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## 8 Things You Can Do to Help Animals This Year

By Vanessa Budnick

Humane Educator, SPCA of Wake County

Posted: Today at 2:51 p.m.

I hate New Year's resolutions and I am good at procrastinating. This should be apparent since I'm writing about the topic at the end of March!

Truthfully, I choose not to make resolutions. Inevitably I don't keep them and then I just feel like I've failed. It's a vicious cycle. I read some good advice once that you should wait until the spring to make resolutions, especially those related to exercise.

But even without resolutions, there are still moments when I worry that I'm not doing enough. At those times I read a story that reflects upon a woman who over the span of 35 years plants one flower bulb at a time that decades later results in an extraordinary landscape of flowers. The parable's message is that moving forward one step at a time, loving the process, and relying on the cumulative impact of an effort can lead to extraordinary things. It also means that sometimes you move ahead with faith that your work will have an impact, even if you are not aware of it.

So, for the remainder of 2008, *here are eight things that you can do to help the animals in our community.*

Don't think of them as resolutions. Think of them as those flower bulbs. Some take less than five minutes; others take more time. If we all do just one, our garden will grow and over time, our impact will be great.

### 8 things to do in 2008 to help animals:

- Be their voice**  
Visit [www.spcawake.org/watchdogs](http://www.spcawake.org/watchdogs) and get involved in helping the animals of Wake County. The policy-makers in our community cannot speak for you and for the animals unless they know what you want them to say.
- Get involved**  
Volunteer your time to help the animals. The SPCA of Wake County and other rescue groups and shelters rely on volunteers and could not help the animals without volunteers.
- Help stop pet overpopulation**  
In 2008, the SPCA of Wake County will be opening a low-cost spay/neuter clinic. If your pet isn't already spayed or neutered, help save lives by bringing in your pet when the clinic opens. Or, get the word out in your neighborhoods, churches, social groups, grocery stores, and any place else where you spend time. With all of our hard work, there are still people that we can only reach with your help and the power of word of mouth.
- Learn the law**  
Take some time to learn the laws that impact animals in your community. A great place to start is reading the North Carolina Animal Welfare Act available at [www.ncagr.com/vet/welfare.htm](http://www.ncagr.com/vet/welfare.htm). Or sign-up for Professor William Reppy's discussion of laws relating to animals in North Carolina on April 29 at the SPCA Curtis Dail Pet Adoption Center (pre-registration is required).
- Prepare for a disaster**  
I remember sitting in the airport watching coverage on CNN of the animal rescue efforts following Katrina. I never want to see that in my community. Do you? Be prepared. Put



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together an evacuation plan and pack for your pets. Visit [www.ready.gov/america/getakit/pets.html](http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/pets.html) for a brochure about preparing your pet for disaster.

6. **Spend time with family and make a pet's life more fun**  
Get the entire family together, or enjoy some alone time and make toys and treats for your own pets or for the pets at your local shelter.
7. **Take care of your pet's health**  
Have you been procrastinating on a routine vet visit? Does your pet have a microchip? Make sure that your pet is up to date on vaccinations and prepared if they get lost. Every day we see more animals arrive in shelters without a rabies vaccination or a microchip, than those that do. A rabies vaccination is required by law. And, while a microchip isn't a legal requirement, it can save your pet's life.  
*(According to American Humane, only 15 percent of dogs and 2 percent of cats that enter shelters in the U.S. are reunited with owners. Why is the number so low? These animals are not wearing tags and do not have a microchip. A microchip is with a pet, whether or not they have a tag, and it can save their life. It can also save the lives of other animals that may face euthanization because of a lack of shelter space.)*
8. **Enrich their life**  
If you do like resolutions and one of those is the ever-so-popular lose weight and exercise more, take your dog for a walk. You might find that even a five minute walk will put a spring in you and your dog's steps. And, while you are at work or running errands, your pets might need more than long naps. Purchase a KONG, Buster® Cube, or other toys that will keep their minds busy while you are not at home.

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