

AnimalTalk

Winter 2018

DIFFERENT WAYS
CATS COMMUNICATE

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LINKTO PARTNERSHIP

PAGE 05

NEW WAYS FOR
KIDS TO GET
INVOLVED
& DOG TRAINING

PAGE 06

OUR MISSION To promote the humane care and protection of all animals and to prevent cruelty and suffering.

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AnimalTalk

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Looking forward from the beginning



The name "Toronto Humane Society" was chosen at our inaugural meeting on February 24, 1887. Our founder, John J. Kelso, believed it best reflected the "broadly educational" mission for better laws, better methods, and the development of a "humane spirit" in all affairs of life.

So much has changed since that meeting. The Children's Aid Society grew to become its own organization while the Toronto Humane Society narrowed its focus almost exclusively to animal welfare. This focus quickly became a passion, a passion that has defined us and our community of animal lovers for over 130 years.

What has not changed, however, is our commitment to a "humane spirit in all affairs" -- all affairs.

Just this year, for example, we expanded our volunteer and education programs by partnering with March of Dimes, Partners in Planning and the Salvation Army to connect individuals and groups to volunteer opportunities. More specifically, with the Salvation Army's recreational and life skills programs, we worked to empower those living with developmental disabilities or dual diagnoses through community participation and volunteerism. We also launched a brand new Junior Volunteering program for youth that want to give back, but are not quite old enough to become a regular volunteer at our shelter. The program gives youth the opportunity to spend time enriching the lives of our pets, while also earning community service hours.

Looking ahead, we will be taking part in several community-focused initiatives that, while never straying from our animal focus, will broaden our role as an educative resource and community partner dedicated to J. J. Kelso's idea of a "humane spirit". One of these new initiatives has everyone here very excited. With the help of our amazing new partners at Link Toronto, we have launched our very own SafePet program. For the details of the program and the partnership, please refer to page 5 of this issue. In short though, we now coordinate foster care for the pets of those fleeing situations of domestic violence. These survivors have access to our large network of dedicated foster parents while they seek help for themselves at a Toronto-area shelter.

This program and partnership is a remarkable step forward for this organization. It reflects not only the direction in which we are going, but the passion of those on our team who all believe that by pushing that humane spirit further each and every day, the world will become a better place for all.

Working with such a team, sharing in their vision, their passion, to be trusted by them with their dreams and goals, has truly been one of the great honors that I have shared as CEO. I cannot wait for what is next.

Thanks to your trust in us, you have helped make dreams a reality; you have helped shape a culture of compassion; above all, you have helped keep J. J. Kelso's original mission alive for over 130 years!

We and the animals thank you,

Dr. Jacques Messier, DVM, MBA
Chief Executive Officer

Want to keep up with what's happening at your favourite animal shelter?

Sign up for our **free** weekly newsletter at
www.torontohumanesociety.com



FELINE LOST IN TRANSLATION

Doctor Jacklyn Ellis is Toronto Humane Society's Manager of Feline Behaviour, Rehabilitation and Enrichment programs. She has a PHD in Animal Care and her dissertation focused on reducing stress in shelter cats. We've asked her a few fun questions about cat communication!

Let's start with vocal communication, or what you call the 'manipulative meow' and 'persuasive purr'. Where does the meow come from?

The theory is that during domestication, cats that would meow at humans to get food and care (in the same way a kitten meows at their mother to get food and care) had better survival rates, and their genes were passed on in greater numbers. This means that cats have evolved a manipulative meow to get human attention.

So wait, don't cat's meow to one another? Or is the meow fur humans only?

Nice... And no. You've probably seen a kitten meow to get attention from their momma cat. But a meow between two adult cats is quite rare.

But cats speak to other cats, right?

Sometimes. When they do, it's through a variety of smells, sights, touches. Males can "yowl" when looking to mate, while females, if they're interested, will also "yowl". This is called a "caterwaul". Other circumstances in which they speak to each other are associated with aggression. Same high-pitched, shrill sound, only scarier.

But what about the 'persuasive purr'? Is that something the cat world has contrived for humans as well?

You could say that. While most people think a purr simply indicates contentment, researchers have discovered that cats have a specialized purr referred to as a "solicitation purr". When listening to recordings of both types of purrs, people described this soliciting purr as more urgent and unpleasant than a normal purr. These interpretations make the listener more likely to provide care for the cat.

Interesting. Well, that makes vocal communication a little less purrplexing. So how else do they communicate? You mentioned body language...

You just can't help yourself, can you? Cats can communicate in a ton of subtle and non-vocal ways. They have an entire body language. Unlike ours, theirs is sophisticated and precise in meaning. Let's start with those strange and beautiful eyes. When the pupils are dilated, the cat is usually telling us they are highly aroused in a "I'm frightened", or, "I'm ready to attack" way. Not always though, sometimes they're in a playful mood. When the pupils are constricted, the cat is aggressive and you should give them space.

Their ears tell us lots, too. Ears forward means they're feeling good. Ears pressed to the side of their head or rotating around means they're unsure of things, maybe slow it down. When the ears are flattened all the way back or out to the side like airplanes, they're frightened or ready to be aggressive and we should probably leave this cat alone.

