

T H E

Latham Letter

VOLUME XXXVI, NUMBER 3

SUMMER 2015

PROMOTING RESPECT FOR ALL LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION

SINGLE ISSUE PRICE: \$5.00



U P D A T E

Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center Continues to **Rehabilitate** and **Educate**

➔ See Page 7

INSIDE SUMMER 2015



Outreach to Native Americans pgs 8 and 16
National Feral Cat Day® pg 10

Animal-assisted Activities in New Jersey and California pgs 11 and 14
From Emancipet: Spay & Neuter News in Houston pg 17

Shelter Program Transforms Teens as well as Dogs

By Nora Parker



St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center is dedicated to providing programs and services that improve the welfare of all animals. But their efforts are also changing people's lives.

In January of 2014 St. Hubert's introduced its Teen Animal Welfare Enrichment Program, a week-long day camp session for at-risk teenagers in recovery for substance abuse, at its Madison, New Jersey campus.

The intensive 20-hour course was developed by Ellen Goldberg, the organization's humane education coordinator (who retired in April 2015). One of the major components of the program is a daily training session with dogs awaiting adoption in the shelter, designed and led by the Center's certified dog trainers. Classroom time with presentations and open discussions on animal welfare topics, and volunteer activities to benefit homeless animals and pet families in need round out the course.

The 12 program participants from around New Jersey are undergoing



Daytop residents Jesus & Taleah

residential treatment at Daytop Village of New Jersey. Daytop provides comprehensive treatment for substance abuse and co-occurring mental health disorders. Students enter the facility voluntarily or are placed there by the state.

St. Hubert's views the program as a "win" for the students, and for the animals. The students receive nonjudgmental, unconditional love from dogs, and also learn the importance of helping other people, while adoption dogs benefit from the additional socialization and training afforded by the program.

Positive Reinforcement

Students work in pairs and are assigned dogs for the training portion of the program where they learn about positive, reward-based training and experience first hand the importance of consistency, kindness, and patience with their canine partners.

"Here we have a group of kids that are struggling to improve their own behavior and better practice patience, tolerance and understanding," says Nora Parker, vice president of community programs for St. Hubert's. "Due to their past actions, it's understandable that it's going to take some time for the people in their lives to regain trust and confidence in them. When they're working with the dogs though,



Brendan

they see the results of their own positive behavior much more quickly. It's so rewarding and reinforcing for them to see not only what they are able to teach the dogs, but also to experience the trust and affection that they receive from them in return for those efforts."

Their common affection for animals and the almost immediate bonds they form with their assigned dogs have had a positive effect on the students, some of whom have been initially reluctant to work as a team.

"Kids that don't necessarily have relationships with one another are paired together," says Eriach Fox, managing director for Daytop. "The animals are the bond that brings them together and that gets them to work together. Without this beautiful loving creature in front of them, they could easily give up."

"I wasn't really happy at first with the partner I was teamed up with because we had our issues," said Taleah, Daytop resident. "But training our dog brought us closer together. In the end, I couldn't have asked for a better partner."

Humane Education

A variety of staff and guest speakers expose camp participants to pertinent animal welfare topics, including the cruelties of puppy mills, dog fighting, factory farming and humane co-existence with wildlife. The students explore ways in which they can help to educate others, and examine their own attitudes and choices that affect the creatures with whom they share the environment. "We arm them with information that they can use to support their own efforts toward increasing respect for all animals," says Goldberg.



Gabby

In accordance with St. Hubert's food policy, lunch and snacks are all vegetarian with vegan options. Vegetarian students expressed their appreciation for the food policy and were pleased, stating that they often feel their needs aren't considered at other venues. Lunch time provided the opportunity to continue meaningful discussion on food choices and for all to recognize the many vegetarian options they have and explore the ways in which their new knowledge will influence their individual choices.

Community Service

Campers work together to prepare food and supplies for distribution through St. Hubert's community pet food and supplies pantry. "There are families in need that will be able to feed their pets meals for a week because of their efforts," says Parker. "Knowing that they are helping us provide a service that will keep pets in the homes where they are loved helps them feel connected with their community."

Students are often surprised to find that their enthusiasm and common goal of helping animals and people in need allows them to put aside their differences and function as an effective team and actually enjoy the group activities. "A number of students have said to me that they have been on the other end of community programs," says Goldberg. "They have been the receivers, and so it's a great feeling for them to be able to give in this way."





Kayla



Taleah



On the final day of the program, St. Hubert's staff and Daytop counselors and residents gather to applaud the participants' accomplishments during a graduation ceremony. Each team performs a training demonstration with "their" dog and talks about their canine partner, sharing information about his/her special individual personality traits, their progress in teaching and their thoughts on why the dog will be a good adoption choice for someone. Without prompting, many students also speak about how they have benefitted from the experience. Each student receives a certificate of graduation from the program, which closes with a celebratory meal with program staff.

"Coming to St. Hubert's and working with the dogs, and achieving things that they don't think they will be able to accomplish, boosts the students' self-esteem," says Fox. "Students that participate in the program come back to Daytop with principles that they can apply to their recovery, and their lives have been improved because of it."

St. Hubert's hopes to expand the Teen Animal Welfare Program, which will require additional financial support. "We believe in the program very much," says Parker. "We hope to be able to increase the number of participants and create an even bigger impact to inspire at-risk teens to stay strong in their recovery and continue their efforts to be a voice for animals."

"I'm glad I had the opportunity to participate in the program," says Taleah. "I grew a strong bond with my canine partner. I felt like I was giving back to him, just like how Daytop has given back to me."

For additional information, visit www.sthuberts.org.



Survey says . . .

Every two years, the American Pet Products Association (APPA) publishes a survey related to consumer habits and trends in pet ownership.

Here are a few of the statistics that Julie Morris, the ASPCA's Senior Vice President, Community Outreach gleaned from their report.

Based on the percentage of pet-owning households and the number of U.S. households, APPA estimates there are some 79.7 million households that own pets. Extrapolating by using the average number of dogs and cats in a household, there are 77.8 million owned dogs and 85.8 million owned cats.

- 31% of cat owners and 23% of dog owners adopted from an animal shelter
- 34% of dogs are purchased from breeders, while just 3% of cats come from breeders
- Few dogs (4%) and even fewer cats (2%) are obtained from pet stores
- Nearly half of all dogs (regardless of size) sleep in their owner's bed and even more cats (63%)

About one-third of owners mentioned shedding, finding care when they are away from home and the cost of food/care/medicine as a drawback to owning a dog. However, 20% said there were NO drawbacks to owning a dog, and the majority of dog owners agreed having fun was a major benefit to owning a dog.





SUMMER PLEASURES *The Latham Foundation: Teaching respect for all since 1918*



The Latham Foundation

PROMOTING RESPECT FOR ALL LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION

ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA 94501 USA

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage

PAID

Alameda, CA
Permit No. 127

