

By Bob Slone

Who would have imagined that from one individual's concern about all those dogs that are chained outdoors 24/7/365, Project BARK would turn into one of the three major non-profit organizations in Greensboro providing free spay/neuter services to those families with financial needs. From small acorns mighty oaks grow.

In November of 2010 Libby Scandale, an art teacher at Ragsdale High School in Jamestown, was walking her rescued terrier, Beasley, on a bitterly cold night. She wondered about dogs chained outside without benefit of a warm place to escape the cold. From that simple thought, grew Project BARK (Bringing Animals Relief and Kindness). Project BARK placed their first free dog house on December 4, 2010 in a snowstorm to a family in High Point. Since that time they have placed over 340 shelters to animals in need in both Greensboro and High Point.

With each shelter they placed and in talking to their owners, they learned because of the economic situation, there was no way they could afford to have their dogs 'fixed'. Knowing about the huge population of unwanted animals and the grim outlook, another idea was born.

With no fencing, dogs would get out, dogs would get in and before you knew it, there was another litter of puppies. Where were most of these puppies going? To the local

animal shelter which was already over populated and in due time they were euthanized. It is reported that of all dogs and cats taken in at Triad Area Animal Shelters 58% were euthanized in 2010. Volunteers wanted to do something about it, even though their number one priority at that time was the placement of shelters. They decided to raise money to **fully pay** for spaying/neutering these animals.

Yard sales, restaurant fund raisers, special events, as well as on-line advertising helped, but much more is needed. This group also pays for rabies vaccinations, flea treatment and post operative medication if prescribed. This does not come cheap. The services are performed by a low cost clinic, but still on average it will total between \$80.00 and \$100.00 without complications. Yes, they will pay for complications as well, if one arises. It's hard to say no at that time.

Contributions are coming, and through January of 2012 they have funded 18 animals. In February, 17 appointments have been made. When you consider that on average a spay/neuter will eliminate an average of five unwanted births, that's 175 animals that will not have to be euthanized. It also means a financial savings to the citizens of Guilford County whose tax dollars support the Animal Shelter.

Project BARK needs everyone's support in eliminating unwanted births with hopes of eventually eliminating euthanization at all animal shelters. This **has** been accomplished in other states. If you want to help, go to their website to make a contribution to their spay/neuter fund, or if you're interested in running a fund raiser, contact information is also available on-line - www.projectbark.org. (look for a link on THT's website)



Just so there is zero confusion on what companionship looks like. This could be one of the best pictures I have ever seen to come out of a bad situation.

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