

**PAWS for Action – Be Kind to Animals**  
**To run 5/15/2016**

Since 1915 the American Humane Association has set aside the first full week of May as “Be Kind to Animals Week.” The goal is to raise awareness of the role animals play in our lives, promote the humane treatment of all animals and encourage others to do the same.

The American Humane Association encourages anyone who would like to add a pet to their household to adopt from a shelter or rescue. It is estimated that each year, more than three million animals are euthanized in our nation’s shelters. This continues to be the leading cause of death in companion animals in the United States. The problem is particularly acute in the Deep South where there is no shortage of highly adoptable animals waiting for their “forever” homes.

Make a pledge to adopt your next pet from your local shelter or rescue group. Organizations such as the American Humane Association can provide tips to help you find the pet who is right for you and develop a bond that will last a lifetime.

It should go without saying that the American Humane Society wants us to take care of our pets. They are like children who never grow up. It is up to us to ensure they stay healthy and safe from harm.

Most vaccines need to be provided annually and this is a good opportunity to get an overall health checkup. At PAWS Humane an overwhelming number of our canine intakes have heartworm. Any amount of heartworm is going to cause some permanent damage and preventing this disease is much less expensive than treating it. Though it may seem expensive it is well worth it to provide your dog with monthly preventative medication.

Proper identification is the most important thing you can do to ensure your pet is returned to you quickly if he should get lost. If your pet is microchipped, animal control will be able to contact you right away even if your pet is not wearing a collar.

If you find veterinary care unaffordable, Columbus, Georgia has a couple of affordable care clinics. PAWS Humane offers affordable prices on basic wellness care such as vaccines, microchips, flea and heartworm testing and prevention.

Please report animal abuse. Animals cannot stand up for themselves when they are being abused physically or through neglect. It can be an indicator of other forms of abuse such as domestic violence and child neglect.

If you see or hear anything suspicious contact your local law enforcement agency immediately. You are more than likely the only voice this animal has. If you don’t use it he will continue to suffer and so will other family members.

Love the animals you have. Include them in your family activities. Make sure they always have secure shelter from the heat and cold and adequate food and clean water. An enriched life for your pet includes interaction with other people and/or animals, time for play and exercise.

And guess what? Having pets who are well cared for and happy is good for our mental and physical health too!

*Bobbi Yeo lives in Opelika, AL. She is the CEO of PAWS Humane in Columbus, GA, an animal shelter and veterinary clinic offering low-cost spay/neuter and other services to the public. Email her at [byeo@pawshumane.org](mailto:byeo@pawshumane.org) with your comments and story ideas.*