



## ISAR's International Homeless Animals' Day® 2009

*ISAR's International Homeless Animals' Day 2009 was commemorated for the 18th consecutive year on August 15th with Candlelight Vigil observances in 24 states and 6 foreign countries.*

For the eighteenth consecutive year, ISAR has facilitated animal rights/welfare organizations in 24 states and 6 foreign countries in making their International Homeless Animals' Day events a success.

In honor of ISAR's International Homeless Animals' Day 2009, ISAR was pleased to once again hold our Online Candlelight Vigil for the eighth consecutive year. Visitors to our website, [www.isaronline.org](http://www.isaronline.org), were invited to light a virtual candle in memory of those directly affected by the global tragedy - pet overpopulation.

Activities for this year's ISAR International Homeless Animals' Day included candlelight vigils, blessings of the animals, concerts, adopt-a-thons, microchip clinics, dog walks, open houses, award ceremonies, and raffles. Other activities included information stalls, "meet and greets" as well as speeches given by local council members, animal advocacy representatives, shelter personnel, veterinarians, and humane officers.

### 2009 Vigil Observances

ISAR encourages all vigil coordinators to contact us with feedback, photos, and video of their events. Through your comments and suggestions, our vigils will continue to grow. Due to space constraints, we're not able to acknowledge the many observances held on August 15, 2009. Representative examples follow.



Four hundred people gathered for *Bark In The Park* held by Holly Help Spay-Neuter Fund in Bristol, Virginia in honor of ISAR's International Homeless Animals' Day 2009. To help increase attendance, Holly Help Spay-Neuter Fund incorporated many activities in addition to their candlelight vigil that included speeches, presentations, and distribution of flyers, contests, awards, a celebrity and pet walk with individuals from local governments from Virginia

and Tennessee, and local media. One of the more effective components bringing to light the problem of pet overpopulation was the big rig depicting graphics of dogs and cats in shelter cages with brightly colored statements declaring "Crime - being born into a world without enough homes - punishable by death" and "To spay or not to spay...you decide!" According to Holly Help Spay-Neuter Fund Founder/Operator, Sue Williams, "judging by the reaction of those attending the event after hearing the local euthanasia statistics read out loud on stage the impact was very effective and was substantial by increased donations for spay/neuter." With regard to increasing attendance at their vigil, Ms. Williams advises others to, "Invite local celebrities and individuals from local government along with media anchors to attend and participate in events."

*Sleeping with Dogs...One of Life's Benefits* was the theme surrounding eleven rescue/adoption/advocacy groups, three vendors and more than seventy-five participants at The Queenie Foundation Inc.'s fourteenth annual International Homeless Animals' Day observance held in Connecticut on August 15th. M. Jodi Rell, Governor of Connecticut, signed ISAR's Proclamation declaring August 15, 2009 as International Homeless Animals' Day. The city council of Glastonbury, CT, wrote a proclamation based on ISAR's and presented it to The Queenie Foundation, Inc. Events at this observance included an interfaith blessing of the animals, vegetarian cuisine, music and raffles, informational booths and a candlelight remembrance. Special guest speakers, Diana Urban, CT 47th District State Representative, and Sue Mercer from Bikers Against Animal Cruelty spoke on the importance of companion animal responsibility and a cruelty free society. No stranger to organizing an ISAR International Homeless Animals' Day observance, Enid Breakstone, Founder and Executive Director of The Queenie Foundation, Inc., cannot stress enough the importance of working together for holding a successful event. Ms. Breakstone encourages everyone hosting an International Homeless Animals' Day observance to, "invite all the rescues and advocacy organizations that you can find in your area/county/region to table at your event. It's important for the public see that the most urgent issue facing companion animals is euthanasia, hence spay/neuter is paramount. The public needs to see that the reason there are so many organizations in operation is because there is a serious need to handle the volume of animals who find themselves homeless. If we depend solely on county and municipal shelters, millions more would die."

West Virginia was the setting for the Mountaineer Spay Neuter Assistance Program's (M-SNAP) first annual International Homeless Animals' Day Candlelight Vigil on August 15th. With candles radiating with hope for a better future for companion animals, approximately fifty people gathered to bring attention to the plight of homeless animals while listening to enlightening speeches, live music, and participating in a blessing for the animals. When asked for her general impression of their vigil's effectiveness in educating about the perils of pet overpopulation and the solution to spay/neuter, Nancy Young of M-SNAP stated, "We distributed our flyers to every bulletin board we could locate, published the invitation on our website and on Facebook. Volunteers also promoted by word of mouth. We sent a PSA to the local radio stations and a press release to the local newspaper. We presented a wonderful program and, although we didn't have a huge turnout, everyone thought that for the first effort, it was a success. M-SNAP will definitely repeat the candlelight vigil each year."

