

After Action Report



Project “Snip-a-Pit”

Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services
Veterinary Public Health



After Action Report

Organizational Name

Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services Veterinary Public Health
(HCPHES Veterinary Public Health)

Project Name

“Snip a Pit”

Project Completion Date

09/05/08

Project Purpose

The project purpose was to **reduce** intentional and unintentional injuries, transference of infectious diseases, and neighborhood nuisances caused by dangerous pit bull terrier type dogs (pit bulls) in zip code 77015 and adjacent communities.

Purpose Impact

1. Reported unintentional and intentional injuries were reduced by 13 percent;
2. Rabies vaccination compliance increased by 7 percent; and
3. Reported free roaming pit bulls have only decreased by 1 percent.

Short Term Goals

The project’s short term goals were to educate residents and adjacent communities on responsible pit bull ownership, bite prevention, and **spay-neuter at least 25 to 30 pit bull terrier type dogs** within zip code 77015 and adjacent communities utilizing a mobile Spay-Neuter Clinic and PETCO store for dog staging purposes.

Short Term Impact

1. Community involvement in the design and content of “responsible pit bull ownership” message, literature, graphics, T-shirts, and door hangers;
2. Over 3,000 bi-lingual (Spanish and English) community flyers were distributed through 22 local libraries and community centers, seventy five local business owners, the local court house, HCPHES Veterinary Public Health field officers, civic associations, local community fairs and events, HCPHES Veterinary Public Health animal shelter kennel staff, and collaborating community partners;
3. Over 3,000 bi-lingual (Spanish and English) “responsible pit bull ownership” brochures were distributed through 22 local libraries and community centers, seventy five local business owners, the local court house, HCPHES Veterinary Public Health field officers, civic associations, local community fairs and events, HCPHES Veterinary Public Health animal shelter kennel staff, and collaborating community partners;
4. Over 1,000 homes were personally visited through door to door community outreach;



5. Over 300 residents were met and personally talked to at 2 local community events;



6. 48 responsible pit bull t-shirts were distributed amongst the local community collaborators, pit bull owners who spayed-neutered their pit bulls, and participating at-risk youths;
7. 2 newspapers carried articles concerning the pit bull spay-neuter day (Houston Chronicle and The Leader);
8. 4 large posters were displayed at the PETCO store in zip 77015, the local court house in 77015, and at the HCPHES Veterinary Public Health animal shelter; and
9. 29 pit bull terriers were spayed or neutered.

Long Term Goal

The project's **long term goal** is to encourage, support and **rehabilitate** a community's intolerance for free roaming and mishandled dangerous pit bull terrier type dogs and reduce the number of pit bull related incidents within zip code 77015 and adjacent communities.

Long-term impact will be measured and tracked. The culture and treatment toward pit bull terriers is deeply ingrained in this community. However, the first step toward changing a community's culture and belief system is to garner its acceptance and trust.

Community members were impressed with the attitude of all project members and messaging toward the pit bull. Our goal to **rejoice** in the merits of the pit bull and over time reinforce responsible pit bull ownership was established with this project. The project provided a spring board and starting point to continue to help the residents of this community **rehabilitate** its culture to one of responsible pit bull ownership.

Project Summary

Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services, Veterinary Public Health (HCPHES VPH), in collaboration with Spay-Neuter Assistance Program (SNAP), Youth advocate programs and PETCO Inc. (PETCO), and in direct response to the public safety concerns in zip code 77015, received the sum of \$5,000 from The PETCO Foundation to fund the net costs of one “Snip a Pit” spay- neuter mobile clinic event and the printing of the required “Snip a Pit” community educational materials.

Focus Groups/Materials Development

The “Snip a Pit” community educational goal was to use \$1,967 of the PETCO Foundation grant to develop a message and materials encouraging responsible pit bull ownership, community intolerance to dangerous dogs, and bite prevention in zip 77015. To aid in message development, HCPHES VPH worked with members of an at-risk youth group to develop a fashionable T-shirt design that promotes responsible pit bull ownership and educational materials that have a style and language that is enticing, useful, interesting, and targeted to the younger at-risk youth community population.

