

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **No more homeless pets is animal welfare conference goal**

Companion animal advocates, shelter workers and rescue volunteers, policy makers and community members will gather at the Holiday Inn Gateway Centre in Flint on Thursday and Friday, Sept. 15 and 16, for the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance (MPFA) biennial Getting to the Goal No Kill Conference.

“When MPFA held its first conference in 2009, more than 120,000 dogs and cats were dying in Michigan shelters every year,” said MPFA Chair Deborah Schutt. “Now that number is less than 39,000 and continuing to decrease.”

The roster of nationally recognized speakers includes Tawny Hammond, Chief of Animal Services for the City of Austin, TX, who will present sessions on breed labels and language; Karen Sparapani, Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission Executive Director, on changing animal control practices; and Dr. Julie Levy, Maddie's Professor of Shelter Medicine at the University of Florida, co-founder of the Million Cat Challenge.

One conference track will focus on Million Cat Challenge themes. Catherine Garrett of All About Animals based in Warren, will present a special Trap, Neuter and Release training workshop, free and open to all, even if not attending the conference. Registration is required.

Other sessions will be led by Michigan experts in their fields, such as Richard Angelo of Best Friends Animal Society, Pam Sordyl of Puppy Mill Awareness of SE Michigan, Christie Keith of the Million Cat

Challenge and MiPACA's Courtney Protz-Sanders. Hear stories of change from Paul Wallace, Genesee County Animal Control; Melissa Miller, Detroit Animal Control & Care; and Ken Kempkens, Humane Society of Macomb.

The highlight of Thursday evening's awards banquet will be recognition of several Michigan shelters which, based on 2015 statistics submitted to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and calculated by MPFA, are the best in several categories.

The \$100 registration fee includes breakout sessions and roundtable discussions, a Thursday evening cocktail reception with cash bar, breakfast and lunch with vegetarian and vegan options on Friday, prizes and exhibitions. Banquet tickets may be purchased separately.

A day-long Friday Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards certified course, recommended primarily for law enforcement officers, "Animals in the Field: Law Enforcement Training," will be taught by Michigan Humane Society President and Chief Executive Officer Matthew Pepper and his specially trained staff.

Go online to [michiganpetfund.org](http://michiganpetfund.org) to register for the conference, awards banquet, law enforcement training or TNR workshop.

The goal of the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance is to end the killing of healthy and treatable homeless dogs and cats in Michigan shelters.