

Animal Shelters Mark 'Be Kind to Animals Week'

Organizations around the country plan to host special pet events for the 95th anniversary.

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The role that dogs, cats and other animals play in the lives of people inspired the creation of Be Kind to Animals Week, May 3 through 9. To mark the event's 95th anniversary, Kent Animal Shelter in New York plans to offer a free rabies clinic for cats and dogs.

The animal shelter joins organizations throughout the country in hosting special events during the week to raise awareness about pets, and to celebrate the bond between humans and animals. One of the kindest things pet owners can do for their pets is to keep their vaccinations up-to-date, said Pam Green, Kent Animal Shelter's executive director.

"In these tough economic times, Kent is happy they can offer free rabies vaccinations," Green said.

The American Humane Association first launched Be Kind to Animals Week in 1915. Marie Belew Wheatley, president and CEO, said kindness toward animals is a building block of a humane and compassionate society.

"We celebrate and encourage that all year long," she said.

In honor of Be Kind to Animals Week, Green suggests the following ways to show appreciation for animals: Report suspected animal abuse or neglect. Commit to adopting a dog from an animal shelter or rescue group. Donate to or volunteer at the local shelter. Spay or neuter pets and encourage friends and family to do the same. Spend quality time with pets. Make sure pets have an ID tag or microchip. Drive cautiously through areas populated by wild animals such as deer. Speak out in the community about the importance of respecting animals.