

BAARK's busy spaying dogs nationwide!



●Volunteers at the Nicholls Town, Andros Spay Neuter Clinic



●ANIMAL LOVERS: Kids learn about caring for pets during a visit to their school by a BAARK! official



●SLEEPING IT OFF: BAARK! volunteer with dogs recovering after their spay-operations at the landfill-dump site

★SO far this year, Baark! (Bahamas Alliance for Animal Rights and Kindness) has teamed up with Renew Bahamas for a one-day MASH (Mobile Animal Sterilization Hospital) clinic at the Landfill site, held numerous classroom education sessions, teamed up with Potcakes of Andros for a three-day MASH Clinic in Nicholls Town and held one-day "Operation Potcake" clinics in Nassau and Georgetown, Exuma.

Baark! is actively promoting their spay/neuter and education projects to create cleaner, safer and more responsible communities in The Bahamas.

Since forming in 2009, Baark! has worked to reduce the number of homeless animals on our streets through sterilization programs such as TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) and providing subsidies for low-income families with owned pets. Following the 2014 outbreak of the deadly sickness distemper, Baark! has also provided free vaccinations for dogs before their spay/neuter surgeries.

In January, Baark! was welcomed by Renew Bahamas to trap, neuter and return dogs that reside on the landfill-public dump.

Laura Kimble, president of Baark! expressed her excitement about the clinic: "I visited the area years ago, and was pleasantly surprised to see vast changes, improvements and organisation of the landfill. The team at Renew Bahamas are supportive of the feral dogs, and giving hope to the future of The Bahamas regarding our waste disposal."

WasteNot Limited kindly donated the use of their facility to be set up as a MASH Clinic for the day. And local vets volunteered their time to perform the surgeries. Some 15 dogs and one cat were trapped, neutered and returned.

Michael Cox, Renew Bahamas COO, said: "We want the dogs to be healthy as it is inevitable that dogs will find their way here. So the best solution is to work with a local animal welfare group like Baark! so the numbers do not continue to grow and we can maintain a healthy feral dog population."

Julia Jordan, a clinic volunteer, shared her experience: "The dogs are like a family. When we released the ones we had trapped back to the landfill, after their surgery, their family members ran up to them, happy to see them back. It was a rewarding experience."

Last month the Baark!

education team met over 150 kids in preschool and Grade 1 of Claridge Primary and the Della & Stanley Wilson Preschool. Both provided warm welcomes, the children behaved impeccably and were surprised to hear that visiting pets "Mambo" and "Harriet" are Potcakes!

Shelley Hardman, Baark's education coordinator, explains what each session entails: "After the students spend time learning how to be safe around dogs, why we spay or neuter our pets and how to be responsible pet owners, they enjoy meeting the dogs individually and practicing how to meet dogs safely." She added: "If you would like Baark! to visit your school please contact info@baarkbahamas.org or tel: 427-SPAY."

Also last month, volunteers and local vets travelled to Nicholls Town to team up with Potcakes Of Andros headed by Rick Goodlander. Some 110 spay and neuters were performed. Volunteer Stephanie Kesten said: "It is encouraging to see the change in the mindsets of people. When we started coming to Andros a few years ago to provide free spay and neuters, people were not interested."

"Now they are seeing how much healthier their dog or cat is. And we have so much support from the entire community."

And just last weekend, BAARK! hosted "Operation Potcake", holding two spay/neuter clinics for low-income families in Nassau and Georgetown, Exuma. Chairman of Baark, Laura Kimble stated: "The Nassau Operation Potcake was a CAT ONLY Clinic, POTCAT. And about 200 cats were spayed and neutered!"

The clinic in Exuma, coordinated by Lissa McCombe, spayed and neutered both dogs and cats.

Baark! does not receive any government funding but relies solely on donations from supporters and their own fundraising efforts. They will be hosting their second "Carnivale Night" at 1er Cru on April 30.

Attendees will enjoy delicious food, music, an array of prize-winning games including "Tombola" and the very popular "slowest bike race". The event is presented by Purina and sponsored by Think Simple, Odyssey Aviation, Graham Real Estate, Happy Pets Animal Hospital and JS Johnson.

Baark's goal each year is to provide 1,000 free or subsidized spay/neuters. For more information, call Baark! on tel: 427-SPAY (7729).



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