

Upcoming SPCA Organized Events

1) World Animal Day

Location: East Coast Park

Date: 25 September 2011

Time: 10.30am-6.00pm

2) Pet Care Talks in Libraries 2011

Location: Bedok Public Library

Date: 15 October 2011

Time: 1.00pm-2.00pm

*Registration Required

For more of SPCA's new & past event listings, check out

<http://www.sPCA.org.sg/index.html>

Education always comes first at SPCA

Since starting out in 1800s, SPCA has been a constant voice for animal cruelty and getting the public to be more understanding of animals in caring more responsibly for their welfare.

BY: DARREN CHAN KENG LEONG



The current SPCA logo and their primary objectives that they want to drive to the public.

"Be Kind to Animals" and "Friends for Life" are the two objectives that SPCA constantly strives for the protection of animal welfare. Photo Courtesy of SPCA

The Singapore Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is a non-profit organization and relies on donations from their supporters who continue to support their efforts through adoption drives or volunteerism. The two main objectives of SPCA are promoting kindness to animals and to prevent cruelty to animals.

Relying on donations up to 2 million annually to continue their services and outreach programmes, SPCA uses education as a tool to help them sustain their efforts in these areas. Mrs Ng, an education officer from SPCA is an example of these on-going efforts.

The famous SPCA donation box that has a long tradition as being an icon of the organization



“The SPCA Education Team has two staff, my senior and I. Together; we conduct education talks and visits almost daily in our five-day work week. There are almost 10 engagements in one week” says Mrs Ng when asked about the roles of an SPCA Education Officer.

Mrs Ng also responds to student’s queries in helping with their projects, interviews and community involvement programmes that are based on animal-related topics or centred at SPCA. She and her staff are also responsible of publicity and media appearances for the organization. Mrs Ng also manages the SPCA website by providing event updates and news regarding SPCA.

By taking charge of the education aspect of SPCA, the education team actively share with students about stray animals to correct the misconception that they are scary, dirty creatures who should not belong in this society. Mrs Ng says: “Our rescue efforts also see us rescuing stray animals in need of help day in, day out. We handle more than 3,000 calls of rescues annually”.



Mrs Ng, an SPCA education officer giving a talk and interacting with a group of primary school children on the importance of caring for their pets and getting them to participate in quizzes. Photo Courtesy of Chong Poh Choo (Mrs Ng), SPCA



Apart from handling calls of animal rescues stemming from stray animals that are in distress from signs of abuse, neglect or sickness, SPCA has always rolled out some

prevention guidelines to control the population of stray animals in Singapore. These prevention guidelines range from a special programme which is called “Sterilisation Voucher Programme”.

According to the SPCA, sterilisation is the most humane and effective way to control the number of strays. This programme allows these stray animals to be sterilised at participating veterinary clinics. More than 5,500 dollars per month is set aside for this programme.

This shows the importance in the sterilisation process of both strays and pets as it will help bring down the population of strays and unwanted animals that SPCA is already trying to deal with.

Mrs Ng also advises pet owners by saying: “At SPCA, we sterilise dogs, cats and rabbits”. Adding on she says: “We recommend pets to be kept singly or with the same sex if owners are unprepared to take care of their young”.



Cats waiting to be adopted at SPCA’s cat sanctuary which provides clean living areas for these cats to stay until they are being adopted by suitable owners.

Mrs Ng says: “Another initiative that SPCA has launched would be being a SPCA caregiver to these strays and look after the welfare of these strays at designated areas”. This initiative is part of SPCA’s on-going efforts of caring for these strays and standing up for them, should people complain about them.

SPCA caregivers would work with the town councils and residents for a peaceful settlement of problems caused by stray and listen to their feedback that would lead hopefully to positive resolutions between both residents and the strays.



Dogs waiting to be adopted by potential adopters. They are house at SPCA premises with food and care so that they are well-taken care of.

Sadly, there are increases in the number of strays in Singapore as more owners are giving up their pets. According to Mrs Ng, she says: “Normally people give up or abandoned their pets when the going gets tough”.

