



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## ROANOKE VALLEY SPCA HAS RECORD-SETTING YEAR

Roanoke, VA. – January 9, 2009 –

The Roanoke Valley SPCA worked diligently throughout the year to prove that it is the “more-than-you-think” shelter with increased emphasis on adoptions of homeless animals and expanded community outreach programs. Year-end figures have been compiled and reveal that 2008 was a record breaking year for the RVSPCA.

The mission of the Roanoke Valley SPCA is to “protect and enhance the quality of life for animals and the people they touch in the Roanoke Valley”. This is accomplished through placement of adoptable pets in permanent homes or with breed rescue groups, providing services to the community that help keep people and pets united, and by helping to create a future community of responsible pet owners through humane education programs to our elementary aged students.

**Pet Adoption:** Adoptions are a big part of what we do. Expanded hours on Friday evening and new hours on Sunday, and increased offsite adoption events have made it more convenient for those wanting to bring a new pet into their families. We have increased partnerships with breed rescue groups, both in and outside of the Commonwealth of Virginia, to save more animals from the Regional Center for Animal Control & Protection (the municipal pound). In all, the RVSPCA’s efforts resulted in the successful adoption of 2,009 homeless dogs, cats, hamsters, guinea pigs, ferrets and rabbits into permanent, loving homes in 2008.

Increasing adoptions of companion animals has resulted in a decrease in the euthanasia rate at the Regional Center for Animal Control & Protection (municipal pound), serving the Roanoke County, Roanoke City, Botetourt County and the Town of Vinton. Nearly 64% of all dogs entering the Regional Center (2 out of every 3) were either returned to their owner, or placed in permanent homes or with breed rescue groups. In 2007, only about 53% of dogs entering

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*RVSPCA, 2008 – Add Two*

the pound were saved. The news for cats is not as encouraging, but showed an improvement in 2008 with nearly 23% of adoptable cats at the pound being returned to their owners or finding new homes, compared to fewer than 17% in 2007.

**Foster Program:** Being able to provide lifesaving foster care for infant and orphaned animals has given those animals the chance they deserve. Temporary respite from the shelter environment has allowed homeless adult animals to learn good manners, basic obedience tasks and how to trust again. Animals that have been fostered are more likely to become valued members of someone's family and roughly 50% (1,014) of the animals adopted in 2008 had spent some time in foster care.

**PET (Pets Eat Two) Program:** The RVSPCA developed the PET Program in January, 2007 to provide food for the pets of recipients of Meals on Wheels so that they would no longer have to share their protein-rich meals with their pet or have to give up their pet because they couldn't feed them. Pre-packaged pet food provided by the RVSPCA is delivered weekly along with normal meal delivery to recipients with pets from the cities of Roanoke and Salem, Roanoke County, and parts of Botetourt County. In 2008, 4,500 pounds of pet food was provided for this purpose.

Since April, 2008, the RVSPCA has been providing pet food to Manna Ministries, operators of a food pantry serving the working poor. The need for pet food has risen dramatically with the downturn in the economy, with an average of 3,000 pounds being distributed each month to families with pets receiving assistance through the pantry; a total of 27,000 pounds in just 8 months. The donated pet food is helping to keep pets and people united; giving the family an alternative to relinquishing their family pet to the local pound when times get tough, and food gets scarce.

In 2008, the RVSPCA provided 31,500 pounds of food to feed the hungry companion animals in the Roanoke Valley. The need will exceed 40,000 pounds of pet food in the coming year.

**Adopt-a-Classroom:** Educators and community leaders recognize the character building benefits of our humane education programs and have consistently contacted the RVSPCA to present programs at their schools, community centers, or here at the our facility. To help deliver our message, we have expanding our outreach program to include *KIND (Kids in Nature's Defense) News*<sup>™</sup>. *KIND News* s<sup>™</sup> has been published since 1983 and is currently used as a curriculum supplement in 35,000 elementary school classrooms nationwide. This classroom newspaper created by the Humane Society of the U.S. teaches children about kindness and respect for people, animals and the environment.

### *RVSPCA, 2008 – Add Three*

To date, 148 classrooms (representing more than 3,000 students) from the area have signed up to participate. Each classroom is provided with 28 copies of *KIND News* each month, September-May. Each issue is tailored to K-2, 2-3 or 5-6 grade classrooms with a teacher's guide for each issue. It also includes a teacher resource book of reproducible worksheets, a calendar of fun facts on helping animals and I.D. cards for the students.

#### ABOUT THE RVSPCA

The Roanoke Valley SPCA is a no-kill limited admission adoption and education center. We provide adoption services for homeless and unwanted animals from the City of Roanoke, Botetourt and Roanoke Counties, and the town of Vinton. Prior to adoption, all animals are spayed/neutered, vaccinated and microchipped. The organization also provides humane pet education; pet assisted therapy programs, and provides donated pet food to the less fortunate in our community. Through programs, services and community outreach, the RVSPCA accomplishes its mission to protect and enhance the quality of life for animals and the people they touch.

The Roanoke Valley SPCA relies on the generosity of the business community for the funds necessary to operate the Adoption & Education Center. It does not receive funding from any governmental body or national animal welfare organization. For more information about the RVSPCA and its services, volunteer opportunities or to make a donation, please call 540.344.4840, or visit [www.rvspca.org](http://www.rvspca.org).

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