HCPHES VPH held 2 focus groups of at-risk youths aged between 14 to 17 years of age. The feedback from the at-risk youths was used directly in the development of “responsible



pit bull owner” bi-lingual brochures, door hangers, posters, and t-shirt designs. The youths’ honest and forthright responses were significant in the development of our message.

The youths were randomly selected based upon their age and circumstance. In spite of the random selection, 75 percent of the participating youths owned a pit bull terrier type dog.

A copy of the youth pit bull feedback has been included in the attachment section.

In particular we noted that Harris County at-risk youths:

- are proud of their pit bulls and view them as “the best dog in America”;
- use these dogs for street validation and credibility;
- are conversant with the terminology and process of dog fighting;
- believe a responsible pit bull owner keeps their dog on a heavy chain at all times;
- own their pit bulls to hide street “weakness”;
- have little to no concept of appropriate care and maintenance; and
- assume pit bulls only have theft to fear from humans.



35lb chain that was found on a stray 20lb pit bull

Materials developed directly from the PETCO Foundation grant:

The youths assisted HCPHES VPH with materials content, style, and messaging. In particular, they urged us to reinforce the beauty, intelligence and athletic ability of the pit bull whilst educating on how to appropriately care for this “special” breed.

Materials developed and distributed:

- bi-lingual responsible pit bull ownership brochures;
- responsible pit bull ownership t-shirts
- bi-lingual responsible pit bull ownership door hangers

Copies included in attachments

The youth group also urged HCPHES VPH to educate pit bull owners through You Tube, Facebook, My Space, and Rap artists.

HCPHES VPH is currently researching appropriate You Tube, Facebook, My Space and local Rapper artists to further the responsible pit bull message distribution.

Responsible Pit Bull Message Success:

The fashionable black and silver look and feel of the responsible pit bull materials resulted in a popularity and demand for additional items.



In response to this demand, HCPHES Veterinary Public Health solicited funding to furnish the following materials to aid the educational campaign of Responsible Pit Bull Ownership:

- 2,000 printed dog leashes;
- 2,000 printed book covers and posters; and
- 1,000 printed pencils.
-

HCPHES Veterinary Public Health also printed and funded the following Responsible Pit Bull Ownership materials

- 200 T-shirts with the same look and message
- 1,000 flyers

The Spay-Neuter Day:



Zip code 77015 area is typically resistant to spay-neuter programs for their pit bull dogs. In spite of the anticipated resistance, the mobile spay-neuter clinic was met with a crowd of pit bull dogs and their owners. **In all, 29 pit bulls (75 percent were large females) were spayed or neutered that day.**



While pit bull owners were waiting to register their pit bull dogs for spay-neuter services, HCPHES VPH staff and volunteers actively surveyed pit bull owners. The intent of the survey was to discern decision making factors for spay-neuter services and areas that this spay-neuter clinic drew from.

Most notable was that 80 percent of the participants acquired their pit bulls as family pets. Over 60 percent of the dogs were untrained to basic dog commands or walking on a leash. Only 5 percent of respondents admitted to their dogs having multiple litters and yet at least 25 percent of the females spayed that day showed signs of multiple litters. Lastly, 53 percent of the participants came from a secondary high risk area (zip codes 77093 & 77039) that is particularly resistant to spay-neuter services for any breed of dog or cat.

Rejoicing for Responsible Pit Bull Ownership:

In accordance with the celebration of the pit bull dog, we ensured each participating owner was greeted with joy and thanks for being a responsible pit bull owner. Upon collection of their newly spayed or neutered pit bull, they were presented with a gift package of the pit bull T-shirt and supporting materials. Each participant and their dog also posed for a photo opportunity.

Crowd waiting for pit bull spay-neuter day



Celebrating a spayed pit bull!



Celebrating a spayed pit bull!

Celebrating a spayed pit bull!

Celebrating a neutered pit bull!



Hot Wash Report:

Upon close of the “Snip-a-Pit” project, HCPHES VPH chaired a “hot wash” (after incident meeting) to quickly ascertain what worked well and what could be improved upon.

