

# Animal Shelters in Society

**Grades:** K - 5

## **Background Information for Teachers**

Animal shelters and animal control facilities play important roles in the community. They are usually not so high-profile as other community facilities such as police and fire stations, and many students do not know many--if any--of the services they provide. In learning about animal shelters and control facilities, students can also learn what roles they themselves play in being community members by learning to whom to turn when problems arise. For grades K-2, students can understand that they should turn to adults for help, and that different parts of a community have different jobs. Older students can understand the difference they personally can make by being active, helpful members of a society by working with established civic organizations to identify and address various problems. Students of all ages can understand that animals have needs, and that domesticated animals have needs very similar to those of humans, including special care.

## **Objectives:**

### Affective:

- Students will understand the role animal shelters and animal control facilities play in society by helping animals.

### Academic:

- Students will read and comprehend non-fiction stories.
- Students will government and civic life.

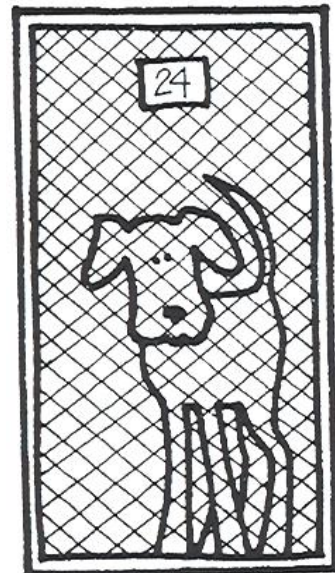
## **Motivation:**

Tell students, “The city needs your help! Usually, Marcus helps the mayor of the city by answering phone calls from people who have problems. Marcus directs the person’s call to the place that could solve the problem. But, today Marcus is sick! Can you help out by listening to the phone calls and figuring out where to send the caller?”

## **Procedure:**

### Mini-Lesson:

- 1) On the board, place the illustrations of the police station, hospital, and animal shelter. You may want to enlarge the pictures and either color



them or have students color them.

- 2) Help students describe what each of these places is, and the types of jobs it does.
- 3) Hand out the cards with calls on them.
- 4) Have students read what the callers say on the cards.
- 5) Decide which place, the police station, hospital, or animal shelter, would be the best place to help the caller.
- 6) After students have decided, write the problem under the place on the board.
- 7) Read what happened to each caller's problem.

Small-Group Activity:

- 1) Have students make posters/signs/collages that describe the things animal shelters do to help the community.
- 2) Students can show their posters to the class and display them for other classes to see.

**Follow-Up Activities:**

- Discuss why animals need a home and why we need animal shelters. Explain that if students encounter animals outside, they should ask an adult to call the local animal shelter or animal control facility. Children should never approach or touch an animal they do not know. Let students know that the animal shelter is a place to look if your family has decided to bring a new pet into the home.
- Ask the students if they have seen dogs or cats roaming their neighborhood. Do they think these animals are happy and healthy? Ask them where they think these animals have come from. Discussion about abandoned pets, defining "abandoned" for the younger grades. Have students discuss why someone might abandon their pet. As appropriate for the age, discuss what things may happen to abandoned pets. Pets are domesticated animals, they have been bred to live in homes and cannot survive as well in the wild. Stray animals can be dangerous, especially since children will be more likely to approach a feral dog or cat than wild animals (like bob cats or coyotes).
- Ask the students why they think the people who abandon them really knew what could happen to their pets? Do they think that the people who abandon their pets know of the dangers their pets will face? What should the people do instead of abandoning their pets.

**Special Education and ESL:**

Talk to the students about the idea that if they feel someone or some animal is in trouble, that they should talk to a trusted adult about it. Even they do not understand the different roles of police and animal control officers, they can understand that they should speak to adults about trouble they see.

## Addendum #1:

### Caller Scripts

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“Hello? Everybody I know is getting sick. They are getting the flu. I am worried that I will get sick too. Where can I go to help so I do not get sick?”

