



Our Motto: We speak for those who cannot speak for themselves

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A GOOD YEAR AT THE ANIMAL SHELTER

The Tobago Branch of the Trinidad and Tobago Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (TTSPCA), known to all as the Animal Shelter, held its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday March 31st at the Conference Room of the Shelter on Friendsfield Road in Bacolet; a new committee was elected to manage its affairs for the year 2010-2011 and the activities of 2009-2010 were reviewed.

Mary Soodeen was returned as Chairperson, with Annie Williams as her Deputy and Andrew Phillips as Treasurer. The remainder of the new committee includes a healthy mix of returning and new members: They are Dr. Paul Crooks, Nathalia Crooks, Lois Helmark, Lesly Nurse, Donna Parillon, Jenny Westbury, Diane Samuels, Beverly Smith and Linda Urbanowicz.

Soodeen was happy to report on a good year, with several significant achievements, despite the perennial difficulties with funding. With donated monies, Shirley Rogers instigated and completed a project involving the construction of new homes for the Shelter's cats and kittens. The long-awaited puppy run will soon be completed, using the proceeds of a workshop at the Kariwak Hotel, facilitated by Vanessa Soodeen. These will permit employees and volunteers to work on socializing the animals, thereby making it easier for them to adapt to their new adoptive homes and owners.

Other infrastructural improvements included painting, drainage improvement, refurbishing the washroom and air conditioning the office/surgery used by the Shelter's Veterinarians, Dr Michael Downes, Dr Paul Crookes, Dr. R. George and, until he left Tobago, Dr George Daniel.

Adoption remains the best option for the unwanted animals at the Shelter. For the year, 82 dogs, 85 puppies, 24 cats and 35 kittens went to new homes – a significant increase due, in large part, to the Shelter's adoption drives, one of which was facilitated by Gulf City Mall at Lowlands. Six dogs went overseas to new owners, who had fallen in love with them



while visiting Tobago; one of these, Skeeter, found wandering in the Rain Forest, became the ring-bearer at the wedding of his new owners in upstate New York!



A major achievement was the hosting, for the second successive year, of the SPOTT programme, which is funded, in part, by the Humane Society International of the USA and is thus able to undertake spaying (female) and neutering (male) of dogs and cats without cost to the owners. Veterinarians, from Tobago, USA and Trinidad, assisted by 17 veterinary students from Mount Hope, worked tirelessly over the weekend of November 14-15 on 114 dogs and 12 cats. These

animals will now enjoy a better quality of life and will not produce offspring to face a difficult and uncertain future.

A similar programme is to be conducted in June or July this year in Charlotteville, to assist pet owners of north eastern Tobago; you will read more on this soon.

Domestic arrangements at the Shelter have also progressed well, with the employment of a full-time manager and greater consistency among other staff. The Shelter is grateful for meat and other supplies donated by the Golden Grove Farm, RT Morshead, Romike, Yats Supermarket, Ansa McAl, Novartis and others.



Annie Williams and her team worked consistently on successful fund-raising and social events throughout the year, and many book, cake and jumble sales have taken place. The collection boxes at various locations added further valuable monies, together with monies from other donors, who included the House of Assembly. The Shelter Committee is grateful to all who have assisted, in whatever way for, without this, the Shelter would be unable to continue to provide its invaluable services to Tobago.