More than three thousand people gathered in Pretoria, **South Africa** to pay tribute to homeless animals during an International Homeless Animals' Day observance held by Wet Nose Animal Rescue Centre. During the event, all animals under Wet Nose's care spent the day romping and playing with the locals. Activities included live



entertainment, flea market stalls, delicious food, dog shows, award ceremonies, and the dedication of their brand new animal hospital facility. Wet Nose Animal Rescue Centre was also presented with keys to a new vehicle for their animal inspection division. With regards to this year's International Homeless Animals' Day event, Tracy Forté, Managing Director of Wet Nose Animal Rescue Centre, said, "It was the most amazing experience to have so many loyal animal lovers and supporters here at once. This year was the best International Homeless Animals Day ever held by Wet Nose, we never expected so many people! Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who helped make this day so awesome. To all those who spread the word, forwarded the advertisement on the net and brought along family and friends - THANK YOU! We will be ready and waiting for even bigger crowds next year!"

### **Our Deepest Gratitude to Vigil Coordinators**

Listed below are some of the countless organizations ISAR would like to thank for their efforts.

ISAR would like to specially thank KXCI 91.3 FM, Center for Animal Rescue and Adoption, HOPE Animal Shelter, Spay and Neuter Solutions, Inc., Citizens for a No-Kill Tucson, City of Glendale Building Safety Department Staff Members, Murphy Dog Park, Bryant Animal Control & Adoption Center, For the Sake of Dogs, Fort Bragg Feed and Pet, Animal Care Services, Fallbrook Animal Sanctuary, La Plata County Humane Society, inside/out, Rocky Mountain Alley Cat Alliance, All Breed Rescue & Training, The Animal Haven, Humane Society of Greater Miami, Cats Exclusive, Inc., Brevard County South & North Animal Care and Adoption Centers, Animal Guardians of Brevard, Cats Angels, Inc. SPCA, SPCA of Central Florida, Susan Buser, Orange County Animal Services, The Central Illinois Animal Welfare Coalition, Humane Society of Indianapolis, Humane Society of Elkhart County, Siouxland Humane Society, Lexington Humane Society, Chesapeake Cats and Dogs, Inc., K9Resque, Minnesota Valley Humane Society, College View Manor, Dellridge Health & Rehabilitation Center, New Rochelle Humane Society, Merlin's Song, Edgcomb-Nash Humane Society, The Greater Triad Shag Club, Cleveland Animal Protective League, The Mutt Hutt, The Happy Dog, Great Lakes Brewing Company, Gress Mountain Ranch, BSA Troop 72, Helen O. Krause Animal Foundation, Hillside SPCA, The Greystone Restaurant, Bradford County Humane Society, No Kill Lehigh Valley, Defenders of Animals, Crescent Park Carousel Commission, Believe in Bristol, Green Mountain Animal Defenders, Greyhound Rescue Foundation, Animal Defense League, The Kanawha/Charleston Humane Association, Greenbrier Humane Society.

ISAR also truly appreciates the international participation of PACE, **Canada**, Estonian Society for the protection of Animals, Tallinn Environmental Board, **Estonia**, OIKOS KAI BIOS, **France**, SPANA, **Jordan**, SOS Chats, **Switzerland**.

## **Special Thanks**

ISAR is grateful for the support from U.S. Governors and Mayors who acknowledged the companion animal overpopulation crisis by signing ISAR's Proclamation declaring August 15, 2009, as International Homeless Animals' Day. ISAR would also like to take this opportunity to encourage every elected official who has not participated in this year's International Homeless Animals' Day observance to please consider doing so for next year's event. ISAR cannot stress enough the importance of having the support of all elected officials in combating pet overpopulation!

ISAR is extremely appreciative to all participating media for helping us to promote International Homeless Animals' Day this year. ISAR also sincerely appreciates every individual who utilized their local media and online resources (blogs, online communities, etc...) to educate others on the importance of responsible pet care and the simple solution to the pet overpopulation crisis: spay/neuter. Media coverage included newspaper articles, radio and television interviews, and numerous online resources directing the public to International Homeless Animals' Day observances in their area.

## **Organize a Vigil for 2010**

As any past vigil coordinator can attest, beginning the planning process early proves indispensable in generating a bigger impact for a successful International Homeless Animals' Day observance.

ISAR will be glad to welcome back all previous vigil coordinators as well as a host of new ones to participate in International Homeless Animals' Day 2010. Together we will once again orchestrate a heightened awareness of the plague of pet overpopulation and on a global scale promote the importance of spay/neuter.

Individuals or organizations wishing to take part in ISAR's International Homeless Animals' Day 2010 observance on August 21st can receive a free vigil planning packet by submitting a request to ISAR by mail, phone, fax, or email. Our vigil packets include guidelines for organizing a successful vigil event with tips on site selection, suggestions for speakers and vigil events, reaching target audiences, poems, songs, and sample press releases are but a few of the items included in our packet. Beginning in 2010, you can also receive, for a donation of \$5.00 to ISAR, our International Homeless Animals' Day posters to advertise your event, Proclamations to be signed by your governor and mayor declaring the day as International Homeless Animals' Day, coloring sheets and more. Your donation will also guarantee advertisement of your organization's event to thousands of people on ISAR's website [www.isaronline.org](http://www.isaronline.org), as well as promotion on ISAR's online communities including Facebook and Myspace. Vigil packets are only sent upon request.

Together we will continue to be a strong voice for the animals.

Working together we do make a difference.