

# **Save the Stray Animals!**

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## Abstract

Animals are loved and cherished by people all over the world. Many people live with their pets. Both humans and their pets feel happy when they are together. Sadly, some pets or domestic animals cannot be happy. One of the main causes is by human influence. Some animals lose their owner by something sad happening to them like their owners getting sick and passing away. Otherwise, irresponsible pet owners or animal breeders throw their animals away at an animal shelter. We need to think about how to save and reduce the number of stray animals in our society.

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## 1. Introduction

Living with dogs can be therapeutic. Dogs have special qualities about them that have a direct impact on their owner's health, so people should know about the advantages of living with dogs. Nowadays, dogs are everywhere. The number of dogs living in households worldwide is increasing. Dogs have lived with humans for a long time. There are many pet friendly countries. Animals have been and are still now living with and working for humans. The relationship between humans and animals has been changing little by little up to the present time. They are always beside us and help our lives. For example, there are many dogs working for humans as therapy dogs and guide dogs. Dogs are the most popular animals to have as a pet, because of their unique connection with humans.

Unfortunately, however, a lot of innocent dogs are killed or thrown away by humans every day. This is because people who do not think about the importance of lives throw them away. Although the number of people owning pets is increasing, people who get tired of having pets are also increasing. They love animals, but some of them forget to think deeply about their animal's lives. When people think about having pets, they should take time to learn how to properly care for their pet in order to protect their lives. Living with dogs makes our daily life comfortable and dogs also feel happy to live among humans as family. The importance of the life of humans and dogs are equal. Therefore, people are responsible to take care of their pets for the rest of their lives.

There are many ways to find a new pet and to save the animals. Chapter 2 describes about them. Each country has its own original way. Therefore, people should learn how to live with animals peacefully.

## 1.1 Relationship between Humans and Animals

In the past, humans have lived with wolves which are the ancestors of dogs since 20,000 years ago. Both humans and dogs have helped each other since then. Humans have two legs and two hands, which allows them to use weapons, but they are unable to see their prey in the dark. Wolves can run fast, have a keen scent, and are able to see their prey in the dark more accurately than humans, but they do not use weapons. Thus, wolves and humans have helped each other by utilizing each others' advantages to catch their prey. Surprisingly, there is a similarity between wolves and humans. They have a similar family structure, which is monogamous. Having a monogamous family structure is helpful to keep the family safe from outsiders. Now that dogs have been introduced to human families, they now work to protect their owner and their family. They also help maintain order around the house. Dogs bark when strangers approach. The relationship between humans and dogs has changed from the past. In the past, dogs and humans live together to help each other.

Now the humans' position is more dominant than the animals so people began owning animals as pets. There are many dogs which work to help people, such as guide dogs, police dogs or gun dogs. They always give us a lot of care and support. For example, trained therapy dogs can work to help patients who are in pain by spending time with them. Surprisingly, they can understand people's feelings. Even if some patients cannot communicate with other people, their hearts become open through spending time with therapy dogs. They are so kind to people, especially patients who are in pain.

## 1.2 Stray Animals

Despite humans and dogs living together for thousands of years, the dogs' living conditions have gotten worse, and there are a lot of stray animals more than before. There are many animals that are thrown away and/or killed by irresponsible people. In Japan, animal shelters were built for killing animals infected by rabies (Honjo, 2017). In doing so, it protects healthy animals from catching the disease. Fortunately, animals with rabies have not been found in Japan in the past 60 years or so. However, animal shelters still exist and operate to this day. At these shelters, many innocent animals are killed by humans. People should know about the importance of animals and protect stray animals. If you are willing to have pets, you must take care of rest of their lives. Some people give up their pets to take care of because they feel tired of owning pets. People who like to travel need to leave their pets at pet hotels or find a dog-sitter. Even though they like animals, they sometimes feel stress about living with their pets. Pets need to go on walk every day, even if it rains outside. People who cannot do these basic things take their pets to an animal shelter.

