

Photo Tour of KCACC (Jan & Feb 2008)



The Kent shelter is located in a mostly industrial area away from prime residential and retail corridors which are the backbone of a high volume adoption shelter. As a result, its success depends on comprehensive community outreach programs operating at a high caliber of competency. Unfortunately, the Advisory Committee accurately described them as “paltry at best.”



Potholes flood during rainy weather, and provide for a very bumpy ride at the Kent facility, especially in the area where animal control transport vehicles are bringing animals into the facility.



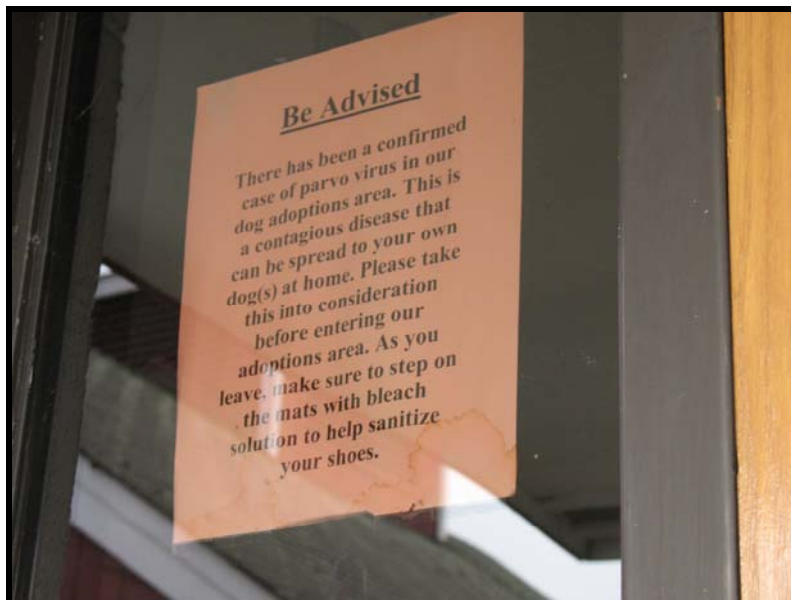
Trash litters the outside of the Crossroads shelter, much of it appearing to be old garbage.



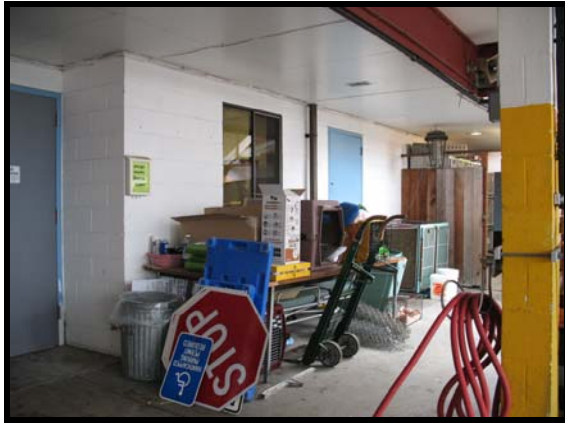
Dozens of cigarette butts, coffee cups, and other trash litter the front, sides, and back parking areas at the Crossroads shelter. This is what first greets visitors of this relatively affluent community.



A trash strewn parking lot and broken shutters (which are absolutely black with filth from the lobby vantage point), haphazardly placed signage, and hours that ignore the goal of increasing adoptions greet visitors to King County Animal Control in Crossroads-Bellevue.



A sign at the entrance to the Kent facility warns all visitors to be wary of adoption and that entering KCACC puts their own dogs at risk.



Broken street signs, 30-gallon trash cans filled to the top with dirty rain water, broken kennels and carriers, construction debris and trash show the state of sheltering at KCACC and belie claims by County Executive staff that oversight includes regular visits to the shelter.



Piles of food on wet (combination of water, bodily fluids, and cleaning chemicals) and dirty floors, right next to buckets of caustic chemicals.



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Three dog kennels are either used for healthy dogs to be segregated from disease in the shelter, for sick dogs to segregate them from healthy dogs in the shelter, or for storage, depending on who you talk to.



Dogs are kept in chain link kennels made up of concrete.



Despite a sign that indicated the kennels had been “spot cleaned,” the same piles of feces were evident in the dog kennels hours later calling the veracity of the information and the extent of oversight into doubt.



