



A Somber Appraisal

HSUS team assesses the eco-catastrophe unfolding in the Gulf

As thick black goo stained coastal Louisiana and tar balls washed ashore in Mississippi, Alabama, and northwest Florida, The HSUS sent a team of experts in mid-June to assess the damage of the Gulf Coast oil spill and its implications for the region's fragile ecosystem. Traveling on foot, by car, on water, and in a helicopter flight over the Mississippi delta plains, they gained a sobering perspective of the challenges presented by the landscape's vastness and complexity.

The team's firsthand look at the efforts to rescue affected wild animals brought glimmers of hope tempered by grim ambiguity. At the Fort Jackson Oiled Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, team members witnessed round-the-clock work to clean hundreds of birds in preparation for eventually flying them to eastern Florida for release—a potentially futile exercise, but the only viable option at this point.

"Nobody knows if they'll adjust to those new areas or if they have long-term damage to their livers and kidneys," says Laura Bevan, Eastern

regional director for The HSUS and one of the organization's most experienced natural disaster responders. "There's a whole lot of research needed and tracking of these animals to figure out the long-term impact."

An uncertain outcome also awaited sea turtles being washed at the team's last stop, the Audubon Nature Institute outside New Orleans. Because of the animals' instinct to return home, no matter how far away, workers planned to hold the turtles indefinitely. Their fate hinges on the Gulf's capacity to cleanse and heal itself—a process that will take years.

Bevan notes that although similar wildlife recovery centers are set up across the northern Gulf Coast, more are needed, as are trained rescuers to retrieve oiled birds and marine animals. The effort, she says, needs to be expanded—and quickly. —*Ruthanne Johnson*

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Signatures for Change

Groundbreaking ballot measure would help dogs in Missouri's puppy mills

Mary Jo Dazey was in the market for a dog, and she thought she'd done her homework.

Aware of the inhumane conditions at factory-style breeding operations known as puppy mills, the Missouri woman began calling up kennels and asking questions about their practices. One kennel operator's answers seemed perfect, so Dazey decided to visit the facility in the hopes of finding a new friend.

What she saw horrified her. The woman had accurately given the dimensions of the kennel's cages—but neglected to mention that 10 dogs were crammed into each one. The cages also lacked overhangs to give relief from Missouri's baking hot summers and freezing cold winters. The dogs ran terrified in the other direction when the cage doors opened, and they were so filthy and matted that it was difficult for Dazey to even identify their breeds. When Dazey pointed out the bloody feet of a pair of Boston terriers who'd been fighting, the kennel operator merely stuffed them both into one