Correct place: Hospital

Under Location on Board Write: Flu Shots

That’s right! Sometimes people go to a hospital when they are not sick! People go to hospitals to get “shots.” Shots can help people not get sick in the first place. The person who called goes to the hospital and gets a flu shot. Because she [or “he” if the child reading the script is a boy] got a flu shot, she does not get the flu from her sister. Instead, she is able to help take care of her sister until she gets better.

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“Hello? I saw a dog walking around my neighborhood. He does not have a collar, and he looks hungry. Who can I call to help the dog?”

Correct place: Animal Shelter

What do you think happened?

The shelter sends out a Carla, an animal control officer. This is someone who helps stray animals and sometimes looks to see if people’s companion animals are doing O.K.



Carla, the animal control officer, finds the stray dog. The dog is sick, hungry, and scared. Judy takes the stray dog to the shelter. She names him Max.

At the shelter, Max gets shots to help him not get sick again. Max also gets “neutered” so that he won’t have children that could have become hungry and scared stray puppies.

For the next week, Max lives at the shelter. The people at the shelter give Max lots of love so he isn’t so scared anymore. Then a responsible family adopts him.

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“Hello! My name is Mister Chu. I am the father of a little girl named Mindy. Mindy would LOVE to have a dog. She knows that dogs take work. But, she knows that pets love you, and she will help take care of the dog. Now, we have find a place to adopt a nice dog! Can you help me find a place where we can adopt a dog?”

Correct place: Animal Shelter

Under Location on Board Write: Adopting a Dog

What do you think happened?

Mr. Chu and his daughter, Mindy, go the shelter. While they are there, they see a beautiful dog with long, beige fur and big, brown eyes. Mindy falls in love with the dog right away! Mindy asks the people at the shelter what the dog’s name is. They tell her that her name is Willow, and that she’s a very nice dog.



Mr. Chu and Mindy adopt Willow, and take her home. They’re careful to let Willow get used to her new home. Not everything goes perfectly right away, but in very soon, Willow understands what she can do, and where she can do it. Willow becomes Mindy’s best friend!

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“Hello! Hello! I just saw my neighbor trip and fall! He looks hurt! Who can I call to help him?”

Correct place: Hospital.

Under Location on Board Write: Helping a Hurt Person

What do you think happened?

Isn’t it nice when neighbors help each other?! Luckily, the man who fell was not hurt badly. At first, the man was nervous about going to the hospital. But, the doctors and nurses were very nice to him. After he got back from the hospital, he felt much better. And to thank his neighbor for calling for help, he baked him an upside-down cake.

“Hi. I was walking down the street when I saw a dog. He was chained up in someone’s yard. The chain was very short and the dog barked a lot. He didn’t have any food or water, and it was a hot day. The dog looked very upset and angry. Is there anything I can do to help him? Is there someone I can call?”

Correct place: Animal Shelter

Under Location on Board Write: Helping a Stray Animal

What do you think happened?

In some places, the police do something about animals that are not treated well. But, in many other places, animal shelters can help. And that’s what happened here! Remember Carla, the animal control officer? Well, it looks like today is another busy day for her!

Carla goes out to visit the people who own the yard and the dog. The dog’s name is Sam. She talks to the people and helps them realize that they are not treating their dog, Sam, well. Carla tells the family that by being mean to the Sam, the people are breaking the law! The family has to pay fines.

Carla and other people from the animal shelter work with the family. They teach them how to train Sam, and pretty soon, Sam is a loving member of their family! He doesn’t bark all the time anymore, and the family wonders how they could ever have treated him so badly!

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“Hello there! My name is Mrs. Rivera. I am a first grade teacher. I want my students to be safe. I would like someone to teach my students how to be safe with dogs. Where could I go to find someone to teach my students how not to get bitten by dogs?”

Correct place: Animal Shelter

Under Location on Board Write: Teaching Students About Animal Safety

What do you think happened?

Mrs. Rivera calls the animal shelter. She talks to Audrey. Audrey says that she often goes out to schools to talk to students about how to be kind and safe with animals.