I arrived for an unannounced visit in January and found a shelter in disarray.



Rather than provide housing conducive to the health and well-being of cats, KCACC houses them in old, dirty, difficult to disinfect cages which were donated by a primate center to KCACC in lieu of discarding them.



Two dogs share a kennel covered in fecal matter and urine. Dogs are fed in feces filled kennels, and staff does not appear to check or follow up to see if the dogs have eaten.



The wall of King County Animal Control's room for the neediest and most at risk animals: sick cats in what passes for the agency's isolation room or infirmary. The room has no ventilation, cooling, or heating, despite promises to do so going back years, and does not even have running water or a sink. Staff has to carry buckets of water and disinfectant from other rooms in order to clean and care for the cats.



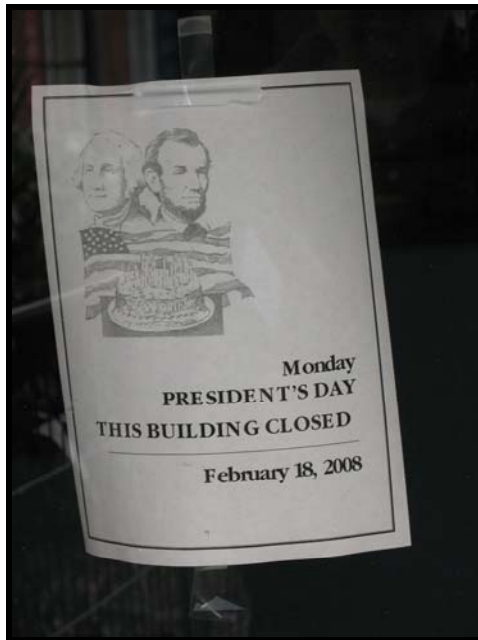
The commercial washer and dryer have been a source of controversy.



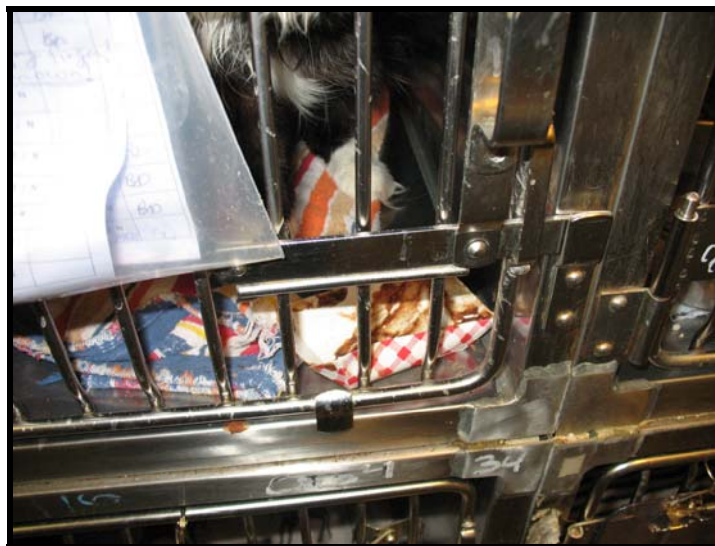
Dog Kennels at Crossroads-Bellevue.



Cat cages at Crossroads-Bellevue.



The shelter was closed on a day families with children were available to adopt animals.



The neediest cats in the shelter are not provided the rudiments of food or water for over 24 hours and possibly longer. Sergeants who are supposed to oversee staff do not provide adequate oversight and sign off on forms without proper supervision.



Sick cat with bloody discharge in KCACC's isolation/infirmiry hovers around an empty food bowl. The cat, and several others, did not have food or water for long periods.



One of many empty water bowls in the isolation/infirmiry room. Staff fabricated records showing animals were eating, drinking, and had been cared for. In addition, the Sergeant on duty "signed off" on their care.



Cats in the isolation room had no food, no water, filthy litter bowls, and no paperwork.



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This infirmity cat had food, but it was caked over, old canned food that was untouched. Cats who cannot smell often do not eat, but need to be forced fed while under infirmity care. Nonetheless, this cat had food in his cage, although no water. Staff notes show this cat “eating and drinking” on a day that the cat did not touch his food and had no water to drink. The following day the food remained untouched. The Sergeant on duty claimed to have signed off on “spot check” forms and submitted them to his supervisor for filing.



