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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Animal Welfare Groups Descend on Duroville

Thousand Palms, CA – January 26, 2010: Last Saturday and Sunday, Animal Samaritans' staff members and volunteers joined members from Loving All Animals, Save-A-Pet, and The Humane Society of the United States, for a weekend of free veterinary services for the animals that inhabit the impoverished Duroville Trailer Park in Mecca. Donations from PetSmart Charities included portable dog carriers, leashes, and collars.

In preparation of the event, Animal Samaritans bilingual Humane Educator, Michelle Hodge, has been working with trailer park residents since October 2009 to educate them about the benefits and importance of vaccinating and spaying and neutering their animals.

Over the weekend, veterinarians spayed or neutered 150 dogs; most of the animals were also vaccinated. The Save-A-Pet animal shelter in Desert Hot Springs rescued 30 dogs that were either relinquished by their owners or identified as homeless.

Animal Samaritans' Executive Director Fred Saunders helped set up the mobile veterinary hospital in the park's small church. "It was similar to a military MASH unit," explains Saunders. "With all medical supplies and work stations being trucked in and set up on the spot."

With four days of rain preceding the event, the dirt roads of Duroville were flooded. "Rain water and mud was everywhere," says Humane Educator Michelle Hodge. "A man was pulling his dog down the street, and it literally submerged in a pond of muddy water." To keep pet owners and their animals clean and dry, event volunteers used an Animal Samaritans moving truck to transport them to the clinic site at the back of the park.

Depending on who you speak to, an estimated 200 to 600 dogs (many of them homeless) still roam Duroville and two other outlying trailer parks. Animal Samaritans plans to continue its efforts to educate the residents of this area on the importance of stemming the tide of unwanted animals, proper medical care, dog bite prevention, and compassionate pet ownership.

Animal Samaritans SPCA, a 501 (c) non-profit organization founded in 1978, is committed to improving the lives of animals and people. As the Coachella Valley's most comprehensive animal welfare organization, they strive to one day eliminate the needless suffering and abuse of homeless and unwanted animals. Programs and services in place to save the lives of healthy and treatable animals include prevention through humane education, low-cost and no-cost spay and neuter, low-cost vaccinations, animal sheltering and pet adoptions. In addition, more than one hundred volunteers from their Animal Assisted Therapy programs visit disabled children in special needs classrooms, nursing homes, and hospitals, while their Animal Assisted Activities teams see residents at Juvenile Hall. More information is available by calling 760-343-4908 and by visiting www.animalsamaritans.org

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