

# AMIGOS DE LOS ANIMALES DE GUANAJUATO, A.C.



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[www.amigosanimalesgto.org](http://www.amigosanimalesgto.org)

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## Combating a Vicious and Illegal Sport

On the morning of July 27, a woman walking her dog along a dirt road on the outskirts of Guanajuato came upon a badly mauled dog, barely alive. His bloody head and neck were covered with bites, and there were bites on other parts of his body.

The woman immediately alerted a member of Amigos de los Animales, who took the dog to Dr. Maru Herrera, one of the veterinarians in our program. Given the seriousness of the dog's injuries, Dr. Herrera suggested euthanizing him. Seeing that the dog was conscious and believing that he deserved an act of kindness after his terrible ordeal, the volunteer asked her to save him if she could.

Dr. Herrera gave him an analgesic to reduce the pain, began an intravenous drip to reduce shock and rehydrate the animal, and administered a strong antibiotic. Her assistants then gently bathed the dog's head and neck to expose and clean the numerous bites. Fortunately, the dog's eyes were not injured, and he looked imploringly at his rescuers. Dr. Herrera then anesthetized him and cleaned and treated his worst wounds. As she shaved the afflicted area in preparation for the surgery, she discovered a scar suggesting that

the dog had been bound with wire around his neck.

We suspect that this young dog was used as bait for fighting dogs. A witness saw two young men with two pit bulls leaving the area near the spot where the injured dog was later found. Their dogs had cropped ears and wore heavy leather harnesses that covered their chests.



*Vito immediately after his rescue*

It is illegal to mistreat or torture an animal in the state and the city of Guanajuato. Organized dog-fighting is specifically prohibited, and punishable by

finer—though, as yet, not by incarceration. Unfortunately, it is all too common, and some young men use aggressive dogs to parade their own virility. Through one of our billboards, an article in a popular newspaper, and our talks with pet owners and school children, we have encouraged people who witness dog fights to report them to the authorities. The authorities promise to treat such reports as confidential and to investigate the charges.

**Organized dog fighting is illegal but common in Guanajuato.**

The injured dog in this case was lucky. His spinal injuries did not result in permanent paralysis. He got excellent medical care, thanks to Dr. Herrera and the Amigos volunteer who paid his medical bill. Amigos de los Animales paid for his sterilization and vaccinations. After he was finally able to walk again—you can see him taking tentative steps on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TSCWJAEmPg>—he spent a few weeks being fostered by Marlene Davis, a devoted volunteer from Mex-Can Partners, who posted him on Mex-Can's website. And best of all, Vito, as we named him, found a perfect home in Victoria, Canada, with Carol-Anne and Robert Stiles and their other dog, Barney. The Stiles paid Vito's foster expenses and airfare.



*Vito at Marlene's while in rehab*



*Vito with Carol-Anne and Barney at his new home in Victoria, Canada*

Carol-Anne wrote that shortly after Vito arrived at the Stiles' home, he decided to try out Barney's bed. "They actually both were squeezed into it at one point, so Robert bought a new one today and it looks like they have decided that Barney gets the new bed and Vito gets the old one."

You may ask, wouldn't it have been better to let this dog die and spend that money instead on treating a lot of dogs? Of course we cannot save every dog we find. Some are too ill or too injured, or do not have the luck of being rescued by someone determined to save their life. We try to make rational decisions about such cases. But there are times when we decide we must do everything possible to right a terrible wrong.

## A Multinational Family Comes to Guanajuato

by Marion Pritchard

*Most of us know at least one mixed-nationality couple. But recently a couple moved to Guanajuato with six pets—three dogs and three cats—that they adopted in three countries: Canada, Tanzania, and Guatemala. They have added one more dog to the family from Guanajuato, bringing the grand total to seven. Canadians Lyle and Marion Pritchard have had an itinerant life, as Lyle is in mining. They spent four years in Tanzania and two years in Guatemala before Lyle accepted a position as underground manager at el Cubo Mine in Guanajuato. Marion worked with the SPCA in Canada and volunteered at an animal shelter in Guatemala.*

**I** first met Minnie while working at the animal shelter in Dryden, Ontario, Canada. Minnie had been aban-

done in a local park, and Animal Control had picked her up. She was to be kept for five days, and if no one claimed her then Animal Control would euthanize her. On the last day, I asked Animal Control to release her to our care, and they agreed. Minnie was in poor condition: hair matted, emaciated, and in need of a home. I took her to our home to bathe her, and all it took was one lick on the face and those big brown eyes; she was never leaving our home. That was in 2002. Since then Minnie has been all over the world with us. She is accepting of all the other animals and loves everyone.



