

Enrichment recommendations for both dogs and cats in shelters

How do you protect the physical and mental well-being of cats and dogs in a shelter? Here are some specific recommendations.

Canine Enrichment Recommendations:

Provide Kuranda Beds

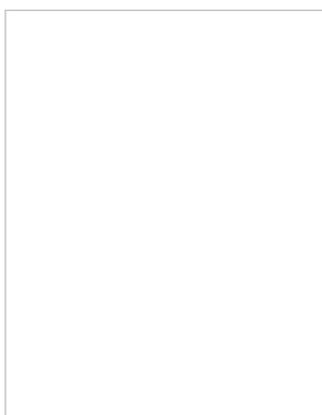
- Keeps dogs off of cold and/or wet floors
- Get them donated through website - <http://kuranda.com/donate>
- Have volunteers build and measure dog kennels to determine desired dimensions :
 - Small size - Outside Dimensions: 30x20x6 / Fabric Area: 27x17
 - Medium size - Outside Dimensions: 35x23x6 / Fabric Area: 32x20
 - Large size - Outside Dimensions: 40x25x6 / Fabric Area: 37x22
- Other enrichment provided will help keep some dogs from chewing up the beds – some just will not be able to help themselves. Beds can be replaced and Kuranda does offer ballistic nylon fabric ('chewproof') models.

Provide high-sided beds



- Dogs really like to curl up in these beds and the blankets stay dry even if the kennel floor is wet
- http://www.thatpetplace.com/pet-supplies-search#!&ea_q=perla
- These can also be put on your shelter's [Amazon wish list](#)

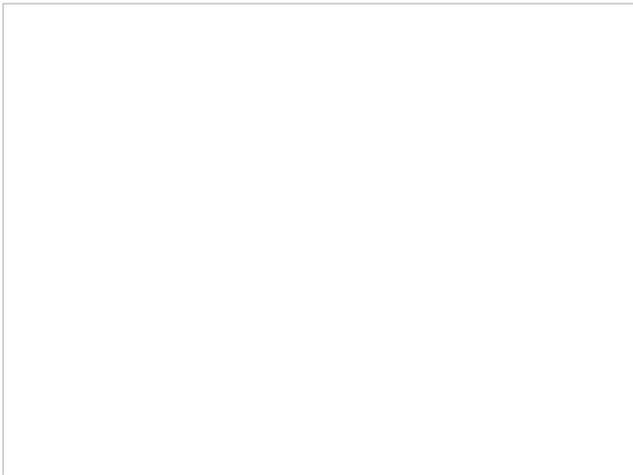
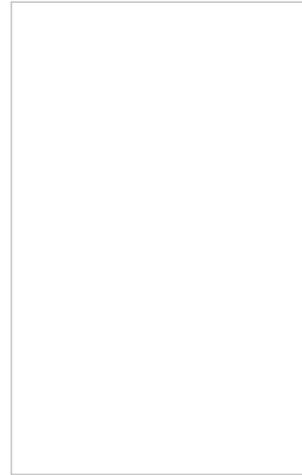
Provide frozen Kongs or frozen stuffed cardboard toilet paper rolls as treats



- Have volunteers stuff and put in the freezer (Example - Peanut butter or canned dog food with kibble or cheerios)
- Distribute to dogs once a day or every other day

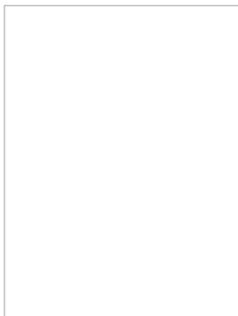
- [Order Kongs at a discounted price](#) through Kong Cares program.

