

THE CONNECTION

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HOW TO DEFINE THE ASILOMAR ACCORDS

By Director of Business Intelligence, Candice Price

While most of us at Michigan Humane have heard the word asilomar, some of us may not know what it means or why we talk about it. The Asilomar Accords were developed in 2004 by a group of animal welfare organizations with the goal of reducing euthanasia of healthy and treatable animals. They defined a classification system to group animals with similar conditions and standardize shelter reporting. Here are the official definitions from the accords:

Healthy: The term “healthy” means and includes all dogs and cats eight weeks of age or older that, at or subsequent to the time the animal is taken into possession, have manifested no sign of a behavioral or temperamental characteristic that could pose a health or safety risk or otherwise make the animal unsuitable for placement as a pet, and have manifested no sign of disease, injury or a congenital or hereditary condition that adversely affects the health of the animal or that is likely to adversely affect the animal’s health in the future.

Treatable: The term “treatable” means and includes all dogs and cats who are “rehabilitatable” and all dogs and cats who are “manageable.”

Rehabilitatable: The term “rehabilitatable” means and includes all dogs and cats who are not “healthy,” but who are likely to become “healthy” if given medical, foster, behavioral or other care equivalent to the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners/guardians in the community.

Manageable: The term “manageable” means and includes all dogs and cats who are not “healthy” and who are not likely to become “healthy,” regardless of the care provided: but who would likely maintain a satisfactory quality of life if given medical, foster, behavioral or other care, including long-term care, equivalent to the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring owners/guardians in the community, provided, however, that the term “manageable” does not include any dog or cat who is determined to pose a significant risk to human health or safety or to the health or safety of other animals.

Unhealthy and Untreatable: The term “unhealthy and untreatable” means and includes all dogs and cats who, at or subsequent to the time they are taken into possession, (1) have a behavioral or temperamental characteristic that poses a health or safety risk or otherwise makes the animal unsuitable for placement as a pet, and are not likely to become “healthy” or “treatable” even if provided the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners/guardians in the community; (2) are suffering from a disease, injury or congenital or hereditary condition that adversely affects the animal’s health or is likely to adversely affect the animal’s health in the future, and are not likely to become “healthy” or “treatable” even if provided the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners/guardians in the community; or (3) are under the age of eight weeks and are not likely to become “healthy” or “treatable,” even if provided the care typically provided to pets by reasonable and caring pet owners/guardians in the community. The asilomar classification alone does not determine the outcome for an animal; that decision resides with each individual organization. The system enables us to understand the level of success we are having with each grouping and how we compare to other organizations.

ANIMAL BEHAVIOR HELPFUL HINTS By Director of Behavior Programs, Beth Chamberlin

In the upcoming weeks, Beth Chamberlin, Director of Behavior Programs, will be sharing helpful animal behavior tips that you can use in the shelter or at home or share with your friends. If you would like to learn more about how to appropriately deal with a specific animal behavior, please email The Connection at theconnection@michiganhumane.org, and we will work to provide more information about that behavior in an upcoming Connection issue.

Go to Spot - teaching your dog to go to a crate or blanket. For dogs who are aggressive to people at the front door, we suggest using the crate when teaching this exercise. For dogs who simply need a bit of control, a blanket does the trick and is more portable than the crate.