Some of the reasons that pet owners give for their decision on giving up their pets include having insufficient time to care for them, moving overseas, and allergies, behavioural problems that they experience with their pets or even health issues with their pets.

However, before the owners give up their beloved pets to SPCA, Mrs Ng says: “At the point of surrendering, we often counsel them and try to get them to change their minds”.

Adding on she says: “We also try to provide alternatives so that there’s another avenue to address the problem (a vet for health problem, a dog trainer for behavioural issue, etc) but more often than not, people’s minds are set and they eventually still make the decision to surrender the animal to us”. Therefore the decision of the pet owners at this stage is very heartbreaking and it is sad for them to give up their pets without contemplation.

The process for animals up for adoption is a hard and difficult choice as at SPCA, the staff would evaluate the physical condition of the animals and decide the best outcome for them.

Mrs Ng says: “Animals selected for adoption will be put through a quarantine period of 10 to 14 days, depending whether there’s space in the adoption area to place them. Otherwise they continue to wait in the quarantine area. While there, they will be sterilised, vaccinated, micro-chipped and de-wormed”.

The reality is that not all animals can be adopted as they are unhealthy or have sustained bad injuries; these animals are put to sleep humanely by lethal injection. After the quarantine period is over, the animals are kept indefinitely until a suitable home is found for the animal.

There is good news for those who are willing to provide a safe home and loving environment for these animals. The adoption criteria states on the SPCA website indicate that the adoption fees for adopting any animals are free. But there is one condition which is paying for compulsory medical expenses during the animal's stay at SPCA.

Mrs Ng advises pet owners that they should be able to take responsibility of the adopted animals' well-being and care for them in a loving environment. She says: "Anyone who wants pet, potential pet owners must carefully evaluate their reason/s for wanting a pet".

Adding on she says: "Also, the owner must be willing to commit to the entire lifespan of the animal (16 years for a dog, 19 years for a cat, 5-10 years for a rabbit, etc). The owner must read up on how to properly care for an animal before adopting one".

Even though if you cannot adopt a pet for some reason or another, sharing your interest and love in animals does not stop here. Rather, be an active SPCA volunteer to help stray animals in the streets of Singapore.



A SPCA youth volunteer explaining to a member of the public some interesting education material that SPCA is making use of to create awareness of being caring for pets.

Beside her is an exhibition booth of proper pet ownerships and facts of these animals. Photo Courtesy of Chong Poh Choo (Mrs Ng), SPCA



Mrs Ng, SPCA Education Officer happily posing with a group of teenagers who went to an excursion at SPCA. Photo Courtesy of Chong Poh Choo (Mrs Ng), SPCA

As of 2011, SPCA has close to 200 active volunteers. The criterion to be a volunteer is to be of age 17 years old and above to register. The roles of an SPCA are diverse and ranges from administrative, taking charge of the animal shelter, education and committed roles.



SPCA's Adoption Centre

Each role adds up towards SPCA efforts of caring for the animals' well-being and giving them a better life. Also, SPCA has staff strength of 36 dedicated members in different departments. Past events that SPCA has been at to raise awareness as an organization include the "Puppy Mill Event"

where SPCA educates those who run dog farms on how to house their animals properly and to raise the living standards of the farms. More information can be found at <http://sgpuppies.com/>

Mrs Ng says: "The next event that we would be participating in would be "The World Animal Day "event at East Coast Park. It is to spread the message of educating the public and pet owners on the importance of taking responsibility of their pets and not to get a pet on impulse if they are not ready to 100% care and love them.

Annex

RESOURCES:

- 1) <http://www.sPCA.org.sg/index.html> . Official SPCA Website. Retrieved on 24 September 2011.
- 2) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singapore_Society_for_the_Prevention_of_Cruelty_to_Animals . Singapore Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Retrieved on 24 September 2011.
- 3) <http://sgpuppies.com/>. Stop the Cruelty in Puppy Mills (Adopt, don't buy).Retrieved on 24 September 2011.



- 4) SPCA Interview Questions-answered. . Interview Questions with SPCA Education Officer, Mrs Ng (Chong Poh Choo). Primary Information of article. Retrieved on 24 September 2011.