*Minnie, adopted in Ontario, Canada*

While in Mwanza, Tanzania, for a weekend getaway from the mine site where we were living in 2004, Lyle heard a mewing in the bushes at our hotel. Upon searching he found a little kitten so small that it fit in the palm of his hand. This poor kitten had such a bad eye infection that her eyes were fused with the discharge. We took her into our room, cleaned her eyes, and fed her some milk. She was too young to lap the milk, so we had to feed her with a syringe. She survived the weekend; and once we got her back to our home, I treated her with antibiotics for a respiratory infection she had and also treated her eye infection. To our delight Simba, as we named her, thrived. We also discovered that Simba was an African wildcat and had a distinct eating habit: she would eat meat and nothing else. The African wildcat is very similar to a feral cat. Simba lived with us in Canada for a time but did not appreciate the winter weather there. She is very happy to be in a warm climate again.

The same weekend that we found Simba we were given Abby, our next dog, by a woman in Mwanza who does animal rescue there. Abby was quite young and was being trained to be a guard dog at one of the Mwana fish plants. The training that these puppies are subjected to is extremely cruel, so Abby came to us



*Simba, adopted in Mwanza, Tanzania*

with a lot of issues. She did not know how to play and was afraid of men. It took about four months of care and love for Abby to start enjoying her life. She still has some social issues with other dogs but has done very well with her blended family. Abby also hated the Canadian winters.



*Abby, adopted in Mwanza, Tanzania*

After wintering in Canada we had the opportunity to move to Guatemala. There I started helping out at an animal shelter in Sumpango. The Animal Aware Hounds Heights Shelter houses well over 150 dogs and 80 cats. They also do many spay/neuter/vaccination clinics and education programs to teach about the overpopulation of animals. The shelter's managers Xenni and Martin do a fabulous job of helping these animals. While helping in the cattery one day, I met Carlito and Margarita. They were snuggled together in a basket, and I could not separate them. So home they came with me. Carlito is a handful, always off exploring and worrying us. My neighbors in Guatemala grew tired of

hearing me calling for Carlito at all hours. He wanders here too, but now I try not to worry so much when he takes off. Margarita is a real little lady, always keeping herself clean and pretty, and she stays at home.

At the shelter one day, a little dog was brought in from Sumpango. This poor little one had had her front left leg chopped off by someone wielding a



*Carlito and Margarita, adopted in Sumpango, Guatemala*

machete. The clinic vet was on holidays, and so I asked if I could take her to my vet in Guatemala City. They agreed, and that very night she had surgery. She then spent the next two months recovering from her surgery. We also treated her for parasites and had her vaccinated and spayed. Minnie and Abby accepted her right away; they seemed to know how hurt she was and just welcomed her to our home. Cassidy looks identical to Minnie but is only about one-third of Minnie's size. She has the most loving personality, and she does not let her disability slow her down. She keeps up with all the other dogs on our Sunday morning hikes.



*Cassidy, adopted in Sumpango, Guatemala*

Arriving in Guanajuato with the gang, we found a house with a large yard. But there was a problem: two dogs were already living at this house and their owners wanted them to stay. Unfortunately, Tigre, an older dog who belonged to the former residents, could not get

along with our dogs and was constantly biting them. With help from a friend, Tigre found a new home, and Nellie, who accepted our dogs, stayed. [See Tigre's story in the April 2011 issue of the Newsletter, found at our website.] Nellie is about eight years old and was a rescue from the streets of Guanajuato. She had to have some tumors removed a couple of months ago, but has recovered and is doing wonderfully. She now plays with the other dogs and is very happy.



