



## The Birmingham News

### **Birmingham, Alabama Humane Society helps feed pets with pantry**

**Owners can get free food, advice**

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At just 1½, Cinda is somewhat of a star although she doesn't know it.

A photo of her sweet face uploaded on the social networking site Facebook has captured the hearts of visitors. She and her sister Camilla are up for adoption after their family's money shortage forced them to give the girls up.

The girls are dachshund-hound mixes that the Greater Birmingham Humane Society has been calling residents since Aug. 15. They are among pets that were taken to the Humane Society by owners who could no longer afford to care for them.

The nonprofit organization took in about 10,000 animals in 2008. About a year ago, it began experiencing an increase in families bringing in their pets due to strained or depleted budgets, said Christy Moore, the Humane Society's volunteer coordinator.

In response, the Humane Society has opened a pet pantry at its building at 300 Snow Drive. Since August, the organization has been accepting donations of unopened wet and dry pet food that will be made available to families who can not afford to feed their pets. The group also is accepting tax-deductible money donations.

"It's a tight time for a lot of people because of the economy," said Lisa Hasen, the pantry's coordinator.

Setting up the pantry was Moore's idea, one that was sparked by her working nine months in the Humane Society's Surrender Department. She had heard of other organizations hosting similar efforts.

The pantry has 13 volunteers including Moore. It is open to the public noon-2 p.m. the first Saturday of each month through December. On Saturday, the pantry's first give-away, eight people came to get food.

Pet owners seeking assistance are asked to present their driver's license and to fill out a confidential form, Moore said. Decisions on giving out food are made case by case, she said.

"Our pet pantry volunteers are trained to give people ideas on how they can keep their pets through those difficult times," Moore said. "That is our goal."

Owners also are given tips on how to care for their pets, such as amounts of food for pets by weight, said Hunter Hasen, a pantry volunteer. Pet food coupons and information on low-cost pet care clinics are available, too. The pantry is open the same weekend as a clinic offered by an independent veterinarian each month.

The next date for people to seek donations is Oct. 3. Moore said the goal is to have 5,000 pounds of food

donated by December. By then, Humane Society officials will determine if they can continue the service.

Donations may be mailed to the Humane Society, 300 Snow Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209.

Pantry info: Lisa Hasen at [petpantry@gbhs.org](mailto:petpantry@gbhs.org)

Humane Society programs: [www.gbhs.org](http://www.gbhs.org) or 942-1211. [vcoman@bhamnews.com](mailto:vcoman@bhamnews.com)

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