

Milwaukee's new shelter for animals

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A stay in Milwaukee's new Humane Society provides more than just a roof, food and water for animals in need of a home. Since opening in December 2000, the Four Seasons of animal shelters has seen a 54 percent increase in adoptions, and the corps of volunteers has grown to 850.

The 40,000-square-foot facility cost \$8.5 million to build—an investment that has enabled the Humane Society to provide much-needed community services benefiting both animals and humans.

An indoor cityscape composed of Dogtown, Canine Country club and the Royal Cat Hotel accommodates dogs and cats in individual suites large enough for volunteers and potential adopters to enter and interact with the pets-to-be. Larger spaces, says executive director Victoria Wellens, “maintain the animal's comfort and dignity.” Room to roam, freedom from excessive noise and lots of natural light relax the animals and let their true personalities shine—helping to encourage a better match of animal and human.

The new people-and-pet-friendly facility also lodges rabbits, birds and hamsters for adoption in its Small Animal Boutique. In addition, the center hosts such innovative programs as pet-assisted therapy and nursing home visits and, every year, the society takes 5,000 sick, injured and orphaned wild animals into its Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, one of the nation's largest.

“Our most important contribution to the community,” Wellens says, “is helping curb animal overpopulation.” The staff of the center's state-of-the-art veterinary clinic spays/neuters all of the shelter's animals, and subsidizes the program for pets of low-income families.

“We want to let everyone know,” Wellens says, “that good things are happening for animals.”