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The research question, “How do Public Service Announcements and the media help increase awareness for abused dogs,” still remains completely unanswered. Throughout the research process it was very difficult to connect media towards the aspect of dog abuse. Michael Vick was convicted of dog fighting and sentenced to prison. The reason he became such a big focus in the media was the fact of him being a professional NFL football player. It is striking to find that he came up more frequently in the research process than any other reports of animal cruelty, simply for being famous. That being stated, day-to-day dog abuse continues to be ignored. The ASPCA is a great organization that fights and prevents all animal abuse. They air hundreds of PSAs about this topic and receive many donations. How does mankind know if this is actually an effective mean of informing society? Do these commercials succeed in preventing animal cruelty? Many television shows, commercials, and ads inform the public about dog abuse, but it can’t be proven that it has somewhat or even completely stopped it. Thankfully there are harsher laws that have come into place. Any human that performs these heinous acts should face those consequences. Since these laws have taken place, nobody should be getting away with such crimes, therefor decreasing the amount of hurt and abandoned dogs.

*How do Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and the media help increase awareness for abused dogs?*

By Cassidy Pearce

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Global Connections, Mr. Demott

Animal cruelty is the act of violence or neglect committed against animals and is completely unjust. Dog abuse is the most prevalent type of animal abuse in today’s society. Such examples would include overt dog abuse (signs of being beat or hurt), dog fighting, and neglect where the dog is denied basic necessities such as food, water, and shelter.

Animal cruelty can be divided into two general categories: neglect and intentional cruelty. Neglect is the failure to provide an animal with the most basic requirements of food, water, shelter and veterinary care. Neglect may be due to ignorance on the animal owner's part and is usually handled by requiring the owner to correct the situation. If the problem is not corrected, the animal may be removed from the neglectful person by law enforcement authorities. Intentional cruelty is when an individual purposely inflicts physical harm or injury on an animal. Intentional cruelty is often more shocking than neglect and is frequently an indicator of a serious human behavior problem. In recently reported animal cruelty cases, dogs, pit bulls in particular, are the most common victims of animal cruelty. Of 1,880 cruelty cases reported in the media in 2007, 64.5 percent (1,212) involved dogs. (Animal Cruelty Facts)

Companion animals are essentially covered by state animal cruelty laws, which have varied throughout many states and counties. Animal welfare organizations across the country work vigorously every day to educate and inform people about the correct forms of caring for animals and how to further prevent animal cruelty. Thirty-three states and as well as the District of Columbia currently have laws and regulations that make intentional animal cruelty a felony charge, while other states treat animal cruelty only as a simple misdemeanor. Many states now require the person who is convicted of animal cruelty to go through psychological evaluations and counseling, as well as paying a fine or serving time in prison. Multiple states provide civil and criminal protections to veterinarians who report suspected cases of animal abuse to law enforcement authorities, as veterinarians are more likely to be the first to come in contact with abused animals. Enforcement of animal cruelty laws are carried out by local police or by humane or municipal agencies that are given power from the state or their local government. (Fight Animal Cruelty)

“Over the past several years, the Animal Care (AC) program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has initiated numerous decisions to improve all aspects of its operations. These initiatives have enhanced the way the program conducts Animal Welfare Act (AWA) inspections and pursues AWA enforcement actions. To improve the well-being of dogs covered under the AWA, AC published a final rule in 1997 that removed from the AWA regulations the foundations for the permanent tethering of dogs as a means of providing primary enclosure. Temporary tethering of dogs as a means of primary enclosure for health or other reasons is still accepted if licensees obtain approval from their AC inspector or AC regional office. But in most cases, licensees must now provide their dogs with a primary enclosure that enables them to move about freely without being tied down. In March 1998, AC revised the AWA temperature requirements to clarify the climatic conditions required for dogs and cats in indoor, sheltered, and mobile housing facilities, and in primary conveyances used for transportation, and in animal holding areas of airport terminal facilities. The rules now state that animals covered under the AWA are not to be exposed to combinations of time, temperature, and humidity that would adversely affect the animals’ health and wellbeing. The responsible party must take into account each transported animal’s health status, breed, age, and other suitable factors in assessing the temperature of transport-related facilities,” reported from ASPCA respondents. (Fight)