Have you ever thought about what happens to animals at animal shelters? They close their heart and attack people out of fear. That is why these animals cannot find a new family and are killed after three days of being found. The way to kill the animals is not by anesthesia, but poison gas. They die with pain. Some animal shelters try to save their lives. The staffs train animals so that they can find a new family for them. The animals can adjust to a new family easily if they are trained to live with humans. If you are planning to have any pets, you must think about their lives. If you want to save stray animals, try to go to animal protection center, instead of a pet shop. You can protect lonely animals who are looking for a family. Volunteering for animal adoption is very

popular in America. As shown in figure 1, some students at Hope College are joining the volunteer groups with their own pets. People who are volunteering sometimes foster the dog from its owner who went abroad or got sick. Therefore, people do not have to worry about their pets when they are not with them. Thanks to those volunteer activities, people can live with their pets peacefully.



*Figure 1.* These dogs are found at the dormitory in Hope College. They are trained by students who spend time with them.

### 1.3 Ways to the Save Stray Dogs

In the case studies below, I will describe the different ways animals are being incorporated into society today, and how these interventions help (A) control the population of animals, (B) protect the animals, and (C) provide jobs for animals. Each case is classified under the following headings.

A: Control the population of animals

B: Protect the animals

C: Provide jobs for animals

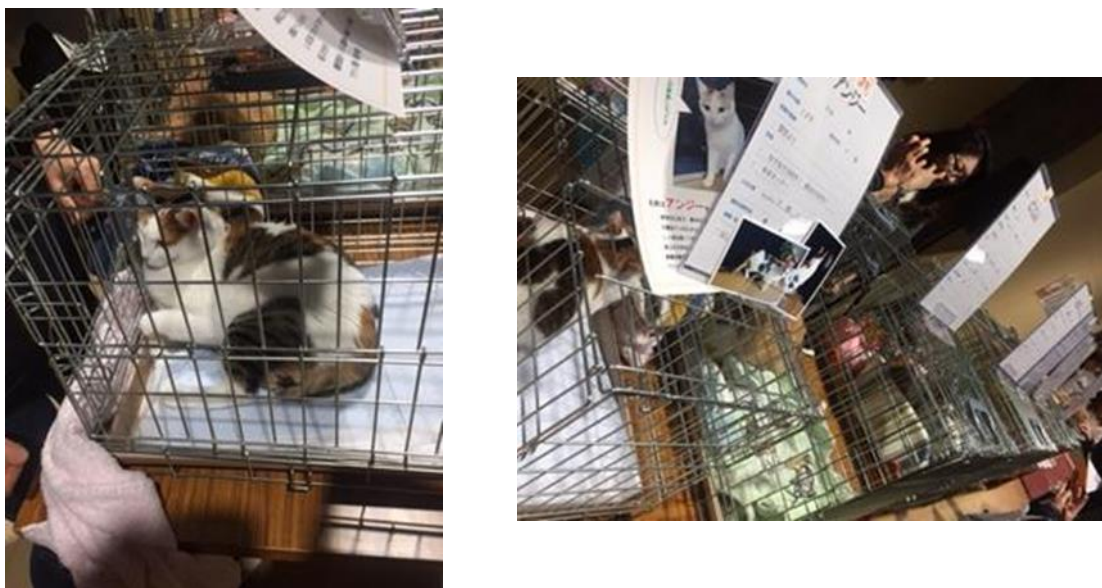
## 2. Case Studies

### 2.1 Animal Adoption Events in Japan

In Japan, there are some animal adoption events, but most Japanese people buy pets at pet shops. Since people can buy dogs at pet shops for low prices, they do not know about the choice to adopt a pet from animal shelters. For the most part, pet shops only sell puppies, but some of them grow up and become big there. In addition, some of the animal dealers in Japan do not care about their dogs' quality of life, so unsold dogs are taken to animal shelters to be killed. Although the number of dogs killed is decreasing every year, about 700 dogs and cats are killed every day. Few people know about the choice of adopting dogs from an animal shelter. As the number of homeless animals continues to grow, the number of people who are able to support them is not enough. Yet there are many people who own pets in Japan. Surprisingly, many of the stray dogs in Japan are expensive dogs with pedigrees. The animal breeders produce these dogs because Japanese people prefer particular kinds of dog, such as toy poodles and dachshunds. The government should become more involved and restrain it. People need to think more about the animals that they are selling as pets looking for a home rather than people's selfish desire of owning an expensive breed.

