



NEWS RELEASE

Media contacts:

Kerry McKeel, 757-761-9412 (cell) or kerrym@bestfriends.org

Barbara Williamson, 435-689-0200 (cell) or barbara@bestfriends.org

*NOTE TO NEWSDESKS: Images, videos downloadable below**

Covid-19 Impacts to Shelter Pets in Greater Houston Area *Best Friends Animal Society Urges Community Support to Save Lives*

HOUSTON (March 16, 2020) As Covid-19 spreads throughout the greater Houston area, local animal shelters in the greater Houston area are bracing themselves as they see increased intake, fewer adoptions, fewer foster homes and dwindling space.

“Pets are neither a risk, nor at risk, but we are starting to see our local shelters reach capacity numbers,” said Kerry McKeel, Houston Program Manager for Best Friends Animal Society. “The real threat at this point is our local animal shelters in the greater Houston area having to deal with an increase of dogs and cats in need of homes because fewer people are visiting shelters right now.”

Multiple health organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control, World Health Organization and the American Veterinary Medical Association have stated that pets and domestic animals are not at risk for contracting COVID-19.

People can reduce the impact on local shelters by reaching out to foster or donate to support the animals in their community. Local municipal shelters, including BARC, City of Baytown Animal Services & Adoption Center, Fort Bend Animal Services Center, Harris County Animal Shelter and Montgomery Animal Shelters are in need of people to foster pets on a temporary, emergency basis.

“There is nothing better than working from home with a furry co-worker or sharing your staycation with a companion sure to be a source of entertainment and companionship. If you have thought of adopting or fostering now is the time to do it!”, said McKeel.

“We really want to assure people with pets that their relationships with their dogs and cats should remain unchanged and it’s not only safe to keep them in the home, but also beneficial, as they can serve as a source of comfort during a crisis,” McKeel added. “The companionship of pets has been shown to reduce stress and lower anxiety, helping people to feel calmer and more secure when the news from the outside world is distressing.”

To adopt or temporary, emergency foster an animal in your community contact:

BARC (City of Houston):

Email: barcfoster@houstontx.gov

Phone: (713) 837-0311

Website: <http://www.houstontx.gov/barc>

Harris County Animal Shelter (Unincorporated Harris County):

Email: Foster@pfs.hctx.net

Phone: (281) 999-3191

Harris County Animal Shelter is offering curbside pick-up for those offering to foster.

Website: www.CountyPets.com

Montgomery Animal Shelter:

Email: Foster.coordinator@mctx.org

Phone: (936) 442-7738

Website: <https://www.mcaspets.org/>

Fort Bend County Animal Services:

Phone: (281) 342-1512

Fort Bend County Animal Services is offering curbside pick-up to residents, as well as Dog Dash/Uber service to deliver fully vetted pets to adopters and fosters within the County.

Website: <https://www.fbchhs.org/animal-services>

City of Baytown Animal Services & Adoption Center:

Email: animalcontrol@baytown.org

Phone: (281) 422-7600

Website: www.Baytown.org

Best Friends in Houston leads the Coalition to Save Houston's Pets with 23 partnering local groups. So, when fear and uncertainty spread through our communities—as is occurring with the spread of coronavirus, or COVID-19 — doubt can disrupt our normal way of life, even affecting the choices we make about our companion animals.

Tips for Pet Owners:

People with pets should be prepared with enough food, water and medications for their pets, in case of lockdown or self-quarantine:

- Have on hand at least a one-month supply of your pets' medications, litter, and food.
- Make sure your pets' vaccination records are current and you have copies.
- Consider the care of your pets as you put together your household readiness plan.
Example of pet preparedness kit can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/emergencies/pet-disaster-prep-kit.html>
- People can also help by offering support to their neighbors who might need help caring for their pets during illness.

DOWNLOAD B-Roll Video from Best Friends Animal Society:

<https://p.widencdn.net/r62ng9/People-and-Pets-Broll?download=true>

DOWNLOAD Still photos, from Best Friends Animal Society:

<https://p.widencdn.net/nu3qda/CaboodleCottage6363MW?download=true>

<https://p.widencdn.net/sze25g/CoralineHotelBed8867?download=true>

<https://p.widencdn.net/isv1ns/JoyCathySleepover9274?download=true>

<https://p.widencdn.net/tkwyzi/QuintinNorman9805SAx?download=true>

About Best Friends Animal Society in Houston

Best Friends in Houston works collaboratively with city shelters, local animal welfare organizations and passionate individuals to save the lives of pets in shelters in Houston and the surrounding areas. To guide this work and help Houston become a no-kill city for cats and dogs, Best Friends launched the Coalition to Save Houston's Pets in April of 2018 followed by a Community Cat Program, foster programs for dogs and cats, local adoption programs and an out of state transport program. For more information visit bestfriends.org/Houston.

Join the conversation on [Facebook.com/bestfriendsanimalsocietyHOU/](https://www.facebook.com/bestfriendsanimalsocietyHOU/) and Instagram ([@bfas_houston](https://www.instagram.com/bfas_houston))

About Best Friends Animal Society

Best Friends Animal Society is a leading national animal welfare organization dedicated to ending the killing of dogs and cats in America's shelters. In addition to running lifesaving programs in partnership with nearly 3,000 animal welfare groups across the country, Best Friends has lifesaving centers in New York City, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Salt Lake City, and operates the nation's largest no-kill sanctuary for companion animals. Founded in 1984, Best Friends is a pioneer in the no-kill movement and has helped reduce the number of animals killed in shelters nationwide from an estimated 17 million per year to around 733,000. That means there are still about 2,000 dogs and cats killed every day in shelters, just because they don't have safe places to call home. We are determined to bring the country to no-kill by the year 2025. Working collaboratively with shelters, rescue groups, other organizations and you, we will end the killing and Save Them All. To check out our community lifesaving dashboard and for more information, visit bestfriends.org.

Join the conversation on [Facebook.com/bestfriendsanimalsociety](https://www.facebook.com/bestfriendsanimalsociety), [Twitter \(@BestFriends\)](https://twitter.com/BestFriends) and [Instagram \(@BestFriendsAnimalSociety\)](https://www.instagram.com/BestFriendsAnimalSociety)

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