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For Immediate Release

UNITY 1000 CHALLENGE COMPLETED: 843 PETS BELONGING TO LOW INCOME HOUSTON RESIDENTS SPAYED AND NEUTERED FREE OF CHARGE

Houston, Texas, December 28, 2013 – Unity for a Solution, a collaboration of Houston animal welfare groups, completed its 2013 Unity 1000 Challenge by fixing 843 pets belonging to low income residents free of charge. In exchange, they asked the residents to educate others about the importance of fixing their pets. Unity launched its campaign earlier this year along with a fundraising initiative. They were successful in raising over \$60,000 in private donations to pay for the spay/neuter surgeries which took place at Gulfgate Animal Hospital and the SNAP mobile clinic.

The Unity 1000 Challenge is part of Unity for a Solution's ongoing campaign to increase public awareness about Houston's animal overpopulation crisis while actually doing something to address the crisis by fixing pets belonging to residents in low income areas. Often, owned animals or family pets that are not fixed are allowed to roam and produce unwanted litters of puppies and kittens, some of which end up on the streets. Fixing these animals is a first step in reducing overpopulation. This year's challenge targeted communities that have large numbers of homeless animals including Houston's East End, Fifth Ward, Sunnyside, Denver Harbor, and along the "Corridor of Cruelty" (U.S. 59 North). There are estimated to be up to 1.2 million homeless animals on Houston's streets.¹

"We have been working with the city of Houston and encouraging our elected officials to do more about the many homeless, suffering animals that some of us see daily in our communities," said Gloria Zenteno, president and founder of Unity partner Barrio Dogs. "The city has been slow in responding so we took the initiative to do something ourselves by fixing as many pets from low income areas as possible. While the number we fixed is negligible when you consider the scope of the problem, we are also asking residents to help us educate others and spread the word that only way out of this crisis is with education and spay/neuter." 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. Barrio Dogs' FixIt goal for 2013 was 333 animals and they exceeded it by spaying and neutering almost 400 animals.

Barrio Dogs, Corridor Rescue and Forgotten Dogs of the Fifth Ward formed Unity for a Solution in January 2013 to try to improve conditions for Houston's homeless and unwanted animals by raising awareness and finding ways to provide more free and low cost spay neuter services. Since forming, Unity has brought in additional partners including Clipped Ear Cat Sanctuary, AARF Houston, Twyla's Friends, Jurassic Bark Rescue, Lucky Dog Rescue, Scout's Honor Rescue, Inc., Texas Litter Control, One Hundred Thousand Hearts, 4 Paws Farm, Star Pizza, South Side Street Dogs, Shaggy Dog Rescue, Haute Pets Mobile Grooming Salon, FMW/FabLab, The Buck Foundation, Christi's Pet Sitting, Winston's on Washington, Paws Pet Resort, Olivine, Martini Hardware and Gratifi Kitchen + Bar. To learn more about Unity, go to www.unityforasolution.org. To donate or learn more about Unity's fundraising efforts, go to firstgiving.com/unity1000/fundraisers.

¹ BARC statistic reported KHOU 11 News, ww.khou.com/news/local/Residents-complain-about-citys-response-to-roaming-stray-dogs-216842061.html, 7/13/13