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## **National Dog Bite Prevention Week is May 17-23, 2009: Animal Samaritans SPCA supports local schools to educate students**

Thousand Palms, CA May 12, 2009 – In recognition of National Dog Bite Prevention Week, Animal Samaritans SPCA's humane educators will be at John Adams Elementary School on Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 11:45am and at Peter Pendleton Elementary School on Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at 8:45am to teach students about dog safety and dog bite prevention. Since January 2008, Animal Samaritans' humane educators have taught this program to more than 3,750 children. "We are dedicated and committed to providing children lifesaving information about dog bite prevention," says Jennifer Nathan, Director of Education at Animal Samaritans. "Too many children and adults in the Coachella Valley have been affected by dog bites. We hope with our educational outreach we can lessen this problem."

Each year Animal Samaritans SPCA provides free humane education programs to an estimated 1,100 classrooms and in conjunction with the organization's Animal Assisted Therapy volunteers visits roughly 23,000 children and adults. Their dog bite prevention and safe behavior around dogs presentation is created for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. Students view the award winning *Bite Free* video and Animal Samaritans educators reinforce the message by engaging kids in role playing dog safety scenarios.

Animal Samaritans offers the following tips for parents and dog owners to help keep kids safe:

For Children to remember:

- Dogs don't like hugs and kisses on the face
- Be a tree if a strange dog approaches
- Never tease a dog

For Parents to remember:

- Always supervise dogs around children
- Train your dog the right way. Never pin, choke, or hold down a dog to teach it lessons or tricks

General tips for Dog Owners:

- Spay or neuter your dog
- Condition your dog for the world—social training and positive reinforcement are key
- Supervise your dog around children and strangers

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, low-cost dental care and pet wellness exams, microchipping, 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](http://www.animalsamaritans.org)