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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **AWA Names Laura Houston as its New Executive Director**

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**Voorhees, NJ** - Today the Animal Welfare Association (AWA) announced it has named Laura Houston as Executive Director, reporting to the AWA Board of Directors. In her role, she will oversee all shelter and clinic operations and strategy, management of the staff, programs and services, and fundraising.

“We are thrilled to welcome Laura to the AWA,” said Jonathan Furlow, AWA Board Chair. “Her passion for animals, knowledge of the local community, and expertise in animal welfare and zoology are the perfect combination to guide us to the next chapter of Building a Place Where Happiness Begins. AWA has been saving animals for nearly 75 years and under Laura’s leadership we are confident that we are laying the foundation for the success of the next 75.”

Houston joins the AWA team with more than 20 years’ experience working to advance the human-animal bond. Houston most recently held the position of Director of Education with the Elmwood Park Zoo in Norristown, PA, where she was instrumental in it becoming the first zoo in the nation to become Autism Certified. Prior to that, she was with the Philadelphia Zoo for 16 years where she held several roles including Director of Education. While at the Philadelphia Zoo she helped steward the creation and advancement of multiple programs and exhibits including the award-winning ZooCrew teen volunteering program and Hamilton Family Children's Zoo.

She holds a Bachelor of Science and Master’s degrees in English from Rutgers University. In addition to being an avid animal-lover, she is also passionate about engaging with her community, holding the position of Secretary for the Gloucester Commission for Women, and a dedicated Philadelphia sports fan. Houston is a life-long resident of West Deptford, New Jersey.

“I am excited and honored to be joining AWA’s team,” said Houston. “I have long been an admirer of AWA’s work for homeless pets and their commitment to humane education. I believe strongly in the importance and need for Humane Education to help foster the animal-human bond and create a better world for all of us. The new Adoption and Education Center officially opening in June gives us a great



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foundation to grow from and I look forward to helping the organization make a huge impact for both homeless pets and humans in our community.”

To learn more about AWA’s lifesaving programs, visit [awanj.org](http://awanj.org)

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### **About AWA**

Animal Welfare Association (AWA), a private, non-profit, 501(c)3 animal welfare organization, operates the oldest and largest low-cost spay/neuter clinic, adoption center and no-kill animal shelter in South Jersey. Through a variety of innovative programs including adoptions, veterinary services, pet therapy, trap-neuter-return and humane education, it strives to ensure that animal companionship is accessible to all. No animal is euthanized due to space, length of stay, or for treatable/manageable conditions.