

Eithana Gonzalez-Calero

Ms. Gasser

Capstone Project

## “Prevent Animal Cruelty” Capstone

### Bibliography

For my senior capstone, I partnered up with two local non-profit animal shelters, PAWS, and Spay & Save, to inform my community about what animal cruelty means and how we can recognize the signs to stop it from happening. Animal abuse can be defined as the cruel, torturous, and neglectful behavior which is forced upon animals. Behavior that is lawfully deemed as "animal abuse" is against the Animal Welfare Act. Despite this clear and ethical law, every day there are thousands of animals being neglected, abused, and forced to fight.

My love for volunteering at animal shelters was developed during my internship at Spay & Save in my sophomore year of high school. I fell in love with the animals and the community of dedicated volunteers which I met at Spay & Save. During my volunteer shifts, I heard many stories of people who recently lost their pet and visited the animals at the shelter that I volunteer at because many of the animals reminded them of their pets that they lost. Most of my life I have been surrounded by animals, but it was not until I started volunteering and training with shelters like PAWS and SPS that I truly learned the hardships that many animals in our country face.

Throughout this school year, I have volunteered and attended fundraisers in order to prepare to host my own fundraising event. I planned on hosting a fundraiser to collect supplies to give back to the shelters I worked with. This fundraiser was meant to bring the SLA community together and create a positive change for animals. My event would have included games for all

ages, photos of the animals I worked with, art pieces made by my fellow peers & I, and rescue stories from PAWS.

My modified capstone consisted of collages and posters to visually demonstrate my gained knowledge about the ways that people can prevent animal cruelty. Despite the impact that COVID-19 has had on me to re-model and re-plan my capstone, I am really happy with my progress and final outcome. I learned about the consistent nourishment, victimhood, and survival that animals face in an animal shelter. I also learned that people who work in animal shelters have long shifts and deal with many laborious and emotionally challenging circumstances when caring for abused animals. These people along with others who intend on adopting animals from shelters, collectively make a difference in our community

The itinerary for my fundraiser consisted of displaying art pieces, photographs, footage of interviews (to be projected on a whiteboard), and other activities that were structured to elicit emotional responses from my community. In order to host a successful fundraiser and accomplish my goal of raising awareness about animal cruelty, I needed to implement the SLA core values: inquiry, collaboration, research, presentation, and reflection. My inquiry process was driven by, "How can a fundraiser raise awareness to animal cruelty and no-kill shelters?"

When Sarah and I found out that we were both doing our capstones related to animal cruelty, we decided to collaborate and host an event together. She wanted to join me at PAWS and film during my volunteer shifts. Together we planned on interviewing experienced volunteers and staff on their experience working with PAWS and rescue animals. I began my volunteer hours with Spay & Save during the fall and attended a few fundraisers. My goal was to have a successful fundraiser in April, so for the next couple of months, I took notes and asked the



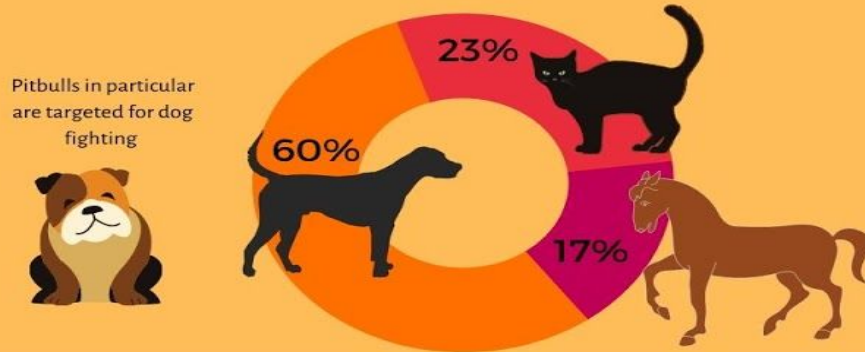
like in April. Also volunteering every week gave me a sense of stability during a busy week of school and work. Educating others about animal cruelty and exposing the blind eye American has put on animal cruelty with weak laws was something I had to write about for my capstone.

For my modified capstone, I made posters and collages that visualize the reality millions of animals face every year. I wanted to display the information I learned about animal cruelty through visual pieces that lure an audience in. In my original plan, I wanted to physically present photos and art. Now with my new pieces, I can share with everyone virtually through the pieces I created; I included signs of animal cruelty, ways to prevent it, and actual pictures of the animals I worked with during my time with PAWS and SPS.

