

# **Nebraska Humane Societies**

*“Become a Member of the Humane Race”*

## **Introduction:**

In 2001, a total of 7,551 cats and dogs were brought to the doors of the Capital Humane Society in Lincoln, NE. Of these 7,551 cats and dogs, 1,977 of them were reclaimed by their rightful owners, and 1,449 of them were adopted into new homes. This leaves 3,989 cats and dogs that were either deceased upon or shortly after arrival, or put to death at the shelter ([www.chs.inetnebr.com](http://www.chs.inetnebr.com), 28 May, 2003).

Over half of the 7,551 cats and dogs brought to the humane society were put to death. Why such the large number? Why are adoption rates at the humane society so low? Does no one want a black kitten with white paws that answers to the name of Boots? Is there not a kid in the world that would die for a golden lab puppy named Molly?

Everyday there are families expanding with the addition of a pet or pets, yet thousands of animals at local humane societies must meet the needle because it seems that no one wants them. So why this such a problem and what is can be done to solve it?

## **Background:**

By surveying people in the Omaha metro and surrounding areas I uncovered the attitudes toward the Nebraska Humane Society. Although 100% of the people surveyed feel that the Nebraska Humane Society provides valuable services, only 45% of the people have actually utilized the services. The great majority of people that have used the

NHS live in the country or in rural areas. Most of the incidents were of dropping an animal off at the shelter, most likely a stray that had been dumped nearby.

Over half of the people surveyed said that they would consider adopting a pet from the Humane Society, yet not nearly that many actually have. Some people would not adopt from the NHS and their reasons include. “I don’t know where it [the pet] came from”, “It might get sick and die soon”, and “I don’t know how good it would be with my kids.”

I also discovered in my survey that the vast majority of people underestimate the number of animals brought into the Nebraska Humane Society each year. Eighty-five percent of the people surveyed thought that the number of animals brought into the humane society each year was between 100 and 5,000, when actually the number is over 7,000 ([www.nehumanesociety.org](http://www.nehumanesociety.org), 28 May, 2003).

According to my research, it seems that nearly everybody agrees with the Humane Society and the services it provides, yet many people do not take full advantage of these services for various reasons. People are misinformed, if even informed at all, about the immense numbers of animals associated with the NHS services.

### **Campaign Objectives:**

In order to benefit the Nebraska Humane Society system the following objectives have been set:

1. Build awareness of the Nebraska Humane Society and the services it provides to the public stretching beyond just a shelter for stray animals.
2. Educate the public on the practices and procedures of the Nebraska Humane Society.

3. Increase animal adoption rates as well as increase animal donation rates.
4. Increase the number of people volunteering their services at the Nebraska Humane Society.

### **Strategies and Tactics:**

The following strategies and tactics outline how I would go about carrying out the objectives for the Nebraska Humane Society campaign. Some of the different objectives may be satisfied by the similar strategies and approaches.

Objectives 1 and 2: *Build awareness of the Nebraska Humane Society and the services it provides to the public stretching beyond just a shelter for stray animals, and educate the public on the practices and procedures of the Nebraska Humane Society.*

- ❖ Become a more prevalent corporation in the Omaha metro area and other cities by becoming visible at functions that would attract families. Also, provide information regarding the NHS to adults.
  - Sponsor events around the area such as bike rides, baseball games, and the Shakespeare on the Green festival.
  - Set up booths at events that are not necessarily sponsored in part by the Nebraska Humane Society (i.e. College World Series, or Taste of Omaha festival). In these booths include information about the society and its practices, as well as have a pet (or pets) available for public viewing and handling.

Objectives 3 and 4: *Increase animal adoption rates as well as increase animal donation rates, and increase the number of people volunteering their services at the Nebraska Humane Society.*