<u>Room for Improvement</u>	<u>Worked Well</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spay-neuter of pit bulls is still viewed in this zip code as an activity which greatly reduces the pit bulls’ strength, value and reputation. • 60 percent of the participating pit bulls are untrained requiring the full day use of at least 3 animal control officers/kennel technicians • 25 percent of the pit bulls were inadequately constrained in ill fitting collars and/or breakable collars and leashes. All dogs should be immediately fitted with appropriate collars and leashes • 53 percent of participants came from a secondary high risk area some 17 miles from the clinic site, realizing that the goal to change the culture of 77015 will take many more programs and interventions • Many residents of 77015 stated that they were unable to bring their pit bull for spay-neuter services as it was held on a Friday. They requested spay-neuter services on a Saturday or Sunday 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing community youth to assist with message development resulted in brochures and T-shirts that have become sought after commodities • Intensive responsible pit bull messaging encouraged a typically resistant population group to spay-neuter their pit bulls • Celebrating the pit bull with T-shirts and pit bull related information encouraged those who are typically reticent • Extensive community and partner involvement and collaboration • Changing the project name to “Free Spay-Neuter for Pit Bulls” • Utilizing Animal Control Officers to assist with crowd and pit bull control • Proof of income or residence was not required which encouraged residents who shy from the local authorities to bring their dogs • Use of the PETCO - Uvalde store for staging of dogs for surgery • Utilizing bi-lingual messaging in all materials development encouraged the Spanish speaking residents

Conclusion:

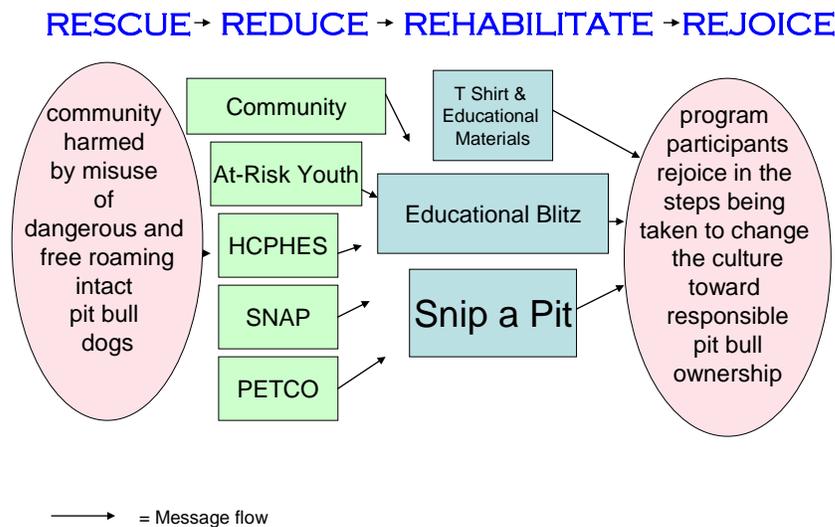
Thanks to the kind generosity of the PETCO Foundation, HCPHES VPH and collaborating partners, the message of Responsible Pit Bull Ownership and encouragement of spay-neuter services was achieved in zip code 77015 and filtered over to zips 77093 and 77039. Also 29 pit bull terriers were spayed and neutered from primary or secondary high risk communities.

The community appeared grateful for the attention and concern given to their pit bulls. They liked the pit bull messaging and quickly adopted the phrase “Off the chain-On the leash” and “Train – Don’t Chain”.

In particular, the community of zip codes 77093 and 77039 repeatedly requested for similar pit bull spay and neuter programs in their area.

The PETCO Foundation goals of **Rescue, Reduce, Rehabilitate,** and **Rejoice** were strategically maintained throughout the project.

SNIP A PIT – The “Four R’s” for zip code 77015



After Action Report

Attachments

Grant Expenditures	Page 11
Youth Feedback	Page 12
Pit Bull Spay-Neuter Survey	Page 15
Survey Results	Page 16
Responsible Pit Bull Brochure	Page 17
Door Hangers	Page 18
Flyers	Page 19
T-Shirt Design	Page 20

PETCO Foundation Grant Expenditures

Activity	Income	Expense
PETCO Foundation Grant	\$5,000	
Printing for 4 posters, 48 T-Shirts, 2,000 Door Hangers, 5,000 Pit Bull Brochures		\$1,967
Contract rate for mobile Spay-Neuter Clinic		\$3,000
Total	\$5,000	\$4,967

Balance: \$33

Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services – Veterinary Public Health has a balance of \$33 in its Memorial Trust Fund account and shall utilize this \$33 toward the printing of additional community pit bull T-Shirts.