Animal rescue experts have agreed that chaining dogs increases aggression in some cases. “Rather than protecting the owner or property, a chained dog is often fearful for itself, particularly poorly socialized dogs or those with a previous negative experience,” says Rolan Tripp, affiliate professor of animal behavior at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Colorado State University. “When tethered and exposed to a potentially threatening stimulus, one thing the dog definitely knows is, ‘I can't get away.’ In that circumstance, a reasonable response might be, ‘Therefore I'm going to try and scare you away by growling or, worse yet, biting.’” (Man’s Best)

Hundreds and thousands of dogs in the state of South Florida and throughout the country are sentenced to a life of imprisonment with no possibility of being free. These dogs have done nothing wrong and have never committed a crime, yet they are subjected to a punishment worse than death, more so “life at the end of a chain.” Many of these dogs are chained up every hour of every day and some remain confined like this for their entire lives. Most of these dogs have never been for a walk, or even played a game of fetch. They have never enjoyed a single car ride, and have never even known a moment of love. “Dogs are pack animals and possess a strong need for social interaction. The cruelest thing you can possibly do to a dog is to force him into solitary confinement. I find it difficult to comprehend why anyone would acquire a dog and then choose to ignore the animal for the rest of his life. You would not banish your human family member to the backyard or the garage for life, so why would you do this to your canine family member? Dogs are members of the family, too, and in some cases they are probably the nicest ones. Dogs are loyal, patient, affectionate and sensitive. They are non-judgmental and provide unconditional love, something most humans are incapable of doing. They are always there for you, yet millions of American families are not always there for them. Dogs do so many things for humans, they rescue them in disasters, sniff for bombs so humans will be safe, lead the blind, assist the police, and they help heal the sick.” Judith Fish stated (Unchain Your Dog). Dogs are sources of comfort providing strong emotional support for many families. Ninety-eight percent of Americans consider pets to be companions or members of the family. (Facts). So it is time we do something for them in return and help.

News Alert reported that the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Field Investigations and Response Team were in Kentucky caring for more than one-hundred dogs rescued from a puppy mill. Later after the discovery, the owner of the dogs, Patricia Blevins, 58, was arrested. She now faces a tremendous forty-six counts of animal cruelty. Patricia was arrested on October 19th and spent a night in jail before being released on bail. She was charged with forty-six counts of misdemeanor animal cruelty and one count of kennel mismanagement related to keeping more than one-hundred dogs in overcrowded conditions outside of her mobile home. “The ASPCA commends the Rowan County Attorney’s Office for taking swift action in pursuing this case,” says Kyle Held, ASPCA Midwest Director of Field Investigations and Response. “We’re pleased that they’re treating the issue of puppy mills with the seriousness it deserves.” This was not Patricia’s first time in court for animal cruelty, she was reportedly charged with the same crime in 2004, but the charges against her were dropped when her husband was also convicted. “We hope that justice is served so the dogs can move on toward a better life soon,” says Held. Because the dogs are part of a continuing investigation, they are not yet available for adoption, but they are already worlds away from the unsanitary and claustrophobic conditions they lived in before being rescued. They are currently being cared for by ASPCA responders and volunteers from Red Rover and other organizations, receiving veterinary care, treats, toys and loads of human kindness. To help make room for the puppy mill victims, the ASPCA transported twenty-seven dogs from the Rowan County Humane Society to Capital Area Humane Society in Columbus, Ohio, and St. Hubert’s Animal Welfare Center in Madison, New Jersey. (ASPCA, Kentucky)

The ASPCA was the very first humane society to be established in North America and is still today’s largest in the world. The organization was founded by Henry Bergh in 1866 based on the belief that animals are entitled to kind and respectful treatment at the hands of humans, and must be protected under the law. Headquartered in New York City, the ASPCA maintains a strong local presence, and with programs that extend their anti-cruelty mission across the country, they are recognized as a national animal welfare organization. They are a privately funded, not-for-profit corporation, and proud to advertise more than one million supporters across the entire country. As the first humane organization to be granted legal authority to investigate and make arrests for crimes against animals, they are entirely and wholly dedicated to fulfilling the ASPCA mission through nonviolent approaches. The organization provides local and national leadership in three main areas: caring for pet parents and pets, providing positive outcomes for at-risk animals, and serving victims of animal cruelty. Joined in 1866 by the New York State legislature, the ASPCA has a history full of challenges and many successful victories from providing care and protection for the city’s horses, transforming dog pounds into professionally run adoptions facilities, to founding an animal hospital that is still running today. The ASPCA’s mission, as stated by Henry Bergh in 1866, is “to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States.” (Fight)