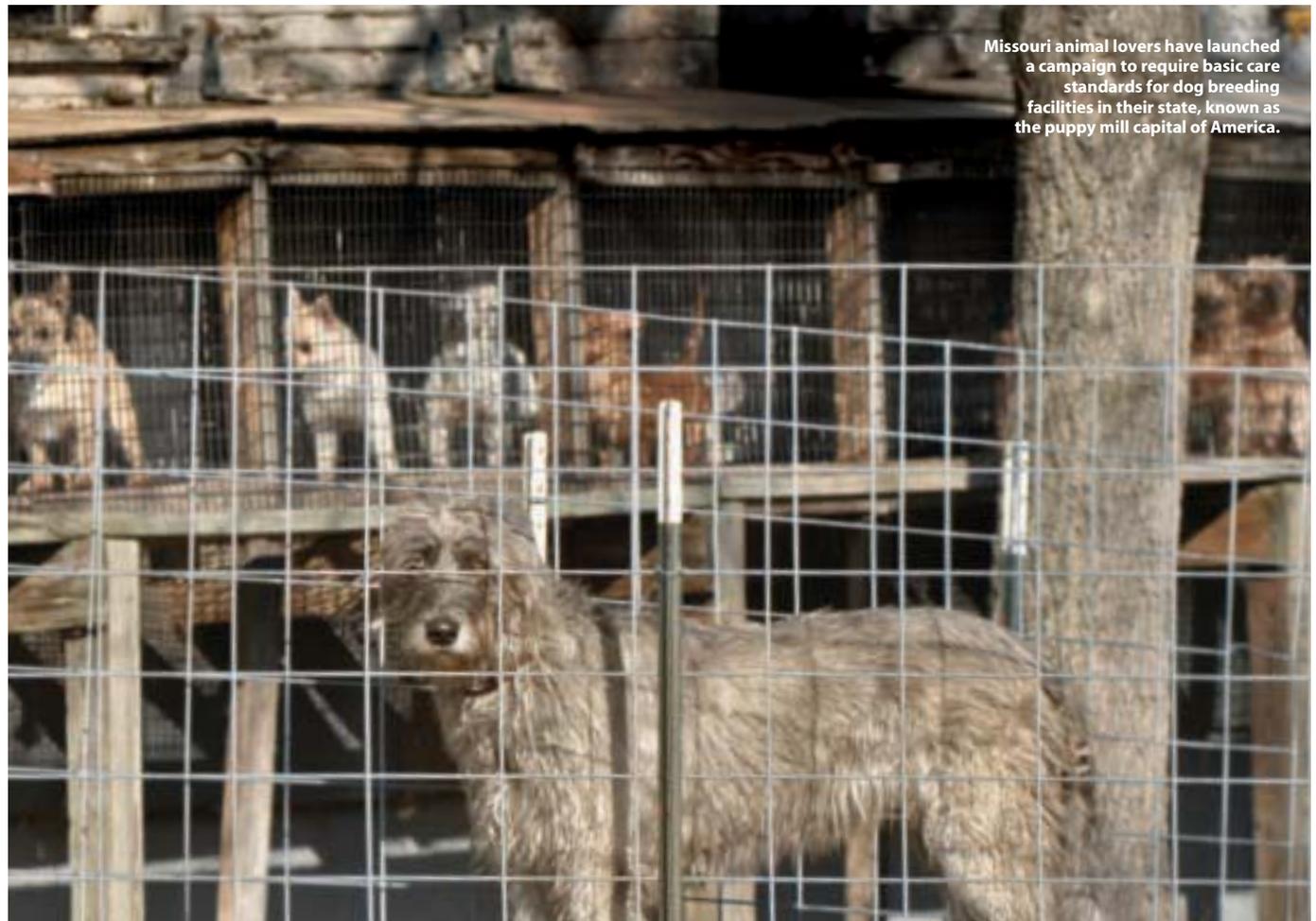
crate, facing in opposite directions.

"It totally opened my eyes," says Dazey. As soon as she left the kennel, she made it her mission to find out all she could about puppy mills in Missouri. "I wasn't going to turn my back on this and pretend like I didn't see it or didn't witness it."

Four years later, Dazey is on the front lines of the fight to improve the lives of the tens of thousands of dogs at the state's mass breeding facilities. Earlier this year, she joined a legion of Missourians in gathering the 100,000 valid signatures needed from registered voters to place the Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act on the November ballot. Ultimately, just over 190,000 signatures were turned in.

The first statewide ballot initiative in the country to require basic care standards at dog breeding facilities, the measure would mandate provision of sufficient food, clean water, regular exercise, and necessary veterinary care; it would also require more humane

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Missouri animal lovers have launched a campaign to require basic care standards for dog breeding facilities in their state, known as the puppy mill capital of America.

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housing, including protection from the elements, solid flooring, and space to stretch and lie down. Two other stipulations—adequate rest between breeding cycles and a limit on the number of breeding dogs to 50 per facility—would go a long way toward alleviating the misery of mother dogs, who spend years on end confined in cramped, barren wire cages, pumping out litter after litter.