I went to a cat adoption event in Kobe on February 5, 2017. I asked the staff who volunteer to take care of homeless cats about animal protection in Kobe. Figure 2 are the pictures of the cats looking for a new owner. She supported the Trap Neuter Return

program (Alley Cat Allies, 2019). It saves cats' lives and is effective. First, the volunteer staffs trap the stray cats. Second, the cats have a castration operation. Finally, they are returned to the place where they were found. This program sounds like a little different from saving animals, but this actually help to reduce the number of homeless cats. All of the volunteers on staff love cats and they do not hesitate to talk about the cats that they own. Therefore, the people who participate in this event can understand about cats and realize the choice to have cats from a shelter.



*Figure 2.* People can see cats looking for a new owner.

## 2.2 Tierheim in Germany

In Germany, animals are part of their society. They can live life freely with no systems in place to harm them. There are no animal slaughter systems in Germany. If people want to have a pet, people go to Tierheim instead of a pet shop. Tierheim is like an animal shelter, but it never kills animals. The animals which are thrown away or born

in wild will be sent there. About 90% of them can find a new family, but about 10% of the animals at Tierheim spend the rest of their lives there. Tierheim is not just an animal adoption center, but also an education facility. Education is one of the biggest reasons why the number of stray animals living in Germany is less compared to other countries. In Germany, even the pets with a family are required to get a castration operation. The reason for that is to keep animals who already live, strays or animals with a home, safe. For example, if there is only one cat who does not get castration operation and they mate with a stray cat, then the number of cats keeps on multiplying. 4 years later, the number of cats is over 20,000. This example tells us about the importance of castration.

Germany is a pet friendly country. The German government accommodates a lot of things for pet owners when they take their animals out into public. Designating a place for dogs waiting for their owners in front of supermarkets is an example. Also reducing the number of “dogs not allowed” signs, which allows dogs to enter restaurants and stores. Some companies in Germany allow workers to take their pets to work if they cannot find someone to take care of their pets. It is also common for people to take their pets to puppy nursery schools to train them so that dogs can behave in public and go on walks without leashes. The pet owners need to pay “dog taxes” in order for people to own them and they also have to clean up the city or parks. Dog tax is used like welfare for dogs, and to fund facilities like Tierheim. The German government supports its citizens and their pets to decrease the number of stray animals. Learning from Germany, every government ought to think about their pets.

In Germany the process for adoption is very simple. When you show up Tierheim and find the animal which suits you, all you have to do is fill out an application with your basic contact information and pay the adoption fee at the central

office. The adoption fee is different for each animal. “In Berlin, it costs up to €205 for dogs, €65-85 for cats, €20 for rabbits and between €5-25 for small animals. These fees cover the care, vaccinations, microchipping and spay/neuter” (Porter, 2016). Then, customers can observe the animals and read about their information. Finally, they decide which animal is right for their household and then they can bring them home.

### 2.3 Panel for Life (Ikea Japan)

IKEA Japan, a furniture store, started a campaign for appealing to people about animal protection initiatives, cooperating with Christel Takigawa who is representative of the Panel for Life in May 22, 2018 (Japan In-depth, 2018). Figure 3 is the presentation of it. They plan to display life-size animal’s panels at all of 9 stores until June 29, 2018. By scanning the QR code on the panels, you can connect to that particular animal’s profile on an animal welfare organization website. This project is for drawing people’s attention to animal adoption. IKEA Japan became the first partner of a general incorporated foundation Christel Vie Ensemble “Panel for Life” which tries to improve animal welfare and discourages killing dogs and cats. On May 22 at the presentation, Helene von Reis who is the president of IKEA Japan said “Pets relieve people’s stress at their homes” to urge the importance for residential space. Christel Takigawa states that she wants people to get familiar with the current situation of stray dogs and cats.



*Figure 3.* Panel for life presentation in Tokyo on May 22, 2018.