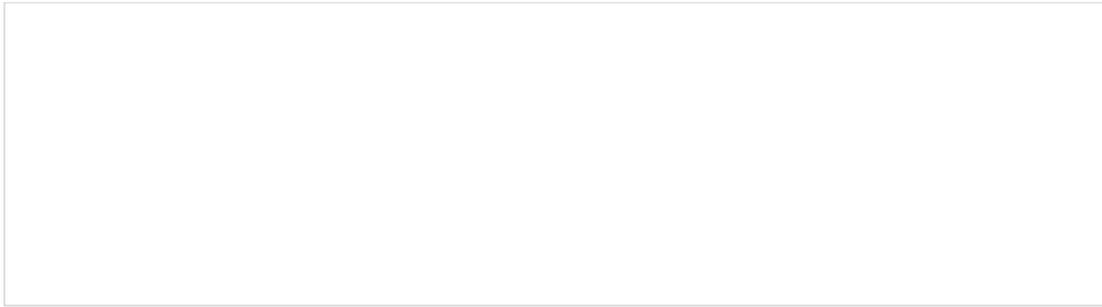
Feed dogs out of containers other than bowls



- There are many [food dispensing toys that can be purchased](#)
- Alternatively [volunteers can make a tough, easy to disinfect, inexpensive PVC food dispensing toy](#)
- For other inexpensive ideas, refer to the [ASPCA page on food and behavior enrichment](#)

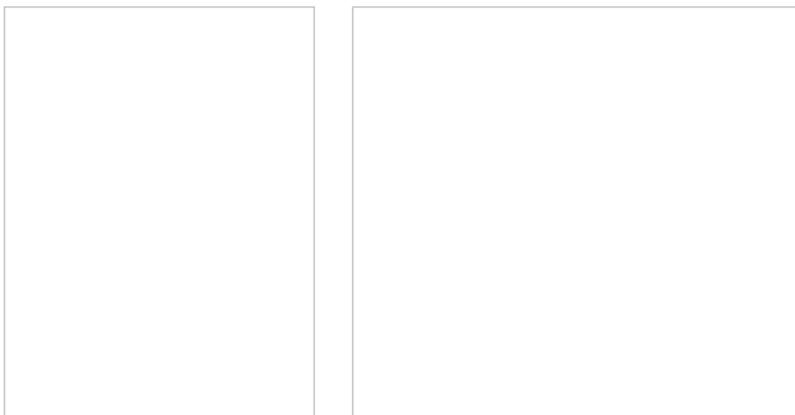
Implement a hand-feeding program / Use treat buckets on each dog's kennel



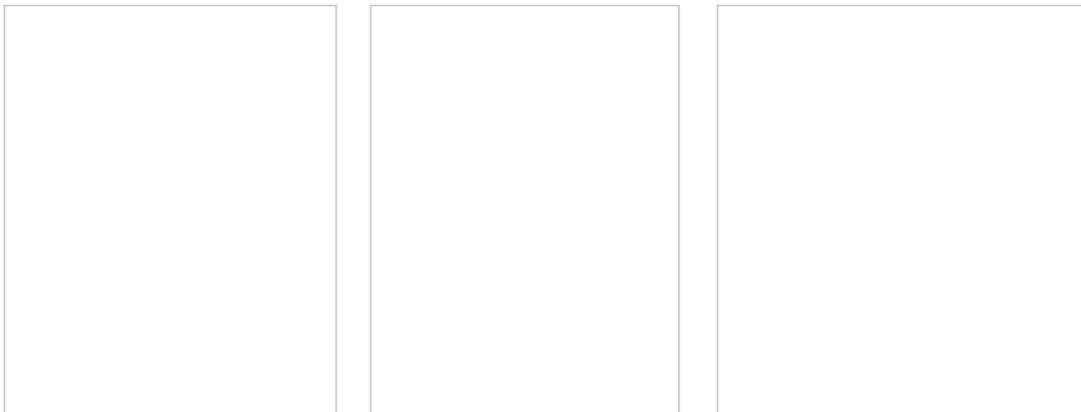


- Rewards calm behavior and reduces barking
- [Treat Buckets](#) from the Center for Shelter Dogs

Hang blankets / cover over 1/2 of the kennel for scared/fearful/reactive dogs



Provide an area of retreat for scared/timid dogs

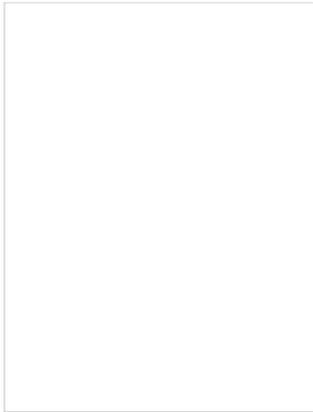


- Refer to our information sheet ["Sit, Stay, Retreat! Enrichment Ideas for Dog Housing in Shelters"](#)

