

# Be Frugal: How to save lives on a shoe-string

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[www.austinpetsalive.org](http://www.austinpetsalive.org)  
[www.americanpetsalive.org](http://www.americanpetsalive.org)



**First some history...**



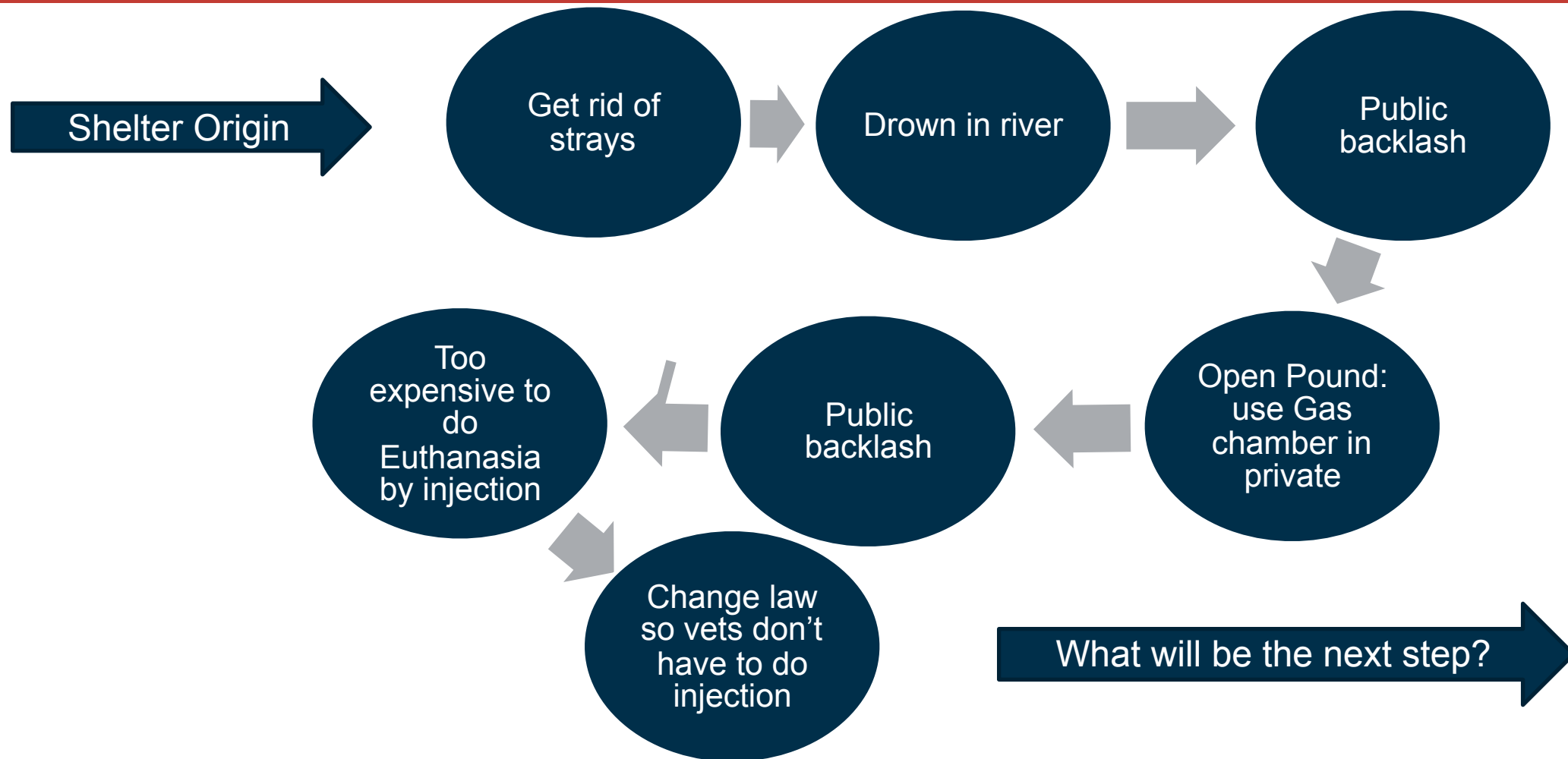
# Shelters were not created, or budgeted, to save lives

And dollars drive the entire business

- Lowest dollar amount possible to take pets off the streets
- Laws were written, and rewritten, to make it as cheap as possible to run shelters
  - Non vet euthanasia
  - No hold time for sick/injured strays
- The bar for the whole state is based on poorest shelter



# Think about it.....



# Ok, what does that have to do with your lifesaving work?

- We have acted for decades like we live in a parallel universe....