The culmination of a decades-long struggle by Missouri dog lovers, the initiative aims to better regulate an industry that has been operating under flimsy laws for too long—and that has survived several pushes in the state legislature for stronger oversight. Considered the puppy mill capital of America, Missouri hosts an estimated 3,000 puppy mills, far more than even well-known dog breeding states such as Iowa, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.

The state's central location positions it conveniently for mass shipping of puppies to big cities like Chicago and populated areas along the East and West coasts. And the remote, rural landscape, weak animal welfare laws, and history of lax enforcement create an ideal environment for the industry. "Here in Missouri, it's perfectly legal to confine dogs to tiny wire-floored cages for their entire lives," says HSUS Missouri state director Barbara Schmitz, "and the cages can be stacked one on top of the other so that waste streams down from one dog to the ones below."

Most dog breeding operations in the state are licensed by the



30 percent of the nation's federally licensed dog breeding operations are located in Missouri

Missouri Department of Agriculture, and those that sell to pet stores or other middlemen must be licensed by the USDA as well. But required care standards are minimal and enforcement is weak. According to an audit performed by the USDA Office of the Inspector General regarding the agency's scant oversight of dog dealers, 4,250

federally licensed breeding operations racked up Animal Welfare Act violations between fiscal 2006 and 2008. More than 2,400 that repeatedly violated the regulations were penalized minimally or not at all.

As the OIG report noted, the system seems skewed toward bringing breeders into compliance rather than holding them accountable for poor conditions. Kim Townsend, a longtime campaigner against Missouri puppy mills, recalls the story of one breeder who "had her license revoked and actually went through the system twice, where the USDA took legal action against her, administrative action," she says. "Even after she lost her USDA license, she continued to stay in business—the state licensed her."

These systemic flaws were confirmed by a recent Better Business Bureau investigation launched after the organization received more than 350 complaints and reports about Missouri dog breeders and sellers. Results released in March pointed to cases of sick puppies, some of whom died, and sellers' refusal to reimburse veterinary bills. The report advised inspectors to more aggressively pursue penalties against repeat offenders and consumers to consider adopting pets from shelters.

The reports by the Better Business Bureau and inspector general herald a shifting tide for the nation's mass dog breeding operations. Last year, 10 states passed laws governing puppy mills, while a recently introduced federal bill would establish licensing requirements for breeders selling directly to consumers.

Missourians are riding this wave of change—and helping to set in motion even more ripples. Lawmakers in nearby Oklahoma, another top puppy mill state, passed legislation in anticipation of the Missouri measure's success, fearing that stricter regulations would push breeders to set up shop in their state. "If we can deal with the industry where it's most active," Schmitz says, "then we will see sweeping change in the rest of the country."

The campaign's early success bodes well for ultimate victory. Accustomed to seeing heartbreaking images of puppy mill raids on the evening news, many Missourians already know about puppy mills and are eager to enlist, says Schmitz, who herself was recruited for the cause when she saw one such news report 18 years ago. Thousands of everyday people conducted a herculean effort to put the measure on the ballot and are poised to continue volunteering to ensure passage.

Like Dazey, many have drawn inspiration from animal suffering they witnessed. For Gloria Boyer, it was the companionship of an old schnauzer she rescued from the middle of a busy road one hot day three years ago. Suffering from heat stroke, the pepper grey dog merely panting as a woman got out of her car to kick and yell at him,



Missouri dog breeding operations sell puppies all over the country, as in the case of Buddy, who was shipped to a Maryland pet store from a facility that sells more than 3,000 puppies a year. Within four months of his purchase in April 2008, the golden retriever was diagnosed with severe hip dysplasia—reportedly the worst his vet had ever seen—despite the pet store's assurances about the quality of its breeders and health guarantees against illness or congenital defects. By curbing the breeding at Missouri puppy mills and requiring that dogs be examined by a vet at least once a year, the Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act could help eliminate future cases like Buddy's.



