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**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

- Tracy Lewandowski, Great Plains SPCA, (513) 260-6777, [tlewandowski@greatplainsspca.org](mailto:tlewandowski@greatplainsspca.org)
- Nancy Chartrand, Kansas City, Kansas Animal Services, PIO/Media Relations Specialist, (913) 201-1418, [nchartrand@kckpd.org](mailto:nchartrand@kckpd.org)
- Amber Keating, Melissa's Second Chances, (913) 368-4897, [amberdkeating@gmail.com](mailto:amberdkeating@gmail.com)
- Sydney Mollentine, **Chief Executive Officer**, The Humane Society of Greater KC, (817)-719-0708, [sydney@hsgkc.org](mailto:sydney@hsgkc.org)

**Kansas City Area Animal Rescues Raise Alarm of Full Shelters**

Merriam, KS (January 26, 2023) – Four animal shelters in the Kansas City metropolitan area have come together to issue an urgent alert that shelters are at or over capacity with large dogs. They need the community's help to address the problem.

Great Plains SPCA, Kansas City, Kansas Animal Services, Melissa's Second Chances, and Humane Society of Greater Kansas City are all experiencing the same thing: the shelters are maxed out with large dogs. In addition to all of the kennels that normally house these dogs, some of the shelters report housing them in pop-up kennels, staff offices, training rooms, medical exam rooms, conference rooms and any other available space. Intakes are up and adoptions are down, creating this crisis.

The shelters recently reported the following statistics:

- 170 dogs larger than 30 pounds currently in their care
- 430 requests from the public to surrender large dogs in a recent two-week period
- Average of 35% increase in dog admissions in 2022 over 2021

Melissa's second chances reports 31 dogs larger than 30 pounds in their care and only 16 kennels in which to house them. Great Plains SPCA reports that 82% of their adult dog population is large dogs. All of these shelters have municipal contracts that require them to take in animals even when their facilities are full.

The shelters are and have been taking the below measures, among others, to address this crisis:

- Running adoption specials

- Halted “voluntary” admissions of large dogs (owner surrenders and transfers from other shelters).
- Increased the number of dogs in foster care.

In the last nine months, KCK Animal Services has established its own foster program to help with the problem.

These unprecedented trends are not specific to Kansas City. Shelters across the country are experiencing similar numbers. According to Shelter Animals Count, which shares a national database of animal shelter statistics, there were 7.3% more animals entering shelters than leaving in 2022 and stray dog intakes have increased by 7.1% over 2021.

Great Plains SPCA CEO, Tam Singer, said “This is an issue that is playing out across the country and animals shelters alone cannot solve it. We need the support of the citizens in our communities and community leaders as well.”

Members of the public can make an impact on this situation. These shelters suggest the following steps that people can take to help:

- Adopt a large dog and give it a forever home. All of these organizations have photos of adoptable dogs on their websites.
- Foster a large dog.
- Make a tax-deductible donation to a shelter.
- Instead of surrendering, hold on to your dog or find an alternative for rehoming them.
  - Check the pet policy at your new home before you sign a lease to make sure your dog can live with you.
  - Plan ahead when moving to give yourself time to make arrangements for your pet so you don’t have to bring them to a shelter.
  - Take your dog to training if there is a behavioral issue that is causing you to feel the need to give up your dog.
  - If you find a stray dog, consider keeping the dog or rehoming it before taking it to a shelter. Most vets will scan for a chip to see if there is an owner.

The websites for these organizations are as follows:

[www.greatplainsspca.org](http://www.greatplainsspca.org)

[www.kckpd.org/animal-services.html](http://www.kckpd.org/animal-services.html)

[www.hsgkc.org](http://www.hsgkc.org)

[www.mscrecue.org](http://www.mscrecue.org)

[www.midwestanimalresq.org](http://www.midwestanimalresq.org)

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