

71 Oglethorpe St., NW
Washington, DC 20011
202.726.2556

A New Global Standard for Animal Care Unique Innovations Enhance Animals' Wellbeing, Facilitate Recovery, Increase Adoptions

Light-filled rooms, the soothing sounds of gently splashing water, happy people and playful animals – a tranquil image not often associated with animal shelters. However, this vision is now a reality at The Washington Animal Rescue League.

For the abused, abandoned, and forgotten animals, WARL's new facility provides the perfect atmosphere for recovery as they make the transition from lives of hardship to being cherished members of the family. Every detail has been painstakingly designed to promote their physical, psychological, and social well-being. Steel-bar cages were replaced with comfortable and attractive doggie dens, cat condos, and puppy pads.

"Our vision was to create a physical structure consistent with our philosophy," declares WARL Executive Director, Scotlund Haisley. "Years of research and hard work have paid off in a big way for the animals."

Christiano can testify to that. A Hurricane Katrina rescue, the mixed terrier lived at WARL for nearly a year. He was reserved and timid. He never wanted to have much to do with people, at least until the renovations were done. At that point, Christiano became noticeably less tense, his tail started wagging, and he began to take an active interest in visitors. He was adopted in a matter of days.

The same thing can be said for the cats. Nell once shied away from human contact and was not above letting people know, in less than subtle ways, that she'd rather be left alone. But in her new condo, Nell became a different cat, content and affectionate. She found her new home shortly after the move.

The shelter's design incorporates innovative health-promoting features such as



Corian® cat condos (Corian does not harbor bacteria) and individually ventilated living spaces that prevent the spread of common airborne diseases. "We have reduced the spread of diseases like kennel cough in dogs and upper respiratory infections in cats by 90%," affirms Medical Center Director, Dr. Gary Weitzman. "This is an incredible feat for any shelter."

What is perhaps most remarkable about the new design is that, at the same time it enhances the level of care each animal receives, it allows for the housing of more animals. WARL can now provide comfortable accommodations for nearly 400 animals at any given time. That's a 66% increase in the number of cats and dogs given a new and better life.

The new atmosphere works for adopters as well as for the adoptees. People stay longer to visit with the animals, and some even return after they have adopted just to enjoy the animals' company. The shelter celebrates the joys and hope of animal rescue work; it turns visiting an animal shelter from a distressing experience to an uplifting one.

Haisley hopes other shelters will soon follow WARL's lead, using the League's facility as a model for sheltering the homeless, abandoned and forgotten: "We have redefined what it means to meet the basic needs of an animal in a shelter. There is not another facility like this in the world, but there will be."

*Photos courtesy of Dupont™ Corian® solid surfaces.
Photographer: Judy Davis/HD Photo.*



HOURS

Open Daily:
11:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Extended Hours:
Tuesday and Thursday
11:00 a.m. - 8 p.m.

www.warl.org