Develop a "Doggie Wellness Hour"

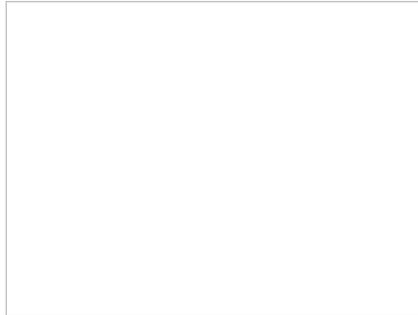
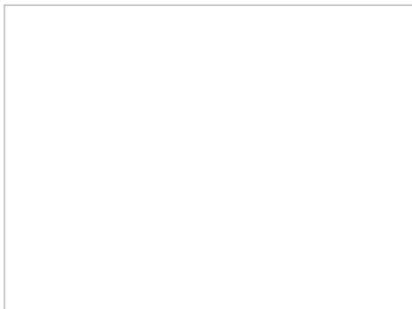
- Program in Orange County, FL (annual intake ~20,000 animals)
- Each day from 2 to 3 p.m. is "Doggie Wellness Hour" when the kennels are closed to the public for feeding time. The staff uses that time to observe the dogs' food consumption, health, temperament and well-being. Dogs who are not eating are helped out with hand feeding, wet food and medical evaluation.

Provide quiet time with people inside the kennel - Reading programs



http://aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/mym_enrichment_r_r_program_0.pdf

Provide quiet time with people outside of kennel



- Quiet time is just as important as active time and can be more attractive to some adopters
- <http://centerforshelterdogs.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/QuietTimeWithPeople-1.pdf>

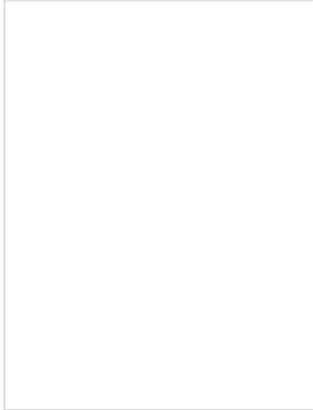
Establish a protocol and implement Canine Play Groups

- Allowing dogs to play together can provide enrichment, more comprehensive assessments of a dog's sociability with other dogs, enhanced adoption matching opportunities and overall quality of life for many shelter dogs.
- Providing a more natural environment for dogs to interact can reduce concerning behaviors such as barrier and on-leash reactivity.
- Providing a healthy outlet for shelter dogs to expend mental and physical energy can better prepare them for adoption events and help them to show in a more appealing way to adopters.
- <http://dogsplayingforlife.com/>

Feline Enrichment Recommendations:

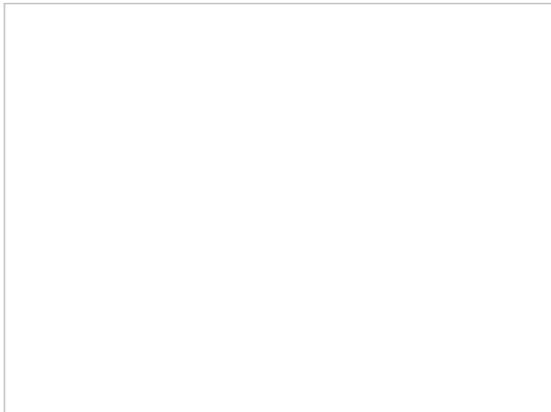
Install portals in all cat cages

- Creating compartmentalized housing is essential for stress reduction, overall welfare and to meet the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare
- These can be created with [manufactured portals](#)
- Alternatively these can be made using [PVC pipe](#)



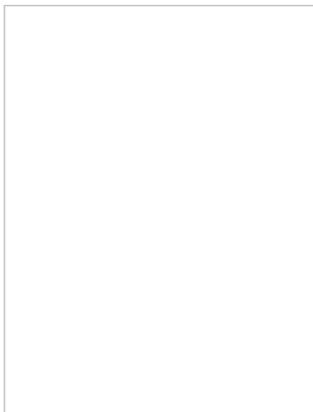
Provide elevated beds

- Have them donated through the [Kuranda website](#).
- Have volunteers build an [elevated cat bed](#)



