

NDJ Speaking

**Euthanasia Testimony**

**From :**

Tue Feb 22 2011 11:11:50 PM

**Subject :** Euthanasia Testimony

**To :** ~~anthony@comcast.net~~

I have been an employee at the Connecticut Humane Society for years. During my time of employment I have not explicitly witness euthanasia being performed, but I have been a witness to non-medical staff bringing live animals into the euthanasia room and exiting with dead bodies. I have also had some of these staff members tell me about particularly difficult euthanasia instances. The one that is most horrific is one instance where the particular behavior staff member described to me how she was attempting to euthanize a large, difficult dog. She told me she could not hit a vein because he was moving too much and she was alone with the dog, so she ended up straddling the dog and sticking the needle into the neck of the animal. I was also told about times when certain non-medical staff were attempting to euthanize an animal and missed the vein, resulting in the solution being injected into the muscle of the animal. I understand this can be painful and distressing for the animal. I have also seen non-medical staff staying after hours and bringing in animals to the euthanasia room. There is also on instance I am aware of in which a non-medical staff member euthanized the private pet of another staff member after hours, I do not know if a donation was made to the shelter for this service like there would be if a member of the general public brought an animal in to be euthanized. I also do not know if it says anywhere in our operations manual or employee handbook about the free euthanasia of employees' pets. There is one more thing I would like to discuss and that would be the so called "wet lab." This is a once a year training opportunity provided to all employees who are interested in learning how to euthanize animals. To the best of my knowledge this "lab" uses a live animal scheduled to be euthanized for either medical or behavioral reasons as demonstration.

This concludes my testimony.

*Not Spoken***Letter****From :**

Tue Feb 22 2011 10:13:23 PM

**Subject :** Letter**To :** ~~cathyde1962@comcast.net~~

The Connecticut Humane Society had a history of untrained and unqualified staff with no medical backgrounds performing Euthanasia. Many animals were needlessly put down for supposed behavioral issues, some of which were legitimate and others that were not. All downstairs managers (most of whom had no official behavior/dog training/medical background, as well as a newer hire Tabitha also performed Euthanasia. Tabitha was part of the behavior department that also tested and determined which dogs would be put down. She had no previous dog training experience and had never even owned a dog before working at the Humane Society. Tabitha often spoke to staff in a very casual manner about having to put a dog down because she thought it acted "funny" and even boasted of having to wrestle a dog to get the needle in. Clearly, anyone who had a medical background would know how to properly restrain a dog for the safety of both staff and the animal for Euthanasia. The Humane Society also regularly took in animals with health conditions that it was unequipped to care for nor tried to care for. On one occasion an Iguana had been taken in that had some serious medical issues. The general staff did their best to try to care and provide for it until medical care or a rescue could be contacted. Many staff offered to contact rescue and medical facilities to get it some treatment. Some staff even offered to pay for the medical care out of their own pockets. The management refused and the staff was reprimanded for getting involved. The animal remained in the building far too long until help was given. There seems to be a bigger concern at the Humane Society of following a managerial chain of command than on people working together as a team to help the animals. Any time that an employee asked about a particular

animal or suggested an alternative to Euthanasia they were seen as interfering and trouble makers. This would then result in increasing harassment, bullying tactics and interrogations. The particular staff in question would be brought into a room with two or three managers and aggressively attacked verbally. If the management felt that a particular person was becoming involved by asking questions about animals or trying to reach out for help from other organizations they were targeted, written up for various small offenses and in some cases a small mishap was turned into a larger fabrication of the truth. Currently, the staff to management ratio is way over the top. There are probably a total of 15 to 20, non-managerial, in the downstairs department of headquarters currently. Including the District Manager there are 5 managers on staff downstairs alone. This is not including the managers in administration. It seems like over kill and is a large problem in regards to communication. Every manager has a different way they want things done and the information that the general staff receives is often times conflicting and inaccurate. New Hires now have to take tests and fill out elaborate forms on policies and procedures for every department, including the ones that they do not work in. They are expected to complete these accurately however, management can't seem to decide what the correct information is. One manager may sit with a new hire and tell them how something is done. Then when the new hire meets with another manager that manager says the other one is wrong and gives them a different answer. The staff is later reprimanded for not following correct protocol. The current work atmosphere is hostile and negative. The managers are constantly bickering, whispering and talking about staff to the point that it borders on gossip and vindictiveness. Certain managers have targeted employees if they are sick or get injured on the job. One girl was recently sick with the flu and was vomiting. However, she did not have sufficient time for sick days because the time is accrued for new hires. She was told she could not go home.

There continue to be many manager issues at the Humane Society that are going unchecked by management that doesn't care to deal with the trouble makers. Everyone is not treated the same and some managers get special treatment and can do no wrong because they are cozy with the district manager. This causes a lot of resentment among staff who feel that their not heard and are ignored. When staff is mistreated

their work is not as affective. A positive environment fosters positive outcome and would make for a more humane Humane Society. There is a huge turnover rate at both the Humane Society and Fox Memorial Clinic. They are unable to keep sufficient staff mostly due to mismanagement. The Humane Society still refuses to admit any wrong doings to both staff as well as it's past Euthanasia practices. The organization should be a leader in it's field and can be with people that are not only dedicated to the animals but who are also experienced and qualified for their positions. We still need new practices and new management that will make a positive change at The Connecticut Humane Society.

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