- Put the blanket down, lure your dog into a down on the blanket and feed him about 10 tasty treats, one at a time. Then lift up the rug, tell your dog to “go play,” remove the treats and ignore him for a minute or two while the rug is not on the floor.
- Replace the rug, and begin to shape the behavior by rewarding your dog for looking at the rug. When he looks at the rug, say “yes” and give him a treat. Repeat steps (a) and (b) a couple times a day for about a week.
- When he’s consistently looking at the rug for a treat, wait until he actually takes a step toward the rug before you say “yes” and give a treat. Repeat a couple times a day until he’s purposely stepping toward the rug.
- When he’s consistently stepping toward the rug, don’t say “yes” and give the treat until he’s walking toward the rug and standing on it. Repeat a couple times a day until he’s purposely walking toward (from just a few feet away) the blanket and standing on it.
- When he’s consistently walking to the rug and standing on it, don’t “yes”/treat until he tries something different to get the treat. He may bark, he may sit, he may lie down. We want the lie down, but if he sits, I’d “yes”/treat that for a few times. Then, after he’s consistently sitting on the blanket, wait for a bit and see if he’ll lie down. If he does – lots of treats!!! Repeat until you get him to walk to the blanket (from only a few feet away) and lie down on it without needing to command or lure him into the down.
- Once he’s lying down on the blanket consistently, then you can begin adding the command. Bring the blanket out, give the command (whatever you want) and when he walks over and lies down on it, “yes”/treat. Repeat until you’re able to give the command and he walks over and lies down on the blanket every time you give the command (with the blanket and your dog in the same room).
- Practice giving the command with your dog at different distances from the blanket. First, practice close and slowly work your way up to where you can send him to the blanket from another room. Repeat until your dog is able to go to the blanket when it’s in another room.
- Once he’s able to go to the blanket on command, begin waiting a few seconds before you “yes”/treat. Each time, wait a few seconds longer before you treat him. That way, he’ll learn to stay for longer and longer periods of time before receiving the treat. Repeat having your dog lie down for five seconds on the blanket before you “yes”/treat a couple times a day for about a week. Then go to 10 or 15 seconds before you “yes”/treat. Practice that for a week a couple times a day. Then go to 30 seconds. Give him the command, and have him go to his blanket and lie down. Have him wait for 30 seconds and then “yes”/treat him. He can get up after the treat. If you want, you could then move up to having him wait for a minute before he’s treated, etc. As you continue to practice, work up to three minutes, then five minutes then 10 minutes then 15, then 30. You could even have him lie on his blanket for an hour ... just work your way up to getting the one hour down by rewarding him for shorter lengths of time first.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION HELP

Hello everyone! We are busy designing the New Member Orientation and could use your help. Please think about the following questions and send your responses to The Connection at theconnection@michiganhumane.org.

1. How do you fulfill the mission?
2. What advice would you give to a new employee?
3. What is the most inspiring thing you have seen a co-worker do?

Thank you all for your help. We look forward to seeing all of your responses.

TRIVIA

Q. How long can a snail sleep for?

Send your answers to theconnection@michiganhumane.org, and the first person to answer correctly will receive a free Michigan Humane t-shirt!

Issue 20 Trivia Answer: An Elephant. Congrats to last week's winner, Kristin Swann.

JOB BOARD

Know someone who would be a great fit for the Michigan Humane team? Check out our job openings at michiganhumane.org/careers

Animal Transport Evaluator/Driver
Behavioral Health Services Director
Call Center Representative
Clinic Veterinarian

Clinic Veterinary Tech
Customer Service Representative
Licensed Veterinary Tech
Shelter Licensed Veterinary Tech

Shelter Medicine Manager
Shelter Veterinary Tech

UPCOMING EVENTS

Meet Your Best Friend at the DIA

- When: Sunday, August 25
- Where: Detroit Institute of Arts - Detroit, MI

Meet Your Best Friend at the Zoo

- When: Friday, September 13 & Saturday, September 14
- Where: Detroit Zoo - Detroit, MI

Giddy Up Pup

- When: Sunday, September 22
- Where: Eastern Market - Detroit, MI

DTE Corporate Adoption Event

- When: Wednesday, September 25
- Where: Beacon Park - Detroit, MI

Doggie Dash

- When: Saturday, October 5
- Where: Kenington Metropark - Milford, MI

Great Lakes Animal Welfare Conference

- When: Monday, October 21 & Tuesday, October 22
- Where: Renaissance Center - Detroit, MI

INTERESTED IN SUBMITTING CONTENT FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE CONNECTION? SEND YOUR SUGGESTIONS TO THECONNECTION@MICHIGANHUMANE.ORG