*Nellie, adopted in Guanajuato, Mexico*

So that is how we came to have four dogs and three cats from two continents. Who knows where our next adventure lies, but one thing we know for sure: no pet gets left behind. Our animals are all world travelers, and we have actually turned down jobs in countries that would not allow them to move with us.

## Our Fall Sterilization Blitz a Mixed Success

On Sunday, September 26, we held our 28th campaign since starting Amigos in 2001. We've learned from previous campaigns how many things can go wrong, but there are always surprises. This time we forgot an important rule: always secure keys to the school where the campaign is to be held at least 24 hours before we deliver the carloads of equipment. In addition, there are some factors over which we have little or no control—such as illness among our volunteer surgeons.

This campaign was to be held in the primary school of the village of Cuevas, near the city of Guanajuato. A couple of weeks before the campaign we met with the school director, who agreed to let us have the use of two classrooms for the campaign. A week before the campaign we visited the school and, with the director's permission, interrupted the regular instruction to tell the children about the campaign, leaving fly-



*Amigos Vice President Julia Salido, speaking to children at the primary school "Ignacio Ramírez"*

ers with the teachers to give to the children's parents at the end of the day.

The Sunday before the campaign we arranged for it to be announced at the local church and handed out flyers outside the church. We put up posters around the village announcing the campaign, and we announced it as well in neighboring villages.

So far, so good. Then on the day before the campaign we arrived at the school, our vehicles loaded with equipment, to set up for anesthesia, surgery, recovery. But we were not able to get into the school because the director had forgotten to give the keys to the village delegate. We spent a couple of hours trying in vain to track down the school's custodian or the director, neither of whom live in the village.

Finally, a local resident came to our rescue,



*Amigos president Eduardo Rodríguez hanging a tarp*

offering us the veranda of her family's home for the campaign. We checked out the site, decided it would work for us, and dropped off the equipment there. Because this campaign would be held outdoors, we would have to set up the equipment in the morning, rather than run the risk of having it disappear during the night.

Next morning some of our volunteers arrived in Cuevas very early to post signs indicating the new location for the campaign and begin setting up the equipment. Hastily procured tarps were hung around the area designated as the surgical unit to protect the vets and their patients from the sun. A tent was used for the recovery unit. To our relief, pet owners began arriving soon afterward, and we were pleased at the good turnout. We were pretty sure we could get the campaign going by 9:30, only half an hour late.

But by 10:30 we still had no surgeons. Dr. Miguel Ochoa, who handles the anesthesia for us during our campaigns, was the only veterinarian on the scene. His wife, also a veterinarian, was convalescing from surgery and could not participate. Another vet in our program had informed us the day before that he was ill and could not come. A second vet eventually arrived, then a third, and finally two more. One of them was suffering from a terrible cold and sore back. To compensate for the shortage of surgeons, Dr. Ochoa both anesthetized the animals and performed some of the surgeries himself.

To make the situation still more challenging, almost all of the cases were adult female dogs. Such cases take much longer than sterilizations of males or even female puppies. One dog was pregnant (another complication) and still another had a mammary tumor.



*Pet owners waiting to register their dogs and cats*



*A girl and her puppy awaiting their turn*



*Dr. Octavio Centeno operating on a puppy*



*Dr. Miguel Ochoa operating in our makeshift surgical unit*



*Vicky Moore talking with children about the humane treatment of animals*

As a result of all these factors, the vets were able to sterilize only 25 animals before it was time to pack up for the day.

Fifty-seven animals were registered to be sterilized. Most owners had made a modest donation to Amigos when they registered their pets. We told the owners of those animals not yet sterilized that they could bring them to any one of the clinics of the veterinarians who participate in our program and have them sterilized there at no additional cost. Amigos would

pick up the balance of the vets' charge.

To our immense relief, the people who had waited all day for their pets to be sterilized, only to be told that they would need to take the animals to a clinic instead, understood our dilemma and did not complain or demand that we refund their donations. They accepted the situation cheerfully, some even helping us load our vehicles. We are very grateful to them, to the volunteers—including the 14 high school students who donated a day of public service to our cause—and to the owners of the home in Cuevas where the campaign was held.