Her Most Meaningful Role

From 1972 to 1983, she played Maj. Margaret “Hot Lips” Houlihan—a rule-bound but compassionate army nurse in the iconic television series *M*A*S*H*. At the same time, Loretta Swit was working off-screen on the front lines of the animal protection and human rights movements, battling cruelty and injustice wherever she saw it. It’s a role the actress and artist has continued to this day.

Whether she’s creating paintings to raise funds for spay/neuter work, encouraging government officials to support animal protection legislation like the 2006 Chicago foie gras ban, or working with groups like Stray Rescue of St. Louis, Swit remains one of Hollywood’s most steadfast animal advocates. A longtime supporter of The HSUS, she believes “a house is not a home without an animal” and gets daily inspiration from her four rescued companions—terrier Munchkin and three cats.

In this excerpted interview with senior editor Julie Falconer, Swit talks about her fight against puppy mills and other cruel industries.

Q: How long have you been involved in animal protection, and what inspired you to join the cause?

SWIT: I’ve been an activist before it had a word. I can’t remember not caring. Along the way, I turned around and said, “But doesn’t everybody?” And I found out that everybody doesn’t. And I was determined that they should learn about [animal protection issues].

Q: How has your advocacy affected your work as an actor?

SWIT: I’m in a play now where there is fur. I begged the producers to please only use fake. ... This may be just a little thing—one play, but I’ve done it on movies. [I say], “Please if you don’t mind, I won’t wear fur. If you want me to have the look, then I’ll ask you to use fake. And if it’s a play, will you note it in the program that the furs onstage are all repro-

duced, they’re all fake?” So that people are getting the right impression, that we care, that we’re looking to end this cruelty.

Q: You’ve helped place dogs rescued from large-scale breeding operations, and you actively promote spay/neuter and adoption. How did these experiences inspire you to join The HSUS’s fight to shut down the nation’s puppy mills?

SWIT: [Puppy mills are] a blight on our society, one of many. It just happens to be the one that I find the most heartbreaking because we are the caretakers here. We’re supposed to be caring for these animals. So I find it particularly meaningful and more hurtful.

Q: What progress have you witnessed in the campaign against puppy mills?

SWIT: I think the scales are tipping. I’m meet-

ing more people who are out there fighting, I’m meeting more people out there who are adopting, who have [multiple] dogs. You sometimes feel like [what] you’re doing [is just] a drop in a ocean, but we’ll keep on going, and we’re going to win, because we’re right.

Q: What core message do you want to give people about puppy mills?

SWIT: I feel that these things that are being done in the puppy mills are evil, and I think we must as a society fight evil and rid ourselves of these things. You have to drop everything and start caring. Get involved—this is the only world you have. If you’re not helping to make things better, what good is your life? You use your life to make things better, to help others. That’s the life you want to live.

➤ **LEARN MORE** at humanesociety.org/puppermills.

trying to prompt him to get out of the way.

