

**PAWS for Action – Together We Can Save Them All**  
**To run 2/28/2016**

The goal of the Best Friends Animal Society is unequivocal and is reflected in the organization's tag line, "Save Them All". When I first arrived in the Southeast I was told by some that it would not be possible to achieve this goal here. Many of the people had given up. Maybe this was because they had to in order to live with poor outcomes. There were plausible excuses, such as the warm climate, which supports the birth of more litters of puppies and kittens and gives them a higher survival rate.

I've heard Southerners themselves say that the culture is notoriously resistant to spaying and neutering their dogs and cats. I was told it would take a decade to even begin to see attitudes toward spay/neuter shift.

Today I know that these excuses simply do not hold up when today we have the example of over 200 cities, counties, regions and even states that have achieved no-kill status.

The No Kill Utah Coalition, comprised of 56 partners, achieved an 84% state-wide save rate for 2015. The partners vary in size and mission, but they share a common goal which is to end the killing of cats and dogs in shelters. They are bent on achieving a live release rate of over 90% and they will succeed.

PAWS Humane is a member of the Pet Coalition of Muscogee and Harris Counties in Georgia. This is a six member coalition consisting of two municipal animal control agencies, three shelters and an animal welfare foundation.

We have made a formal commitment to work together in order to increase the number of lives saved. Our first official project is a large breed dog adoption program which is funded by Best Friends Animal Society and hosted by PetSmart in Columbus. Every week, Monday through Friday, we take turns transporting dogs for off-site adoptions.

In Columbus, Georgia the euthanasia of cats for lack of space has been eliminated with the Best Friends Community Cat Program. Puppies are relatively easy to place, as are small dogs, with good animal husbandry and adoption programs. But large breed dogs are another matter altogether. This is especially true of the bully breeds which are banned in many apartment complexes and on military bases. Some cities have even banned bully breeds entirely.

The simple fact that a dog is large will too often be cause for owner relinquishment. When owners have to move, it may very well be beyond their means to find a landlord that will allow a large breed dog. The Pet Coalition is raising awareness of the plight of these breeds and highlighting them as loyal and loving pets.

The Best Friends tag line is often expanded to say "Together We Can Save Them All" and that is just how we plan to do it in Muscogee and Harris counties.

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