Trying to forget that this is actually our universe



# Why do I bring this up?



Because in order to be No Kill,

we need to re-align our actions and our intentions with the real problems

Until the government changes our system to do better we have to work with our real universe.

# 5 ways of thinking to save lives on a shoestring budget

1. Compete with Cost of Death
2. Herd Health
3. Keep it Simple
4. Engage the Community
5. Automate Everything





# 1. Compete with the Cost of Death

- How much does it cost to end a life?
  - ~\$2.00
    - Syringe
    - Beuthanasia Solution
    - Bag
- How much does it cost to save that same life (minimum)?
  - Spay/neuter
  - Adoption counseling
  - Longer housing
  - Foster support
  - Other medical needs



How do we compete with  
the low, low, low cost of  
death?

BE as CHEAP as possible!



"Pick something from the menu and then  
we'll go to your place and make it."

# 1. How to compete with the Cost of Death



Treat what we see

- No testing unless pivotal to treatment
- Ask the vet: Will the treatment recommendation change if positive/negative?

Nature is your biggest ally

Use what you have

- Don't order different or expensive drugs unless there is truly no alternative on hand
  - Should be extremely rare

Break up tubes/bottles to share without contamination

- Frontline
- Eye meds
- Bravecto

Find alternatives to expensive meds

- Eye meds, antibiotics

Reuse

- Pill bottles, syringes, bags, etc

# However....

Don't skimp or delay on:

- Vaccines
- Pain medicine
- Cleaning up wounds
- Proactive treatment on things that will get worse possibly
  - Anorexic cats
  - Eyes
  - Baby illness



# 2. Herd Health isn't just for Cows

Herd Health Approach:

- Been in existence for eons

Goals:

- Keep herd healthy
- Keep costs lower than "profit"
- Keep everyone alive- don't waste the inventory
- Deliver good enough product

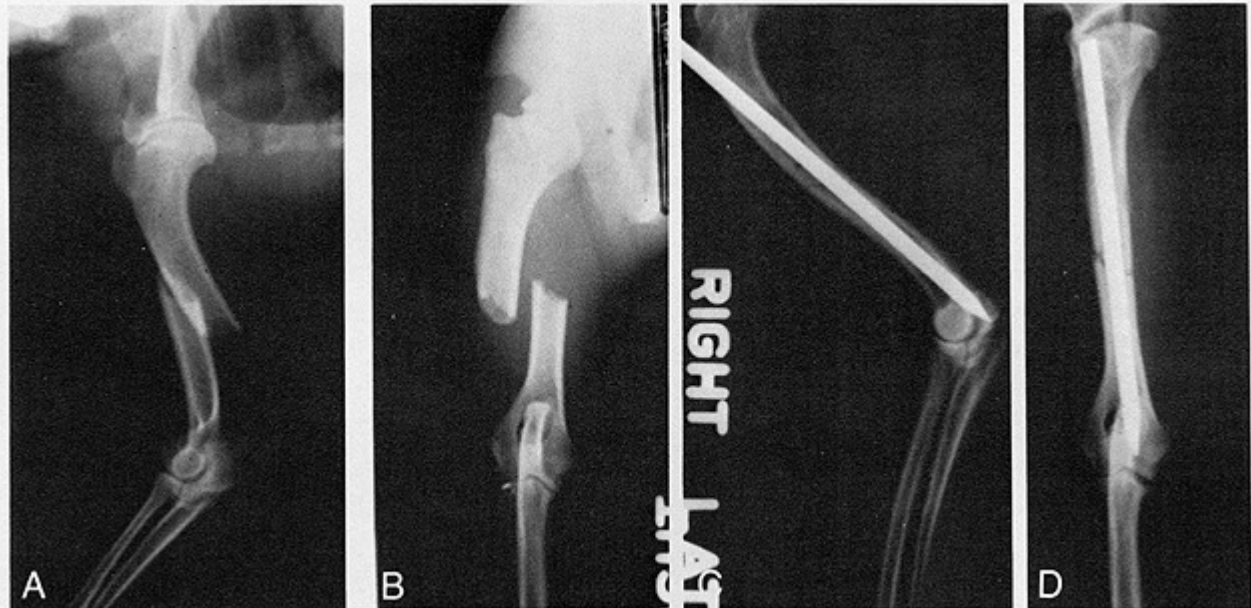




## 2. Herd Health vs Private Practice Standards in a Shelter:

SPP: Save some high dollar animals but not all who are salvageable due to limited funds

- Most No Kill Shelter's choice



HH: Spread funds over all animals by incrementally giving the most basic care until all are saved

- APA's choice
- Why?