## **A Grand Time Had by All at Our July Brunch**

**W**e skipped our annual February fundraiser this year and held one instead on July 17. Dr. Virgilio Fernández and his wife Estela Cordero generously offered to host a brunch at their beautiful home in the Guanajuato sub-



*Estela Cordero (front left) chatting with Jan and Renick McClellan*

urb of Marfil. About 75 people attended and were treated not only to a wide variety of delicious dishes, but also to cabaret entertainment ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Classical pianist Marta García Renart and flautist Mara Tillett came from Querétaro to perform music having animal themes. Some of the pieces were composed by Maestra García. Kate Burt, an American soprano now living in Guanajuato, sang several American classic tunes, adapting them to the occasion by changing some of their words. For example, "Ain't Misbehavin'," she told us, was the lament of a cat that had been left alone for the day. The newly formed and under-rehearsed group called the Amigos Follies performed the finale.

All of the food for the brunch was donated by the hosts and other Amigos volunteers, with the result that the proceeds were pure profit—11,200 mxp in all. Our sincere thanks to Virgilio and Estela, Julieta Adriana Gutiérrez Ramírez, Gloria Marín Olmedo, Hugo Anaya, Ron Mann and Sandra Ward, Marion and Lyle Pritchard, Karen and Lalo Rodríguez, Gilberto Salazar, and Juan Jesús Vargas for preparing the delicious food. And our special thanks to Kate Burt, Marta García Renart, and Mara Tillett for providing the serious entertainment, and to Kate Burt, Lalo Rodríguez, Chuck Windsor, and Sandra Ward for being willing to make fools of themselves.

Marta and Mara have produced a CD entitled "Los Animales en la Música ... la Música en los Animales," which contains some of the pieces they performed at the brunch. The CD is available from the following chains: Librerías Gandhi, Educal, and Mix Up. You can also order a copy by contacting [luzam@prodigy.net.mx](mailto:luzam@prodigy.net.mx), the distributor.



*Marta García Renart (piano) and Mara Tillett García (flute) performing music with animal themes*



*Kate Burt singing some old standards with new lyrics*



*The Amigos Follies in their debut*

## Toronto Sets a Welcome Precedent: Limiting the Sale of Dogs and Cats through Pet Stores

In an effort to shut down puppy and kitten mills, where female dogs and cats are often treated inhumanely, the City Council of Toronto in Ontario, Canada, voted unanimously in September to prohibit the sale of dogs and cats through pet stores unless the animals come from shelters, rescue groups, or pet owners who give up the animals for free. We hope this precedent will be followed by other cities, states, and countries.

Throughout Canada efforts are being made to restrict sales from puppy mills. According to the Toronto-based newspaper *The Globe and Mail*, a year ago the city of Richmond, British Columbia, became the first city in Canada to ban all puppy sales at pet stores. Toronto's decision may further the movement to ban or restrict pets being sold in shops, according to Liz White of the Animal Alliance of Canada. "The animal protection community from around North America has been watching very closely at what was going on at Toronto city hall and how this issue was unfolding," she said.

### Note from a Reader

Thank you so much for all of your hard work, dedication, and care of animals. Keep up the good work, and let us know how we can do more to help.

Norton, Carrie Hook's companion



*Editor's reply:* Thank you, Norton! We always need donations to keep our program going, so please tell all your friends. And, as our next item indicates, we need volunteers in Guanajuato too.

## Volunteer Dog-Walkers Needed!

Do you live in the municipality of Guanajuato and enjoy the company of dogs but cannot have one yourself? Do you want to get some exercise while making someone else very happy? Consider taking a daily, weekly, or occasional walk with a dog awaiting adoption or a dog that has a home but whose owners are unable to walk with it.

We know of one sweet older dog in the city of Guanajuato whose owners, in their 80s, can no longer provide the daily exercise he craves. Tigre, described in our April issue, behaves very well on a leash. He lives in the Embajadoras area of Guanajuato. If you would enjoy walking with him for an hour or so, especially on weekends, please contact Sra. Dorle Stravoudis at [dorle@cafetal.com.mx](mailto:dorle@cafetal.com.mx).

