ASTROS' LANCE McCULLERS

PITCHING FOR ANIMALS

YARD DANGER HAZARD ALERT

DR. GOOGLE IS HE RIGHT OR WRONG?

Meet Other Charities Supporting Houston's Pet Population
By Lynn Rodriguez

Barrio Dogs mission is premised on the belief that with more education and awareness, conditions can improve for the animals in our Houston East End community. To that end, we provide information and resources to help residents become responsible pet owners. We also teach children and others the importance of always spaying and neutering pets, properly caring for all animals, and reporting abuse and neglect when they see it.

Barrio Dogs began when native Houstonian Gloria Medina-Zenteno returned to the East End after years away and was horrified to see so many homeless, neglected and mistreated animals. She first worked with rescue groups but quickly realized that the most effective way to address the situation was through a solution focusing on the root of the problem.

Barrio Dogs is an all-volunteer, community-based organization that since 2010, has been working to create a long-term solution to the animal welfare crisis we face around us. Our message focuses on three points: 1) pets are a lifelong commitment and must receive proper care and treatment, 2) education and spay neuter are the most humane and effective methods of controlling animal overpopulation, and 3) zero tolerance for animal mistreatment and neglect will create safer, healthier, higher property value communities.

Our community work takes place at local parks, businesses and community events. On our outreach days, residents sign up their pets for free spay neuter and to date, we have made almost 3,000 animals and vetted many pets for low-income residents. In exchange, we ask pet owners to help by sharing our message with others.

“Volunteers, most of us concerned residents with full-time jobs, who dedicate our free time to the organization. We do not receive city or state funding and rely solely on fundraising activities and private donations to fund our work. Over time, we have developed good relationships with elected officials, community leaders and residents. We’ve reached many residents, engaged them with our message and believe that as a result, they are better pet owners. However, we realize that animal overpopulation, neglect and mistreatment are still big problems in the East End and in other parts of Houston and that much remains to be done. That’s why in 2013, we partnered with Corridor Rescue and Forgotten Dogs of the 5th Ward to form Unity for a Solution, a collaborative effort to increase awareness and create solutions. Since then, Unity has expanded to over 40 partners including small businesses, civic organizations and animal welfare groups. A priority for Unity has been to raise awareness about Houston’s animal welfare crisis and to work with city officials to create more spay neuter options in low-income areas. Unity for a Solution is proud to have a strong steering committee that includes members from Adore Houston, Barrio Dogs, Houston Street Dogs, Houston Pet Set, Crime Stoppers and Texas Humane Legislation Network. In the future, Unity plans to partner with the city of Houston and others on educational and spay neuter outreach activities. 

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Children’s Museum, usually with a rescued therapy dog, to teach children about proper animal care and the importance of spay neuter. Through our Barrio Watchdog program, we encourage and empower residents to report animal abuse or neglect to the police or other agencies. Finally, while not a solution, we face around us. Our message focuses on three points: 1) pets are a lifelong commitment and must receive proper care and treatment, 2) education and spay neuter are the most humane and effective methods of controlling animal overpopulation, and 3) zero tolerance for animal mistreatment and neglect will create safer, healthier, higher property value communities.

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