

Helping Those Who Can't Help Themselves



By Shelly Horan

As PR Director for the children's burn hospital in Galveston in a previous life, I saw a lot and wrote some very moving stories. But this has to be the hardest article I've written as editor of Thunder Roads Texas. As I write this with a box of tissues nearby, at the end of the day - it's a story about a group of bikers doing something about an issue often overlooked - a story of hard work and hope.

I've long said that bikers have the biggest hearts... but watch them with an animal, especially one that's been rescued, and there's a whole new level of "big" that comes across. Unfortunately, thousands of animals are reported abused and/or neglected in the United States each year. It's just plain scary to think that there are thousands that we know nothing about. But, we can help those that get dumped at the shelter or found on the roadside.

On the heels of the Michael Vick animal cruelty case in 2007, a group of bikers in Connecticut started talking in a local online forum dedicated to bikers and pit bulls. The primary topic: sheer outrage and discussion of how to raise awareness and help these animals. It wasn't long before they figured out that one person helping one animal was good - but that if they could get many people involved, more animals could be helped through a group effort. So, on September 22, 2007, the group met and formally organized Bikers Against Animal Cruelty (BAAC).

BAAC isn't a rescue group, but they work with many different rescue organizations. Their primary efforts are by supporting individual cases of abuse, offering financial assistance for veterinary care and assisting in finding foster and permanent homes for these animals. Additionally, they work to increase awareness of these cases and educate the public to help prevent the situation in the first place.



AIMEE - BEFORE

Cruelty to animals generally falls into two categories: direct violence and neglect. The types of direct violence that animals suffer every day at the hands of people include being beaten, mutilated, shot, set on fire, or otherwise tortured. The intentional suffering inflicted on these animals can result in severe injury or death. Other animals suffer and die from neglect when they are denied proper food, water or shelter, causing them to slowly starve to death or die from exposure to freezing cold or sweltering hot temperatures. Hoarding (housing too many) animals can also cause suffering on a large scale. Most of those abused in the US are man's best friend.

There are laws against animal cruelty. In Texas, it only takes one strike and you could be in jail if found guilty of it. But, not enough culprits are even found in the first place. What we can do, is help the animals that are identified; help provide financial assistance to veterinary clinics taking care of them and help to find them good homes.

Meet Aimee, a gold and white six-year old Staffordshire Terrier. Aimee was a "throwaway mom," meaning she had babies and found herself without her puppies or a home. She was dropped at a shelter as an emaciated stray and

was rated "no concern" (serious health issues, no money, low priority). BAAC stepped in to sponsor Aimee's full vet care. The individuals involved describe her as very sweet with big expressive eyes. Initially coming in at only 39 pounds (average should be 65 pounds), BAAC believes she'll be beautiful when she's fully recovered. As you can see from the second picture - she's well on her way. Aimee is currently under the care and being fostered by BAAC. They are looking for a permanent home for her.



AIMEE - AFTER

As the new chapter of BAAC in Texas gets up and running, please consider getting involved. The Biker Community is one of big hearts who give, and give, and give - even when it hurts. With your help, a difference can be made and animals saved.

Contact Chantelle Sandberg at sandberg1972@hotmail.com to help in Texas or visit BikerAgainstAnimalCruelty.org to donate. BAAC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.



MERCY (PHOENIX)

Moving from a story of neglect and abandonment to one of downright evilness... not all cases end in survival. Meet Mercy (Phoenix) who was set on fire by a group of teenagers who found it entertaining to watch her writhe in pain while engulfed in flames. Intentional cruelty such as this is a sign for things to come for the individuals who committed this crime. While veterinarians tried to save her, sponsored by BAAC, the pain was too much for her body to endure.

