



NEWS RELEASE



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LA CITY COUNCILMAN HERB WESSON JOINS LA ANIMAL SERVICES AND DOWNTOWN DOG RESCUE TO ANNOUNCE "OPERATION SAFETY NET"

Los Angeles – What would it take to keep your dog from entering a shelter? That one question saved seven dogs from entering the South LA shelter over the past two weeks. While that may not seem like a lot, it's a start.

The Safety Net Program is scheduled to roll out this week initially in just the South LA Animal Care Center. A sign and postcards will be available in the Center lobby to inform dog owners how they can keep their pet when they think they have run out of options. This is how the program works:

"Dog owners sometimes come into the South LA Center feeling forced to surrender their dog," said LA City Council Member Herb Wesson, "because they can't afford to feed, vaccinate, spay/neuter, treat a minor medical issue, get basic obedience training, or even pay for a \$15 dog license. With Safety Net, LA Animal Services staff and volunteers encourage the dog owner to take his beloved pet home, and call the Downtown Dog Rescue phone number on the postcard given to them. This is a wonderful example of a community working together to solve one of the most basic problems a family might face."

When the dog owner calls the Downtown Dog Rescue Hotline Phone Number a volunteer will return the call within 48 to help address the situation that brought the dog owner to the shelter. "Often, 'the problem' is a combination of several issues, said Lori Weise, founder of Downtown Dog Rescue. "Most dogs need to be spayed or neutered, vaccinated, licensed, and training. Monthly dog food deliveries are also a frequent request. These are not good reasons to give up a family member. Operation Safety Net is designed to help keep pets and families together."

"Safety Net is a collaboration with Downtown Dog Rescue, Karma Rescue, Paw'd Squad and LA Animal Services," said Ed Boks, general manager of LA Animal Services. "These three private organizations bring tremendous experience working with large breed dogs who are more frequently relinquished and euthanized at the shelter. We are thrilled to be working with them on this life saving program."

The program is not designed to help dogs surrendered because the owner is moving, or just doesn't have time for the dog; it is designed to help dog owners who want to keep their dog if only they had the resources. The program is modeled after Downtown Dog Rescue's successful 13 year-old Skid Row program to help homeless dog owners. Visit: www.downtowndogrescue.org for more information.

For more information or assistance call LA Animal Services at 1-888-452LA-PET1/1-888-452-7381 (TTY Hearing impaired: 877-875-8205) or visit the website at www.LAAnimalServices.com.