

July 5, 2020

Dear Board Member:

You are receiving this information because you have been identified as member of the Danville Area Humane Society (DAHS) Board of Directors. You may not be aware of the recent surge in concern among Danville area community members and beyond regarding the high euthanasia rates at DAHS. Our hope is that the information provided here will enlighten you to the issues, raise your own concerns and move you to take much needed action to bring DAHS up to par with the vast majority of animal shelters in Virginia.

In June of this year a billboard was erected on Rt. 29 and a website launched ([www.danvilleshelterwatch.com](http://www.danvilleshelterwatch.com)) stating a startling fact - **Since 2005, the Danville Area Humane Society (DAHS) has been in the top five highest euthanizing shelters in Virginia, taking the lives of a staggering 53,798 cats and dogs and counting.** Under the current long-standing leadership, DAHS remains one of the worst performing shelters in all of Virginia. Additionally, a *Change.org* petition launched on June 25<sup>th</sup> has quickly collected more than **2,400 signatures** in under a week demanding change at the DAHS.

We can only assume you are not aware of the statistical data that has brought such alarm and grief to the community. After all, most people who support and volunteer with a nonprofit animal welfare organization do so to save the lives of animals it is trusted to take in and to make the community a safer more humane place for animals in need. DAHS has fallen down on this mission for years and the community will no longer tolerate it. As a Board member, you have an obligation to the donors who support the mission of DAHS and to the public whose animals, for various reasons, enter the shelter.

We have been informed by several people involved with DAHS, current and past, that the Board is consistently not provided with factual information and kept in the dark about opportunities, offered to DAHS through Paulette Dean, that would vastly improve the live outcome rates for its animals. Ms. Dean consistently refuses such offers by stating that the Board is not supportive.

- In 2018, the National Kitten Coalition (NKC) offered to do a free in-house workshop on caring for neonatal kittens, a group of animals that ranks among the highest euthanized due to the specialty care they need. NKC also offered to set up a neonatal kitten foster program free of charge that has been successful at dozens of public shelters across the country. **Ms. Dean declined this offer citing the Board's disinterest.**
- In 2018 and again in 2019, a DAHS rescue partner offered to create a foster program for young animals in Danville City at no cost to DAHS, based on their own successful foster program that has saved more than 20,000 lives in 18 years, which would aim to prevent puppies and kittens from having to enter the shelter where so many are euthanized or end up sick/dying from preventable diseases. **Ms. Dean declined this offer twice citing the Board's disinterest.** The rescue partner has since started the program with the nearby Pittsylvania Pet Center.
- In 2017 and again in 2018, DAHS was offered the opportunity to receive free in-house training and support on best practices for shelter cleaning protocols (again at no cost to DAHS) after many rescue partners reported receiving an ongoing and concerning high number of sick animals from DAHS. **Ms. Dean declined the offer** stating that they were comfortable with their cleaning protocols despite being told that their animals were often sent to rescue sick at higher frequency than other shelters.

- Why does Ms. Dean continue to transfer animals to PETA whose euthanasia rates also consistently remain in the top five among all Virginia shelters when there are dozens of other shelters and rescues willing to take DAHS animals? This makes absolutely no sense but suggests she only does so to report higher transfer numbers. This must stop. Your Board should in no way be supporting this.

Ms. Dean has continued to rebuff offers from area shelters and rescues to enhance partnerships to improve DAHS' live outcome for animals at no additional cost. She instead suggests that DAHS is an anomaly among all other shelters and simply has no choice but to kill so many of the animals she takes in. We believe strongly that this is the misinformation she regularly shares with the DAHS Board.

**Fact:** Being an open admission shelter does NOT prevent one from embracing successful and proven programs including foster programs, managed intake, and robust transfers. The comparative data provided in this document illustrates that DAHS is choosing to kill so many animals when others are choosing to save them. Look at the dozens and dozens of other open admission shelters where intake is higher, transfers are higher and euthanasia is lower. DAHS is choosing not to emulate their programs and their successes. The data cannot be disputed. DAHS is choosing to kill when other shelters are choosing to save.

**Fact:** Ms. Dean consistently puts out false narratives to the community (and the Board) about managed intake. There is no evidence whatsoever that managed intake leads to more animals being abandoned in the community and she has not been able to provide any such statistics when pressed. In fact, shelters across the country that have implemented managed intake have done so with great success and not only saved lives but greatly increased their community support. And there is data to prove that this practice in public shelters works. Read the page at [www.DanvilleShelterWatch.com](http://www.DanvilleShelterWatch.com) to learn about what managed intake is and is not.

**Fact:** Ms. Dean has consistently villainized the nearby Pittsylvania Pet Center (PPC) by stating that DAHS is forced to take in animals "turned away" from PPC and that the PPC requires an animal surrender fee. The PPC has offered numerous times to Ms. Dean that any animal arriving at DAHS from Pittsylvania County will be accepted through transfer with an animal custody report by PPC and that simultaneously, the PPC welcomes any animals from Danville City. Additionally, it is clearly stated on the PPC website that while donations are welcomed, no animal will be turned away if an owner cannot make a donation towards their animal's ongoing care. PPC statistics also indicate that the number of animals from Danville entering the PPC are similar to the number of animals from Pittsylvania entering DAHS, thus neutralizing any reason that Ms. Dean should use blaming the PPC for the high euthanasia numbers. ***Pittsylvania County, and the Pittsylvania Pet center has made it clear to Ms. Dean that she is under no obligation to receive county animals and she should redirect them to PPC.***

**Fact:** Ms. Dean continues to claim that DAHS is the only area shelter that offers euthanasia assistance to the public if the owner cannot afford to go to a veterinary clinic. This is in fact false, however PPC encourages owners to have this done in a veterinary clinic whenever possible for the pet's sake, where the owner can remain with the pet. In contrast Ms. Dean encourages people to utilize DAHS for euthanasia services.

**Fact:** We are aware that two recent DAHS Board Members have recently resigned once they had the opportunity to look into the data provided and fact check many of Ms. Dean's repeated statements in recent years.

As a Board member, we ask that you take the time to carefully read through the data provided on the [www.DanvilleShelterWatch.com](http://www.DanvilleShelterWatch.com) page. Visit the VA Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services site to view for yourself the self-reported DAHS data (<https://arr.va-vdacs.com/Reports06>) and see how it so poorly compares to all other shelters in Virginia. Ask why it is that DAHS is so comfortable killing animals that need not die, but have opportunities that are being denied for no good reason. And ask yourself if you are comfortable with your involvement in a shelter that has demonstrated no interest in changing for the better to save lives, a shelter that constantly claims to be a victim of its environment and circumstance, and a shelter that acts almost proud to be among the worst in Virginia. Is an organization so stuck in the past and so accepting of low-performing programs and outcomes really one worthy of your time and commitment? And can you really continue to believe the stories from Ms. Dean that suggest that DAHS is so different from all other organizations in the state and beyond that it literally cannot possibly save more animals.

**It's time for change. We ask that you do your part.**