

## Animal haven to be just like a cozy home

By Tonya Maxwell  
Tribune staff writer

The plans have everything a homeless pup could want in an abode: a comfy couch for dozing, room to romp, a little Beethoven playing in the background.

Chicago's newest venture in pet sheltering, to be built in Lincoln Park, follows a nationwide trend that takes cats and dogs out of cages and puts them in faux mini-living rooms that don't smell like, well, a roomful of animals.

Pets Are Worth Saving Chicago, a non-profit organization dedicated to animal welfare, will break ground Thursday on the \$6.5 million facility. The ceremony will have all the hallmarks of pet cuteness: The invitation features a kitty holding a shovel; pups will dig for dog bones in a dirt pile.

Also at the PAWS groundbreaking, up to 200 dogs and cats displaced by Hurricane Katrina are expected to be available for adoption. Volunteers left for Arkansas on Tuesday to pick up the animals, who were relinquished by their owners after the disaster.

PAWS often uses a single pup with break-your-heart eyes to draw attention to its larger goal

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## Animals up for adoption will wait in style

Groundbreaking will take place Thursday for a 13,000-square-foot PAWS Chicago shelter where cats and dogs will stay in suites instead of cages.

### DOG TOWN Can hold 60 dogs

- Suites with doors, windows, blankets, doggie beds and toys
- Classical music in the rooms to reduce stress and boredom
- Areas for exercise, training
- Three walks a day
- Passersby can see dogs and cats in windows

### WELCOME CENTER

- Fireplace and coffee bar
- Computer gallery for training and counseling
- Get-acquainted room where people can spend time with their pets and prospective pets

### KITTY CITY Can hold 75 cats

- Separate rooms for senior cats, adult cats and kittens
- "Condos" for cats that prefer humans
- Kitty City and Dog Town have cafe areas for volunteers and guests
- Cat trees and aquariums with fake fish

Floorplan  
Ground floor

### MEDICAL CARE AND TREATMENT CENTERS

- Isolation rooms for animals that need medical observation or extra attention
- Holding room for strays
- Exam, treatment and recovery rooms

### COMMUNITY AND HUMANE EDUCATION CENTER

Area to train and educate children about animal care

### VOLUNTEER PAVILION

- PAWS' more than 3,000 volunteers care for the animals and help socialize them
- Room for training and meetings
  - Locker room with showers
  - Offices for adoption counseling

Source: PAWS Chicago

Chicago Tribune

## SHELTER: Pets displaced by hurricane up for adoption

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of creating a Chicago where adoptable pets aren't euthanized.

"The animals are compelling to us. They have no voice, no funding from the government," said PAWS founder Paula Fasseas. "They are suffering, and the methodology of our society is just to kill them."

The new building, expected to be open by fall 2006, will feature a rooftop playground and spa for the pets and a coffee station for the humans.

It is another brick in reaching the no-killing goal, Fasseas said. PAWS began laying those bricks in 1997, wanting to spread the word about the number of shelter animals being put down. That year, more than 42,000 shelter animals in Chicago were killed.

The group kicked off with an annual adoption event called Angels with Tails at upscale boutiques along Michigan Avenue and continued with information and adoption campaigns. In 2001 it established what it considers to be its top weapon in curbing overpopulation: the Lurie Family Spay/Neuter Clinic in Little Village.

In 2004, that clinic operated at a loss of about \$400,000 in providing the spay and neuter service at a discount or free to pets of low-income families.

Mark Duggan, formerly an as-

sistant economics professor at the University of Chicago before moving to Maryland, offered to examine the numbers of animals being euthanized after he adopted two cats from PAWS.

"If people put their minds to it, this is a solvable problem. If you think about crime or health care or guns in Chicago, those problems are very formidable. Where do you start?" he said. But curbing pet overpopulation isn't as daunting, he said.

The spay and neuter services target the South Side, where many of Chicago's homeless animals are born, he said.

PAWS and other groups do deserve credit for combating pet overpopulation problems, said Melanie Sobel, spokeswoman for the Chicago Animal Care and Control Shelter.

But her group deals with a different reality, Sobel said.

"For there to be no-kill facilities, there has to be a full-service animal organization that doesn't have the luxury of picking and choosing the animals that it takes, that has to do the dirty work of society," she said.

The dirty work—euthanasia—often comes down to simple math: too many animals, not enough homes, she said.

Nationwide, the number of pets killed in shelters has been declining for about 35 years, said Merritt Clifton, a reporter on animal issues.

Now editor of Animal People magazine in Washington state, Clifton measures the rate that shelters euthanize animals against the human population. He classifies cities that kill five dogs and cats per 1,000 people per year as no-kill areas.

The formula balances a city's need to put down dogs and cats that are rabid, dangerous or ill against its ability to place

adoptable pets, he said.

Chicago kills about 10 pets per year, Clifton has determined. New York and San Francisco, two cities considered leaders in the no-kill movement, are each at about 2.5 animals put down per 1,000 people.

With the new building, PAWS leaders envision what is considered old hat in San Francisco.

The movement for homelike facilities kicked off seven years ago with the opening of Maddie's Adoption Pet Center by the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Pups have rooms with sofas and TVs, while cat condos feature high perches and windows for afternoons of sunning.

Supporters say the cage-free and odor-free environment makes for happier, healthier and better-behaved dogs and cats. For people wanting to adopt a pet, the experience leads to fewer new owners returning the animals, supporters say.

"In the no-kill movement, the idea is that animals are going to stay in a shelter until they get adopted. They're going to be there for the long term," said Tracy Pore, community outreach coordinator with the San Francisco SPCA. "You can't keep a cat in a cage for two years."

"We're not going to adopt our way out of the problem. We're going to sterilize our way out of it," Fasseas said.

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