# ANIMAL CRUELTY

Everyday, thousands of animals across the world are victims to abuse and neglect due to ignorance or dilberate malice.

## VICTIMS OF REPORTED CASES...



## SIGNS OF ANIMAL NEGLECT AND CRUELTY

Every year hundreds of pets die because people move out and simply abandon their animals.



The animal has open wounds or other visible injuries which have not been treated, frequently exposed to harmful objects or toxic fumes

Hoarding occurs when a person is housing more animals than they can possibly care for in unsanitary conditions.

An animal appears deprived of food, water, and/or shelter

The animal has visible symptoms of an illness, like a rash, hair loss, bumpy skin, heavy discharge from its eyes and nose.

**If a person is seen inflicting violence or any form of cruelty upon an animal, it is crucial to involve law enforcement. Violence towards animals often leads to a larger pattern of violence inflicted on humans. 71% of domestic violence victims reported that their abusers also targeted their pets.**

## TAKING A STAND AGAINST ANIMAL CRUELTY



### REPORT

If you witness an animal who is immediate danger from cruel treatment, call your local animal control agency or report it to the police straight away. Then you can contact an animal cruelty prevention organization to talk about what you saw and to follow up with them to see what action is planned

Fight animal abuse using your voice. Make posters and flyers to spread information out to your peers or locations where they'll be seen. You can help raise awareness of animal cruelty issues by spreading information on social media platforms as well.

**SPREAD THE WORD**



**Support animal free products**



Next time you go shopping keep a close eye on what products you pick up that test on animals. Write letters to companies that still proceed with brutal experiments on animals. Do your research and find out makeup, clothing, or other products you buy that still use animals. Support the Humane Cosmetics Act.

**There are hundreds of ways to take action for animals, find your voice today!**

Eithana Gonzalez-Calero

My two proudest moments during this capstone process was my braskem presentation and improving my skills with animals. Preparing for braskem was intense. Sarah and I were nervous about presenting in front of the braskem team. Nevertheless, all of those nerves went into good use because we came in well prepared and got out with full funding! One thing that will always stick with me about presenting to braskem is what one of the judges said to me. When we finished our presentation, one of them told me that when I was up presenting, I looked passionate about what I was talking about. She said I opened up her eyes as a pet owner about how we can make a change.

The purpose of my capstone is to address the reality of animal cruelty and how we as a community can make a difference. Animal abuse remains one of the most misunderstood and undercharged crimes. Not enough people are informed about all of the different forms of animal cruelty that take place in our country every single day. What's most shocking is that in 2020 there are still no national reporting requirements to the number of cases reported, filed, and sent to trial. And those records would only consist of the reported cases. Unlike humans, animals can



not report their abusers. Animals rely on us to protect them by reporting animal abuse.

Improving laws on animal rights and registering animal abusers is not only saving the lives of animals but of humans as well. Various studies have stated that there is a clear correlation between domestic violence, child abuse, and animal abuse. These statistics say that 71% of violent criminals in prison have a history of animal abuse.

According to the ASPCA, approximately 6.5 million animal companions enter animal shelters annually in the United States. Their statistics show that this amount has declined from 7.2 million in 2011. Most of these animals end up back in the system due to abandonment, inability to afford unexpected health costs, and problematic behavior. Every single year about 1.5 million animals pass away due to euthanization in pounds. That is why it is critical to promote no-kill shelters because with local non-profit shelters growing, the mandatory laws that euthanize animals for space can be removed. PAWS is the main shelter in the Philadelphia area that is promoting this movement so we can ensure that strays can get a second chance.

If I could do this capstone all over again, at another time, I would have my fundraiser. Use all of the skills and experience I gained into an event to honor the animals I worked with and help spread awareness about ways to prevent and recognize animal cruelty so animals can have a better tomorrow.

The first step in preventing people from buying from puppy mills, purchasing animal-tested products, noticing animal hoarding, and speaking up when you signs of animal abuse in your community is by educating yourself. I hope my infographic, posters, collages, and blueprint are useful resources to use. If someone down the line from SLA were to have a fundraiser about animal cruelty it would give me great joy to be apart of the process of spreading

awareness.



**DON'T NEGLECT**

**EITHANA GONZALEZ-CALERO**