



## **St. Thomas, March 17, 2020 –The Humane Society of St. Thomas (HSSTT) Introduces Temporary Protective Measures During COVID-19 Pandemic**

Due to the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, and in accordance with national animal health and welfare organizations' recommendations that shelters reduce the number of animals in our care, effective immediately the Humane Society of St Thomas is limiting intake of both owned and stray animals until at least the end of March. We will continue to serve the people and pets of St. Thomas through Adoptions, Fostering, Transports, and other services.

To maximize our ability to save lives, we are urgently asking for help from the St Thomas community:

- 1) For the safety of our staff and the public, we are limiting public access to our campus. While we rely on volunteers to care for our animals, volunteer hours must be scheduled ahead of time. At this time, all volunteers must be 18 years or older. All visitors and volunteers to the campus must sign in. Access to our kennel areas is restricted to staff only. Please do not visit the Humane Society if you have any symptoms of illness. To better accommodate and protect our staffing and clients, we will be adjusting hours to Monday-Saturday 11am-5:30pm to allow additional appointments for adoptions. We will be closed to the public on Sundays until further notice.
- 2) All owner surrender and stray intakes will be by appointment only. Appointments must be made in advance by calling 340-775-0599. The Humane Society will accept only limited numbers of animals on a case-by-case basis.
- 3) Foster, Volunteer, and Advocate. If you are interested in volunteering or fostering please contact our shelter ASAP. We need foster homes to help immediately reduce our shelter population. Schedule a shift as a dog walker. Tech savvy people can help promote our animals online with videos and pictures. Please contact our shelter for more information on how you can help.
- 4) If you see a healthy-looking adult stray dog, please do not pick it up and bring it to the shelter. Currently, we have no capacity to care for these animals. We encourage the community to feed stray dogs where they are for now. If a stray animal is injured, very young, or otherwise in distress, please call the Humane Society before bringing the animal to the shelter.
- 5) "Kitten and Puppy Season" is starting now. To prevent an influx of puppies and kittens to the shelter, it is urgent to spay and neuter feral and companion animals as soon as possible. If you have pet or are feeding strays, please take advantage of our "Fix Dem All" spay and neuter program. All St Thomas vet offices are participating in the program and charge only a \$15 co-pay per animal. Traps are available to rent at the shelter. If a pet needs transportation to/from a vet office for spay/neuter, we will try to help. Please call the Humane Society for details. Again, to better accommodate and protect our staffing and

clients, we will be adjusting hours to Monday-Saturday 11am-5:30pm to allow additional appointments for adoptions. We will be closed to the public on Sundays until further notice.

- 6) Adopt! Adoptions are free for animals that have been in our care for 6 months or longer! The Humane Society has many wonderful pets looking for homes. Now is a great time to add a new pet to your family. Please look at our Facebook page for photos and information about all the adoptable dogs, cats, puppies, and kittens. We ask that you call the shelter to make an appointment to meet an animal at 340-775-0599.
- 7) Donations are always appreciated. We are in great need of Purina Cat Chow Complete, cat litter, Purina Puppy Chow, Purina Dog Chow, newspapers, liquid hand soap, bleach, Odo-Ban, black heavy duty contractor bags, airline approved soft carrier travel bags, and 400 series airline approved hard dog kennels.

It is important to know that, so far, there are **NO** cases of dogs or cats becoming sick from the new coronavirus. There is also no evidence of people catching the virus from dogs or cats. However, it is always a good idea to practice basic hygiene when interacting with animals, and to wash your hands frequently. Don't forget to stock up on pet food supplies for your pets.

If you cannot care for your pets, due to illness or any other reason, create a plan for family, friends, or neighbors to properly care for your pets, or placed in the care of a boarding facility. The Humane Society of St Thomas is not able to board owned pets. Businesses on St Thomas that may be able to board animals include Canines, Cats, and Critters (340-693-7780), Veterinary Centers of the VI (340-777-7788), and The Kennel Club (340-777-2582).

The Humane Society of St Thomas is implementing these measures during this challenging time in order to save as many lives as possible, to ensure the humane care for the animals in our custody in the face of expected staffing shortages, and to protect human lives. This is a time of uncertainty for us all. If you have questions or concerns please email Annette T Zachman and Dr. Heidi Stout at [HSSTT.BOD@GMAIL.COM](mailto:HSSTT.BOD@GMAIL.COM) or call (340-473-7278).

The Humane Society of St Thomas is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to providing and promoting the humane treatment of animals. We rely entirely on public donations and support for everything that we do, serving the animals and community of St Thomas. Now, more than ever, the Humane Society and animals need your support. Donations can be made online at <https://www.classy.org/give/212529/#!/donation/checkout>