



DALHART ANIMAL WELLNESS GROUP AND SANCTUARY, INC. (DAWGS) P.O. BOX 911, DALHART, TX 79022 (888)TXDAWGS  
WEBSITE: [www.dawgsntexas.com](http://www.dawgsntexas.com) EMAIL: [dawgsntexas@yahoo.com](mailto:dawgsntexas@yahoo.com) DAWGS is a 501c3 Nonprofit Organization

Dear DAWGS Family,

All of us here at DAWGS hope you are enjoying warm weather and Spring flowers. Here in the Texas Panhandle we were beginning to think Spring and Summer would never arrive!! It was one of the harshest winters we have ever had. Thankfully, everyone is doing well and we are hoping the nice weather brings lots of adopters our way, providing "forever homes" for all our loving cats and dogs.

In March, we celebrated our seven-year anniversary and what an adventure it has been! Thank you for being part of our journey and helping us save so many precious lives. Because of your support, we have been able to continue our efforts to provide second chances to thousands of homeless dogs and cats, seven ferrets, a baby deer, a baby goat, two raccoons, two dwarf rabbits, three doves and an iguana. To celebrate their lives and this seven year journey, we wanted to share our timeline of events, **only made possible because of you--your kindness and your generosity.**



**ALIX AND CHICO**

approval from our City to be a "No Kill City" whereby all the animals would come to us rather than be euthanized. Mutts, purebreds, old and young, blind and deaf, three legged and scarred, each one found a home with us until they could be adopted to their own "forever home."

### **MARCH 2003 - OUR JOURNEY BEGINS (Rescued 817 animals)**

After a temporary start in the backyard of a very kind local judge, we moved into our first "shelter," a former slaughterhouse and ranch from the 1930s (the kids called it "the haunted house"). The debris and rubble from years and years of neglect was quickly cleaned by our crew of children volunteers and within a few days we were building pens; first 12 and then 12 more and then 12 more...and so on as we tried to keep up with the number of animals coming into our shelter. We organized our first fundraiser, a "Lady and the Tramp" themed spaghetti meal and auction. During the dinner the students shared the "Starfish Story" (which they had read in class and saw the relationship to their cause). They each held a picture of a special dog they had saved and thanked everyone for helping them make a difference.

*The Starfish Story--One morning a man was walking down the beach, covered in dying starfish. The tide the night before had been especially strong and thousands of starfish had been washed up on shore, too far up for them to make it back into the water by themselves. The man shook his head as he trudged along thinking what a shame that all of the starfish would die on the beach. He came upon a boy who was frantically throwing starfish back into the ocean as fast as he could. He was out of breath and it was obvious that he had been at this task for a while. "Son," the man said, "you might as well quit. There are thousands of them. They are washed up all over the beach as far as you can see. There is no way you can make any difference." The boy did not pause in what he was going. He kept bending and throwing, but as he did, he spoke to the man. "Sir, I can make a difference to this one, and this one and this one." And the man thought and he knew the boy was right. He began to help return the animals to their home, smiling at how life's biggest lessons sometimes come from the youngest people (Author Unknown)* The students loved this story and wanted to include the starfish in our logo; so our logo is a starfish, with a dog, a cat and a heart. It represents their desire to make a difference, one animal at a time, one day at a time. ***Their ability to make those differences is only made possible due to your amazing support! Thank you!***

### **MARCH 2003 - OUR JOURNEY BEGINS**

**(Rescued 817 animals)**

The story of the sanctuary began in Dalhart, TX. In a town of 7,500 people, over 600 dogs were being killed each year (six times the national average). I was teaching fourth-grade reading and encouraged my students to read the local newspaper. One fateful day there was an article and photos of some dogs at our local animal control shelter. Four little girls asked me, "What happens to the dogs if they don't find a home?" I was honest with them and told them they would be put to sleep if they weren't adopted. Then they asked, "**Why do the dogs have to die?**" I told them that, unfortunately, it was a sad way of solving the problem of too many unwanted and homeless pets. Then they asked the question that changed our lives, their lives, and many other children's lives--and the lives of thousands and thousands of animals: "**Is there something we can do?**" So, with the help of my husband and my family, DAWGS was born. With initial approval from our school, and then from our city council, we began to receive the dogs that were saved from being euthanized. Seven puppies and five adults arrived during our lunch hour the next day and were quickly fostered into homes. Then we began looking for a permanent place to house them. A month later, we received