Roughly one-hundred seventy-five toy breeds and other small dogs have recently received care and attention at a temporary shelter. Their owner has faced cruelty charges after the ASPCA helped law enforcement raid an Arkansas puppy mill on November 7th. “The breeding dogs, some with tiny, unweaned puppies, had been living in sheds outside a mobile home. Responders found them suffering from various eye diseases, dental diseases, skin diseases, fleas, mites and heartworms. The invasion originated from a two-year investigation led by Corporal Angela Graybeal, a Garland County sheriff’s investigator who received numerous complaints about the living conditions and mistreatment of the puppy mill dogs. The investigation concluded on a Monday morning with the arrest of mill owner Pam Thomas on three felony counts of animal cruelty. Soon after the arrest, the veterinary forensics team and volunteers from the International Fund for Animal Welfare began inspecting the property to collect evidence, including several deceased dogs. At the same time, the ASPCA Field Investigations and Response (FIR) Team began removing dogs from the puppy mill. The team transported the dogs to a temporary shelter using the ASPCA’s custom animal transport trailer. Once the dogs arrived at the temporary shelter, a veterinary team led by FIR Medical Director Dr. Rhonda Windham began assessing and treating the dogs’ medical conditions. The dogs are also receiving toys, affection and healthy food from a sheltering team of roughly thirty people who are using supplies donated by PetSmart Charities, Inc.”, Lieutenant James Martin reported. (ASPCA Raids)

ASPCA Animal Fighting Expert Terry Mills arrested two dog fighters in New York who are currently facing the consequences for their gruesome crimes. “On April 13th, police in Long Beach, New York, came upon a horrifying sight near a sewage treatment plant. Two men were street fighting three Pit Bulls by mashing their faces together and rotating the dogs for endurance training. When it came time to prosecute the two dog fighters, Sharon Hicks and Robert Stockdale, the Nassau County District Attorney’s Office turned to ASPCA Animal Fighting Expert Terry Mills to serve as an expert witness. As the trial date neared, defense attorneys tried to block Mills from testifying, but the judge struck down their proposition. Soon after, facing a case reinforced by Mills’ expert testimony, the defense folded. Hicks and Stockdale pleaded guilty to felony dog fighting. Hicks will receive three months in jail, five years of probation, an order not to possess animals for five years, a spot check agreement to support the order, and restitution for related veterinary bills. Stockdale will receive the same sentence, minus the jail time.” Terry reported. This case marked the second and third guilty pleas Mills has helped secure in Nassau County. (Terry Mills)

A North Carolina man is currently facing animal cruelty charges following accusations that he shot his neighbor’s dog in the face at point blank range.  Terry Jackson turned himself in to the Perquimans County Sheriff’s Office at 5:00 p.m. on December 12th, 2011. Perquimans County Sheriff Eric Tilley said officers believe Jackson and another man were on Jackson’s property on December 10th when Duke, his neighbor’s Labrador, came onto the property. According to Tilley, the dog barked at Jackson and followed him as he walked back to his home. A witness told the sheriff’s office that Duke was calm. Tilley said Jackson went into his home, retrieved his shotgun, put the firearm up to Duke’s muzzle and fired. Duke was able to run back home. “I love my dogs, they’re like family to me. He was a gift to me for my 60th birthday, which was last year December 21st. I get up in the morning, there he is...I go to bed at night there he is. Those big brown eyes melt your heart.” Duke’s owner, Jarvis Miller, said. Miller is absolutely heart broken. The night Duke was shot Miller said he let Duke go outside, but when he went to bring him inside Miller found his porch covered in blood. He stated that it had looked like somebody butchered a hog or calf. He then followed the trail to the side of his home. “That’s where he (Duke) was laying and when he saw me, he got up to his feet and fell back down, I looked and saw his face was mangled,” he added. Miller rushed Duke to the veterinarian where he was later put down. Miller recalled that it was obvious whoever shot him, did so in point blank range. “I’m going to miss him.” Miller thought Duke might have been hit by a stray bullet from a hunter, but deputies say he was shot by Miller’s neighbor. “He knew it was my dog, that's why he shot him,” Miller added. But Jackson claims the dog scared him. “The dog came into my yard barking with his bristles raised, I walked to the house and he was barking so...” Jackson told Wavy News 10. They then asked Jackson if he was sorry, but he replied by saying “I’m not going to say that. I wish it hadn’t of happened.” (Man Accused)

