

# HOUSTON **PetTalk**

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NATURAL HEALTH

## BACH FLOWER REMEDIES



**HOUSTON ASTROS &  
SAVING ANIMALS:**  
A WINNING TEAM FOR ANIMAL ADOPTION



Carlos Lee and adoptable dog from HCPHES.

# A NEW PITCH FOR THE HOUSTON ASTROS

Saving Animals and Astros Team up By: Kim Hogstram

Looking for another home run, the Houston Astros and Saving Animals have teamed up for the second year to produce the Astros "Pets and Players" calendar. The calendar's first year of production, 2007, proved that fans loved the idea as they snatched up copies to support their hometown team and the homeless animals of the Bayou City.

The calendar is the brainchild of Astros' pitcher Dave Borkowski and his animal loving wife, Jill. Dave approached Saving Animals with the idea and his wife Jill insisted that she would "get things done" for the animals in Houston. Saving Animals embraced the idea and now the second annual calendar for 2008 is rolling off the presses.

The calendar is produced through a collaboration of people and organizations willing to help the plight of homeless animals. The Astros team players pose with homeless dogs and cats from HCPHES (the Harris County animal shelter) or with their own pets. Photos are taken and the calendars are designed, printed and sold for charity, with proceeds benefiting Saving Animals.

This year, Bayer Animal Health participated as the underwriter for the calendar. Bayer also provided special coupons for the resQ microchip system and Advantage flea control products inside each calendar.

With the 2007 calendar scoring big with the public, the Astros players were keen on participating in this year's photo shoot. Some of the players who sat for portraits with pets include Carlos Lee, Brad Ausmus, Brandon Backe, Mark Loretta, Jason Jennings, Woody Williams, Dave Borkowski, Morgan Ensberg, Adam Everett, Brad Lidge, Trever Miller, Brian Moehler, Orlando Palmerio, Chris Sampson, Dan Wheeler, Roy Oswalt and Chad Qualls.

The Astros 2008 "Pets and Players" calendar will be available at some home games, The Shed gift shop in Minute Maid park as well as every area Petco store. You can also order online at [www.savinganimals.org](http://www.savinganimals.org) and [www.astros.com](http://www.astros.com). Each \$15 calendar purchase goes right to work in the animal community.

## Putting The Proceeds To Good Use

Sean Hawkins, founder of Saving Animals, envisions communities where every dog and cat has a forever home. Founded in 2005, the mission of Saving Animals is to eliminate financial, geographical, and cultural barriers that cause animal suffering. Saving Animals provides the highest quality sterilization and veterinary services for dogs and cats and promotes their physical and emotional well being through education and adoption.

Saving Animals, working with the Animal Alliance of Galveston County, opened the first of its area high-quality, low-cost spay and neuter clinics in La Marque, with more clinics to follow in the Greater Houston area.

Partnering with Petco and the Petco Foundation, Harris County and the City of Houston's animal shelters, and Northwest Mall, Saving Animals opened the very first permanent off-site Pet Adoption Center for homeless animals that would otherwise not receive exposure to the community. The dogs and cats in search of their special human family are spayed or neutered, vaccinated and treated for parasites before they arrive at the Pet Adoption Center.

Hawkins is dedicated to making Houston the first major American city where every dog and cat has a home. "Thanks to the generous donation of the players' time," states Hawkins, "the Astros' pet calendar will gener-



ate funds needed to increase pet adoptions and expand animal sterilization services helping to end animal homelessness in Houston.”

People in Houston and Harris County also benefit from calendar sales through the Astros in Action Foundation. Utilizing the strength of the national pastime, the Astros in Action Foundation enhances the quality of life in our community by supporting educational, health, and spiritual endeavors. The foundation funds the efforts of non-profit organizations or programs related to Literacy, Education/ Scholarships, Health Issues, Faith Based Organizations, and Reviving Baseball in the Inner City.

**Who Makes it Happen**

Hundreds of volunteer hours and a generous financial commitment from Bayer Animal Health made the calendar possible. Bayer’s underwriting donation allows

for 100 percent of the proceeds from calendar sales to go directly to the charities.

Bayer is genuinely dedicated to making the world a better place for pets and people. The organization is renowned for helping its customers succeed by offering solutions to the complex challenges animal owners bring to veterinarians, partnering with like-minded educational and professional organizations who share Bayer’s vision, and doing it all while respecting and protecting the environment and global resources. This is a passion and unites all of Bayer. They call it the Bayer Spirit.

Another “team player” significantly involved in the creation of the calendar is Houston photographer Evin Thayer. Thayer masterfully manages to produce images of wiggling dogs and fractious cats, held by players who frequently have only minutes avail-

able to take the photo before that day’s big game. Thayer donates his considerable talent, time and resources to get the perfect shot. Thayer’s work is also at the heart of starting Houston’s annual firefighter’s benefit calendar.

Another important team player making the calendar a reality is Petco Foundation. Paul Jolly, Petco Foundation’s president, has worked his magic behind the scenes for the second year making it possible to purchase a calendar at every area Petco store. The Petco Foundation was established in 1999 to promote a wide variety of educational and hands-on activities for animals nationwide. Since then, Petco Foundation has raised over \$31 million to distribute to organizations that help animals. Petco Foundation played a major role in Houston recently in emergency conditions to fund evacuation, care and treatment

for thousands of Katrina and Rita animal evacuees.

**The Bottom Line**

Many volunteers worked to make the calendar initiative a reality but one of the most instrumental volunteers was Astros’ pitcher Dave Borkowski and his family, wife Jill, dogs Bailey and Belle and their cat, Camden. With their vision and leadership Dave and Jill were the driving force behind creating, producing, and selling the “Pets and Players” calendars.

Together, they initiated the relationship between the Astros and Saving Animals. They enlisted the support of players, the front office and Astros’ management for the project. Although that was “the easy part” according to Jill, the toughest tasks were organizing the players and photo shoot, guiding the talent of Active Imagination to design and produce the product, managing printing quotes and obtaining all of the permissions and clearances needed for the players to participate.

And if that’s not playing many positions on the team, Jill can even be found selling the calendars to fans and Dave never misses a beat when a reporter unexpectedly needs on-camera remarks about the importance of spaying and neutering pets.

It is safe to say that the Houston Astros, Petco Foundation and Petco stores, Bayer Animal Health, Evin Thayer, Active Imagination and Dave and Jill Borkowski share a dream, the very same dream identified in the Saving Animals vision statement- a world where there are no homeless dogs and cats.

C’mon Houston, let’s make the 2008 Astros “Players And Pets” calendar another home run! 🐾



Astros' pitcher Woody Williams and adoptable dog from HCPHES.

