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Beth
Ostrosky Stern

Why the model, actress, TV personality
and foster "mom" tirelessly promotes
animal adoption

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WELLNESS



BONUS INSIDE!

KUDOS TO SANTA PAULA

There aren't many no-kill towns or cities out there yet, but Santa Paula is one of them. With a 99.5% save rate, it's proud of its status as Southern California's first and only no-kill community. This past June, the Santa Paula Animal Rescue Center (SPARC) celebrated its first anniversary with a big block party. Special guest stars included FOX's *Good Day LA*'s TV personality Mar Yvette and Ms. California Christina Meredith. Ms. Yvette was the media spokesperson for the festive family and animal-friendly event; a champion for animals, she recently featured SPARC on the *Good Day LA* morning show.

santapaulaarc.org



Photo courtesy of Robert LeMaire

Left to right: SPARC's Executive Director William LeFeuvre, Ms. California Christina Meredith, Mar Yvette, Officer Randy Haumann and Hozy.

DRIVEN TO SAVE ANIMALS

Starting an animal sanctuary is a huge undertaking, but for NASCAR racer Michael Annett and his girlfriend Heidi Spillane, it's a life dream. In order to learn more, the couple recently visited Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Utah to "learn from the best", as Michael puts it. While at the sanctuary, he and Heidi attended a workshop and toured the facility.

"The most important thing people need to know, if they want to help homeless animals, is that the problem starts with people, not the animals," Michael says. "It is our responsibility to spay and neuter them. We can build a million sanctuaries but if people are not spaying and neutering their animals there will never be enough homes.

"When we were at Best Friends, I learned about red collar dogs – those with special behavior issues. Best Friends never gives up on them. And we can never give up on the dream that we can save them all."

bestfriends.org



NASCAR racer Michael Annett meets two of the pooches at Best Friends Animal Society.

FINDING THEIR WAY

What do a rescue dog and a teenager in a juvenile detention center have in common? They've both lost their way and are in need of some help and a second chance. The West Michigan Humane Society's B.A.R.C Program (Building Adolescent Responsibility and Compassion) has teamed up with the Kent County Juvenile Detention Center to give youth the chance to learn responsibility by caring for, rehabilitating and training dogs. It's a win-win situation because the kids gain a better sense of self-worth and compassion by working with the animals, while the dogs themselves become more adoptable.

hswestmi.org



Project B.A.R.C. helps teach responsibility and compassion to teens at Kent County Juvenile Detention Center.

Spending quiet *quality* time with your dog is a great way to *de-stress* at the end of the day.



Beth's love for animals is in her blood. "In my family, it was important to keep animals safe and nurtured," she says.



By Barbara Nefer

How *serendipity* and a bulldog named Bianca transformed this model, actress and TV personality into an adoption advocate.

She's known for many things, from her modeling career and roles in *True Beauty* and *She's Got the Look*, to being the wife of famed radio shock jock Howard Stern. Perhaps less well known, but just as important, is Beth Ostrosky Stern's passion for dogs and other animals, and her work on their behalf.

Beth's love for dogs, cats and other critters started early. "It's in the blood," she laughs. "The firstborn in my family was a mutt named Suzie Dog. She was a big collie mix who came along before my mom had any children. She was there first and was always treated as a member of the family."

Growing up outside Pittsburgh, Beth says she and her two brothers were always around animals. "My mother really believed in rescuing from local shelters," she says. "We always had dogs, cats, guinea pigs and fish. We even had chicks for Easter one year and watched them grow up on a friend's farm." That love extended to wild animals, too. "Whenever there was wildlife that was hurt, we would call the local rescue. In my family, it was important to keep animals safe and nurtured. That was a key part of growing up for me."

Beth also had a passion and talent for modeling, and began her career while still in her teens. Her work took her to Europe, where she lived

for five years. When she returned to the United States, a serendipitous offer gave her a special opportunity that allowed her to combine her success with a way to help homeless dogs.

“Back in New York, I got a call from my agent, who said: ‘I know you’re a big animal lover, and North Shore Animal League is putting out feelers to agencies looking for models to donate time to their annual luncheon.’ They wanted to have a fashion show with models carrying adoptable dogs. I didn’t know much about them, but I said: ‘Count me in!’” The luncheon was a big success. “I was there in my couture gown, holding a dog, and I wouldn’t leave the stage until the last dog was adopted.”

