Finding Ways to End Pet Overpopulation
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

It has been a busy and exciting past few months here at Atlanta Humane Society (AHS), and I can’t thank you enough for your continued support. Thanks to the generosity and commitment of animal lovers like you, we have been able to find permanent, loving homes for thousands of homeless animals.

We continue to work with more than 100 transport partners nationwide, bringing needy animals to Atlanta where they can receive life-changing care. Now more than ever, we are focusing rescue efforts on senior, large-breed and special-needs animals.

Our Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Georgia Initiative remains a key focus as we provide an invaluable community service to thousands of animals across the state. Last year, we were able to spay and neuter more than 12,500 animals, including dogs and cats at AHS and pets throughout Georgia. This is the first step in putting an end to companion animal homelessness and overpopulation.

We do not receive government funding and rely solely on gifts from animal lovers like you who want to create a more humane world for their pets and animals in Georgia. Your generous support can do so much in our life-saving mission for the animals. You will find a survey enclosed with this newsletter, and we hope to hear from you with your thoughts about our mission.

Please also consider our monthly Caregivers Club that allows convenient, automatic donations every month – find out more at atlantahumane.org/caregiversclub. Please know that your gift makes a difference in the lives of thousands of animals right here in Georgia.

Sincerely,

Cal Morgan
President and CEO

Thank You to Our Corporate Champions

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How Your Support Saves Lives

From Homeless and Hungry to Healthy and Happy

When he was just four months old, Cooper was lost and alone, left wandering the streets to fend for himself. He made his way to a porch, curled up in a little ball and slept. Cooper was completely hairless, with open sores on his body and every bone visible from months of hunger. But in spite of this, Cooper wagged his tail, knowing that he would finally be safe.

Cooper was taken to a local county animal control facility that works regularly with Atlanta Humane Society (AHS). He was transferred to AHS where he would need months of care. Cooper’s skin condition was Demodex Mange, the worst case AHS had seen.

In addition to cuddles, love and food, Cooper received necessary medical attention. He started receiving weekly medicated baths and topical treatments, and his fur soon began to grow back. Because this little fellow needed lots of extra attention on his road to recovery, he was placed in a foster care home, where he is being spoiled and loved until he can fully recover and be ready for his forever family.

Cooper’s transformation would not have been possible without the Have a Heart Medical Fund. The program – supported by local donors – provides care for in-need animals recovering from extreme medical conditions including injuries, skin conditions, heartworm treatment, upper respiratory infections and more. We are thankful that Cooper and countless other animals are able to receive the specialized care they need before finding their forever families.

Senior Dogs Find a Second Chance

Honey and Bear were transferred to AHS from one of our trusted transport partners. At ten and six years of age, the pair were tightly bonded and needed an adoptive family who could open their hearts to a pair of seniors with special needs.

Both were suffering from a number of health problems including dental issues and “loose kneecaps,” a common condition in dogs of their size and breed. They would need a special diet and a watchful family for the rest of their lives.

In the shelter, their biggest hurdle to overcome was their shyness. They would huddle together in the corner of their kennel. Outside of their kennel, they were playful, energetic and loving. We knew a little extra attention couldn’t hurt and decided to feature them as our Atlanta Journal-Constitution “Pet of the Week.”

These two sweet dogs caught the attention of a woman who had previously adopted a senior animal from a puppy mill. The next day she came with her two dogs for a meet and greet. It was love at first lick for all four dogs! She knew what challenges would lie ahead, but knew the love she would receive in return was ten-fold.

Honey and Bear were lucky to receive the second chance they so deserved. Their happy beginning was made possible through our transport program that consists of more than 100 rescue organizations nationwide.

To support the Have a Heart Medical Fund, contact:
Joy K. Hallinan, CFRE
Vice President of Development and Communications
jhallinan@atlantahumane.org

Before

After

Honey and Bear in their new home

AJC Pet of the Week Photo

Honey and Bear in their new home

AJC Pet of the Week Photo

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Join the Movement!
Ending Pet Overpopulation Through Spay and Neuter

By Tara High, CAWA, Vice President of Operations, Atlanta Humane Society

At Atlanta Humane Society (AHS), we prepare every spring for an influx of cute, underage kittens during what is called “Kitten Season.” These are kittens who are frequently free-roaming and living in outdoor cat communities. In the Metro Atlanta Area we are fortunate that many of the kittens who arrive on our doorstep from across the state are taken in by foster families until they are healthy and old enough to be adopted.

Nationally it is estimated that at least three to four million healthy, adoptable cats and dogs are euthanized each year. Many of these homeless animals are former pets who find themselves at small municipal or rural, overcrowded shelters that are doing their best, but just can’t keep up with the numbers. Sadly millions of animals are destroyed who could have made great family companions. Across Georgia there are still many shelters where even kittens and puppies are routinely euthanized because the community’s population isn’t large enough to adopt them all into good homes.