Receipts available upon request.

Youth Feedback on Pit Bull Terrier Type Dogs

Question 1: What is a pit bull?

“The best dog in America”

“Everyone’s favorite dog”

“Handsome”

“Vicious”

“Sweetest dog if trained”

“Protection”

“Killer”

“Dog fighter”

“Mean”

“Cool” (what is cool?) = “looks mean, brave, protects, strong appearance and a keeper”

Note:

50 percent thought of the pit bull as a breed

50 percent thought of the pit bull as a “mutt”

Question 2: Why would a person own a pit bull?

“People steal pit bulls”

“Appearance”

“To not show weakness”

“Dog fighting”

“Entertainment”

“Make money from dog fighting, dog auctions, dog sales, breeding and puppies, dog shows, weight classes, and stud fees”

“Man’s best friend”

Question 3: How many of you own a pit bull?

75% show of hands

Question 4: How much does a pit bull cost?

\$600 - \$700

Question 5: What do you do if you see a loose pit bull?

Unanimous immediate response from all attendees was “**RUN**”

Comments concerning loose pit bull:

“Loose dog are happy dogs”

“Loose dogs escape because they are strong”

“Loose dogs bite and get into garbage”

Question 6: When someone is walking a pit bull on a street what do you think of them?

The person is “alright”, a “crack-head”, “cool”

“The dog is strong so it shows the person is strong to be able to walk a pit bull”

“The person is mean because they have a mean dog”

Youth Feedback on Pit Bull Terrier Type Dogs (continued)

Question 7: What is “responsible ownership” when walking a pit bull on the street?

“Leashes are not safe, a responsible pit bull owner would walk their dog on a chain”

“Leashes can break when the dog pulls away from the owner”

Question 8: Would you talk to someone who was walking a pit bull?

50 percent responded with a “YES”

“I would want to know the particulars of the dog and what it does

“I would want to ask about the dog’s breeding stock”

“I would want to pet it”

50 percent responded with a “NO”

“I know the dog is dangerous because of what is reported on the news”

“I do not talk to strangers”

“I would be scared of their dog”

Question 9: How can you protect pit bulls from people?

The first answer was “stop them from being stolen”

The youth demonstrated an inability to connect dogs being harmed by people with anything other than them being stolen. This concept of people harming pit bulls took some discussion, showing photographs of PBTT with severe mange, starving, puppy mills and on a chain with missing ears, missing eye and scars, and a tour of shelter to show abused, sick and fighting PPTT dogs

After a tour of the HCPHES VPH animal shelter, discussion and thought provoking photographs, the group told us:

“Stop dog fighting”

“Raise pit bulls in communities with less people”

“Take the chains off and let the dogs run free”

“Train the owners”

“Only allow a female to be bred once”

“Have tougher laws and send people to jail”

Question 10: How can you protect people from pit bulls?

“Only use short leashes/chains”

“Do not allow people to pet pit bulls”

“Stop putting dogs in chains in yards as it causes aggressive behavior”

“Do not have dogs in front yards...make a law for pit bulls to only be in back yards”

“Make is mandatory for pit bull owners to post “beware of dog” signs”

Question 11: What do people need to learn to be responsible pit bull owners?

“Correct placement – only let people who know how to handle have one”

“Teach them what a good looking pit bull should look like (cropped ears, docked tail, strong posture and lots of muscles)”

“# 1 - always use a chain”

“Have the proper “free” environment and let dogs run free”

“Do not anger a pit bull”

“Do not fight a pit bull”

“Give the dog their shots”

“Never tie a pit bull up”

“Put warning signs up”

Youth Feedback on Pit Bull Terrier Type Dogs (continued)

“Neuter after first breeding”

“Do not train the dog with hitting – use positive training”

Question 12: What can we train people to do?

“Socialize the puppy and expose it to small animals”

“Go to dog training classes”

“Read books and educational materials on basic dog obedience”

Question 13: If we were to offer something to help people with their pit bulls what should we provide?

Free dog training classes

Free dog walking chains

Free dog muzzles

Free beware of the dog signs

Question 14: If we were to offer a community training program for pit bulls dogs, what should we provide?

