

December 2010 NEWSLETTER

Mission: To improve the quality of life of underprivileged animals. We are concentrating on squatter camp animals and feral cats. Read more about both in our column **WHAT FOUR PAWS IS ABOUT.**

Vision: To expand by obtaining more vehicles, employing more fieldworkers and operating from our own clinic.

Shelter news:

Our shelter is slowly but surely coming along, but we still do not have enough funds to complete our shelter. **Please consider giving our homeless animals a Christmas gift by making a kind donation towards our shelter?**

Please take the time to read our recent rescue story, if one can call it that! As told by our vet, Dr Shelagh Hahn:

THE GRAVE OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER 11/11/2010

Today I put down a dog. I do not know if she had an owner and I do not know if she had a name.



She was just an old dog, probably not nearly as old as she looked, who had spent her whole sad life in a bad place. She was very thin and had bad mange of most of her body, and ticks and fleas and worms. Her hindquarter had collapsed, partly from malnutrition and partly from bad arthritis from old untreated injuries. Her ears had been cut short and were eaten away by flies. Her teeth were stumps, probably from biting at wire or a chain. Her well-worn teats were hanging from raising litter after litter of puppies. There was no fur on her back end from dragging herself around.

She wagged her naked tail and tried to crawl to us, thrilled to have a kind touch, even though she was in a strange vehicle taken by strange people to a strange place.

She is not a newsworthy abuse case, or a dramatic rescue story, or a happy-ending adoption.

One of the **FOUR PAWS** teams got to her in time to give her a kind and gentle death. But nobody was there to give her a better life. Everything wrong with her was preventable or treatable. She shows us that there is still not enough:

Not enough public awareness or education about animal welfare
Not enough organisations prepared to go into the bad places
Not enough money or people or vehicles for those that are
Not enough people marketing and fundraising for charities
Not enough professionals prepared to do charity work
Not enough people volunteering to help a little
Not enough shelters with not enough space
Not enough enforced legislation against neglect and abuse

She is just another nameless casualty in the battle against ignorance and the pet population explosion. There is no armistice in this war. The burden falls on too few too much of the time. The grave of the unknown soldier is a black plastic bag in a freezer in a veterinary clinic. And the war goes on.

SQUATTER CAMP PROJECTS:

The main problem in these poor areas is that people simply do not have the means, transport or finances to provide their animals with basic health care and veterinary treatment. As a result, many animals suffer unnecessarily, while others die a slow, painful death. Ignorance plays a big role in animal cruelty. Overpopulation results in numbers no community can sustain, and many animals die from starvation.

We provide primary health care services, veterinary treatments and sterilisations, free of charge. We also educate pet owners about proper pet care.

So many Township animals are **victims of car accidents** (like the dog in the picture below). Most of them survive, but with very serious injuries. If no animal welfare is available, the animals suffer and die a slow, painful death. Fortunately, in the places where we are working, people have our emergency contact numbers and can call us if their dog gets sick or injured. Our regular visits also ensure that we come across sick or injured animals if their owners fail to call us.



Before



After I still do not like it if you touch my leg!

DOGS AND CATS NEEDING HOMES:

We received a call from a concerned member of the public about a Chow living in an open field. On arrival we found this beautiful Chow (picture below) lying in the field. He was obviously very weak and we tried to approach him, but he was very bewildered and we did not want to scare him off. We put tranquilizers in soft food and fortunately it did the trick! He must have been living in the field for quite some time, as his hair was very matted and had to be shaved off. He suffered from

billiary, and would not have survived for much longer! **He is now in desperate need of a loving home.**

Our thanks to Tracy who runs Dogtown SA, for taking him in, since our shelter is not finished yet. Please contact Tracy on 0832225180 if you can give this lovely boy a home.



His coat was so matted, most of it had to be shaved off

This beautiful boy in the picture below, has been living on the streets in Rivonia for some time. Fortunately a kind lady, Anthea, started feeding him. He was also very bewildered and scared of people, and we could not get close to him. Fortunately we managed to trap him in our dog trap. **We are now desperately looking for a good home for him!**



He is still a bit wary, but very sweet and a fast learner!