Cat socialization cards sit unused.



Only one cat had been “cuddled” according to the system of notification in place. However, this occurred the day before my arrival. This card sat on the cage during the entire week I was there, and was still there on Thursday, five days after it was placed on the cage.



The floor of the dog exercise yard allegedly used for strays is impossible to clean, harbors disease, and contained piles of what was clearly old fecal material. Checked daily, the piles of dog waste remained throughout my visit.



Despite construction noise and a sign that the door is kept close due to noise, the door was in fact left open.

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A superficially clean cat cage with a large amount of clearly visible dried bodily fluids shows how sloppy protocols are followed at KCACC and also underscores the lack of oversight by supervisors and management.



A dog with kennel cough is not only housed next to healthy dogs, but housed next to newly arrived dogs who are at greater risk because of heightened stress levels (they have not had an opportunity to acclimate to the shelter environment) and may not have been vaccinated against any diseases.



Despite available cats sitting in holding cages outside of public view and ready to be moved into the adoption area, at least a dozen cat cages sit empty both during my visit on January 30, 2008, and for the entirety of the February 18-21 visit. The integrity of KCACC's commitment to give every animal a fighting chance for life depends on keeping animals moving through the system. A system to do this does not exist.



Supervisors failed to notice the empty cat cages in the adoption room, nor the cats marked “OK” for adoption waiting in the stray area for their chance at a new home.



Cat in adoption room being treated with Amoxil. There is no start or stop date on the medication. In addition, staff does not make notations as to whether the animal is responding, and whether the animal is eating, drinking, and defecating normally. Note: “Rx” sticker and medication.



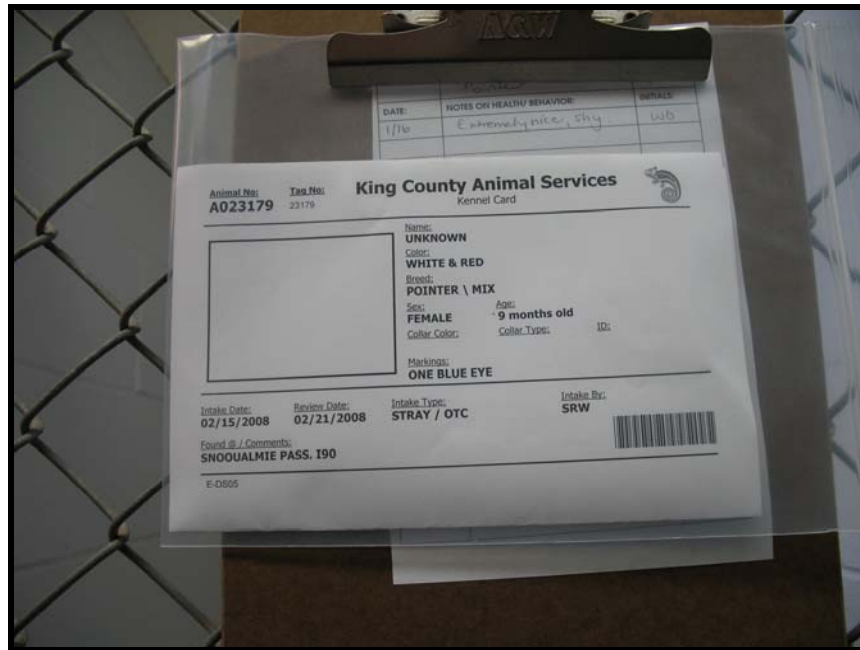
Animal with “Rx” sticker, but no medication.



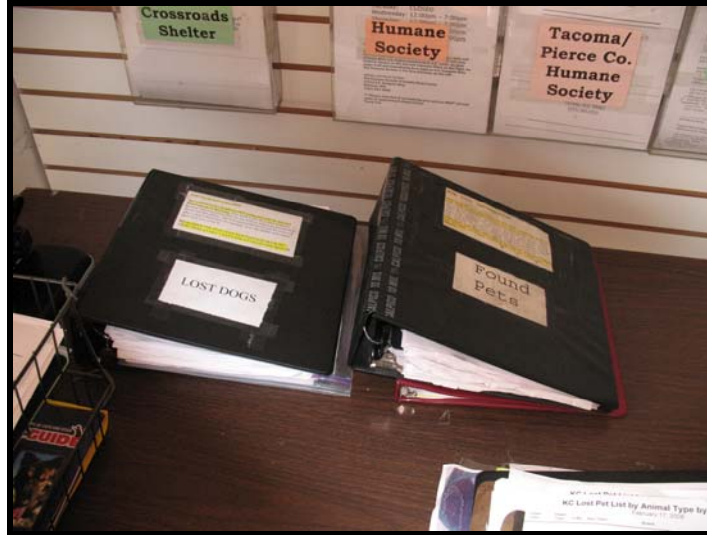
Animal with medication, but no “Rx” sticker.



