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ASPCA® Milestones

- 1866** The ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®), the country's first animal welfare organization, was founded by Henry Bergh. The Society also prompted the New York State legislature to pass the country's first effective anti-cruelty law.
- 1867** Operated the first ambulance anywhere for injured horses—two years before New York's Bellevue Hospital put into service the first ambulance for humans.
- 1873** Promoted the mechanical “gyro-pigeon” as alternative to live pigeon shoots.
- 1874** Bergh helped organize the first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SPCC), following the rescue of an abused nine-year-old girl named Mary Ellen.
- 1875** Bergh invented a canvas sling for rescuing horses that got stuck in the mud or fell into the river.
- 1894** Assumed the job of caring for New York City's stray and unwanted animals, a function previously performed by New York City government.
- 1902** Put a motorized horse ambulance into service.
- 1912** Opened its first veterinary facility, a free horse dispensary.
- 1916** Started a formal humane education program for school children. Raised money to help care for the 934,000 horses that served in World War I.
- 1920** Advanced the use of anesthesia in animal surgery. First used radium to treat cancer in animals.
- 1925** Began a weekly series of talks over the new communications medium: radio.
- 1928** Expanded the humane education program with classroom demonstrations in public schools and summer playgrounds.
- 1939** Inspected the 2,000 animals on exhibit at the New York World's Fair.
- 1942** Took wartime emergency measures and conducted courses on care of animals in the event of air raids.

- 1944** Inaugurated obedience-training classes for dogs and their owners.
- 1952** Began inspection of laboratories in New York that use animals for research—the first program of its kind in the country. These inspections arose from the passage of the Metcalf-Hatch Act, which required that animal shelters provide animals for research purposes.
- 1954** Expanded its animal hospital by adding a contagious disease ward, pathology laboratory, X-ray therapy laboratory and an internship program.
- 1958** Opened the Animalport at Kennedy International Airport to inspect and care for animals entering or leaving the country by plane. The ASPCA ran this facility until 1994.
- 1961** Bergh Memorial Animal Hospital performed its first open-heart surgery on a dog.
- 1964** Acquired patents for pens for the humane slaughter of food animals and offered them royalty-free to meat packers throughout the world. Began a course to train animal handlers working for research institutions.
- 1966** Celebrated 100th anniversary by renaming the hospital after Henry Bergh and presenting a gold medallion to Walt Disney for his positive depiction of animals.
- 1973** Adoptions department began compulsory spay/neuter for all animals.
- 1976** Dr. Gordon Robinson developed the Bergh bandage for orthopedic recovery.
- 1985** Government affairs office opened in Washington, DC, to monitor, initiate and lobby for legislation to protect animals. Advocated for Animal Welfare Act revisions to include provisions for the exercise of dogs and the psychological welfare of primates used in animal research. Following the terror attacks of 2001, this department relocated to New York City, but continues to advocate for animal welfare around the country.
- 1992** Began promoting the adoption of retired greyhounds, administering a grant from the American Greyhound Council to help rescue groups across the country.
- 1993** Along with nine other animal organizations, initiated National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy, and conducted the first survey and census of shelter animals in the United States.
- 1994** Helped to pass the 1994 New York State Animal Experimentation Bill that allows students who object to dissection to complete an alternative project without a negative impact on their grade.

1995 After 100 years of providing animal control services for New York City, the ASPCA declined to renew the contract in order to focus on national education, information and advocacy.

Animated “Spokescritters” adopted by ASPCA from the Walt Disney animation studios began to appear in public service announcements.

1996 Acquired the National Animal Poison Control Center, the only veterinary toxicology telephone service operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Also that year, ASPCA Cares inaugurated the Care-A-Van, a mobile spay/neuter clinic for the New York metropolitan area.

2001 Television show *Animal Precinct* was launched on the Animal Planet network, taking viewers on patrol with New York City’s Humane Law Enforcement (HLE) officers. The award-winning reality series chronicles the work of the only law enforcement division in New York City’s five boroughs devoted solely to investigating crimes against the city’s animal population.

2000 First Henry Bergh Book Awards. Named in honor of ASPCA founder Henry Bergh, the annual awards recognize books based on their exemplary handling of subject matter pertaining to animals and the environment.

2001 The ASPCA pooled its resources with other local animal welfare agencies to respond to emergencies resulting from the World Trade Center attack. The rescue team cared for over 500 animals within a week of the attack.

2003 Edwin J. Sayres joined the ASPCA as President & CEO. Mr. Sayres headed The San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals from 1998 to 2003, where he pioneered the city’s “no-kill” campaign. A leader in engineering collaborative solutions to deal with animal welfare issues, Mr. Sayres brought his vision and expertise to New York to continue to change the fate of homeless animals for the better, one community at a time.

2004 The ASPCA was a founding organization of the Mayor’s Alliance for New York City’s Animals, a public-private partnership with the City of New York to develop creative solutions to deal with issues of animal care and control and to ultimately make New York City a “no-kill” city. In addition, *Animal Shelter Medicine for Veterinarians and Staff*, edited by Lila Miller, DVM and Stephen Zawistowski, Ph.D., was published as the first text in the field.

2005 The ASPCA’s \$5 million lead grant enabled the Mayor’s Alliance for NYC’s Animals to be eligible for a grant from the Maddie’s Fund, furthering its goal of making New York City “no-kill” in five years.

When Hurricanes Rita and Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast in 2005, the ASPCA sprang into action to assist in rescue and recovery efforts. Thanks to the generosity of its supporters, the ASPCA was able to donate over \$13 million in grants to shelters and organizations that either were directly impacted, or assisted with the

recovery efforts, following these two tragedies. In the wake of these disasters it became clear that a plan was needed to account for pets and pet owners in the event of an emergency such as these.

- 2006** The ASPCA celebrates its 140th anniversary, and unveils its newly renovated shelter—a \$5 million renovation that began in 2003 and covers 12,000 square feet, with a 40 percent increase in shelter capacity. The only vertical urban shelter of its kind in the United States, the shelter boasts state-of-the-art housing for shelter animals as well as a new HVAC system that delivers air exchanges eight to 12 times per hour, minimizing the spread of airborne illnesses.
- 2007** The ASPCA launches ASPCA® Mission: Orange™, partnering with select “target communities” across the United States to accelerate and enhance animal welfare efforts, in an ambitious effort aimed at creating a country of humane communities, one community at a time. This partnership goes beyond any previous efforts and serves as a model to other communities across the country—a blueprint to end the needless euthanasia of healthy, treatable, adoptable companion animals, simply due to the want of a home.
- 2008** The ASPCA responds to both Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, at the request of the Louisiana State Animal Response Team (LSART) and Texas State Animal Resource Team (TXSART), respectively, working in tandem with other humane agencies to help care for hundreds of animals impacted by these disasters and pledging more than \$75,000 in grant funding to humane organizations in Texas and Louisiana.

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