Barriers & Solutions: Field Trips & Sleepovers

* Dogs might not be on adoption floor when someone wants to adopt them
  + Set expectation that participants will keep phones on and bring them back if this happens
  + Schedule field trips when shelter is closed
  + Steer them toward other dogs
* Management hasn’t completely bought in
  + Show them the cost analysis
  + Discuss research with them
  + Show Maddie’s Fund’s best practices
* Staff & volunteers have fears
  + Use your own experience to help them get more comfortable
  + Compare outings to adoptions
  + Be transparent
  + Remind them of the alternative
  + Have good SOPs
  + Get support from upper management
  + Show them the data
  + Strategically meet with staff in groups of 3-5 to talk about it face to face
    - Talk about transition
    - LISTEN
    - Keep staff informed (who went where, etc.)
    - If staff have favorite dogs, send them out
  + Ask management to give a pep talk
    - Explain why the program isn’t solely foster
      * Impacts and benefits behavior staff, caretakers, etc.
* Volunteers aren’t on board
  + Town hall meeting
    - Present data, program logistics, etc.
  + Write about it in volunteer newsletter/email
  + Gameify it- create some kind of fun competition
* Staff are judgmental of community
  + Review organization’s mission statement
  + Workplace culture agreement
* You need help to run the program
  + Ask volunteer coordinator for referrals of volunteers who can help you
  + Send an email to volunteers to recruit
  + Tap your most reliable fosters individually
  + Talk with high schools, training facilities, colleges, etc.
    - National Honor Society- needs volunteer hours
    - May be able to get college credit, reference letter
* Participants only want to take easy dogs
  + Create top picks
  + Have program staff/volunteers discuss the neediest dogs and the matching process with participants
* Nervous about not having volunteer training
  + Online training
  + Have current volunteers do training
  + Have a kiosk in shelter where people can do online training
* Swag is expensive/can’t afford supplies
  + 4Imprint.com - easy, fast, cheap
* Grants from local Community Foundation
  + Get bulk donation of bags and have the logo printed on
  + Business sponsorships
  + Recruit a graphic artist to volunteer & create program logo
  + Maddie’s Fund’s Innovation Grants
  + Amazon Wish List
  + Max & Neo: get Adopt me leashes and collars at cost
  + PetSafe has a donation program
  + Subaru gives out portable bowls in some areas
  + Ask Tito’s Vodka for sponsorship
* Liability/Insurance issues
  + Start program small with only current volunteers to test logistics, then grow (pilot program)
  + Ensure participants are read and/or printed any information on behavioral issues
  + Have your waiver read and edited by a lawyer
    - Recruit lawyer to volunteer pro-bono
* Need help with marketing
  + Ask volunteers to post program announcement on NextDoor
  + Make a flier & have volunteers post
  + Meetup.com
  + Post on your personal page and ask for help sharing
  + Create an open social media group where fosters can post about pets for potential adopters & community
  + Ask specific influencers to try out the program (mayor, owner of coffee shop, city or county’s marketing department)
* Marketing staff aren’t on board with promoting program
  + Get support from upper management
  + Guerrilla marketing: ask volunteers & fosters to post on their own social media, Nextdoor, etc.
  + Draft text for post and ask them to edit (saves them time)
* Finding volunteers to help run the program is a problem
  + Ask fosters/volunteers individually
  + Seek out teens/college student who need service hours
* Finding participants is a barrier in rural areas
  + Check with church groups, 4H, etc.
  + Press release
* Transportation is a major barrier in the city
  + Partner with a taxi/transport company
  + Use adoption van to bring dogs to a central meeting location close to walking areas, like a park
  + Doobert.com
  + Ask volunteers to help transport dogs