Tails communicate a large number of different emotions. To keep it short, when the tail is tucked close to the body, the cat is frightened. When it's up, the cat is friendly. Unlike a dog, when a cat's tail is wagging, it means the cat is very annoyed and that you might want to rethink the way you're acting with them.

Woah. Cats really tail it like it is, don't they? Is there anything else people might not understand or know about feline body language?

I will keep this quick because I don't know if I can take another pun. There are definitely some things people might not know. One is that, when a cat shows you their belly, they probably trust you. But it does not necessarily mean they're okay with belly touches.



A PARTNERSHIP TO HELP BUILD A HUMANE SOCIETY

Through partnership, we've joined a movement toward a humane society.

For those experiencing domestic violence, having a pet can sometimes make their situation more complicated and concerning. No Toronto-area Violence Against Women shelters currently allow pets, and for many survivors, leaving their pet behind with their abuser is not an option.

According to a recent University of Windsor study^[1], nearly 90 percent of women staying at the surveyed Violence Against Women shelters said that their partner also abused their pet; 56 percent of these women delayed leaving an abusive relationship due to fear for their pet's safety.

Thanks to the efforts of activists and advocacy groups, there are now programs like SafePet that provide temporary care for the pets of those fleeing situations of domestic violence. Originally created in 2003 by the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association (in partnership with the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses), the SafePet program arranges foster care for the duration of the pet owner's stay at a Toronto-area Violence Against Women shelter. The OVMA re-launched their program in 2013, and they provide guidance to local shelters and veterinarians who are interested in this aspect of sheltering.

The Toronto Humane Society is proud to announce a new initiative: the Link T.O. - THS Community Partner Program. Soon, our large and experienced network of foster parents will be available to survivors of domestic violence while they seek help at a Toronto-area shelter. We will also be providing veterinary care for SafePet animals, to keep them healthy and happy while they are with their foster families.

Link Coalition Toronto, a non-profit serving Toronto and the GTA, began their SafePet program in 2017 after identifying a need for such a program in our city. They work with numerous Violence Against Women shelters in the area, providing pet fostering services for women seeking shelter. Link T.O. also educates about the "link" among four types of family violence: child abuse, animal abuse, domestic violence, and elder abuse.

This partnership marks a significant step forward for the Toronto Humane Society as we continue to expand our services to build a humane society. We are honoured to be working with Link Coalition Toronto, and look forward to what this new and exciting partnership will bring!

^[1] www.ovma.org/pet-owners/safepet-program



GETTING KIDS MORE INVOLVED WITH THE TORONTO HUMANE SOCIETY

This year, our humane education department launched two new programs for kids who want to give back to shelter pets. Our new Birthday Parties program invites kids aged 4 and up to host their special day alongside some furry friends at the shelter. Parents or Guardians can choose from our “Pawsome Party” or “Doggone Deluxe” packages ranging in price from \$300 to \$425 for a two hour experience. Since its launch this summer, we’ve had 9 parties, with more to come!

The new Junior Volunteering program is another education initiative. It’s aimed at youth who want to give back, but are not quite old enough to become a regular volunteer at our organization. For five weeks at a time, youth aged 12 to 17 have the opportunity to spend time enriching the lives of our small pets, while also earning a few community service hours. With five kids per session, they get much more personal and hands-on experience and get to know our animals.

Our Junior Volunteer Program has quickly become one of our most requested programs for this age group, and has a growing waitlist. Past participants have loved helping our shy pets come out of their shells. For more information, or to be added to our waitlist, please email education@torontohumanesociety.com.



DOG TRAINING CLASSES ARE AT THE TORONTO HUMANE SOCIETY

We are proud to announce that we have officially relaunched our dog training classes! Dog owners can once again join us in a supportive, constructive environment and strengthen their human-canine bond whether they’ve recently welcomed a new puppy into their lives, are looking for “the basics”, or are trying to overcome a more challenging behavioural concern.

The relaunched training services allow our team of passionate animal lovers to advocate for and educate pet owners about humane, force-free, compassionate, and trust building training practices. We sincerely believe that these principles, with the help of our training program, will shape a culture of care and compassion beyond the training room

into the homes of our community. The classes have also touched the lives of animals in our care. Puppies in-shelter or in our foster program are encouraged to participate in our puppy socialization classes. Post-adoption support is also encouraged as our alumni save money on registration. Odie, one of our longer stay dogs, recently graduated from our Tier One training class thanks to help of one of his Animal Care Workers. He now has his own certificate next to his kennel door.

Our own CPDT-KA certified trainer, Melissa Shupak, says that the training classes not only provide industry standard canine training and support, but also aid in pet retention. “Our hope is now that our training services are back up and running, we can help reduce the number of dogs in the Toronto-area being relinquished to shelters for behavioural reasons,” she added.

We’re so happy to be bringing this program back not only because of how important it is for strengthening the human-animal bond, but also for what it can do for our community. By promoting our standards and beliefs, extending the reach of our expertise, resources, and capacities through community resources and support, we aim to inspire those around us to help build a humane society.



GIFTS OF LOVE

We gratefully acknowledge the donors who have given gifts of \$80 or more in honour or in memory of a special person or pet. Tribute gifts are a thoughtful and meaningful way of acknowledging a loved one’s memory, expressing your good wishes or commemorating an occasion.

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