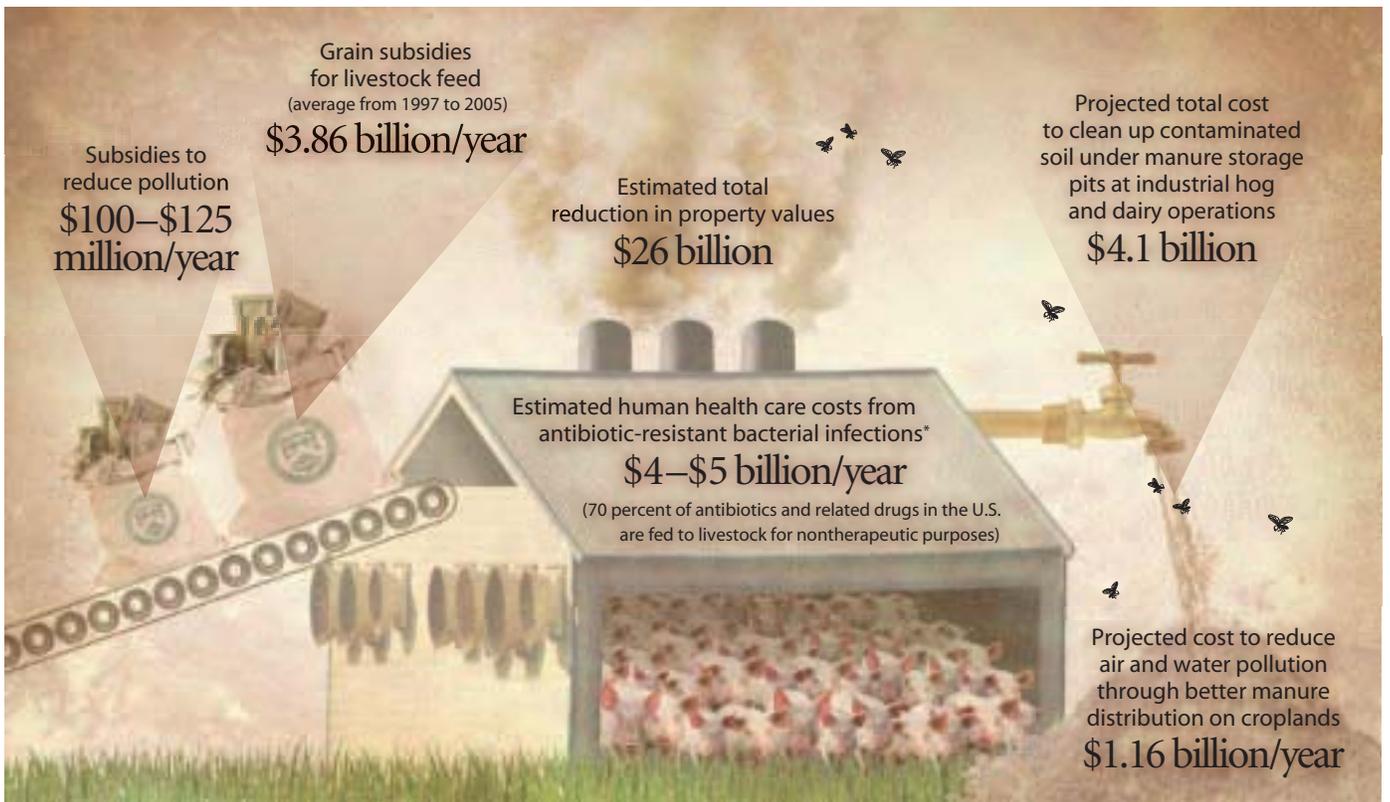
Driving by at the time, Boyer checked her anger and scooped up the ailing dog. She located the schnauzer’s owner, who didn’t want him any longer, so Jack became a permanent member of Boyer’s family. Before he died last December, Boyer promised her friend that she would save 1,000 dogs in his memory. Ten days later, she got an e-mail from The HSUS asking for help gathering signatures.

Boyer began hitting the campaign trail regularly after work, vol-

unteering at times for 10 hours at a stretch. The work gave her something to focus on after Jack’s death. “I would just think about me and him sitting and watching TV,” she says. “He was probably filled with arthritis, and he had seizures and all kinds of health problems, but he would still come over and spend time with me when I’d come home.

“... He was the world to me,” she adds, “and I wanted to pay it forward.”

— *Ruthanne Johnson*



Through subsidies and sacrifice, Americans foot the bill for the operation of inhumane and environmentally destructive factory farms. These numbers, compiled by the Union of Concerned Scientists,* include rough estimates of some of the costs of doing business that have been transferred to the public—and of the funding that would be required to mitigate the damage.

*Health care costs derived from National Academies of Science Institute of Medicine report

The Illusion of Cheap Food

There's no such thing as a free lunch, especially when it's cooked up by the nation's factory farms.

Though animal agribusiness giants have long touted their ability to produce cheap food for the masses, supermarket prices mask a largely hidden reality: Taxpayers shell out billions to prop up an inhumane, inefficient, and environmentally destructive industry.