#### 2.4 Animal Adoption Events in America

As shown in figure 4, the dogs wearing blue jackets came to Hope college. The reason that they came was to heal students by spending time with them. These dogs were stray dogs before becoming therapy dogs. Once these dogs were thrown away, they felt deeply depressed. Giving stray animals work makes them regain their trust so that they can live with people again. Besides becoming therapy animals, there are a lot of ways to save their lives. Just stop killing stray animals. It is not good idea for both people and animals. Some of stray animals have valuable skills that make them able to work. Others just need a new family to live with. Many Americans do not buy dogs at pet shops, because they feel a great distaste toward the dealers of the dogs which are sold at pet shops. They sell dogs for just earning money, and they do not care about the dogs' lives. Some states ban selling pets at pet shops. If you are really looking to buy animals, you can go to the shelter to find the animals that are waiting for a family. I went to the pet event, Petapalooza at West Ottawa High School on June 11, 2017. Figure 5 are the poster of that event and the dog looking for a new owner. That event was family oriented and dogs could also participate. There were a lot of booths, for example,

contest booth, photo booth, pet food booth, and animal adoption booth. People who were looking for a pet could find it there. Some humane societies took adoptable pets to this event. People could also donate money to support them. I asked the staff of Headin' Home Rescue, a pet boarding service in the Ottawa County, about how they decide the animal's new family. People who want to take care of the animal they see at the event need to first take a matching test. They also need to talk with the staff who has taken care of that animal so that the staff can determine the compatibility between the new owner and the dog. If people who want to match up with the dog, they can adopt it into their family. Events like Petapalooza teach people about the importance of how to properly take care of their animal's life.

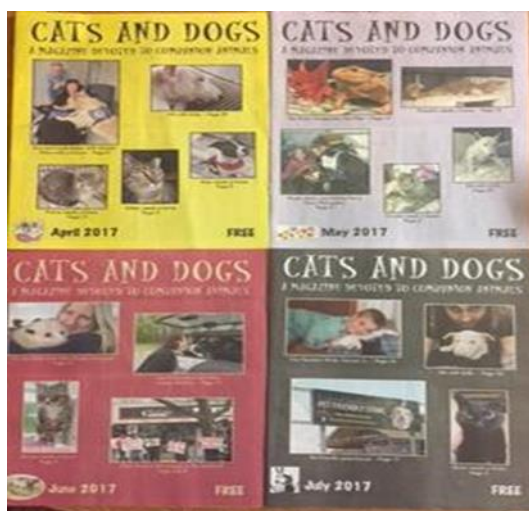


*Figure 4.* This dog in the middle of the students came to Hope College to reduce their stress.

*Figure 5.* The left one is found on the board to inform people about the event, Pet-a-Palooza. The right one is a dog which looking for a new owner at the event.

## 2.5 Free Magazine Articles about Pets (America)

There are some free magazine articles, which talk about animal adoption in Holland, MI, United States. You can get these magazines (*Figure 6*) at the stores, restaurants, and book stores in Holland. The title, “Cats and Dogs, a Magazine Devoted to Companion Animals” is published monthly and has a lot of useful information about pets and animal adoption. It is sponsored by humane societies and clinics (Vormittag, 2017). It also posts the descriptions of dogs still looking for family to inform the reader about the age, characteristics, the species, and health problems and pictures. The articles written are about people who live with dogs, and it also helps you to understand about living with pets. There are some articles that discuss the merits of living with a pet or the life with animal. This can serve as a guide for people who want to own pet. Also, it can convince people who have maybe never thought about owning a pet to desire to have one. In America, there are about 5,000 animal shelters. Surprisingly, only about half of the animals living in a shelter receive a new family. Having these kinds of free magazines let people know about which pets are still looking for family.



*Figure 6.* People can get these free magazine articles at Downtown Holland.

## 2.6 “Pet me” at an Airport (America)

It is said that one of the biggest stressors of traveling is flying. Along with the rush of trying to make it to one’s flight, stress also occurs during the flight and while getting off an airplane. At U.S. airports, you can find dogs wearing vests saying, “Pet Me.” They are highly trained therapy dogs. Handlers walk them through the terminals to greet passengers to reduce the stress of traveling. In 2015, roughly 230 therapy dogs were placed at several major airports in the U.S. (Pet Smile News for Wan chan, 2016). These are dogs that are trained hard and never bark or show bad behavior to anyone. However, not only dogs can work as therapy animals in an airport, but other animals can as well. People traveling to San Francisco one day met an unusual animal working at the airport as one of these therapy animals. LiLou is world’s first airport therapy pig at San Francisco airport. Many people have never touched a pig before, so Lilou is always surrounded by a lot of people. She has her own account on Instagram to share to her followers about her daily life. She is also working on gathering donations for pig charities. Pigs are not a conventional pet, so it is not so easy to get funding support. Many pigs are abandoned after they outgrow their owners’ expectations, or their owners can no longer take care of the pig.

