

From: No Kill Houston <nokillhouston@yahoo.com>
Subject: Re: Response: Houston Humane Society: Helping BARC
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Cc: "Chris Dodson" <[REDACTED]>, Houston_Area_Dog_Rescues@yahoo.com, "Lana Hughes" <[REDACTED]>, "Gene Locke" <genelocke@andrewskurth.com>, "Annise Parker" <Annise@anniseparker.com>, "PeterBrown for Mayor" <info@peterbrownformayor.com>, "Society of Peace" <societyofpeacenetw@yahoogroups.com>, "THLN" <THLNSoutheastChapter@yahoo.com>, "Brad Woodard" <[REDACTED]>, venky.nagasandra@cityofhouston.net, "Tony Roubik" <[REDACTED]>, "Keith Thayer" <[REDACTED]>, "Jim Griffing" <[REDACTED]>, "Dr. Cynthia Rigoni" <[REDACTED]>, "Connie Cooke" <[REDACTED]>, bbrannan2@comcast.net, "Beth Brinkerhoff" <[REDACTED]>
Date: Monday, August 10, 2009, 7:04 AM

I appreciate Houston Humane Society's efforts in providing low cost spay/neuter services and investigating animal cruelty, and I agree that there is no reason BARC cannot be operated as an animal control facility and treat animals in a humane manner. However, I don't believe that the HHS' failed efforts of running a no kill shelter should be used as a model that the city should look to when seeking changes at BARC. Nor should it be used as an excuse to not move forward with no kill efforts at BARC. The failure of HHS, or any other shelter, to become no kill is the failure of the leaders of those particular shelters to implement the programs and services that have been proven to work. It is not the failure of the successful No Kill model of sheltering that Nathan Winograd and others advocate. It is simply a failure of that shelter.

In 2005, the Mayor's Task Force reported that HHS had a kill rate of 86%-89%. I am assuming their kill rate is still at this level, however, we don't know that for sure since HHS currently refuses to provide their kill rate to the public. With a kill rate at 86%, is this really the model of sheltering that city wants to emulate? Why not look at the shelters that HAVE successfully dropped their kill rates dramatically? Why not look these successful shelters:

* Washoe County, Nevada: Washoe County Animal Services and the Nevada Humane Society (<http://www.nevadahumanesociety.org>) are **SAVING 91% of the dogs and 74.6% of the cats** this year. This is despite having a per capita intake rate over two times the national average (higher than Houston's per capita intake).

* Charlottesville VA. The Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA has a **SAVE** rate of **92%** (<http://www.caspc.org>);

* Tompkins Co., NY SPCA (<http://www.spconline.com/nokill.htm>), an **open admission animal control facility** with a **SAVE** rate of approximately **95%**. The Tompkins County SPCA can boast the highest save rate of any comparable shelter in the United States

* San Francisco SPCA (<http://www.sfspca.org>) with a **SAVE** rate of roughly 97% in 2008 (<http://www.sfspca.org/assets/stats/asilomar-accord-stats-08.pdf>).

More and more shelters join these ranks all the time.

We can see that other shelters are proving that No Kill can be done and there is no reason that the 5 kill shelters in Houston, including BARC, can't do the same thing. But the most critical component to success is a shelter director who pushes the programs that have been proven to work. Maybe after 25 years of doing the same thing over and

over, HHS leaders are satisfied with status quo of killing 86% or more of animals that enter their doors. We don't have to be satisfied with this number for BARC.

By the way, if you think that backyard breeders are responsible for the 80,000 animals that are killed in Houston area shelters every year, you are seriously looking in the wrong direction. Not that I support irresponsible breeders or puppy mills, I don't. But breeders do not account for the 80,000 animals entering Houston area shelters. (And if you have ever walked the kennels at BARC, you will notice that most are not pure breed dogs and cats.) Likewise, breeders are not the problem when BARC, or other shelters, have no offsite adoption locations so that few people ever see all the wonderful adoptable pets. There should be offsite adoptions all over the city every single day of the week. Breeders are also not the problem when BARC has a very meager foster program to take in sick, injured or unweaned animals, so these animals end up being killed. Breeders are not the problem when the city funds very few low cost or free spay/neuter programs to help sterilize pets or strays especially in low income neighborhoods. Breeders are not the problem when BARC has no TNR program so that all feral cats going to BARC are killed instead of being neutered and returned to their habitat. Breeders are not the problem when BARC has no pet retention program to help keep pets in their homes instead of being dumped at BARC (a friend said she kept 12,000 animals out of her shelter in one year by utilizing this program). Breeders are not the problem when BARC does not work hard to return lost pets to their owners, and instead kills those animals. And breeders are not the problem when BARC does not have a compassionate, hard working director who will push all of these successful programs forward, but instead relies on the same old catch and kill philosophy that it always has. Breeders aren't causing BARC to kill 30,000 animals per year. BARC's failure to do the above is causing these animals to die.

I believe a No Kill model of sheltering can be successful in Houston and it is our duty to the animals, and to the public, to look to those who are successfully doing it and make it happen in Houston.

