We are... saving our best friends

Our spay/neuter campaigns, shelter mentoring program, and outreach to underserved communities are helping bring about a day when every healthy, adoptable animal has a home and all pet owners have the resources to care for their best friends for life.

Street Dog Policies Transformed

Attending a 2008 Humane Society International workshop was like “a slap in the face,” says Alice Utlang, lead government veterinarian in Cebu City, Philippines. She realized that everything about her department’s street dog control program was inhumane.

With Utlang’s newfound knowledge and HSI’s support, the department has since switched to kinder methods of capture and euthanasia and embraced spay/neuter for population control. In 2011, two HSI-funded clinics sterilized 3,000 dogs, and HSI partnered with Southwestern University to teach advanced spay/neuter techniques to 45 Filipino veterinarians.

HSI also continued to expand its street dog programs in India and Haiti and reached a milestone in Bhutan: neuter surgeries to communities in the U.S. and Latin America. Among the nearly 8,700 patients treated, a Chihuahua named Nosy had surgery to remove a life-threatening hernia. Later, she rejoined her 9-year-old companion. “Seeing the human-animal bond between those two was amazing, and being able to really help is something I will never forget,” says Cullman-Clark.

Into the Disaster Zone

Jennifer Potter and her family rode out Hurricane Irene huddled on a top bunk, their dogs perched on furniture and their cats floating on a mattress. Afterward, they fled, handing their pets off to HSUS responders for safekeeping at a nearby shelter. “With raw sewage in the house, and as much water that came up, they don’t have a dry place to sleep in there,” said Potter. “And ... I just thought this would be the best decision because they’d be fed, taken care of ... until I can get back to them.”

Following the storm, HSUS responders crisscrossed stricken areas in North Carolina, rescuing animals and delivering pet food. Over the course of the year, the team helped more than 2,300 animals in disaster situations, including a tornado in Alabama and floods in Missouri and Mississippi.

COME TOGETHER: A record 1,748 people from 48 countries attended The HSUS’s 20th annual Animal Care Expo, receiving information and hands-on training to improve their services in animal care and control, rescue, and disaster response.

OUT OF THE RUINS: Following the March tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan, a Humane Society International team spent two weeks caring for displaced animals. HSI later sent $300,000 to fund sheltering efforts and pet care in affected areas.

At Their Service: The HSUS’s Shelter Services program visited 29 shelters in 2011 and helped 71 others, offering coaching and critiques to improve operations. In addition to Spay Day funds awarded to spay/neuter programs, we distributed $224,000 in grants to more than 60 shelters for needs such as replacing equipment, seizing animals from cruelty situations, transitioning to a more humane form of euthanasia, and reducing pet homelessness. A $200,000 grant will expand the shelter medicine program at Louisiana State University, giving veterinary students hands-on experience while helping shelters in underserved communities.

For one Philadelphia teenager, searching hard for a job, everything changed the day he read the flier advertising free dog training classes. The sessions are a key part of The HSUS’s Pets for Life program—based in Philadelphia, Chicago, Atlanta, and now Los Angeles—which in 2011 helped 2,500+ animals in neighborhoods with socioeconomic, language, and other barriers.

Devell Brookins, 19, certainly didn’t need much training help; his pit bull Ace could already turn off a light switch on command. But as a longtime animal lover, Brookins was intrigued—and today, he has progressed into a consultant role, teaching classes, helping neighbors with their pets, and encouraging spay/neuter. “I stuck with it and volunteered for six months,” he says, “and now I’ve finally got a job — a job that I love to do.”