Provide all cats the opportunity to scratch

- Scratching is a normal part of cat behavior and serves several functions - conditioning of the claws, providing a means of stretching, and acting as a marker
- [Stretch and Scratch](#)



Provide all cats with a hiding place

- Towel draped over an elevated bed or shelf in cage
- If elevated beds are not provided, cover ½ of the front of the cage or [make your own cage covers](#)
- Provide “community cat boxes” as a hiding place and elevated area –<http://www.livetrapped.com/index.php?>

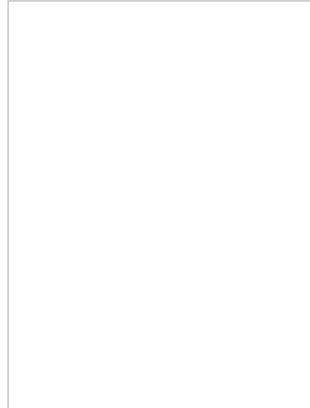
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- Providing a hiding place does not make an animal less adoptable

The effect of hiding enrichment on stress levels and behaviour of domestic cats (*Felis sylvestris catus*) in a shelter setting and the implications for adoption potential

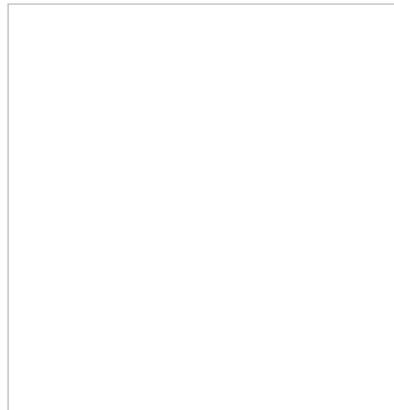
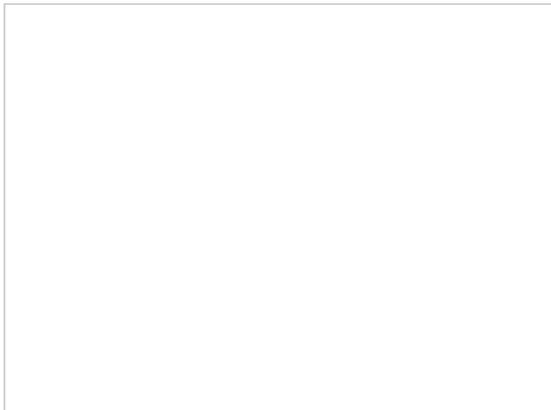
Abstract

This study investigates the effect of hiding enrichment on stress and behaviour of kennelled cats. Forty-three cats were studied either with a BC SPCA Hide & Perch™ box as enrichment, or with an open bed as control. Results of this study suggest that the welfare of kennelled cats is greatly improved if they are provided with the opportunity to perform effective hiding behaviour, and that the ability to perform such a behaviour does not decrease the likelihood of those cats being adopted.



Give cats out of cage time

- Designate a room or other secure area where cats can hang out with volunteers outside of their cage
- Cats can be out of their cage in the room that they are housed in as long as it is not at cleaning time



Develop a novel toy program

Cats like consistency and familiarity. However, in a shelter environment novel items assist in keeping cats aroused, fighting off boredom and reducing stress. For example:

- Sunday – Pipe Cleaners; tie them to the front of the cage or to each other; twist them and wind them
- Monday – Toys that make noise; any toy that jingles, crinkles, tweets, quacks, or roars!
- Tuesday – Plush toys; quality time with fuzzy friends
- Wednesday – Balls without bells; ping pong balls and bouncy balls are great
- Thursday – Paper towel rolls, toilet paper rolls and corks; one man's trash is a cat's treasure
- Friday – Plush toys; quality time with fuzzy friends
- Saturday – Toys that make noise; any toy that jingles, crinkles, tweets, quacks, or roars!

Other resources for enrichment:

- <http://centerforshelterdogs.tufts.edu/dog-welfare/enrichment/entertainment/>
- <http://www.animalfarmfoundation.org/pages/Kennel-Enrichment>
- <http://aspcapro.org/> and search enrichment