**ANGELA (aka LUCKY) FROM DR. DOLITTLE 3**

**MARCH 2005 - THEY ALL ARE STARS IN OUR EYES (Rescued 886 animals)**

Angela is a darling terrier who was found deserted in a dumpster with her brother and sister. We had Angela with us for almost a year when a dog trainer contacted us looking for a rescue dog to star in Dr. Dolittle 3. Believing as we do that all our dogs (and cats) are so special, we knew she would be an instant star. She was able to travel to Canada for the filming, riding in the passenger seat of the airplane and she loved all the attention. During our two-hour lay-over in Dallas, people--especially children--came up to meet her and shake her hand--which Angela LOVES to do!

During this time, we also were featured in the Best Friends magazine (and website), which highlighted our student volunteers as the "No Kill Kids of Texas." It shared our story and brought us some wonderful supporters who have stood by us throughout our struggles and triumphs.

**MARCH 2006 - OUR NOTICE TO MOVE**

**(Rescued 618 animals)**

We came to realize that our City had really been against the shelter from the very start, even though we were saving literally thousands of lives and working with children, teaching them compassion and empathy for animals and for others. Claiming that the land they had given us to use was now needed for another purpose, the City suddenly gave us notice that we had to vacate the premises and contracts were being issued by the city to euthanize all 500 of our precious dogs and puppies. A concerned supporter contacted PEOPLE magazine who came out to do a story as "Heroes Among Us," but, after talking to the City, it turned into a story about our conflict. The national attention gave us time to find a piece of land to move to, put in a road, install electricity, water and fencing. **All this was only made possible with the support of concerned and caring donors, like yourself. THANK YOU!**



**CAN THESE DOGS BE SAVED? (PEOPLE MAGAZINE)**



**MARCH 2007 - THE BIG MOVE**

**(Rescued 601 animals)**

We had run out of time and had to move. The City gave us an ultimatum: we had to be out by the first of the month, regardless of the weather, or they would shut our water off and charge us \$100 per day rental. Moving was a huge undertaking and we didn't think we would be able to complete it in time. The weather was horrendous for months and it seemed nothing would go as planned. It came down to the last weekend and the weather started out with freezing rain that went to snow and then a white out...and, through it all, we kept moving dogs to the new location. When it got dark, we moved dogs by the headlights of the cars and, finally at 3:00 am, we called it a day. Everyone left except four of the older kids who wouldn't give up and built pens until the sun came up...and then started to move more dogs to their new home. It was a VERY long weekend, but at the end of it, we had everyone safely settled. It was a tremendous endeavor that truly tested our determination to provide for the animals in our care. **Thank you for giving us the courage to keep going!**

Throughout our moving process, we continued to find great homes for many of our dogs and cats. Buddy was one of the original dogs in 2003 and was adopted after a few months. In 2005, he was returned to us by a sorrowful adopter who could no longer keep him. Then Jerry and Bertie came to visit and fell in love with him. Buddy fell in love with them too and he's now enjoying his wonderful life in Spring, TX. We also participated in a puppy mill rescue; a Chihuahua breeder surrendered her 114 little ones and we were able to help with the transport and care of them until they could find their forever homes. **Thank you for helping make second chances possible!**



**BUDDY**



**MARCH 2008 - BUILDING THE SHELTER**

**(Rescued 621 animals)**

This is our puppy barn that initially housed 10 little puppies that came in with Parvo. Our electricity was in the process of being hooked up and, in the meantime, we had to use the lights of cars, shining through the windows, to treat the sick puppies with an IV at night. All of the puppies thankfully survived and, once they were ready for adoption, they quickly went to their new homes.

We have always rescued cats, but had sent them to another shelter. When they couldn't keep up with the added input, we had to find another solution.