Existing market economies don't directly capture the financial burden, but "it's not just an exercise in hypotheticals," says Doug Gurian-Sherman of the Union of Concerned Scientists, who wrote the 2008 report *CAFOs Uncovered: The Untold Costs of Confined Animal Feeding Operations*. "We are really paying a cost."

For years, the federal government has used public funds to subsidize grain farmers whose production expenses exceed market

rates—a payoff that translates to artificially low prices for factory farmers buying livestock feed. Taxpayers have also subsidized remediation efforts when waste containment systems fail and helped producers dispose of massive amounts of manure.

"We're bailing out the industry. . . . And what we get in return is pollution and sick animals and impoverished rural communities."

— DOUG GURIAN-SHERMAN, UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS

Meanwhile, the public has watched factory farming practices destroy the quality of life of neighboring communities and compromise one of the greatest medical miracles of modern society. The profligate misuse of antibiotics—to accelerate growth

rates and prevent disease caused by crowded, stressful, unsanitary conditions—has created resistant superbugs and diminished the effectiveness of lifesaving drugs.

"We're bailing out the industry; we're giving them all kinds of stuff," Gurian-Sherman says. "And what we get in return is pollution and sick animals and impoverished rural communities."

It doesn't have to be a devil's bargain. Some studies have shown that more natural animal husbandry methods for hogs and dairy cattle can be economically competitive with similarly sized factory farms, Gurian-Sherman says, but agricultural research funds have long been focused on refining the flawed CAFO system. "With a comparable research effort for alternatives, there's no doubt that their efficiency could be increased considerably."

Of course, our choice of farming prac-

tices shouldn't be based on price alone, as Whole Foods CEO and HSUS board member John Mackey points out. "If it were legal to employ child laborers in sweatshops, we could also drastically lower the cost and prices of most things that we manufacture and sell in the United States," Mackey writes in the new book *Gristle: From Factory Farms to Food Safety (Thinking Twice About the Meat We Eat)*, a collection of essays edited by recording artist Moby and Global Animal Partnership executive director Miyun Park. "But would that be acceptable?... The only reason our abuse of animals is still tolerated is because most people aren't aware of it."

Indeed, the biggest losers of this perverse system are the nearly 10 billion animals who suffer each year in prolonged, intensive confinement. In recent years, the USDA has bailed out pork producers whose supply exceeded demand and egg producers unable to sell their spent hens—and then used the meat in federal food programs. In March, a bill was introduced in Congress to better direct these taxpayer expenditures; the Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act, H.R. 4733, would require federal agencies to purchase pork, veal, and egg products only from sources that don't subject animals to intensive confinement—basic standards already adopted by many states and corporations.

—Julie Falconer

▶ **URGE YOUR LEGISLATOR** to support the Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act, H.R. 4733; find contact information at humansociety.org/leglookup.



Walking Tall

A small patch of land littered with garbage and rotting carcasses was once the place Stevie called home. Neglected and malnourished, with a brittle and patchy coat, the goat compensated for his badly overgrown hooves by hobbling on his front knees.

After a whistleblower reported the abuse, The HSUS helped the Douglas County Sheriff's Office remove Stevie and 28 other animals from the Sutherlin, Ore., property. Stevie's inquisitive demeanor endeared him to rescuers, who noticed that many baby goats on the farm looked suspiciously similar.

"Everyone fell in love with him," says HSUS Oregon state director Scott Beckstead. While other goats kept their distance, Stevie greeted rescuers affectionately, seemingly excited to be in the middle of things. "When you put your face down to him, he reaches out and nuzzles you ... " Beckstead says. "He has very soft, fuzzy lips, and he will smell you and start rubbing your cheeks with his face."

At the Saving Grace Pet Adoption Center, Stevie's thick hooves were trimmed. But he'd been walking on his knees for so long that his tendons had severely contracted and he still couldn't stand. With HSUS funds, veterinarian Gene Kang of Oregon's Parkway Animal Hospital performed surgery on Stevie's legs.