## 2.7 Therapeutic Animals

Animals makes us happy. My friends living with a pet often say “My dog is always beside me. Maybe he knows me more than my parents.” I do not know this was true, but my friend believes that her dog knows everything about her. Animals cannot speak to us, because they are physically not able to speak in our languages. However

more than any other animals, dogs have evolved to become acutely attuned to humans and our behavior and emotions. While dogs are able to understand many of the words people use, they're even better at interpreting our tone of voice, body language, and gestures. Dogs show us their various strange behaviors to tell us about what they are feeling. It makes people feel more relaxed. Originally, therapy dogs were typically incorporated into patient treatment plans to heal people with mental impairments, such as autistic people. However, nowadays, many therapy animals are working everywhere to bring joy and relief to all different types of people. Additionally, the number of people who try to train their pets as therapy animals is increasing. For example, Hope College students are volunteering to train dogs to be therapy dogs in the United States. Some of the students train their own dogs as therapy dogs. The way that they train them is through spending a lot of time with many different students to become accustomed with people. This is also another very important way of knowing how dogs and people live with and understand each other.

## 2.8 Summary

There are many ways to save the stray animals all over the world. Each country can learn from the other countries. Case 2.1 and 2.2 apply to A. Castration operation is the effective way to control the number of animals. The reason for that is to keep animals who already live, strays or animals with a home, safe.

Case 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 apply to B. Humans and animals are equal. People who own pets have to take care of them for the rest of their lives. There are still many stray animals all over the world. They should not be killed by humans. Animal adoption event is one of the ways to meet animals that need a new family.

Case 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 apply to C. Some stray animals have skills to work with humans. People should find the skills and give animals hope to live happily again. Without an object in life, life is not worth living.

Table 1. Classification of the cases in the study

Cases	A	B	C
2.1 Animal Adoption Events in Japan	✓		
2.2 Tierheim in Germany	✓	✓	
2.3 Panel for Life (Ikea Japan)		✓	
2.4 Animal Adoption Events in America		✓	✓
2.5 Free Magazine Articles about Pets (America)		✓	✓
2.6 “Pet Me” at an Airport (America)			✓
2.7 Therapeutic Animals			✓

### 3. Conclusion

Dogs and humans have lived together for a long time. We helped each other since then. Dogs have a lot of great abilities, such as making people happy and helping people. However, unfortunately, there are so many dogs thrown away by people all over the world. Not only dogs but also other animals are thrown away, despite that animals have helped people live for a long time. People should understand the importance of an animal’s life. To do this, people must help to save them. It is important for people to help stray animals so that they can know how to put the animal’s life first. There would be no need for animal shelters if all of pet owners properly took care of their pets for the rest of their lives.

However, in Germany, animals are not killed even though they are placed in animal shelters. They can stay at Tierheim for the rest of their lives or until they find a

new family there. Every government should follow the German standard of animal protection systems. Moreover, there are a lot of animal adoption events in America so you can find a pet suitable to your family there. Japan also needs to make these animal adoption events more available to the public. In addition, the people working at the event have the responsibility to give people a positive image of adopting a pet from an animal shelter. The media is the best platform for showing the positive aspects about animal adoption. Most people have bad image of animal adoption in Japan. They often watch news about pet adoption centers killing animals. Japanese people are too sentimental when it comes to pet adoption. They think that the dogs in animal shelters are just poor animals that have been abused by their previous owners. Regardless, you can save one life. If you want to have pets, you must take care of it for the rest of their lives. If you cannot, do not have one. Take care of them as they have taken care of us. People and dogs have ability to help each other out equally.

There is a way to live peacefully with animals. It is not only for the people who like animals, but also for the people who had never think about animals. The way of saving stray animal is not just helping them to have their new family. Without an object in life, life is not worth living. This is not only for people, but also for animals. We can give them jobs to have something to live for. That means humans can give them hope to live happily.

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