“You can’t train people”

“Teach people how to stay calm and how to act around a pit bull

“Teach people how to be a dog’s best friend”

“Teach a class on animal safety”

“Teach a class on what dog cruelty is”

Question 15: How do we disseminate information? What do you listen to or read?

You-Tube, My Space & RAP songs

BET Channel News

Have stories about pit bulls on Sponge Bob and The Simpsons

Use celebrities such as **Beyonce Knowles** and **Paul Wall** - The People’s Champ.

Questions 16: What does “Snip-a-Pit” mean to you?

“Free dog ear cropping”

Pit Bull Spay-Neuter Questionnaire



Pit Bull Spay-Neuter Questionnaire



Is your dog? Male Female Your dog's age:

How long owned?

Where did you acquire? Bought/Breeder Bought/Road
Friend Stray Internet Have Parent

How much did you pay: \$

Why did you get the dog? Companion Companion/Pet Protection/Yard
Protection/House Looks Good Knows Other Breed Reputation

Has the dog had/sired any litters? Yes No

How many?

Has the dog received training? Sit Stay Walk on leash Come
(Circle if trained)
House Broken Protect Fetch
Plays with other pets Plays with family None

How do you keep your dog from getting out of your yard?
(Circle if contained)
Keep it in house Fenced yard/enclosure Electronic Fence
Tie with chain/rope Nothing needed/dog stays home
Dog escapes

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Pit Bull Spay-Neuter Mobile Clinic Survey Results

75 percent were female
25 percent male

Zip Codes of Responders

53 percent lived in Aldine or immediate surrounding area

Where Did You Get Your Dog?

Almost 50 percent came from a friend, otherwise the dogs were strays off the street

How Much Did You Pay for Your Dog?

Over 90 percent of the dogs were free

Why did you get the dog?

Over 80 percent adopted the dog as a family pet or companion

Has the dog mated or had puppies?

Over 76 percent admitted their dogs had mated

How many puppies?



However, only 5 percent admitted to their dog bearing litters, even though at least seven female dogs showed signs of multiple litters

Is the dog trained?

Less than 30 percent of dogs were house broken
Only 40 percent of dogs were trained to walk on a leash
No dogs knew all basic training commands (sit, stay, down, come, fetch)

Where do you keep your dog?

One third of the dogs were chained in their yards
However, over 90 percent of dogs lived in fenced yards

Why did you bring your dog today?

Over 80 percent of dog owners stated they did not want anymore puppies
The balance wanted to reduce roaming and increased healthy benefits for their dogs

How Did You Find Out About this Spay/ Neuter Event?

40 percent from the local Aldine Leader newspaper
20 percent were from door hangers
20 percent heard about the clinic from a friend
20 percent found a notice on SNAP/HCPHES VPH website or store flyer

Responsible Pit Bull Brochure

Door Hangers

Flyers



Stop The Cycle.
www.snapus.org

Free



www.countypets.com

Government Assistance Not Required
Free Spay & Neuter for
Pit Bulls
August 22, 2008
at PETCO (I-10 & Uvalde)

For information call 713-862-3863 or 281-999-3191

- First come, First served
- Dog must be on a leash
- Arrive before 7am
- No food or water after 10 pm
- Multiple dogs accepted **only** if less than 30 on list
- Dog must be at least 3 months

Sponsored by PETCO Foundation



Harris County
HCPHES
Public Health & Environmental Services



Stop The Cycle.
www.snapus.org

GRATIS



www.countypets.com

No es necesario recibir asistencia del gobierno para asistir este día
Esterializacion GRATIS para perros
PIT BULL
August 22, 2008
en PETCO (1-10 & Uvalde)
Para más información llamar
713-862-3863 o 281-999-3191

- Primero al llegar, Sera el primero atendido
- Los perros deben ir sujetos con correa
- Llegar antes de las 7am
- No le de comida, ni agua despues de las 10 pm
- Se aceptaran perros múltiples por familia solamente si hay menos de 30 personas en línea
- Perro debe tener al menos 3 meses

Patrocinado por PETCO Foundation



Harris County
HCPHES
Public Health & Environmental Services

T-Shirt Design

