

Grace Wilson

6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Make a Difference

So many dogs and cats go missing a year. People will lose them, or worse, get rid of them on purpose. Those animals become strays. It's always been sad for me to see a stray kitten or puppy out in the road. We usually stop the car and go make sure the animal is okay, and see whether or not it has a collar and address. Sometimes they do, and we can find the owner, but that's not always the case. As sad as it is, sometimes the animal has no collar and no home. So we care for it with food and water and we call the pound. But most people won't take the time to help a stray animal.

So how would an overpopulation of homeless cats and dogs effect our ecosystem? For one thing, lots of the animals would be in danger. It's easy for an animal to pick up a disease or virus and pass it on. This worries people, and it costs a lot if someone takes the animal in, and to the vet. Cats and dogs, and especially kittens and puppies, if hurt, must be nurtured and cared for in a safe place. And not to mention issues such as animals running around in the streets. It's easy to not see a dog running by while driving and accidentally hit it.

So how can we prevent the overpopulation? Overpopulation of dogs and cats is already concerning to the government. But what people need to know is *how* we can prevent this from happening. *How* we can avoid the concerning issues that may follow. And *how* we can protect the species, while also protecting our ecosystem. One of the ways people can help is by training their pets if they have them. Training dogs can be difficult--and I know from personal experience--but things would be easier if pets were trained not to sprint out the front door every time it's open. Then the amount of stray dogs and cats would lessen. And we can help each other, too! If you see a stray dog, please see if it has a collar or tag. You could be making someone very happy if you find their dog or cat and return it. Adopting a pet from the shelter is probably the greatest way you can help, though. Did you know, only 37% of cats in shelters are adopted every year? And only 36% of dogs are adopted every year. Animals can't help where they end up or whether or not they're adopted. But **you** can. Anyone can help. There's no limit to how many pets you can help or how much you can donate to animal shelters.

But why should you help? Though it's not possible to know exactly how many stray dogs and cats live in the United States, we can estimate for cats that it could range up to at least 70 million. And that's cats alone. Think about it this way: there are about 320 million people in the U.S. If a quarter of the people in the U.S. helped strays find their owners, or even adopt them or take them to the animal shelters, we'd have 106 million people helping out. And that's all we need to make a difference. It takes one person to make a difference. So why don't you be that person?

In conclusion, we know that overpopulation is an issue. But it doesn't have to be. Let's all help out and make a difference.

Grace Wilson

2107 Lindblad Ct., Arlington, TX 76013

469-655-6550

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Homeschooled



Me with an abandoned stray puppy we found