



The city has a curious practice with some of their employees - to circumvent giving them health benefits some of the employees are laid off every 6 months or so and then rehired a month later. Charming. Now you know how the other half lives.

The animals, after a little time spent at the shelter, lose much of their sparkle and become depressed and withdrawn. The dogs take it the hardest. At any moment you can hear them howling away, howling through the rooms and down the hallways, sometimes rushing to the front door, hoping for some attention or reward. A large, grey-brown male pit bull in my care was like this. He was always howling with excitement to see a human. He looked like he was ready to be put down. The whole room was a constant conflicting bark and yelp. Some of the staff was able to calm him down, but most of the time, there was nothing like the howling dogs. Another dog, with more of a "passing, yowling" sound, was also howling. It sounded like a child crying. I went on to the next time.

I walked past the cat cages. A dozen paws, a chorus reached out through the cages to touch something. There must be 100 cats at the shelter. Most will probably never

leave his place alive.

Besides dogs and cats, there are also rats and mice, birds, guinea pigs and rabbits.

If you want to add some value to your life and the lives of these animals - volunteer at your local shelter. It is a huge gift to just sit with an animal or take one for a walk -

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one does not have to get down and dirty with cleaning to volunteer. If you can't own a pet you still can enjoy the presence of animals.

The shelter also needs people to foster animals in their homes. This alleviates overcrowding, gives animals a break from the shelter, and gives people a chance to see if perhaps they would like to adopt a particular animal permanently. It's a win-win situation.

AND, most importantly shelters, and the animals in them, need people to adopt from here. Do not buy pets from pet stores or from people who breed animals as a sideline income from their homes. At least give several shelters a look-over and give a chance to these animals who have been waiting for so long to get back to a family who will care for.