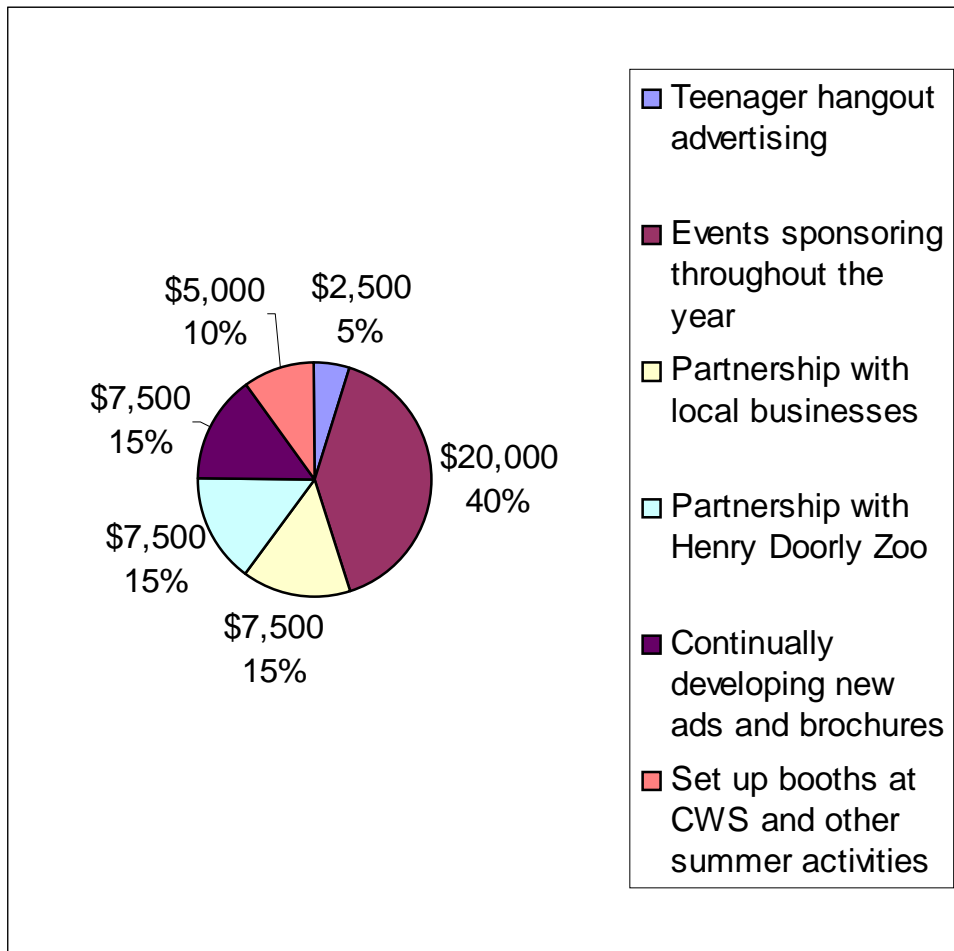
- ❖ Target kids (grade school ages) for adopting animals and teenagers (middle school and high school ages) for volunteering at the Nebraska Humane Society.
  - Because kids are most likely the ones to beg for a pet in the family, it would be beneficial to have pets out and available to play with where kids often come such as the Henry Doorly Zoo or parks and swimming pools throughout the area.
  - During the school year, set up a program with local elementary schools that lets the kids tour the NHS building, as well as provide time to play with the animals. And, of course, send home brochures for Mom and Dad!
  - For volunteerism, teenagers are dying to get out of the house and be with other teenagers, so promote volunteering as a social and fun activity.
    - Put ads up in bowling alleys, fast food restaurants, and other teenage hangouts.
    - Maybe work with these places and provide some sort of discount if the teenagers have a NHS volunteer card or badge.

**Timeline:**

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Continually develop new advertising and info. brochures												
Sponsor summer events (bike rides, etc.)												
Set up booths at College World Series												
Station set up at Henry Doorly Zoo												
Tour program with elementary schools												
Advertise in local teenage hangouts, and work in conjunction with the businesses												
Focus heavily on teen volunteerism												

**Budget:**

As far as knowing how much money this campaign would cost, I am utterly clueless. I can only imagine that it will be costly to set up booths and sponsor events. Also included would have to be the cost of advertising to teens, and partnering with local businesses in order for teenagers to receive discounts and special opportunities. As a pure shot in the dark, if my budget was at \$50,000, the graph below illustrates how the money would be distributed.



**Evaluation:**

In order to evaluate the successfulness of this campaign it will be necessary to survey the people of the Omaha Metro area periodically to see how, if at all, their attitudes toward the Nebraska Humane Society have changed. At the end of each season would be ideal that way we could see what effect the different seasons and types of recent advertising have on the people's attitudes. To evaluate the number of pets donated and adopted, we can look at records from the previous years and compare them. It would also be a good idea to provide a follow-up survey to people who recently worked with the NHS in order to get their views and opinions on the whole experience.

**Conclusion:**

The purpose of this campaign was to increase awareness of and involvement with the Nebraska Humane Society. Through a vast assortment of advertising and publicity techniques, this campaign will hopefully have a positive outcome for the NHS and, in turn, help the thousands of orphaned animals that come to the Nebraska Humane Society for a temporary home.

**References:**

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