In the United States, a Public Service Announcement (PSA) is defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in a formal and detailed manner. A PSA is any announcement (including network) for which no charge is made and which promotes programs, activities, or services of federal, state, or local governments, or the programs, activities, or services of non-profit organizations such as the United Way, Red Cross, and ASPCA. PSAs came into being with the entry of the United States into World War II. Radio broadcasters and advertising agencies offered their skills and facilities toward the war effort and established the War Advertising Council which became the official home front propaganda arm of the Office of War Information. The ultimate demonstration of the effectiveness of public service announcements came in 1969. Two years earlier, a federal court upheld the FCC’s application of the Fairness Doctrine to cigarette advertising on radio and television, and ordered stations to broadcast “a significant amount of time” for anti-smoking messages. The PSAs proved so effective that smoking rates began to decline for the first time in history, the tobacco industry withdrew all cigarette advertising, and Congress made such advertising illegal after 1971. (Dessart, George). Hopefully these same results have or will eventually come about discussing the issue of dog abuse and neglect. Public health professionals credit those PSAs with having saved many millions of lives by initiating the decline in American smoking. Some networks sought to distance themselves from the Ad Council, and to set their own agenda by dealing directly with the organizations themselves, which society profoundly sees today. Local stations were under additional pressure from countless new community-based organizations seeking airtime. Many stations created and produced announcements in an effort to meet local needs. (Dessart, George).

Hundreds and thousands of organizations, societies, and NGOs are actively working to increase the awareness of abused and abandoned dogs. What people do not seem to understand is that dogs should have just as much rights as humans do and deserve to live on this planet. Dog and man are no different from each other. Both of them eat, drink, sleep, and play. Most importantly, they both have feelings. Dogs experience sadness, loneliness, and physical hurt just the same as humans do, if not worse. Obviously dogs cannot speak for themselves. In most cases, they cannot fight back but with only the teeth they have in their mouths. People may seem to think they are lower than humans because they cannot do so. Does someone who dares to use a gun against a hopeless and fearful dog think they are better than them? That person who believes so is sadly mistaken. People who abuse and beat dogs to death only do so because they know the dog cannot fight back. Dogs stand no chance against a human bearing a weapon. People may commit these illegal acts against dogs to gain a sense of authority or leadership over them. “Humans choose to fight, but dogs don’t get that choice. Dog fighting is a form of animal abuse. It is cruel and illegal. But the number of people involved continues to grow. Condemning dog fighting is not enough, action needs to be taken,” MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) legend Frank Shamrock said. “The pit bull has a long history in America. In the early 1900’s the United States proudly used pit bulls on World War I posters to symbolize qualities that make up America - friendly, courageous, hardworking, and worthy of respect. I chose my name because I admire the breed for the same reasons. When I hear about pit bulls being used in dog fighting, it makes me angry. I have a choice to step into the cage to fight, but these dogs have no choice. Dog fighting is morally wrong and inhumane. In my opinion it’s torture,” said Andrei “The Pit Bull” Arlovski Kris Crawford, former UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) Heavyweight Champion. (PSAs, Dog Fighting). Torturing, abusing, and fighting dogs is not a sign of strength, it’s an obvious sign of weakness. Dogs are truly a man’s best friend and they will do anything for their owners to love them. The dog has always been a signature symbol of loyalty. It is sad in which some cases their owners cannot treat them the same way back. (ASPCLA)