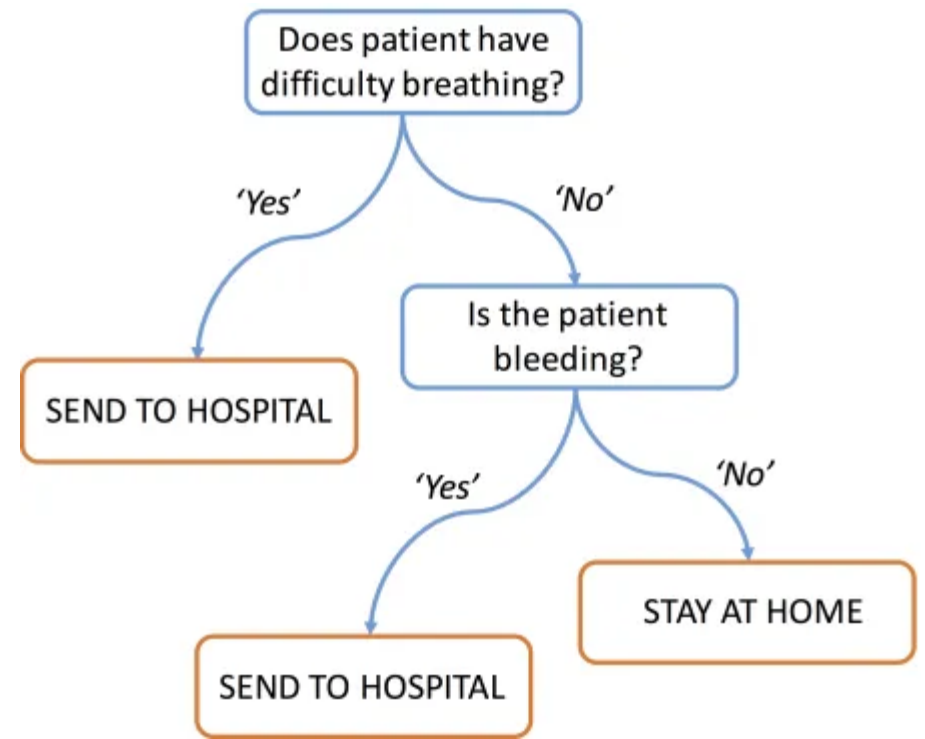
# 3. Keep It Simple

Simple means:

- Less human hours needed
- More people can help
- Less confusion
- Fewer supplies
- Fewer things to go wrong
- Generally less money

Simple does NOT mean:

- You never get complex



## Case Study-Rusty



# Case Study- Coda



er's

- Choices:

