



THE HARD DECISION

Each year many animals are brought to the Guilford County Animal Shelter. GCAS is an “open admissions shelter,” meaning we do not turn away any animal. There are simply more animals than there are homes. Every single day the staff at GCAS must make the difficult decision to euthanize.

The most common misconception about euthanasia at GCAS is that after a certain amount of time an animal is immediately euthanized. ***There is no set time limit*** for the animals admitted to GCAS. Each animal is evaluated case by case, and once an animal has advanced to the adoptions area, they remain in our care until they are adopted. There is a rare occasion where the health or behavior of an animal in adoptions is deteriorating, and euthanasia may be considered.

Prevention

We ask the community to consider admission as a last resort and offer support to try to keep the animal in the home, or re-home the animal with a friend or family member. If an animal is being considered for euthanasia, we will check what alternatives may be appropriate and available, including foster care or contacting a rescue organization.

Check and Balance

When we are faced with the hard decision of euthanasia, it is not a process that is taken lightly. The decision must go through multiple staff members before being finalized.

It is important to recognize that there are specific reasons that we euthanize animals:

- They are too sick to be treated, i.e., cancer, and may even harbor a contagious disease, putting other animals at risk
- They are severely injured
- They are aggressive and would not be safe in a home
- They are not doing well in the shelter. Some animals have a really hard time being in a shelter and become very unhappy, despite the love, care, and attention given by the staff and volunteers.

Ideally GCAS would never have to euthanize an animal but sometimes it is necessary. We are sure to respect each animal and to treat it with care and compassion to the very end. We make sure that every animal that comes through our doors has the best possible chance at a happy life.

Family Companion

It is also important to know that euthanasia is a service GCAS offers to the community. Not all pets pass gracefully, and some owners are faced with the very difficult decision to end the suffering of a dearly loved companion. Owners may not be able to afford the cost to euthanize an animal at their veterinarian, and may turn to GCAS for a reduced price as we recognize that they want to do what is best for their loved one.