After convalescing at The HSUS's Duchess Sanctuary, Stevie was transferred to Sanctuary One. Though he lives with five other goats, he relishes the company of a potbellied pig named Rosie. "One night, he just decided he didn't want to go in his usual pen," says volunteer Jake Dacks. "He went into Rosie's pen, and they've been roommates ever since."

—Ruthanne Johnson



A Corps of Canine M.D.s

After her temperature spiked to 104 and her organs began failing, Catherine Medina was surrounded by everything that modern medicine has to offer—doctors, nurses, and IVs to deliver drugs and nutrients to her weakened body.

But it was a dog rescued off the streets who brought the 6-year-old's spirits back to life, when she received a visit at the Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital from Dayana Susterman and her rescued black Lab, Lucky.

The listless girl started smiling, petting Lucky, and telling her she loved her, says her mother, Auxiliadora Medina. With three dogs back home, Catherine was comforted by the familiar sight at the Hollywood, Fla., hospital. "In her little mind, I think, she thought about home and gradually she was coming back, little by little."

Lucky and Susterman are members of the hospital's corps of canine "doctors" who comfort sick children in need of diversion from their pain and isolation. Sometimes the effects are immediate: Catherine's condition began to improve right after the visit, says her mother. In another case, Susterman says, a doctor tried for more than half an hour to insert an IV into a stressed child. "When Lucky walked in, the child calmed

down," she says, "and the IV was in the arm within seconds."

Ten years ago, Lucky needed a little

TLC of her own, when Susterman found the dirty puppy with infected eyes in the streets. Eventually Lucky received training and was assessed to make sure she had the proper temperament for working with hospitalized children. After two years of volunteering, her services were in such demand that Susterman added another dog to the household.

She found her new friend at the Humane Society of Greater Miami. "Mocca has one leg shorter than the other—not an injury; she was born like that," Susterman says. "But I didn't care about her leg. I wanted her to be my pet and to have the opportunity to be a therapy dog."

Many of the dogs in the programs are adopted, "and we don't know where we'd be without them," says Regina Mathison, RN, the pediatric critical care unit manager at Joe DiMaggio. "Healing is not just about the physical. It's spiritual and emotional as well. That's why we've embraced the pet therapy program, because [the dogs] really do fill a void that the rest of us can't."

— Arna Cohen

Shelter Spotlight: The Humane Society of Greater Miami



Dayana Susterman's second therapy dog caught her eye at the Humane Society of Greater Miami, where many other adopters had already passed Mocca by. "It was a match made in heaven," says Laurie Hoffman, the shelter's director of communication and development.

The Florida organization is just one of thousands of independent groups caring for millions of wonderful pets. To help them in their efforts, The HSUS has collaborated with the Ad Council and Maddie's Fund on the Shelter Pet Project, a campaign promoting shelters and rescues as the best places to find a new friend.

STATS: 49 employees, 116 volunteers, 1,500 dogs and cats taken in each year.

SERVICES: Adoption, low-cost spay/neuter and preventative care, pet parent helpline, pet loss support, humane education, Spanish-language outreach.

WHAT MAKES THEM UNIQUE: Finding homes for greyhounds retired from racetracks; enlisting volunteers to take adoptable dogs with "Adopt Me" bandanas to pet-friendly locales; sheltering pets of abuse victims who are moving to safer places.

FAVORITE ADOPTION STORY: Beauty, a 13-year-old Chihuahua with one tooth, was found tied to a bench outside the shelter, says executive director Emily Marquez. Despite her age, she was adopted by a wonderful family who served her homemade food, took her traveling, and featured her in holiday greeting cards. After two years of bliss, Beauty died; today she's memorialized with a tribute etched in the shelter's brick walkway.

➤ [VIEW ADOPTION LISTINGS](http://theshelterpetproject.org), resources, and commercials at theshelterpetproject.org.