

STATEMENT OF STRAY FROM THE HEART

June 24, 2015

This is a statement by Stray From the Heart, a founding member of The Mayor's Alliance.

In 2009 Stray From the Heart, a NYC based dog rescue organization, sued NYC and its Department of Health for failing to comply with the Shelters Law of 2000 requiring full service shelters in the Bronx and Queens. Our complaint described how ACC animals fall sick because of overcrowded shelters. As a New Hope member, we were drowning in vet bills attempting to nurse these sick animals back to health. The more dogs we pulled from the ACC, the deeper we got into debt with vet bills.

The City's response was that we had no legal standing to sue, meaning we had no vested interest to claim damages caused by the overcrowded shelters.

However, the trial judge agreed with us and ordered the shelters built. The City appealed and a mid-level court agreed with the City. But we didn't give up. Just as New York State's Highest Court had agreed to take our appeal, indicating we would prevail, the Shelters Law was rescinded. That's because a deal had been quietly negotiated. The Shelters Law would be repealed. In exchange, the Department of Health agreed to stop starving the ACC for funding.

Four years later and the ACC shelters still remain overcrowded. Diseases still plague the ACC. And rescue groups continue to buckle under overwhelming financial strains as they pull ACC animals.

In order to stop our financial hemorrhaging, Stray From the Heart stopped pulling ACC animals.

Anyone in this room who says that shelters aren't urgently needed in the Bronx and Queens are wrong, misguided or disingenuous.

A world class City like New York deserves a world class shelter system. And that includes full service shelters in all 5 boroughs.

This time there is no question that Stray From the Heart has standing to bring this message to you.