



BARC

ANIMAL SHELTER
& ADOPTIONS

City of Houston



BARC Education & Outreach Initiatives to Houston Youth

February 2023





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Current State of Operations

- Post-pandemic public access to the shelter – as of May 2021:
 - Shelter re-opened to potential adopters to meet pets in person rather than online
 - BARC returned to participating in off-site adoption events in the community
 - Continue to require appointments to surrender OWNED animals to manage space and due to staffing shortage
- Staffing update: Shortage in frontline shelter staff
- Stray Animal Increase: Higher intake of strays collected by Animal Enforcement Officers means less space for surrender of owned animals
- Volunteer Shortage Post-Pandemic:
 - Throughout the pandemic, BARC lost many of its dedicated volunteers.
 - Volunteer shortage significantly impacts BARC programs, particularly in the community
 - Rebuilding the volunteer program by recruiting new partners
- Despite staffing shortages and a greater demand for enforcement activity, BARC continues to provide critical services:
 - Low-cost and no-cost spay/neuter
 - Low-cost and free wellness services
 - Free pet pantry events
 - Free microchipping
 - Foster clinics
 - Bite case/rabies quarantine services
 - Cruelty investigations



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Community Relations & Education

BARC Community Relations and Education

- **BARC team comprised of three major service areas:**
 - Shelter operations and veterinary services;
 - Outreach, customer service and pet registration; and
 - Animal enforcement operations
- **Pre-pandemic, BARC had a full-time staff member dedicated to community engagement and education. The goal is to return to return to that level of staffing.**
- **BARC's pre-pandemic youth education programs targeted:**
 - Greater awareness of Houston's stray animal problem
 - An understanding of the importance of a robust spay/neuter program in lessening the number of homeless animals
 - **Pet Responsibility:** the importance of responsible pet ownership
- **Post-pandemic, BARC has begun engagement efforts with local communities as staffing allows**



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Pet Responsibility Program

- BARC will implement community engagement programs from the past as staffing allows, including:
 - “Pet Responsibility Program” focused on promoting responsible pet ownership and decrease in pet abandonment through youth education.
 - Interactive presentation to 3rd-5th graders consisting of images representing “good” or “bad” examples of pet ownership models, including emphasis on importance of neutering/spaying pets and getting them microchipped.





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Educational Materials

- Pre-pandemic, our presentations included coloring books developed by an illustrator that focused on responsible pet ownership. BARC does not currently own the rights to the coloring book images and can no longer share them.
- Additional programs and presentations that we would like to add or bring back include a “Wanna Be a Vet?” Program for high school students; a reading to pets initiative; BARC presentations at career days; parent training; and field trips to the shelter.

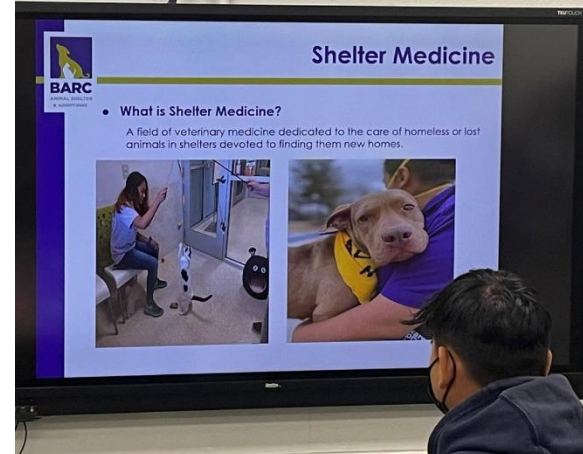
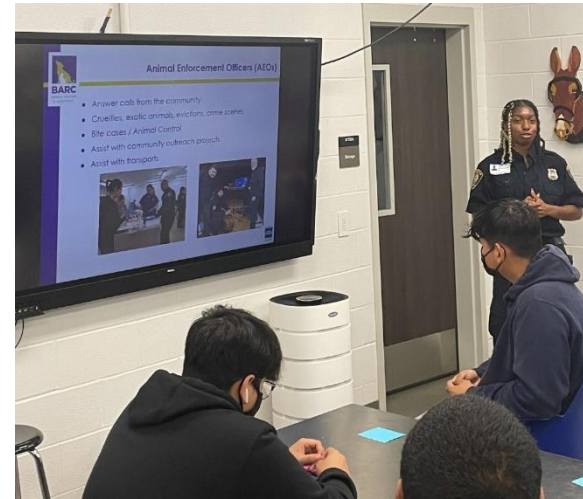


Community Education Post-Pandemic



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- BARC does not currently have a full-time community engagement staff member but is actively seeking to hire one.
- After pausing community engagement activities during the pandemic, BARC has slowly re-launched some efforts, though only by request and when staff and time permits.
- Shelter and medical staff have actively begun presentations to youth interested in a future in shelter medicine.





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Current & Future Operations

- BARC filled a full-time Volunteer Coordinator position in late 2022. Group volunteer activities have relaunched, including facility tours and field trips.
- In January, BARC hosted third and fourth grade students from HISD's Briargrove Elementary, with plans to present this month at their campus.
- Moving forward, BARC hopes to expand our volunteer program to include education and outreach initiatives and door-to-door outreach in targeted communities.





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Questions?