

Happily Ever After (HEA) is a local no-kill shelter in the greater Green Bay area. Dedicated to picking up strays off the streets as well as cats and dogs from overflowing animal shelters, Happily Ever After makes sure that every animal brought into their shelter is cared for, and finds their “forever home”. Given the no-kill emphasis of their shelter, the animal sanctuary ensures that their values and mission are centered around the concept of helping “every single one” and not resting until every animal brought to them has found a safe and healthy “forever home”. At the end of the day, Happily Ever After aims to change the lives of both the animals, and the people who adopt them, every single day. This motive greatly appeals to their volunteer based and community-minded voice. They recognize their HEA family is essential to the benefit of the animals and the community in which they are adopted into, and continue to appeal as a brand to a family-minded voice. Responsibility is another aspect that they value, in that they make a point of recognizing that “behind every interaction, is a life we will impact.” HEA describes their values as a process: seeking to understand, seeing what could be, raising the bar, and changing lives. Overall, the impact Happily Ever After hopes to create is very clear: “To create a world where the life of every companion animal matters...Every. Single. One.” Their website, their Facebook, their Instagram, all of their platforms highlight this mission (their boilerplate). Following this statement on their website is a button for people to click that is labeled “donate” , which is another important feature of the company's voice given that they are a non-profit organization. They work with the community expressing the importance of their “volunteer family” and encouraging the committee that just as every single animal life matters, every contribution a person makes also helps the cause. This idea of “every single one matters” is similar to a “no one left behind” mindset, and is vital to the company's image and voice because it is inviting to families no matter their differences. It speaks to their emphasis on being

a no-kill animal shelter and the reflection this has on the greater community. They state that their mission is relevant to the health of the community: the more people (and animals) that feel wanted, connected, and cared for, the healthier everyone in that community is by looking out for one another. There is sanctuary in helping those in need, in having sympathy for and helping the disregarded. In 2020, Happily Ever After released a documentary about the nationwide pet-overpopulation. The title of the award winning film was “Rescue Story”, and the overlying message it concentrated on was how many stray, unwanted cats and dogs are left to fend for themselves on the streets. They shed light on shelters that do put down animals, but instead of making these shelters out as the “bad guys”, the documentary went into detail on why so many shelters are forced to make this decision. They simply don’t have space, and the community these shelters are in are not connected enough to come together and eliminate the concept of an “unwanted pet”. “Rescue Story” aims to inspire the community to take action in their hometowns, volunteer at animal shelters, and promote the family aspect that a pet brings into a household.. The more people are connected to HEA’s no-kill cause, the more awareness can be brought to the nation-wide issue, and therefore, the more people who are looking out for the community will help it flourish.

Considering the fact that HEA is nonprofit and aims to involve the community to the extent it does, all members of local communities are encouraged to become involved. HEA targets families in particular- that much is clear from their “forever family/home” concept, the “join our family” section of their website, as well as the tab underneath it labeled “for kids”. Even their origin story promotes their family values. Happily Ever After was founded by Amanda Reitz and her family in 2006. The organization started in their own garage and family farm in Northern Wisconsin. The Sanctuary started on the family owned farm in Marion,

Wisconsin, and their adoption center started in Green Bay in 2010. HEA has connections with other non-profit animal shelters across the nation that send strays from all over the United States to their Wisconsin farm sanctuary and adoption center. This non-profit nature of HEA requires a constant demand for volunteers and donations. Their needs range from trained volunteers to take shifts watching the cats and dogs and playing with them, to fabric donations to make toys and pet beds out of. Animal care is the first section highlighted under the “how to help” tab on their website, however, community members can also volunteer to foster animals, plan events and promote HEA, join groups to support their mission, and more. Happily Ever After doesn’t discriminate when it comes to help and volunteers. People of all ages, sizes, and cultural backgrounds are welcomed into the HEA family. Besides just the physical help needed, financially, HEA relies primarily on events and donations. On their website, they describe their events as “lifesaving” to best demonstrate how impactful they are to what the organization does. In July, they hold an “Hour of Love ” in which they ask people to donate one hour of their time to interacting and playing with the animals in which a team takes photos to help promote HEA on their social media outlets. In the description of the event, it is outlined as “a very simple ask for support”. Happily Ever After’s annual walk “Step for Pets” is held in September. It is described as “a day filled with food, treats, music, and hundreds of pets”. Lastly, “Beer and Biscuits” is held in March. What it all entails are samplings, silent auctions, raffles, fun games, and of course, at the center of it all, pets.

With all that Happily Ever after does to target volunteers and the attention of the community to raise awareness for the amount of animals without a home, it’s difficult to lay a finger on a category that they aim to be their target market. At the end of the day, they aim to serve those who care; those who want to get involved and donate their time, energy, and money

to contributing to their cause. HEA makes it clear that they will not be stopping anytime soon in their attempt to find a happy, loving home for every pet they bring in. And given that they take on strays that come from across the country into their local Wisconsin shelters, there is no end in sight when it comes to ensuring a happily ever after for their animals. HEA looks to serve a range of ages: from local college campus students, to families with kids, to the retired community looking for companionship and a family aspect. One thing is clear: no matter your age, or background, the animals and volunteers at HEA have one thing in common- their caring capacity and ability to come together to ensure that everyone feels they have a loving home. Every. Single. One.

## Works Cited

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