



Katy's Animal Shelters

Rescuing and Adopting Pets in Katy

Written by Gabrielle Browne
Select photos by Suzanne Box

Observing the Katy PetSmart on any Saturday morning will prove that Katy residents have a deep affection for their pets. From training sessions and grooming appointments to customers stocking up on food and toys, one would surmise that Katy pets are living the good life. However, volunteers in one area of PetSmart know that, unfortunately, that isn't always the case, and they're determined to change lives of both animals and humans.

Finding Your Pet

Since 1972, Citizens for Animal Protection (CAP) has helped connect animals that need a home with eager human companions. Pet adoption brightens the lives of both humans and animals, as one can easily see in the pet adoption section of the Katy PetSmart. Sponsored by CAP, volunteers eagerly help dogs and cats meet potential new owners every day of the week. Weekends are understandably the busiest times. CAP offers a \$99 adoption package, which includes vaccinations, including a Rabies shot, other medical tests and exams, spaying or neutering, a microchip with lifetime registry I.D. tags, and 30 days insurance for the pet.

Abandoned Animals

In addition to the pet adoption centers at several PetSmarts, CAP operates a shelter at their main location on the Katy Freeway and Dairy Ashford. There are a variety of reasons that people give up their animal according to Trisha Royal, CAP's Community Outreach Director. "About 52 percent

of the animals we get are turned in by their owners. A third of the animals we get are purebred. The number one reason to turn over the animal is moving,” says Royal.

Poor understanding of the care an animal requires is also a major reason that shelters are crowded. CAP frequently receives animals that were used as school projects. For this reason, rabbits are top shelter residents. Royal explains, “People get rabbits and don’t realize that yes, they are cute, but the next thing you know, the poor rabbit is stuck outside in a cage. Rabbits can’t stand heat. Or, there’s a class project at a school or they are given as an Easter present. We always have about 10 rabbits.”

Rescuing Our Special Pals

Special Pals has been in operation for over 20 years. In the mid-90s, the organization moved to its current location in Katy. Special Pals operates a no-kill shelter and seeks to educate the Katy community on the importance of spaying and neutering as being part of a responsible pet owner. In addition to offering temporary shelter for about 100 dogs and cats, Special Pals also boards pets and runs a clinic and a thrift store. Due to its no-kill policy, Special Pals must have a limited intake of animals. Open daily, the shelter encourages prospective adoptive families to come to its facility and find their new animal companion.

Educating Owners

Although not located in Katy, the well-known Houston SPCA accepts more than 100,000 animals each year. Not only does this agency shelter dogs and cats, but it’s the only shelter in the Greater Gulf Coast area that is able to



Chris Villanueva cares for animals at the shelter



Huggie is adoptable from Special Pals, a shelter that’s been serving the community for 20 years

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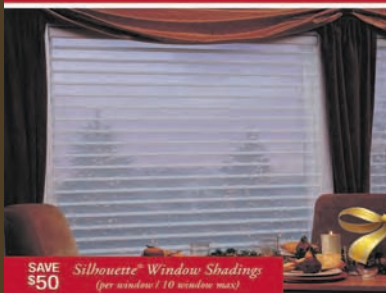


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provide temporary shelter to exotic animals like lions and tigers. It also seeks to protect farm animals and native wildlife.

Besides offering shelter for the protection of animals, one common goal of all shelters is education in order to prevent animal cruelty. The SPCA counsels each adoptive family on the benefits as well as the responsibilities pet ownership entails.

Similarly, CAP runs programs that help families enjoy and take care of their pet. For example, the main office of CAP hosts the Bunny Buddies club. "They hold their meetings at our shelter so they can learn how to properly care for their bunnies. That way they'll keep them. We're after forever homes," says Royal.

Knowing the goodness of Katy residents, there are many such homes that are willing to welcome a new companion into their hearts. **KM**

GABRIELLE BROWNE, her husband, and their son have shared their home with two adopted cats for the past seven years.



Kittens like Pitter Patter make great presents, but it's important to be prepared for the responsibility that comes with adoption



During his visit to Special Pals, Truitt enjoyed playing with Speckles

Adopt - Don't Buy!

