Your Guess is as Good as Ours

It would be great if we could accurately identify the breed or breed mix of every dog and cat that comes into the shelter. In reality we can't, but that's okay, a breed label doesn't portray the whole story; it only supports an idea of what the breed may represent.

That's why PAS in 2015 decided to stop breed labeling the dogs and cats that come to the shelter. In almost every case, when an animal comes to us, we have no information about that animal.

Breed labeling plays a role in the shelter in many ways:

First, it is natural people will ask us the breed of a dog or cat and we have always made our best guess, but sometimes our best guess is not accurate and when they pay the expense of a DNA test or their veterinarian questions our guess, adopters get angry and sometimes return their animals to the shelter.

Second, if a dog comes into the shelter and gets breed labeled as a "pit bull," that dog will stay at the shelter three times longer than average. Any box head dog that has a strong, stout build can be mislabeled a "pit bull." Our problem is that we can't prove it. We just don't know.

Third, some owners themselves are not sure of their pet's breed and mislabel them when they relinquish their dog or cat.

The fourth problem is the most interesting. At times, we will take in a female dog with puppies. We can make a guess as to the breed of the mom, but the puppies are a whole other story. Unless the mom was bred in a controlled setting, the puppies each could have different dads!

By stopping breed labeling, we remove any preconceived ideas of what a dog or cat may be. It allows the potential owner to look at the animal for which it is as an individual and not as the label we have given it. Also, we will provide potential owners with any information we have been given by the previous owner. In that way, we are being as transparent as possible and freeing our staff from a guessing game.