Audrey visits Mrs. Rivera’s class. Audrey tells the class that they should only get close to a dog after they have gotten permission from the dog’s guardian and only when the guardian is with the dog.

Audrey also told the class that there are times when dogs do not like to be disturbed. She said that dogs like to eat alone. She also said that sometimes dogs are cranky when they wake up too quickly--just like some people!

Audrey even taught the class a foreign language--dog language! She told them that dogs talk with their bodies. She said that dogs will show people how they are feeling by making faces and by moving in different ways. Audrey said that a lot times, if a person knows how to read a dog's body language, the person can avoid being bitten by the dog.

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“Hello? This is Mrs. Rivera again! It was so nice having Audrey come talk to my class. They learned a lot about dogs and how not to get bitten. I still want my students to be safe. Who could talk to my class about being safe around strangers?”

Correct place: Police station

Under Location on Board Write: Teaching Students About Being Safe Around Strangers

What do you think happened?

The class is visited by someone named Officer McGruff®! McGruff talks to the kids about many safety issues, and how they can help “take a bite out of crime.”

McGruff told the kids how to be safe from strangers. He said they should never walk or bike alone. They should always have someone else with them. He told them to stay away from empty buildings, too. If a stranger did say something to them, McGruff told them not to say anything back. They should run away and tell an adult they trust what happened.

McGruff said that a stranger might ask them to help find their lost dog or cat. But if someone loses their pet, what should they do? Call the animal shelter! Never go anywhere with a stranger, no matter what the stranger says!

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“Help! My name is Chloe. We lost our cat! We used to keep her in our backyard. I came home from school today, and she was gone! I’m so scared something bad happened to her! I wish we had never let her go outside. What can I do? Where should I go to try to find my cat?”

Correct place: Animal Shelter

Under Location on Board Write: Finding a Lost Pet

What do you think happened?

Chloe goes to the animal shelter and . . . finds her cat there! Her cat, Mittens, looks very scared and confused. The animal shelter said that when they brought her in, she was very dirty and may have gotten into a fight. The shelter cleaned her up and took care of her.

Chloe's family had never put a collar on Mittens. The animal shelter said Chloe's family was lucky. Without a collar, a cat or dog can be very hard to find.

Chloe took her cat home. Her family put a collar on Mittens, and kept her inside. Mittens was much happier being an inside cat. She was much safer inside, too!



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“Oh my goodness! Hello! Hello! I think I just saw an elephant! Who should I call?”

Correct place: Police station

Under Location on Board Write: Wild Animal Problems

What do you think happened?

Well, it turns out that the person did see an elephant! An elephant got scared and escaped from a circus. The elephant didn't know what to do, so it was running through the streets! My, what confusion that caused!

The police called in specialists to help calm the elephant down and catch her. After they caught the elephant, they took her to a place called a sanctuary. At the elephant sanctuary, the elephant was able to live with other elephants just like she could when she lived in Asia. The elephant was very happy at the sanctuary.

## Resources:

- [www.asPCA.org](http://www.asPCA.org) The ASPCA provides information, material, and assistance to people and shelters across the nation. The humane law enforcement officers have jurisdiction over all of New York State. In many other states, animal control officers are also vested with the power to arrest violators of animal cruelty laws.
- <http://www.asPCA.org/site/FrameSet?style=Shelter> A list of shelters in New York State and across the nation.
- <http://www.petfinder.org> A directory of some animals that are available for adoption at shelters around the nation. Also has information on animals, activities, message boards, etc.
- <http://www.nyheart.org/links.html> Links to sites on several topics addressed by animal shelters and other animal welfare organizations

## New York State Standards Addressed:

*ELA Standard 3 - Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation – Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.*

### Listening and Reading

1. Listening and reading to analyze and evaluate experiences, ideas, information, and issues requires using evaluative criteria from a variety of perspectives and recognizing the difference in evaluations based on different sets of criteria.

*Social Studies Standard V: Civics, Citizenship, and Government*

1. The study of civics, citizenship and government involves learning about political systems, the purposes of government and civic life; and the differing assumptions held by people across time and place regarding power, authority, governance and law.