Pet overpopulation in the Houston area is an enormous problem with more than 80,000 pets being euthanized each year. Experts recommend avoiding the pet stores and puppy mills and adopting a pet instead. You'll add joy to your family while making a difference in the life of an abandoned pet. There are hundreds of dogs and cats waiting for good homes at these local shelters. Contact these local shelters to find your newest family addition.

Charity's Animal Rescue

Sealy, TX • 979-877-0980
cars04@gmail.com

Citizens for Animal Protection (CAP)

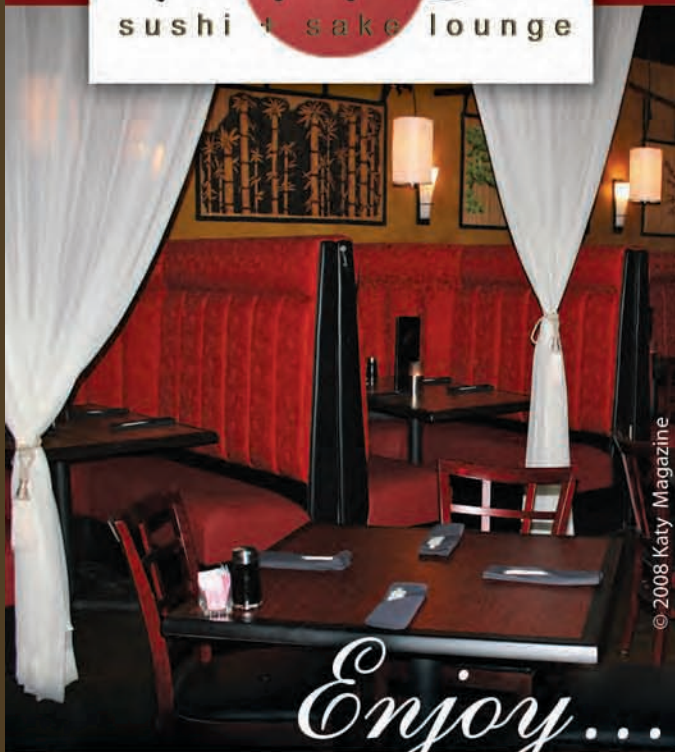
11925 Katy Fwy. • 281-497-0591
cap4pets.org

Houston SPCA

900 Portway Dr. • 713-869-SPCA (7722)
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Special Pals

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Dog Parks in the Katy Area

Once you've adopted your pet,
don't forget to take him to one
of these terrific area dog parks.

Katy City Dog Park
5414 Franz Rd.

This 14 acre park provides a lot of shade, a paved walking trail, and two water fountains. The park is also finishing a swimming pond and adding benches and a washing area.

Millie Bush Bark Park
16756 Westheimer Pkwy.

This 13 acre park also offers numerous options, including swimming ponds, water fountains, showers, pick up bags, shade areas, benches, walking path, parking lot, and picnic benches and restrooms just outside the park.

Congressman Bill Archer Bark Park
3201 N. Hwy. 6

Complete with agility equipment, doggie swimming ponds, water fountains, showers, pick up bags, shade areas, benches, trees, long walking trails, and a parking lot, the 20 acre park is the perfect resort for you and your adopted pets.

Dog Park Rules

Before you treat your dog to a romp in the park, go online and read up on dog park rules.

- Always keep your eyes on your dog.
- All dogs must be leashed when entering and leaving the park.
- All dogs must have current required vaccinations.
- Dogs are required to wear identification tags.
- Dog owners are responsible for picking up and disposing of all their dog's waste.
- Dogs in heat are prohibited.
- Dogs under four months of age may be prohibited.
- Some parks have a maximum amount of dogs per adult.
- Dog owners are responsible for their dog's actions and behavior at all times.

**Not all rules apply for all parks. Be sure to verify before attending any Katy area dog park.*

For more information about each of these parks, visit houstondogpark.org.



Playing ball and swimming are favorite activities at Millie Bush Bark Park



Dogs get a chance to make new friends at area dog parks



Kaleigh makes time to play with her golden retriever



This pug likes the small dog section of Millie Bush Bark Park



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