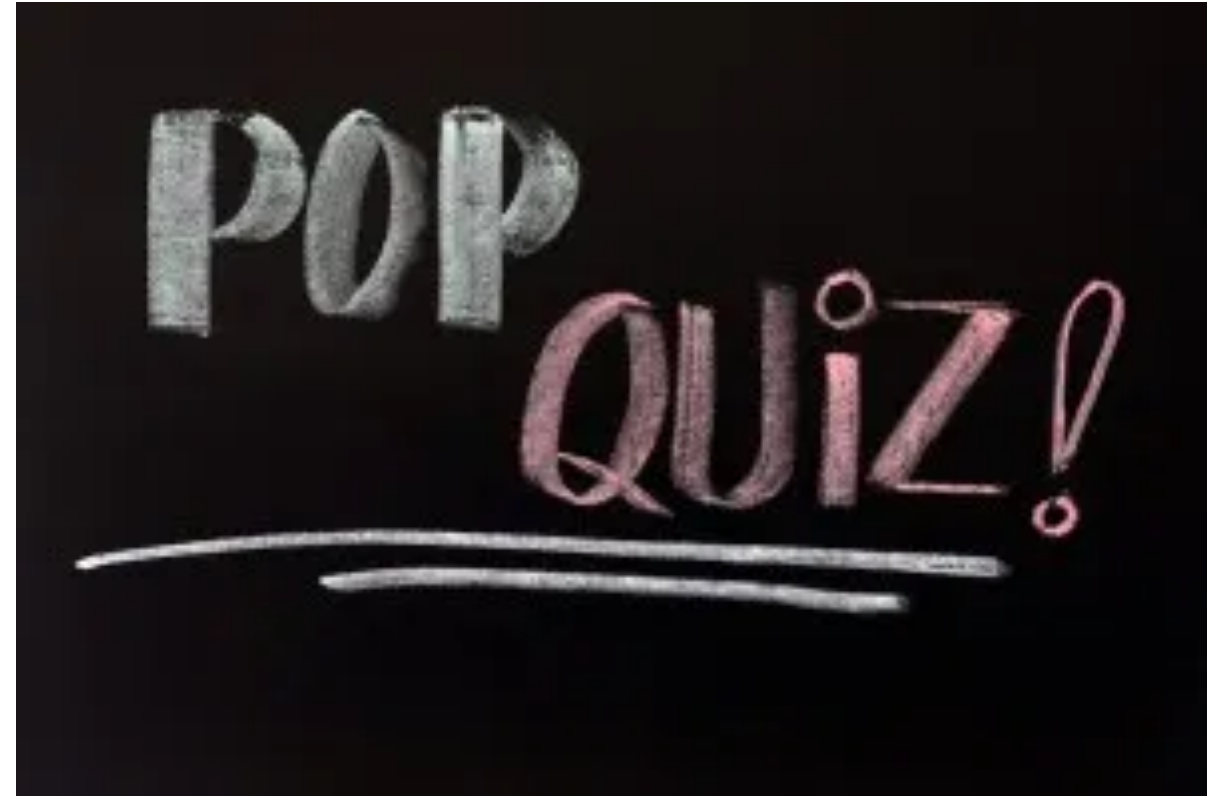
- Euthanize due to poor condition
- Euthanize due to probably congenital syndrome (hydrocephalus)
- Xray to try to see what is going on
- Hope it's trauma and give him time/anti-inflammatories



# Hidden Subject

What do you need most to operate a successful animal shelter?

- Money
- Animals
- People
- A building





# 4. Engage the Community

- Donors
  - Expand your possibilities
- Volunteers
  - Expand your human power hours
- Foster homes
  - Expand your cage AND care capacity
- Advocates
  - Increase govt budgets
  - Expand your reach



# 4. Engage the Community

## Cici

by jennariadi • Posted in: [Donations](#), [Fundraising](#), [Pets Needing Homes](#)

  3 people like this. Be the first of your friends.



Cici is a sweet, extra cuddly chihuahua that has not had very good luck lately. She came to Austin Animal Center as a stray and when no one came to claim her, she ended up on their euthanasia list. So we brought her over to Austin Pets Alive! and quickly learned she was both heartworm positive and has double luxating patellas on her back legs (aka bad knees). We would like to provide the surgery to fix her knees and we need your help! These surgeries are pretty expensive, but any donation amount will help us reach the goal of affording it. Please help, even if you are able to donate just \$5. Thank you!

### Cici



Raised **\$390**  
9 contributors

You can watch a video of Cici getting some real love from her foster parents [here!](#)

### SEARCH

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## Cici's foster helps raise funds (2012)



**Success! And it is a good thing because she needs knees for 2019.**



Instagram video (fingers crossed)

## Fosters raise funds, more fosters and Honey Biscuit





## Note from Honey Biscuit Foster to new foster for another hurt kitty

Honey Biscuit was a total sweetheart and so easy to treat, also hit by a car, with a broken jaw and blind. As soon as her story was posted on the APA blog, she had enough donations to cover her surgery costs (within the first couple of hours!) and an amazing family to adopt her!

I would take this little Lincoln in a heartbeat, it was such a rewarding experience to see Biscuit mend and find a great home, however I have a medical foster kitty already who needs to be syringe fed due to liver issues LOL

I am happy to help anyone who does take Lincoln with advice, supplies, etc, Hope you can give him a chance :)

## Honey Biscuit in Her New Home

Cost: \$350



## Case Study- Eye popped out



- Secrets to posting for help:
  - Be urgent
  - Be real time
  - Be graphic
  - Be hopeful
  - Ask for it all- funds, foster, adopter at once

# 5. Automate Everything

Death is automated at all shelters that have traditionally killed for space.

- After hold time
- Based on breed
- Assembly line fashion
- Same doses/technique over and over and over



Automate life saving!