We found this poor doggie (pictures below) in Video Centre squatter camp, who was **severely emaciated and riddled with worms**. He also had a **blockage in his intestines and part of it had to be removed**. We were not sure if he would survive the surgery, but HE DID! As soon as he has made a full recovery, we will be looking for a good home for him.



Before



Recovering at our vet

We often receive threats from members of the public saying that they will shoot or poison dogs or cats if we do not remove them like these 3 adult cats and 5 kittens in the pictures below. As much as we do not appreciate emotional blackmail, we remove the animals anyway for their own safety.



Three adult cats



Five very scared kittens

We found this mommy cat with her kitten (picture below), abandoned in a Township near Lanseria. The owners had moved away and simply left her to fend for herself and her kitten. Fortunately we found them in time and **they are now looking for good homes!**



The abandoned mommy cat with her kitten

We have many kittens in our care, like these cuties in the picture below. Please contact us if you are willing to give a homeless kitten a good home.



This beautiful, sweet cat from Diepsloot squatter camp was yet another victim of a car that broke many bones in his body. He had a broken pelvis, a broken leg and many broken ribs. He had a long, slow recovery but **he is now ready to go to a very loving home!** Please contact me if you can give this very loving cat a good home.



I had MANY broken bones, but I am healed now and waiting for my forever home!

The cat in the picture below, used to live in Zandspruit squatter camp. The owner was unfortunately completely ignorant about a cats diet, and only fed the cat dry mieliepap. As a result the cat was suffering from severe malnutrition when we found her.



After a few weeks in our care, she is now in good health and also looking for her forever home!

FERAL CAT PROJECTS: Feral cats are a direct result of humans, not sterilising their cats, starting many years ago. Cats and kittens ended up on the streets, multiplying even

more. We trap, sterilise and release ferals and urge people to feed them. Ferals cannot be re-located due to their nature and adult ferals are almost impossible to tame.

We receive SEVERAL calls on a daily basis from people seeking assistance with ferals on their premises. The only humane way to deal with the feral problem is to trap, sterilise, release and feed them. (Read more about ferals at the bottom in **WHAT FOUR PAWS IS ABOUT**).

This mommy cat in the pictures below, gave birth to five kittens in someone's garden. Unfortunately they were not *cat people* and did not bother to put down any food or water for her. Being a very young cat, she battled to fend for herself and her kittens and by the time we received a call asking us to remove her and her kittens, she was severely emaciated.



The severely emaciated mommy cat



Recovering in our care

Update on the 60 cats living at the dairy farm in Benoni:

We recently shared with you the story of the 60 cats who live on a dairy farm in Benoni. We were alerted by a member of the public who saw this ad in the Junk Mail: *We are overrun with cats, so please come and take as many as you want!*

All the cats turned out to be feral and semi-feral and we had to trap them with our cat traps. Since feral cats are not re-homeable, we were desperately looking for a place of safety where they could spend the rest of their lives. Our sincere thanks to Irma from Cat Village for offering to take these cats in. Over 40 cats have been removed successfully and we are continuing our rescue attempts.

SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

Did you know?

There are 45 cats and dogs for every person born

Only 1 out of 10 dogs born ever get a home

Only 1 out of 12 cats born ever find a home

There are simply not enough homes for all of them!

The bottom line?

Please help us to educate people to SPAY and NEUTER their pets!

A very special thank you to ALL our donors: You give us strength, courage and make it possible for us to continue our work! PLEASE, IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED A PERSONAL THANK YOU FROM US, NOTIFY US.

Many thanks to **Amy Groves** for doing our books free of charge, managing our Facebook, raising funds for us (as one of the founders of SAINTs), editing our newsletters and stories and being our personal advisor on many important issues.

Thank you to the ladies of **SAINTs** (Viv, Amy and Dalene) for doing book and jumble sales, sales of many other items, raffles and auctions and organizing events on a regular basis, to raise much needed funds for us.

Thank you to **Pet Pages** for featuring two separate articles on Four Paws in their magazine. (Please pick up your free copy of Pet Pages from your vet or pet accessory store).

Thank you to **Woolworths** for all your dog and cat food donations.

