
California Shelter 'Floored' By Big Response to Drive-Thru Pet Fostering Event Amid Coronavirus

Kern County Animal Services has found foster homes for over 88 pets over the past few days by using drive-thru animal pick-ups

By **Nicholas Rice** | March 19, 2020 02:49 PM

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to spread across the globe, many animal shelters are beginning to feel its impact as they suffer from a lag in adoptions.

But animal shelters in Kern County, California have come up with a brilliant and innovative way to help their animals in need — drive-thru pet fostering and adoptions.

With animal shelters closing to the public to prevent the spread of COVID-19, this route offers a way for animals to find a home, whether permanent or temporary, instead of remaining in cages in shelter facilities.

Speaking to Kern County publication Bakersfield.com, Nick Cullen, director of Kern County Animal Services, shared, “We rely on the public to adopt.”

He added, “When we don’t have that avenue, we’re left with no option to get animals out of the shelter. It’s not healthy to have an animal sit in a cage for 30 days.”

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So on a whim, Kern County Animal Services decided to put out a message on social media for emergency foster homes and announced the drive-thru pickup event.

Describing the event that took place on Tuesday as “incredible,” Cullen added, “What we’ve seen from the community is like nothing we’ve seen before. We’re floored with the response.”

By the end of Wednesday, 88 pets had been put in temporary homes, the agency said on Facebook. The shelter plans to bring in dogs and cats from its Mojave and Lake Isabella shelters as well and they are looking for additional foster families.

“We’re going to do this as long as we need it,” Cullen told the publication. The shelter plans to operate their drive-thru event again on Thursday.

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Right now is an ideal to foster a pet as many are staying home and social distancing in an effort to curb the coronavirus pandemic.

Julie Castle, the CEO of Best Friends Animal Society, recently told PEOPLE, “If you don’t have a pet and are thinking about getting one, now is the perfect time to ‘try it on’ by fostering from your local shelter.”

The Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, and the American Veterinary Medical Association have all stated that pets are not at risk of spreading COVID-19, and science has shown time and time again that adding an animal to your life makes you happier and healthier.

Castle also suggests stocking up on a month-long supply of food and medication for your pet, keeping their medical records updated and on

hand, washing your hands before and after handling your pet, and regularly disinfecting your pet's products (bowls, leashes, beds, etc.) as ways to keep you and your pet safe during the coronavirus pandemic.

As information about the coronavirus pandemic rapidly changes, PEOPLE is committed to providing the most recent data in our coverage. Some of the information in this story may have changed after publication. For the latest on COVID-19, readers are encouraged to use online resources from CDC, WHO, and local public health departments and visit our coronavirus hub.