- Build a written protocol for anything you have more than 10 of in a year
- Follow it 100% of the time
- Allow your staff to implement the protocols
- Incremental resource cost outlined in protocol
  - Elevating only the conditions that have the highest potential for life long problems to the most expensive resources



# Bone Fracture Protocol

## Surgery or no surgery?

- Rationale:
  - Splint/sling- Immobilization Theory
  - Time
- When to Amputate:
  - Open wounds where bone has popped through
  - Limb is not functioning AND it is mutilated
  - Never used instead of fixation for long bone fractures
- When to do Bone Surgery (pins or plates or FHO)
  - Only if joint is affected and size matters
  - Nonjoint fracture doesn't heal with splinting and/or time
  - If more than one leg no matter where fracture is





# Benefits and Risks of Bone Fracture Policy

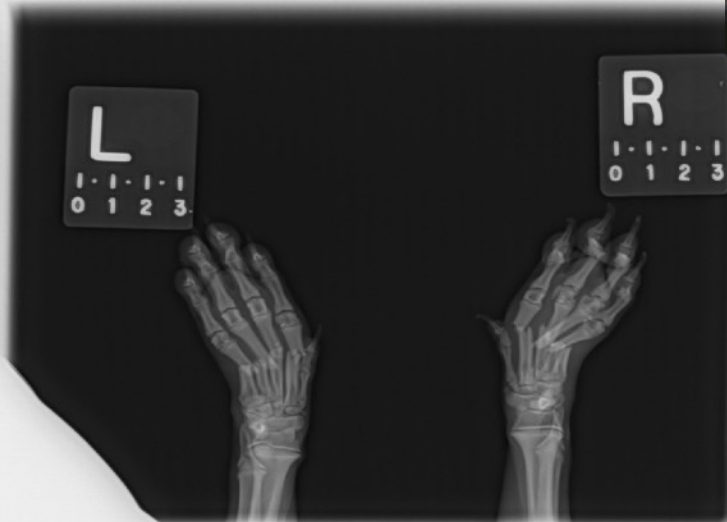
- Benefits

- Saves more lives because more money can be spread amongst more animals
- Costs less per animal
- No anesthetic death risk
- No surgical complications

- Risks

- May heal in weird way or incorrectly
- Takes longer to heal
- May not heal at all
- Regular vets can get angry if not clearly explained why in notes
- Adopters can get angry if not educated as to why choice was made and prognosis

## Case Study- Lily



## Case Study- Elsie Ethrington

- Shelter vet said she must be euthanized immediately
- 6 fractures in pelvis



- 8 weeks later
- Cost: \$200



# Broken Pelvises



# 5. Automate Everything

## Level One - Cat Manager

Nasal: yellow/green nasal discharge or "crust" (aka boogers) on the nose. Maybe sneezing only. Activity Level: Normal

Appetite: Good

Fever: Mild or none.

Congestion: None

Rx: Doxycycline- see dose chart

## Level two - Tech

Not improving on doxycycline.

Nasal: Moderate to heavy discharge

Activity Level: Slightly decreased

Appetite: Moderate, still eating

Fever: Mild to moderate

Congestion: Snuffly, breathing can be heard

Rx: Zithromax- see dose chart

## Level Three - VET

A combination or all of these: congested, fever, not eating, open mouth breathing,

Lethargic.

Not responding to Doxy or Zith

Prescribe - Baytril 5mg/kg PO SID x 10 days, hospitalize, nebulize, force feed if not eating, alert vet asap.if worsens





# Frugal Medical Approach

## Pros and Cons



- Pros:
  - Saves more lives
  - Costs less per head
  - 90% do well
  - All get a solid chance at life
- Cons:
  - People want the best
  - State Veterinary Boards
  - 10% not so well
  - Only some get a solid chance at life

# How to communicate thought process?



GOOD + FAST	WON'T BE CHEAP
FAST + CHEAP	WON'T BE GOOD
CHEAP + GOOD	WON'T BE FAST

Pick any two

# Apply to all areas of the shelter in step wise fashion

Step 1: Write down what you need to accomplish (ie, bone to heal, heating in the kennels, pull 100 more animals, etc)

Step 2: Make a list from cheapest to most expensive of all the ways to accomplish that and what you are willing to do and why and if there is anything you won't allow to be done

Step 3: Explain it to people about it and ask for help

Step 4: If it involves a process that will need to be repeated, write down a successful protocol of what is expected by who for how long

Step 5: Adjust if needed

# Parting Thought

If an animal will die because we don't have X (a surgeon, more kennels, more adopters, more behavior help)

- That is called dying due to lack of resources and should be coded that way.
- That means it's not dying because it actually needs to die.
- That means that we have the ability to figure out how to provide something instead of nothing.

# Thank you!

## QUESTIONS?