County residents will soon view actor Dennis Franz on network TV asking them to report any animal cruelty they might see. Franz, who acts in the ABC series “*NYPD Blue*,” recently did a thirty-second public service announcement for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. “PETA sent the new spot specifically to Philadelphia affiliate ABC, CBS and NBC stations covering the Salem County region, after the horrific animal cruelty case concerning a dog found with its nose and mouth taped shut in Lower Alloways Creek. The Philadelphia market is one of the first to receive the PSA, according to Dan Paden, cruelty caseworker with PETA, because of the severity of the crime against the dog. Because of the extent of its injuries, the animal had to be euthanized. ‘The point behind it (the PSA) is that violence against animals needs to be taken seriously, we use it anytime we get reports of really, really heinous, violence acts,’ Paden said. The television spot came a week after the dog’s alleged owner, Robert M. Lamano, 25, of East Lake Road, Woodstown, was charged with four disorderly charges and one liable charge on animal cruelty against the dog, police said. If Lamano is found guilty, he could serve up to two years in jail and owe a fine of up to $4,000, according to police. The first court date in the case has not yet been set, according to Bill Hanby, animal and cruelty investigator at the Lower Alloways Creek Township Police Department. In PETA’s spot, Franz asks viewers to direct any information about animal abuse cases to authorities. ‘The animals and the people in your community are depending on you,’ he said in the announcement. Franz said that sometimes, people who commit animal abuse progress to committing abuse against humans. According to PETA, a 1999 study found that 78 percent of suspects charged with cruelty to animals have also been charged with violent crimes against people. Paden said in addition to the television spot, PETA also sent a letter to the Salem County Prosecutor’s Office, which is prosecuting the case, to ask that penalties are enforced to the fullest extent to insure such abuses do not happen again. The dog, a male weighing about twenty-five pounds when it was found, was tan-colored with white paws and a white chest. Diane Harrell, shelter manager at The Society to Protect Animals in Carneys Point Township, where the dog was taken after it was found, named him “Rusty” because of its color. His original name was ‘Reno’, according to police. A reward leading to the capture of the person or persons involved in the case grew to more than $15,000 from the shelter. Funds poured in from as far away as California, Florida, and Maine, according to Harrell. PETA, the Humane Society of the United States, and Pilesgrove Township Committeeman Bruce Bobbitt also donated money toward the fund.” Recently reported from Erin and PETA (Boyle, Erin L).

“I think the Michael Vick case demonstrated that Americans are largely appalled by animal abuse and that given the motivation, will rise against it. Many sociologists believe that despite some urban crime statistics, we are actually becoming a more compassionate culture. If that’s true, then that compassion will surely reach into the animal kingdom. We should be getting smarter all the time, too. If we are smarter, then we are closer to realizing our responsibility for the other occupants of the planet that do not have the resources for survival that either we have or we have taken from them. For example, you cannot build a housing development on a bear’s hunting ground and then become enraged that he goes through your garbage can, trying to avoid starving. I think the movement toward responsible environmentalism will also evolve into more sensitivity toward the rights of all animals,” said Mrs. Leslie Allman, Tallwood High School’s Media Studies teacher. (Allman, Leslie)

 Sometimes dog abuse seems even worse than human abuse because there are so many laws, sanctuaries, and forms of recourse to protect human victims. Despite tougher animal abuse laws passed in recent years, legally, dogs are still considered a possession, chattel in fact. Supporters of abused dogs have actually come a long way. Laws are getting tougher on animal abusers. Unfortunately, there will always be people who believe animals are just “things”. Forms of punishment cannot possibly be severe enough on those who commit such heinous crimes. Many believe that Michael Vick served his time in jail and so should be forgiven for past mistakes. People can easily take this attitude with the average mugger or thief, but a heart that is cold enough to kill a dog because the dog was not vicious enough, is a heart that remains capable of that violence despite incarceration. As long as there is one dog in a shelter that desperately needs a home, no one should support the business of large scale breeding, even among reputable breeders. Dog enthusiasts would not want any breed to die out, so other organizations and societies need to find better ways to manage and control breeding. Puppy mills breed their dogs in deplorable conditions, which is just another form of harsh dog abuse. Classroom education could be one starting place in means of informing the public, but schools are reluctant to present a topic that could be controversial within families. The ASPCA, PETA, WWF, and other non-profit organizations do an excellent job with their campaigns and informing societies. Commonly seen SPCA commercials with famous singer Sarah McLachlan, are so effective that when people hear the first familiar syllables, they tend to plug their ears, close their eyes, or immediately change the channel. Most humans cannot bear the horrific images and harsh reality of dog abuse… so why not face it instead of ignoring it? “*All beings are fond of themselves, they like pleasure, they hate pain, they shun destruction, they want life and want to live long. To all life is dear; hence their life should be protected.****”*** *–* Mahavira (Animal Cruelty Cases)

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