Thankfully, a volunteer in town had a huge garage with heating and air. The cats and kittens are kept in large kennels with toys and lots of climbing space until they are adopted into new homes. **Your gift of love allows us the opportunity to save these precious animals!**



### **MARCH 2009 - TOUGH TIMES & BAD WEATHER (Rescued 461 animals)**

This was a very difficult year for us. Our struggles--due to the poor economy--were compounded by the resulting increase in the number of animals needing homes. Gratefully we were able to continue to care for everyone, thanks to your kind response to our newsletters. We are particularly grateful to Merrick Pet Care for always being there for us and providing us with great nutritional food for our animals. One of the student volunteers, Hannah, shared her philosophy on life at the shelter. She said, "It's just like the little engine that could. It thinks it can, thinks it can, thinks it can, and finally we can!" And, finally in 2009 some of our favorite dogs--who'd been with us for several years--were adopted. It was a bittersweet emotion for many of the young volunteers...they shed tears of joy, so happy that, at last, their friends had gone to loving homes, but still so sad to see them go. We have since heard from so many of our special adopters and are thrilled to report that everyone is so happy and loved in their forever homes. **Thank you for helping us to help these deserving animals!**



**HANNAH AND SISSY**



**WRIGLEY**

### **MARCH 2010 - LOOKING FORWARD TO SPRING AND THE NEW YEAR**

**Total Rescued in 7 years: 5,121 Total Adopted/Rehomed in 7 years: 4,299**

This was one of the worse winters in the Texas Panhandle. We had snow storms, freezing rain, freezing fog, windstorms, rainstorms...just about anything one can imagine in the way of terrible weather. Through it all, we continued to care for the animals and provide them with food, water and shelter, together with lots of love and attention. In the midst of the horrible weather, we got a phone call about a stray dog that had been hit by a car. The caller had taken the dog to the vet and, when she got home, she could hear the cry of puppies coming from under the deserted house next door. She called us and, after many hours, we were finally able to find and rescue all five puppies--all healthy but hungry--and happy to be reunited with their mother. This is Wrigley, the runt of the litter. He finally went for adoption (after completing his shots and being neutered) and EVERYONE fell in love with him and his sweet personality. Today he is in a wonderful home that has two little girls who adore him. Although we are seeing a lot of homeless animals, our actual intake numbers are rapidly decreasing due to our community Spay/Neuter program ( from a YAHOO! Grant ).

From the beginning, the shelter has faced some of the worst obstacles man and Mother Nature could devise. Nevertheless, we have always worked hard to provide for the animals in our care. **We couldn't do it without your help!! Your Support is what keeps us going!**

Remarkably, the dedication and determination of the DAWGS kids has been acknowledged by the outside world. In Defense of Animals gave their first Junior Humanitarian award to the children of DAWGS for making a difference in the lives of animals. IDA had searched for a year to find a youth group that was helping animals and finally found DAWGS. The Wisconsin Educational Communications Board came to visit and included the shelter in their wonderful series on children, democracy and responsibility. Motivational Productions similarly featured the children and their hard work in a film project about commitment and dedication. The WIFTS (Women's International Film and Theatre Showcase) chose DAWGS as one of their highlighted charities due to the children's love and commitment to animals. Two phenomenal animal groups, NAVS and AVAR, have also shared the children's journey. "Kids Making a Difference," a great ASPCA series book by Nancy Furstinger, told the story of DAWGS and the animals at the sanctuary. And, "Fifteen Legs," an amazing documentary (and book) about transporting animals to forever homes, shared the DAWGS saga and how everyone can make a difference, regardless of age or size.



**STUDENTS FROM COLORADO COLLEGE ON SPRING BREAK**

Presently we are reaching out to other youth groups to include them in our work of saving animals. Colorado College recently sent eight freshmen and two seniors to our shelter to help us during spring break. Instead of having "fun in the sun" at a resort, they chose to come to Dalhart, TX, and clean pens, walk dogs, feed, water, and mostly bestow love on the grateful dogs at the shelter. They stayed for 10 days and have been back to volunteer on their own time. One of the students took home Chocolate, a little pit mix she fell in love with (he's in the front row of the photo, brown and white with a blue bandana).

In June we are going to begin working with Cal Farley's Boys and Girls Ranch, a great organization that helps kids. We are looking forward to a rewarding experience for the children and for the animals. **BECAUSE OF YOU, DAWGS is entering its eighth year and literally thousands of animals have been saved and found their forever homes. Thank you so much for your caring, compassion, kindness, support and generosity. Our journey is only possible because of you.....YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!! We hope you have a wonderful summer!**

Love, Mark and Diane and everyone from DAWGS