Bett Sundermeyer, President
No Kill Houston
www.NoKillHouston.org

From: Lydia Caldwell <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Houston Humane Society: Helping BARC
To: districtd@cityofhouston.net, districta@cityofhouston.net, atlarge2@cityofhouston.net, atlarge1@cityofhouston.net, districtg@cityofhouston.net, districte@cityofhouston.net, atlarge3@cityofhouston.net, districtf@cityofhouston.net, atlarge5@cityofhouston.net, districtb@cityofhouston.net, districti@cityofhouston.net, districth@cityofhouston.net, districtc@cityofhouston.net, atlarge4@cityofhouston.net, mayor@cityofhouston.net, gafusco@aol.com, "Sherry Ferguson" <sferguson@houstonhumane.org>, "Sherry Nassar" <[REDACTED]>
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Date: Wednesday, August 5, 2009, 12:01 AM

The Ordinance I'm looking forward to is the one that BANS back yard breeding and selling of puppies and kittens for profit, in all of Harris County!

Not all No-Kill models are equal. There are some good ones and there are some bad ones. To learn how it can be done right and *why* spay/neuter ordinances don't miraculously make spay/neuter feasible for folks who can barely put food on their table, visit: www.nokilladvocacycenter.org

Spay/Neuter is primarily a financial issue, not a "lack of responsibility" issue. Just ask anyone who works at SNAP how their mobile clinic attracts untold numbers of poor folks, who otherwise, cannot afford spay/neuter for their animals. Heck, many of them don't even have transportation - they're on the busline! A spay/neuter ordinance, unfortunately, does not even begin to address lack of funds and lack of transportation.

However, a BAN, heavily enforced, against back yard breeding and selling of puppies and kittens... that could make a difference!

Lydia

From: Sherry Nassar <sherry.nassar@houstonhumane.org>

Subject: Houston Humane Society: Helping BARC

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Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2009, 5:30 PM

The Houston Humane Society is all about "Humane" - which is what we have always desperately wanted for BARC too. There was such an outpouring yesterday from so many - imploring the city to STOP the inhumane treatment of animals at BARC.

Sherry

Original Message -----

From: Sherry Ferguson

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Sent: Tuesday, August 04, 2009 1:00 PM

Subject: BARC

I was present at the meeting yesterday and offer any help I or my staff can be in the efforts to make changes at BARC. This is a multifaceted problem that has gone on way too long and desperately needs to be solved.

My Shelter Director, Edward Perez and I have both been at the HHS for 25 years and are happy to offer any insight from our experience. Houston Humane (www.houstonhumane.org) used to be "no kill" and was as bad as BARC is now. Also like BARC, our location has been a challenge. However, we were the first humane organization to open a low cost spay/neuter clinic (1989) open to the public and now operate a full service Animal Wellness Center which offers reduced cost veterinary services to the general public along with our \$30 spay/neuter surgeries. Our Chief Veterinarian, Dr. Timothy Harkness, has been in private practice and shelter animal medicine for many years. He is a commissioned deputy and, in addition to running our clinic, he does animal forensics and testifies in our cruelty cases. We alter more than 11,000 animals each year and see thousands of wellness clients.

HHS is also the only shelter in Texas that employs full-time law enforcement officers to run our R.A.I.D.E.R. (Rescuing Animals In Danger and Education Resources) animal cruelty investigations program. We currently have 100% contracts for a Sergeant and a Corporal from HCPrecinct 6 Constable Trevino and work closely with Harris County ADA Belinda Smith on criminal cases. Together with the HCDA's office we help train law enforcement and others about cruelty investigations and the law and are looking to expand that service.

HHS took the puppies from BARC 10 days ago. EVERY puppy had severe coccidia, hook/round/whip worm infestations. Several of the smallest were so anemic from flea infestation that 2 died. All have been wormed, given vaccinations and treated for parasites. All are on medications, concentrated vitamins and are receiving nutritious puppy food. To date, several have broken with PARVO and we are closely watching others for potential distemper. BARC spokesperson said the animals were "NOT THAT SICK". If officials feel these animals were not sick, then I understand why adopted and kenneled BARC animals are dying. We have "no commented" on media questions about BARC as our stance has always been to help BARC solve problems and give the puppies a place to stay and hopefully be adopted. That BARC was to be congratulated for making repairs.

While HHS is an open admissions facility and believes "no kill" is a misnomer and not viable [emphasis added], we do feel it is imperative that we all strive to reduce euthanasias. Spaying/neutering, public education, and stronger, enforced ordinances are key to stopping the abuse and quantity of unwanted animals. In the meantime, these needy animals deserve to be treated with kindness and care. There is no reason BARC cannot be operated as an animal control facility and treat animals in a humane manner. I am on the board of 2 statewide animal welfare organizations that have humane animal control members/advisors. It can be done and it's our duty to the animals, and to the public, to make it happen at BARC.

We have just completed our new adoption center and kennel buildings and invite you out to tour.

Regards,

Sherry Ferguson
Executive Director