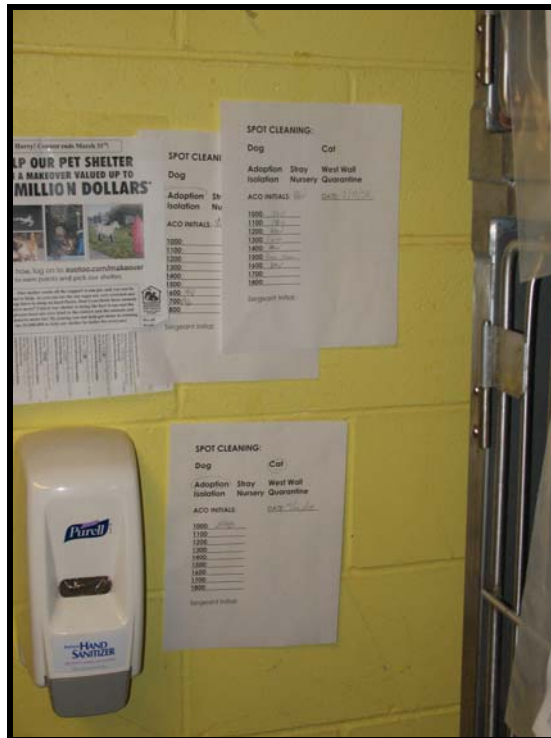
Medication sitting on top of cage, with no instructions, no start/stop date, and no “Rx” sticker.



A kennel card is missing the photograph of the animal. These photographs could allow owners of lost animals to search for them from their home computers. This would help improve KCACC's dismal reclaim rates, but is almost never done.



Lost & Found books are not cross-referenced by staff.



Checklists created ostensibly to ensure accountability and proper care, are left ignored and unsigned by Sergeants on the wall. Here, checklists for three days (the current day was nowhere to be found) sit on the wall. According to management, Sergeants are supposed to do periodic checks, sign off that proper care was given, turn them over to their Supervisor, who is supposed to audit the process to ensure compliance. The system is clearly ignored and broken.



Tukwila PetSmart, near KCACC's Kent facility, and a former KCACC partner adopted out 116 cats in 2007, none of them from KCACC. The cats belong to an "out of county" rescue group because KCACC failed to work effectively with the store.



Empty cages at a KCACC offsite adoption location are a lost opportunity for lifesaving. Volunteers report this as an ongoing problem.



Dog being given a respite from his tiny kennel at Crossroads. Volunteers report holes in the fence were repaired on the eve of my arrival which would allow dogs to be put outside for fresh air.



Before & After: The outside of the Crossroads-Bellevue shelter (left) observed during unannounced visit and (right) cleaned up in anticipation of my arrival.



Dog languishing in his own waste. This is one of many photographs of this nature provided by volunteers and what is described to me by multiple sources as a more “typical” day for dogs at Crossroads-Bellevue. Rules have recently changed from cleaning once per day to cleaning twice per day, but whether this will continue to occur if scrutiny ends is doubtful given lack of systems, lack of oversight, lack of accountability, and history.



The floor of the on again/off again infirmary at Crossroads-Bellevue evidences a high level of neglect of basic standards of cleaning and disinfecting of a modern shelter. Below, the state of the infirmary when I arrived in February. In January, this room was a storage room filled with junk.



The Crossroads-Bellevue Infirmary.



A cat cage in use at Crossroads-Bellevue, situated next to one of the most vibrant communities in the state, if not the United States. The area is home to the headquarters of Microsoft, Nintendo, Costco, and Boeing. It is also near a community of homes belonging to some of the wealthiest people in the world, but does not avail itself of the philanthropy available, nor reflect the community in which it is located.



Cat cage at Crossroads “repaired” with duct tape, which harbors disease.