As an animal welfare professional and advocate, I’ve learned that you just can’t build a shelter large enough to take care of all of the homeless animals created by litters of unwanted puppies and kittens. You also can’t adopt your way out of the problem. There is an old Southern saying that fits what we think is the solution – “You’ve got to turn off the water at the faucet instead of bailing out the flood.”

So, how do we turn off the faucet? In 2010, AHS and the Holland M. Ware Charitable Foundation founded the Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Georgia Initiative, which is a high volume and high quality strategic initiative that has to date reached the milestone of 30,000 surgeries. We partner with shelters and rescues in more than 100 communities and concentrate on taking our mobile surgical unit to rural areas of need. Besides going into the communities, another important factor for success is the low cost (on average $35 to $50) of the surgery, which removes the cost barrier and is partially underwritten by donors and AHS.

In 2015, AHS traveled 27,450 miles around Georgia in our black truck and surgical trailer staffed by an experienced team of veterinarians and vet assistants.

Dr. Erin Bell, DVM, has been part of the program as a veterinarian since the beginning.

“The mobile unit exists primarily for those who are unable to make the trek to us in Atlanta and, in my opinion, for those most in need of our service. So many people are out here who want to be responsible pet owners, but need help. The bottom line is that the mobile unit saves lives. This is the ultimate goal and the reason why I love what I do, despite the hardships. The rewards far outweigh the sacrifices.”

Our goal for our low-cost public spaying and neutering of pets in 2016 is 7,000 surgeries. By increasing our goal every year we are targeting the “tipping point” where the number of homeless animals entering shelters is greatly reduced. Another strategy is to take larger dogs who are harder to adopt in Atlanta to the northeastern United States to shelters where they have fewer animals to adopt. These northeastern shelters were in the forefront of the spay and neuter movement and have had an aggressive spay/neuter program for years. The fact that these shelters are no longer overcrowded shows that the spay and neuter strategy works.
Please join the movement! How?
Spay or neuter your pets. Or help underserved pets by donating to AHS and sponsoring surgeries and vaccinations for those pets whose parents could not otherwise afford this very important procedure. Donate to our “Wish List” for items newborn puppies and kittens need. Or volunteer to be trained as a foster and take care of the kittens and puppies before they are ready to be adopted. Together we can end homelessness and the euthanasia of healthy, adoptable pets.

The Atlanta Humane Society Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Georgia Initiative is sponsored by Holland M. Ware Charitable Foundation, with additional support provided by The Daniel P. Amos Family Foundation, the Petco Foundation and the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

5 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD SPAY OR NEUTER YOUR PET:

1. **Health**
   Your pet has a better chance of a long and healthy life by being spayed or neutered. Reproductive system (breast and testicular) cancer risk increases for unaltered pets.

2. **Behavior**
   Spaying and neutering doesn’t change your pet’s core personality. That’s a myth! What it will do is help make male dogs and cats calmer and less prone to aggression.

3. **Cleanliness**
   Male cats mark territory by spraying and can damage your home. Neutering helps reduce this unwanted behavior.

4. **Lost Pets**
   Dogs and cats who aren’t altered are more likely to roam “looking for love” and run the risk of getting lost or hit by a car.

5. **Overpopulation**
   Spaying or neutering just your single pet does add up. One female dog can have up to 20 litters in her lifetime. At an average of five puppies per litter, that’s 100 dogs being born who might not end up in a happy home. If each of these 100 dogs has 20 litters . . . just imagine . . . the numbers increase exponentially into the thousands!
Helping our Heroes Heal with the Power of a Pet

Through Companion Pets for Vets, co-founded by the Rotary Club of Buckhead, the Atlanta Humane Society (AHS) has been able to adopt more than 200 animals to our hometown heroes.

Many of our nation’s servicemen and women suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other injuries that make readjusting to civilian life difficult.

Staff Sergeant James Garwacki adopted his dog Rogue, a Catahoula Mix, in March 2015 from AHS.

S.Sgt. Garwacki served two tours of duty with the United States Air Force and after four years of service, enlisted in the National Guard and remains on active duty. Years of military service taught him to remain strong and not show emotion. He said that adopting Rogue helped him to tear down those walls. “Rogue was able to calm me down, especially at night when I would wake up and not know where I was. I’d be able to reach down and pet her and realize it was okay,” he says.

Rogue became his Emotional Support Animal. He plans to help her become a trained therapy animal so she can help other veterans suffering from emotional and physical injuries.

Through this program, two lives are made better through each adoption; the quality of life of a deserving veteran and that of a homeless animal. We are so thankful for partners like Rotary Club of Buckhead and Marine Corps Coordinating Council of Georgia, Inc. that have helped make this program possible.

