Where’s it AT with OVERLOOKED CATS?

Delaware Animal Rescue Conference, May 2016
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What is an Overlooked Cat?
Why are they important?

- Taking up space needed by other animals
- Daily cost of care, staff time
- Plug up foster homes
- Health or behavior decline (especially in caged setting)
Commonly Overlooked Cats
We are all Overlooked!

- Black or dark in color
- Obese
- Seniors
- Unattractive
- Medical problems
- Crabby
- Independent
The Inventory Pencil

NEW CATS!

OVERLOOKED CATS!
“Sharpening” the Pencil
STEP 1: WHO ARE THESE CATS?
Any Group Can Have Them!

- Whether your organization is large or small, sheltered or foster-based, cats can end up with long-term stays
- Tracking the long-time cats is critical!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adoption</th>
<th>Animal Id Type</th>
<th>Animal Id</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Breed</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Physical Location</th>
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<td>George</td>
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<td>Himalayan</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>Available for Adoption - Office</td>
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</table>
Divide into Groups

- **WATCH LIST**
- **ACTION LIST**
- **OVERLOOKED LIST**
### OVERLOOKED CATS

**CATACTION LIST for 8/28/2012: (40+ days) Marketing to promote via Facebook and Twitter, Pet of the Week, etc.!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID number</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Special Adoption</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th># days in system</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Media, etc.</th>
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<td>718397</td>
<td>Mink</td>
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<td>RH</td>
<td>99</td>
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<td>719770</td>
<td>Savannah</td>
<td></td>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>In Foster</td>
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<td>700940</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Berman</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>721961</td>
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<td>Joyce</td>
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<td>722231</td>
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<td>Squirt</td>
<td></td>
<td>RH</td>
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</table>
COLOR KEY:

- **Juvenile**: Light blue
- **Senior**: Green
- **No photo**: Purple
- **Adopted**: Yellow
- **No Longer Available**: Red
Information Flow

Weekly Overlooked Report
- Produced by volunteer
- Reviewed by staff

Operations Group OR Foster Coordinator
- Distributed twice weekly
- Used for action plan for moving animals

Frontline Adoption Staff OR Foster Homes
- Daily staff meetings in shelters
- Emailed to volunteers
KNOW the Overlooked!

- Adoption point people must KNOW which pets have been in the system the LONGEST
- Staff and volunteers take steps to promote these pets to adopters
- Reward creativity: signs, cat condo in lobby, collars, bandanas, buttons, cards!
#1 Overlooked This Week

- Detroit: LUPE
- Berman: RAVEN
- PetSmart: ROXY
- Rochester Hills: LUCY
- PetCo: PEANUT BUTTER
Track your Overlooked Cats!

Longtime Cats 30+ days:
Numbers & Outcomes

Number of Cats

- # Cats
- # Adopted
- # Euthanized
TAKE ACTION!

Send offsite
Bright collar
New photo & write-up
Social media
Overlooked web page
Pet of the Week
Focus on the Individual!

SENIORS: Vet check-up; blood panel; free year of insurance
CAT-TENS: Great in offsite settings NOT next to 8 week olds
CHUBBIES: Special diet plan and bag/canned food; scale
UNUSUAL: Highlight kinked tail, crossed eyes, tipped ear, extra toes
SYMPATHY: Really sad story, injury recovery, hospice or final year care
SNOBBIES: Display in lobby, out of sight of other cats; office foster
INDEPENDENTS: “Decorative” label; not needy; like living with an adult versus a child
SHY: office foster; adopt-from-foster home; Where’s Waldo?
Cool Cats!

Greets at front of cage
Drinks with paw
Orange tabby females
Chatty catty
Double jointed tail
Fetches toys
Rides on your shoulder
Plays well with polite dogs
Move Cats Around!

- Cat vs. dog adoptions: People search for dogs, but SEE a cat, GET a cat!
- Overlooked cats need to be seen by new eyes
- Offsite adoptions can be highly successful
- Strive to have multiple adoption locations for cats
Add Personal Zing

• Bright collars can draw attention to overlooked cats
• Beastie Bands or buy bright collars on clearance
• Perfect time to get the cat used to a collar and tag!
• ALL black cats should have a bright collar!
Market Effectively

- Photo on card
- Great name
- Age and price

Simple bullets:
- Litterbox trained
- Vaccinated and spayed
- Bouncy and playful
- Saucy diva
- Used to be a bar bouncer
- Cushion tester
Re-write, Re-photo

• A new set of good photos can make a pet appear “new” online
• Take a new approach with the write-up at the same time: avoid the generic, use humor, bring out a special quality or sad story
• Time to add video is NOW!
• Instagram is a GREAT place to post a “personality” photo and comment
Get Social!

- Use your organization's Facebook page, blog, Instagram, Twitter to promote Overlooked cats
- Pick a cat a week
- Update through adoption—fans will be following cat's progress
- Include original story (why cat is with you)
What’s in a Name?

**Cultural names:** Hispanic, Indian, Muslim: cat name lists on the Internet

**Match to holidays or events:** Presidential candidates; sporting events; movie stars

**Human names versus “pet” names**

**Avoid the REALLY common cat names?**
Dedicated Web Page

- Overlooked cats featured on a dedicated page of your website
- Compelling stories:
  - Found lost by a kind person (vs. stray)
  - Rescued by our emergency van
  - Given up by an owner due to family health issues
Overlooked Pets
Help these longtime residents find a home

Whether they are senior pets, have a disability, or simply have been overlooked, some animals need your help so they can find a home.

Clifford  
Friday, December 28, 2012

Bianca  
Saturday, December 22, 2012

Lilac  
Thursday, December 20, 2012
Slash the Price!

- Scan the competition
- Two for $100 kittens
- Seniors $25
- Overlooked cats $20 or FREE!
- Have a sale when you NEED a sale
- Build into the budget
- Raise extra funds to support
Jazzy is patiently awaiting a home at our Quakertown Adoption Center! She is one of BCSPCA’s longest time residents, having been with us for 45 days. If you know someone who would give this loving kitty a good home, please call us at (267) 347-2794, or better yet, visit Jazzy in person at 60 Reservoir Road, open for adoptions at noon seven days a week.
Assign Actions to Groups

CATWATCH LIST
- Send offsite if possible or move to other locations; eye-catching collars

CATACTION LIST
- Re-photo; new write-up; promote via social media, Pet of the Week

OVERLOOKED CATS LIST
- Overlooked Cats web page with new write-up; reduce price; email tag line; sign on cage
Accountability

• Overlooked pets are WAITING for our actions to bring results
• Praise actions taken!
• Hold managers accountable if ball is dropped
• Provide enough resources
• Let all adoption staff AND volunteers know!
How’s That Working For You?

- Running Total of Overlooked Cat Adoptions:
  1,055 overlooked cats adopted in the first 16 months

- Percentage Adopted Weekly:
  Total adopted / total overlooked

- Length of Stay Longest-term Cat:
  220 days at start of our program, in 16 months dropped to 76 days
CELEBRATE!

• Milestones
  • Big numbers
  • By location
• Let adopters know
  • The “overlooked adoption bell”
  • Intercom
• Let donors know
  • Newsletter
  • Board report
  • Online
Final Thoughts on **Overlooked** Cats:

- **PREVENT** by fast-tracking cats to adoption
- **ELIMINATE** mandatory holding
- **CAT ADOPTIONS** are not money makers
- **EXHIBIT** strays and unneutered
- **TRAIN** cats to engage with adopters
- **SAME DAY** adoptions for events and shelters
- **SPEEDY** adoptions for foster based cats
- **GUARANTEE** or your money back