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For Immediate Release

FREE SPAY AND NEUTER PROJECT LAUNCHED IN HOUSTON

Houston, Texas, July 22, 2013 – A grassroots initiative to bring attention to Houston's animal overpopulation crisis has been launched by several local nonprofit animal welfare groups. Organizers are calling the project the Unity 1000 Challenge and are currently raising funds to spay, neuter and vaccinate 1,000 pets belonging to low income Houston's residents by the end of 2013. Their bigger goal is to raise awareness about animal overpopulation in Houston and educate pet owners about the importance of fixing their pets.

The Unity 1000 Challenge will focus on fixing animals whose owners live in Houston's East End, Fifth Ward, Sunnyside, Denver Harbor and along the "Corridor of Cruelty" (U.S. 59 North). Volunteers will set up tables at parks and high pedestrian traffic areas in those communities to sign up pets for the free spay and neuter. Organizers are using an online tool, FirstGiving, to raise money (www.firstgiving.com/unity1000). To date, they have raised approximately \$20,000 and will ultimately need to raise \$100,000 for the surgeries, which will be performed using a combination of local vets and the SNAP mobile clinic.

"Every day, conditions for homeless and unwanted animals get worse in our community," said Gloria Zenteno, president and founder of Barrio Dogs. "We are doing our part but are also challenging the city of Houston and others to do more to address this huge problem. Spay, neuter and community education are the only solutions." Zenteno founded Barrio Dogs in 2010 in Houston's East End after moving back to her old neighborhood and discovering what looked like Third World conditions for homeless and abandoned animals there. Barrio Dogs educates area residents about proper animal care and during 2012, fixed more than 200 pets belonging to low income residents free of charge during its "FixIt" campaign.

Corridor Rescue board member, Anna Barbosa, and Kelle Mann Davis, founder of Forgotten Dogs of the 5th Ward, agree with Zenteno. "The problem of animal overpopulation continues to spiral out of control," said Barbosa. "As volunteers, we can continue to try to address this crisis but in reality, it will require commitment and leadership from the City of Houston."

The Unity 1000 Challenge is a project of Unity for a Solution (UFAS), a collaboration that began in early 2013 between Barrio Dogs, Corridor Rescue and Forgotten Dogs of the Fifth Ward. Since forming, UFAS has brought in additional partners including Shaggy Dog Rescue, South Side Street Dogs, Scout's Honor, Lucky Dog Rescue, AARF, Twyla's Friends, Jurassic Bark, Texas Litter Control, One Hundred Thousand Hearts, 4 Paws Farm, Winston's on Washington, The Buck Foundation, FMW/FabLab, Christi's Pet Sitting, Haute Pets Mobile Grooming Salon and Star Pizza. Unity for a Solution's first priority has been to raise awareness about Houston's large number of homeless and unwanted animals and to work with the city of Houston to provide more low cost and free spay and neuter services in areas hardest hit by animal overpopulation.

There are estimated to be 1.2 million homeless animals in Houston.¹ Often, pets that are not fixed produce unwanted litters that end up on the streets; offering to fix them free of charge or a reduced price is a first step in reducing overpopulation. For more information, go to unityforasolution.org.

¹ BARC statistic reported by Fox26 Houston, "A chorus of help for homeless animals in the Houston area," 9/21/12

Unity

for a **SOLUTION**
HOUSTON
Engaging communities with pet care
education & spay neuter solutions



UNITY 1000 CHALLENGE

Take the challenge. Be a fundraiser or donate at firstgiving.com/unity1000

PARTNERS

South Side Street Dogs, Scout's Honor, Lucky Dog Rescue, AARF, Twyla's Friends, Jurassic Bark, Texas Litter Control, One Hundred Thousand Hearts, 4 Paws Farm, Shaggy Dog Rescue, Clipped Ear Cat Sanctuary, Star Pizza, Haute Pets Mobile Grooming Salon, FMW | fablab, The Buck Foundation, Christi's Pet Sitting and Winston's on Washington.

Unity for a Solution is working hard to raise awareness about Houston's animal overpopulation crisis. As part of our effort we are going to spay and neuter 1000 pets belonging to low income Houston residents free of charge. We are challenging the city of Houston and others to step up and be part of the solution. Please join us in making a difference; donate to Unity 1000.

Community education and free and low cost spay and neuter are the only solutions.

For more information on how to donate or become a fundraiser for the Unity 1000 Challenge, please email

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unityforasolution.org