The veterinarians in our program often have dogs awaiting adoption that need to be walked each day. The exercise is not only good for them physically and psychologically, it also helps them to adapt to walking on a leash, brings them into contact with people who may be interested in adopting them, and makes their transition to a home smoother. If you are interested, we suggest you contact, in the city's center, Clínica Can-Cat (tel. 732-9353), Dr. Felipe Manríquez (tel. 732-5417), or Dr. Octavio Centeno (cel. 044-473-729-7969); and in Marfil, Dr. Moisés Rivera (tel. 734-5753) or Dr. Lice Alízar (tel. 733-5593).

Finally, the city's Animal Control Center in Colonia Arboledas, near the bus station (tel. 733-4839), always has dogs in need of homes, exercise, and attention. Give the people there a call when you have half an hour to spare. Your kindness can make a big difference in some dog's life.

## Recent Donations and Support

We depend upon the donations we receive from our supporters to provide services to the community. Our sincere thanks go to the following donors and volunteers for their recent support:

**Best friends:** Mariana Grobet; Sandra Ward in memory of her sister Joan Ward Summers and her parents, Ruth Ward Burchard and Edwin John Ward

**Benefactors:** BP Matching Fund, Pat Heinke in memo-

ry of her sister Joan Ward Summers, Peregrine Ledesma and the Wells Fargo Matching Fund, Bill McLachlan, Catherine Miller

**Family members:** Peggy and Vaughan Ball, Niña Garduño, Carrie Hook and Norton, Charles Huckabee and Terri Rasmussen, Jennifer McNulty, Caroline Napoli, David Pearson and Linn Murphy, Martha and Don Roberts, Stacy Tompkins

**Individual members:** Carlos Courdourier, Joanne Grieder

**Donors of professional services:** Maria Chan, accountant; Julián Gaxiola, attorney; María del Carmen Nieto Vega, notary; Edward Schiff, attorney; Victor Weaver, graphic designer

**Donors-in-kind:** Sara Almanza, Lidia and Laura Bonilla, Dr. Virgilio Fernández and Estela Cordero, Colin Hall, Louise Lander, Ron Mann, Lyle and Marion Pritchard, Eduardo and Karen Rodríguez, Gilberto Salazar, Juan Jesús Vargas, Sandra Ward

**Other donations:** Anonymous donor, Todd Fell, Garland O'Day, Dianne Romain

**Governmental and community support:** Animal Control Center of Guanajuato, International Airport of the Bajío, Urban Health Center of Guanajuato

**Volunteer veterinarians:** Octavio Centeno, Manuel Elías, Felipe Manríquez, Miguel Ochoa, Juan Manuel Rayas

**Other volunteers:** Anna Adams, Paty Almanza, Berenice Ayala, Ruby Bartolo, Barbara Bladen, Kate Burt, Marlene Davis, Vivian Devin Della Rocca Ayala, Jolene Gailey, Gustavo García, Mayra Yalmin Guerra Villareal, Gary Hannes, Joyce Lambrecht, Verónica Mares, Viviana Méndez Camargo, Vicky Moore, Citlalli Magali Murrieta Landeros, Jessica Valeria Murrieta Resendez, Lorena Citlali Olmos Lozcino, Amanda Daniela Olvera, Dennis Hiram Olvera González, José Adalberto Ortiz Campos, América Gabriel Padrón Cisneros, Alejandra Pérez Martínez, Tom Reavley, Diana Laura Reyes Hernández, Diana Gabriela Ríos Rangel, Alejandro Rivera Mondragón,

Victor Ramírez, Ana Gabriela Rodríguez Ibarra, Joaquín Rodríguez Lalindo, Eduardo Rodríguez, Laura Edith Rodríguez Rodríguez, David Rogers, Cinthya Rosiles Bejarano, Gilberto Salazar, Julia Salido, Melissa Paola Silva Lona, Juan Jesús Vargas, Mara Alejandra Vázquez Ibarra, Sandra Ward, Victor Weaver, Chuck and Ruth Windsor

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