To sponsor the Companion Pets for Vets program, contact:
Jeff Esola, Director of Corporate Relations and Marketing | jesola@atlantahumane.org

CELEBRITY SPOTLIGHT:
The Biermann Family Adopts

Kim Zolciak-Biermann, star of Don’t Be Tardy (a spin-off of The Real Housewives of Atlanta), and her husband, Atlanta Falcons Outside Linebacker Kroy Biermann, adopted a two-month-old black Labrador Retriever/Border Collie Mix, now named Norma Jean, on Saturday, February 27, 2016.

The Biermanns were volunteering at our Mansell Campus as part of the reality show. Kim, Kroy, and four of their children showed up ready to help. The six family members and the family’s personal chef, Chef Tracy, loved being at our shelter. They talked excitedly about how much fun it would be to volunteer at AHS and they wanted to find ways to come more often. While walking through the puppy room, the seven of them fell in love with several puppies. They couldn’t decide which puppy to take into the Visitation Room – until fate happened. Kim spotted an adorable little black Lab puppy on her way to the Visitation Room and shouted “Kroy, this is it!” Pixie was hiding under the newspapers, but her tail wagged happily. Kim gently picked up the three-pound puppy and sighed. She told her husband that they were going to adopt this little girl.

A few hours later, the family returned without the cameras. They told our staff that they had discussed the possibility of adoption, and they had unanimously decided that this was the right time. They were going to adopt this puppy! Norma Jean is now happily living with Kim, Kroy, and her human and fur siblings in the Biermann household. She has learned to go outside by mimicking her fur sibling, Sinatra. When asked how Norma Jean was doing... Kim said “She’s perfect. Thank you, Atlanta Humane Society!”
In December 2015, Atlanta Humane Society (AHS) launched the Guardians Circle to recognize and build a sense of community with all of our major donors. The Guardians Circle is an annual giving society of individuals and families who have donated $1,000 or more and shown an extraordinary commitment to support our lifesaving animal welfare work.

Guardians Circle members receive special benefits, including:

- VIP behind-the-scenes tour
- Quarterly conference call with insider updates
- Dedicated Guardians Circle phone number

Our first Guardians Circle appreciation event was The Sixth Annual Bonhams A Celebration of Dogs, sponsored by Springmont, Atlanta’s First Montessori School, on Thursday, January 28, 2016 at the Bill Lowe Gallery. The event was an opportunity to view highlights from Bonhams’ upcoming auction, Dogs in Show and Field: The Fine Art Sale held in New York during February and coinciding with the AKC Westminster Dog Show.

The event included a pre-reception at which AHS recognized outgoing board members including Marti Wilson, Debby Pirrung, and Susan Gordy. Hod Nalle was presented with an award for his long-standing service as Chairman of the Board.

To find out more about the Guardians Circle, please see atlantahumane.org/guardians-circle.
Volunteer Spotlight

Luke Testani began volunteering with AHS as soon as he met the age requirement of 18. He immediately gravitated towards animals who might be overlooked due to their size, appearance, energy level or difficulty to walk. Luke ensures that each of our dogs receives attention, enrichment and a good walk whenever he volunteers.

Although busy with school work, basketball and other volunteer commitments, Luke visits the dogs whenever he has time to spare. He has been consistent in giving both his time and enthusiasm. He also enjoys interacting with potential adopters and is glad to spend time with them to help them determine if a dog they are interested in will be a good fit for their home. Luke makes an effort to help all the dogs get out for fresh air and exercise, typically spending several hours each time he volunteers.

Earlier this year when Luke began his college search, he did research to see if there were local humane societies or animal shelters nearby where he can continue this work. We have been so fortunate to benefit from Luke’s service and know any shelter that has the privilege to work with Luke in the future will be just as lucky.

You Can Help Save Lives

BECOME AN ATLANTA HUMANE SOCIETY ADOPTION AMBASSADOR

The Adoption Ambassadors program is foster care taken to the next level. Not only are lives saved, but space, time and resources are freed up inside our shelter to care for more animals in need. The fostered dogs are adopted quicker due to the greater exposure they are given to the public. AHS supplies simple training and a few tools, and foster parents take it from there.

Adoption Ambassadors:
- Feed, socialize, groom, train and provide medication for the dogs if needed
- Take fostered animals to events and approved locations to find an adoptive family
- Interview prospective adopters and facilitate the adoption
- Provide positive reinforcement techniques
- Provide positive human interaction – petting, brushing, love
- Observe the animal’s health, behavior and attend to its needs
- Report on the animal’s condition to the Adoption Ambassadors Coordinator
- Take part in training class

If this sounds rewarding, we welcome you to become an Atlanta Humane Society Adoption Ambassador!

For more information, contact: fostercare@atlantahumane.org

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Follow us on social media for updates on all events!