Beth and Howard are *honoring* Bianca by embarking on a capital campaign to raise \$7 million for a 15,000-square-foot addition to North Shore Animal League.

The folks at NSAL recognized Beth’s passion and asked her to continue working with them, promoting adoptions on daytime TV shows and other venues. Just as she hadn’t known much about the organization before the luncheon, they had no idea she had just started dating Howard Stern and was becoming a public figure with a perfect platform for promoting adoptions. She threw herself into volunteer work with the group, giving them publicity and coming to the shelter to do hands-on work with the animals.

Howard is just as much an animal lover as Beth, and plunged wholeheartedly into supporting her advocacy work. Just as Beth’s first childhood “sibling” was a dog, the couple’s first “child” was an English bulldog named Bianca, who shared their lives for nine years. “I think that was a turning point in our relationship, when we decided to adopt an animal together,” Beth says. The couple’s heart was set on an English bulldog, but at the time, they didn’t know about breed-specific rescues and spent a year finding a reputable breeder.

Continued on page 48.



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Photo courtesy of Best Friends Animal Society

Beth recently visited Best Friends Animal Society — and got a big kiss from Merry, a sanctuary resident.



Continued from page 47.

"We finally found one and went to her home to see the dogs," says Beth. "One of them kept climbing on us and Howard asked the breeder: 'What's this one's story?' She said: 'You don't want that one.' It turned out Bianca was a show puppy who got too old and developed a wiggle in her walk." Beth and Howard didn't care if Bianca was no longer show-worthy. "It was a case of the dog picking us. We took her, and she was the love of our lives."

Bianca was one year old when the Sterns adopted her, and remained with them until her death eight years later. "It was devastating when we lost her," Beth says. "She was so open and kind. She was just lovely to my cats when we started rescuing them as well."

Beth now works with a bulldog organization called Long Island Bulldog Rescue, and has fostered several dogs for them. And this fall, she and Howard are honoring Bianca in a very big way by embarking on a capital campaign to raise \$7 million for a 15,000-square-foot addition to North Shore Animal League (located in Port Washington, New York), to be called Bianca's Furry Friends.

According to Beth, the addition will be a second floor for the shelter. The new area will be devoted to cats, with a wellness center and a cageless, homelike living space, including skylights and tunnels. Currently, both dogs and cats are housed on the shelter's single floor, so moving the felines upstairs will mean freeing up more room for the canine residents. Beth says

that having the entire first floor available for dogs will allow NSAL to save more and have extra space for large-scale projects like puppy mill rescues. Although she wasn't a shelter dog herself, Bianca's legacy means that countless shelter dogs will have a safe place to stay when the addition is complete.

Beth is also a big fan of Best Friends Animal Society in Utah, which she praises for its spacious, cage-free environment. "They have dogs and cats there, and so many other kinds of animals, like horses and guinea pigs. It's a beautiful place."




Photo courtesy of Howard Stern

Beth models with a canine friend.

"I was there in my *couture* gown, holding a dog, and I wouldn't leave the stage until the last dog was adopted."

While Best Friends and NSAL are both no-kill shelters, Beth also saves animals from high-kill facilities by fostering them until they can find homes. "I know they're safe when they're at NSAL," she explains. "Howard and I take in fosters from places where they're in danger."

In addition to her work with animal shelters, Beth has put together a book called *Oh My Dog* (Gallery Books, 2010) that was inspired by all the questions people ask her because of her work with dogs. "People would see me on TV promoting North Shore Animal League, then they'd see me walking down the street and think I was an expert," she says. "They'd come up to me and say 'my dog has a bald patch' or 'my dog has diarrhea' and ask me what to do. I'm not an expert, but I do my own research and have access to incredible resources. I know Oprah's dog trainer and have access to vets and behaviorists because of my associations. I took all the questions I've been asked to the experts, compiled all the answers, and came up with a 500-page reference book."

It's clear that Beth's love for animals has had a huge impact on her life – and she and Howard are paying it forward in an equally huge way. 

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