Thank you to **Royal Canin** for all your dog and cat food donations.

Thank you to **Coca Cola** for your huge donation towards our shelter.

Thank you to **BWC** (Beauty without Cruelty), for sponsoring some of our sterilizations.

Thank you to **Alicia van Loggerenberg** for running our web site free of charge.

Thank you to **Ed Jackson** for auditing our books free of charge.

Thank you to our veterinarians, **Dr Shelagh Hahn (Blue Bush Animal Clinic)**, **Dr Grant Craig (Paulshof Veterinary Clinic)** and **Dr A S Leonard (Northriding Animal Clinic)** for doing sterilisations and treatments at reduced costs. Thank you also for re-homing some of our homeless animals.

Wish list:

- FINANCIAL SUPPORT
- Dog and cat food (especially soft food for trapping ferals and de-worming dogs)
- Cat litter
- Carpets to cut up for blankets
- Cat litter trays
- Cleaning materials such as mops and brooms
- Medicines such as dip, de-worming, vaccines
- Sponsors for kennels
- Books for book sales
- Any item that can be used for raffles
- Jumble for jumble sales
- Another vehicle to transport animals

Please help us to help those who cannot speak for themselves by making a kind donation and. or sending this to all your friends and family.

Banking details:

FOUR PAWS
Nedbank, Fourways
Branch code: 168405, Acc no: 1684110750

Many thanks to each and every supporter! We wish you all a very blessed Christmas and a wonderful 2011.

Kind regards

**Merinda Brits
Founder and Chairperson**

WHAT FOUR PAWS IS ABOUT:

Our aim is to improve the quality of life of underprivileged animals. In our urban surroundings there are two main categories: squatter camp animals and feral cats.

Squatter camp projects:**The problems with our underprivileged dogs and cats are:**

- Malnutrition, insufficient shelter & a lack of food and water.
- Animals become sick and injured and there is no medical care available.
- Animals are knocked over by cars on the roads, because there are no fences.
- Dogs are put on chains mainly due to a lack of education and also because there are no fences.
- Animals are multiplying uncontrollably because there are no sterilisation programmes.
- Communicable diseases like distemper, parvo, snuffles, etc. are spreading, because animals are not vaccinated.
- Unwanted animals, especially litters of puppies and kittens, due to overpopulation.

What we do:

- Dipping and de-worming to prevent internal and external parasites.
- Intensive sterilisation campaigns to prevent overpopulation and straying of animals over the roads in mating seasons.
- Removal of unwanted animals and re-homing to suitable homes.
- Vaccination to prevent deadly diseases.
- Veterinary treatment for injuries and diseases.
- Education about proper pet care.
- Humane euthanasia of terminally ill animals.
- Instilling awareness and respect for animals and the environment.
- Confiscation of animals where intentional cruelty occurs.

Feral Projects :

Feral cats are a direct result of humans irresponsibility not to have their cats sterilised, starting many years ago. This has resulted in a huge overpopulation of cats and kittens living on the streets, multiplying even more.

The facts and problems with our underprivileged cats are:

- People want to get rid of ferals, when in fact it is impossible to get rid of them. There are many thousands of ferals living all over in our surroundings.
- Where ferals are removed, a void is created and ferals from other areas soon fill that void.
- A sterilised feral colony will not allow other ferals to move in
- Ferals keep the rat population under control, as rats are attracted to the same areas as ferals, normally where food is thrown away.
- Feeding ferals will ensure good health and minimize the spreading of diseases.
- Feeding ferals will not stop them from hunting rats, as hunting is a basic instinct.
- Ferals who are forced to live on rats, mice and left over food only, suffer from malnutrition and diseases.
- Ferals are being shot, poisoned and trapped & drowned all over by people.
- Ferals pose NO threat to humans
- Ferals cannot be re-located due to their nature, removing ferals therefore means killing them.

What we do:

- Trap, sterilise and release ferals.
- Educate people about ferals.
- Encourage people to take responsibility for ferals in their area and feed them.
- Trap as many feral kittens as we can, tame and re-home them, instead of letting them grow up on the streets. It is however, a very difficult and time-consuming process to tame feral cats.