



When **Stevie Nelson** was five, his beloved pet dogs were lured away from his home. He was heartbroken. All he wanted for his birthday was the return of his two dogs. It didn't happen.

He saw a commercial for the ASPCA that changed his life and the lives of unwanted animals. He decided to find homes for unwanted pets and to raise awareness for the needs of an animal shelter in his area. He devoted a year to this cause, raising \$25,778 for the shelter's building fund. He collected two truckloads of food, toys and treats to present to his "Furry Friends" at the shelter and has become a "spokesman" for the shelter and a committed volunteer.

What began as a sad event for him and his family has turned into an awesome commitment.

GenerationOn **Make Your Mark Week** (formerly Kids Care Week) inspires and mobilizes kids to use their energy, ingenuity and compassion to "make their mark on the world" through hands-on service. It is celebrated during the third week of October (Oct. 16-22, 2011) and culminates on Make a Difference Day, the largest national day of service. During the week, young people do small acts or service projects that together make a big impact on the issues that matter most to them. GenerationOn equips the youth with educational resources, tool kits, project ideas, incentives for small acts, and grants. The issue areas for Make Your Mark Week 2011 are Animals, the Environment, Homelessness, Hunger, and Literacy.

The Issue of Animals

Kids care about animals and animals can care for people.

Guide and service dogs offer assistance to those with physical challenges. Children with a wide range of physical, cognitive and/or emotional disabilities can benefit from therapeutic horseback riding. The elderly, the ill, and the incarcerated benefit from visits from friendly pets because they evoke a different response than visits from people.

*"Pets play a greater role in our emotional and physical health than ever before. The social milieu on where animals fit into society has really changed in the last 13 years. We've gone from recognizing the potential of animals being a significant positive contribution to certain populations, such as the elderly, to actual documentation. Nearly half of the nursing homes have an organized program for animal therapy."*¹

Make Your Mark on Animals is an opportunity for young people to help animals in need and help animals that help others. The goals for Make Your Mark on Animals are:

- To teach children how they can help animals and how animals help people.
- To enable kids to help animals in need.
- To support animals that help people.

¹ Beck, A. and Katcher, A. *Between Pets and People: The Importance of Animal Companionship*



For many years, The **Wallace Kids Care Club** in Vineland, New Jersey has worked with the National Greyhound Adoption Program and now helps the Canine Hearing Companions for Independence. Their efforts have been written up in *Dogs for Kids* magazine.



The **Helping Hands Kids Care Club**, of Branchburg, NJ distributed 2,000 flyers to collect donations for the St. Hubert's Animal Health Center. The mayor even put a box in the Municipal Building. They also set up donation banks in 17 businesses to raise funds for therapy dogs. The club collected \$850 which enabled training for two therapy dogs.



When the **Camp Fire Teens in Action**, in Ardmore, OK, learned that seniors served by Meals on Wheels could not afford pet food, they collected 500 pounds of pet food which was distributed to the seniors.

To impact the welfare of animals, youth can implement one of the **Make Your Mark on Animals projects**: hold food and supply collections for animal shelters or for pets of shut-in seniors, create a poster campaign to help pets get adopted, or raise funds for guide and service dogs.

GenerationOn will equip the youth with these tools and resources:

- **Issues Education** through easy to understand fact sheets on how animals help people and how people can help animals: *Pet in Your Home — Facts for Kids* and *Animals — Facts for Kids*.
- **Author Interviews** for *Two Bobbies – A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival* and *Nubs, The True Story of a Mutt, a Marine & a Miracle*.
- **Compassion Education Stories** to help young people understand what it takes to raise a guide dog and the challenges of waiting for adoption in an animal shelter.
- **Activities** to kick off the program and educate the kids on the issues of service animals and animal welfare.
- **Service Projects** including Animal Friends Collection of food for pets of seniors and food and supplies for shelters, creating a Pet Wanted Poster Campaign, and raising funds for guide and service dogs.
- **Caring Partner** that can provide additional information and/or outreach related to the issue. The ASPCA is the Caring Partner.
- **Project Tool Kit** that includes resources such as a list of organizations that are friends to animals, logos, letters, and media support including sample press releases and public service announcements.

Thanks to our founding partner, Hasbro, generationOn will award 200 mini-grants in the amount of \$250 each to support service projects that enable youth to “make their mark” on one of the following Make Your Mark Week issue areas: Animals, the Environment, Homelessness, Hunger and Literacy.