



BISSELL Pet Foundation: AN AGENT OF CHANGE

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You may know BISSELL as a creator of quality vacuums and carpet cleaners. Though their carpet care products are immaculate, there is much more to the company than meets the eye. BISSELL has been helping animals find homes through its support of BISSELL Pet Foundation across all 50 states.

Founder Cathy Bissell started the foundation in 2011 after finding love and companionship in her adopted dog, a black lab named Bear. Her experience rescuing a pet from a humane society sparked the desire to bring shelter and safety to pets without a home.

Constant innovation is part of what strengthens their foundation. "At BPF, our rule is that there are no rules. If we can save lives, we adjust our programs to make it happen," Cathy Bissell explains.

Reducing Pet Homelessness

BISSELL Pet Foundation holds Empty the Shelters adoption events in which they pay adoption

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PHOTOS | BISSELL PET FOUNDATION

fees to make the process more affordable. So far, they've been responsible for helping over 850,000 pets and have connections with over 6,000 shelters. Eliminating cost barriers creates a bridge of compassion for potential adoptive families.

The donation-based RescueLove program provides emergency funding for pet veterinary care like vaccines, microchips and other health services. This gives ill and injured pets a second chance at a happy life. Donations through their Feed the Shelters program deliver food to pets at various shelters short on resources.

Preventing Shelter Overwhelm

Helping animals in shelters isn't the only way to quell the rise of homeless pets. Spay and neuter initiatives make a substantial difference in preventing shelters from overflowing. Stray animals and outdoor pets reproduce rapidly. For instance, an unsplayed female cat can have up to 100 kittens over seven years, and there's no limit to the number of females a male can impregnate.

BPF has worked over the years to spay and neuter over 54,000 pets with their Fix the Future program. It's currently the nation's largest spay and neuter veterinary initiative. Preventing pets from reproducing reduces the number of animals in shelters. It also benefits the pets by avoiding early pregnancies. The fewer cats and dogs being born, the more often existing animals get adopted from shelters.

Natural Disaster Relief

When disaster strikes, the effort to save animals often comes as a secondary thought. With people in danger and their lives upended, priorities tend to go toward other matters. BPF's Animal Incident Management team assists in search and rescue projects for animals trapped in the aftermath of hurricanes, earthquakes, floods and more. Currently, they're helping pets displaced by the destruction of Hurricane Helene. Lifesaving care, shelter and transportation to safe locations are all made possible by the program.

The program also helps with disease outbreaks and puppy mill cases. They accomplished this by building their National Shelter Alliance with shelter staff trained in emergency sheltering, field response and disease management. From providing necessities to organizing rescues, BISSELL Pet Foundation gives aid during large-scale disaster events.

A Growing Organization

Originally, BPF only provided grants to shelters and rescues. Since then, they've expanded to



providing a hands-on approach as an operating foundation, creating welfare programs for shelters. They continue to expand with the addition of new programs where they see a lack of resources. Today, their Empty the Shelters events are the largest funded adoption events in the nation.

How to Help

"Animal shelters in Michigan and throughout the nation are experiencing a capacity crisis unlike anything we have ever seen," Cathy Bissell says. "Pets are waiting longer to be adopted, while more pets are coming in than leaving."

You can help the cause by donating or shopping their vast array of online store merchandise. Every cent of proceeds go directly toward the mission of helping pets in need of rescue. There are a variety of ways to donate, including one-time donations, monthly donations, mutual funds and workplace matching.

As we enter winter, the cold becomes a major threat to homeless animals. In December, BISSELL Pet Foundation also hosts an Empty the Shelters Holiday Hope event to help as many pets as possible during the holidays. Volunteering at your local shelter or considering adoption can make a huge difference.

It's wonderful to see companies making a positive impact. Through their charity, BISSELL Pet Foundation has improved the lives of thousands of pets that need caring and loving homes. Supporting businesses that give back to the greater good is just one way to make the world a better place. □