on Organizing Your Own Adoption Day

By Francis Battista

The L.A. Pet Adoption Festival was a great success and when all was said and done, 180 dogs and cats and a bunny found new homes.

This was a big event but a smaller one could very easily be done in your community on a modest budget. Here are some of the basics:

Sound out local groups about their interest in participating so you can get an idea of the space needed.

Identify a good location. A park, shopping plaza, or mall are obvious choices, but don't overlook schools, ball fields, or corporate atriums that stand idle on the weekends. A place that has foot traffic helps a lot. Then *beg, borrow, or rent the best location.*

Make sure that all participating groups understand the ground rules for adoptions, etc., that you establish and – very important – that each carries insurance. No known biters or dog-aggressive dogs. All dogs on leads; all cats in show cages at all times, etc.

Make sure that shade is available for the animals if your adoption event takes place in the summer.

Invite some food vendors along so that the crowds won't have to leave to get a snack and to add a festive atmosphere. Other vendors can also be a source of money to help pay for things but will make the event more complex to organize.



Promotion is probably the most important component of the event. Send public service announcements to all local or area radio and TV stations as well as to the calendar section of the local newspaper. Poster the town and enlist the efforts of the participating organizations. Run off a few thousand letter-size handouts at a copy shop and ask the local supermarkets, pet stores, and other local shops to put the flyers on the checkout stands and have the baggers include one with each purchase. If you have access to mailing lists, by all means, use them. If you have a budget, buy some ads in local papers. Also use the free ads in local Penny Saver-type papers. Place large banners at the event site a week or two in advance.

Walk through the event with your volunteers in advance and diagram the layout.