

Jake McGarey- People Food is not Pet Food

My goal is to become a large animal veterinarian. In 2013 I decided to have a larger impact with my community service work, so I combined the two goals. I started *A Voice for Those Without One*, an IRS-registered 501c3 non-profit organization. We build projects that serve animals in distress, both domestic and wild, beginning in my community, and beyond.

The project I am proudest of is partnering with Geneva Oaks Animal Hospital and COO Bill Collins of Second Harvest Central Florida in 2015 and 2016 in a project that now is keeping pets fed and safe and prevents them from developing fatal disease from poor nutrition.

Second Harvest services over 550 food banks near Orlando. From previous work with food banks, I knew that hungry people and families often had hungry animals. I thought maybe with Second Harvest, we could have a big impact. But I didn't know what that project may look like. After calling Mr. Collins, getting a meeting with me and a Board Member to understand his needs, we ended up producing educational pieces about foods that could be toxic to pets, "Why People Food is Not Pet Food." An example of that education is attached within. We have worked on this project since Summer of 2015 and continues today.

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The first meeting with Second Harvest didn't go smoothly. At the first meeting, I shared my mission but mostly listened to understand what their goals were. They liked me and the organization but were honest that they were in the people food not the animal food business. We agreed to "stay in touch." I had achieved the nice brush off! Back home I thought that somehow there was a connection. I knew something that most people don't think about when donating food is that hungry people have hungry pets too. Every food bank I talked to said the same thing. Pet owners will feed anything they have to their pets so they won't go hungry either. Just out of ignorance, they don't realize that sometimes feeding animals people food just because they have it in the house can be disastrous. For example, in pets, white bread can create pancreatitis and diabetes, and cherries can create cyanide poisoning. Occasional lean chicken or a few pieces of apple, for example, can be OK though. I also thought that Second Harvest would want people food to get safely to humans, and ultimately they would want their animals to be safe too. *A Voice* needed to become that link in between to save animals' lives.

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I had earlier recruited a Veterinarian for my Board of Directors; I recruited four Board Members in total. I explained the opportunity to him and he coached me around the nutrition issue. I compiled lists of food that should never be fed to pets, with possible alternatives, went back to him and I got my science approved. I designed an educational piece to be low literacy and pleasing to the eye with high color and cartoons. You'll see it in the attached. If people can't understand education and can't connect to it, they won't use and understand what you are trying to teach them. I then went back to Mr. Collins with the new approach. He loved the idea and even wrote me a letter of recommendation because I had listened, was resilient with a solution ultimately meeting both our needs, and was confident enough to come back to him. Second Harvest has made this information available to all 550 food banks that they service. Over the course of 2015 and 2016, we continue to produce the education in several forms so it can be used easily. This education reaches food banks that serve tens of thousands of hungry families all year long. Of course many of these families have hungry pets. Clearly, giving people information that they never knew, has the ability to save many animals' lives like this. The Veterinarian on my Board has commented how many pets he sees with diabetes or pancreatitis that ultimately is fatal to animals.

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We are also currently working on an event and a fundraising campaign for the Volusia Country FL (Daytona Beach) Fire Services Large Animal Rescue Team to acquire high cost items they need to train their staff for horse and cattle rescues. Recently we have raised money for the Central Florida Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Center Florida so they may vaccinate and care for wild animals in distress that they are nursing back to health for release back into the wild: deer, bobcat, squirrels, fox, et al. The Wildlife Commission locally brings them animals in distress and they are one of just a few places left to do that work. We also helped 1 Day Ranch in Bethel Acres Oklahoma build a new barn that was destroyed and condemned in a tornado. 1 Day Ranch rescues abused horses and uses them as a part of treatment for troubled teens. My point in the Second Harvest work and the others is that I built *A Voice* on projects that have a beginning and end. Project work allows me to continue my organization wherever I attend college, Vet School and beyond. Wherever I go to do undergraduate work, whether its New Orleans, Chicago, Durham or somewhere else, I'll take time to understand what animal need there is in the community, organize my friends, build collaborations and keep *A Voice* working to relieve animals distress and save lives.

People Food is **Not** Pet Food

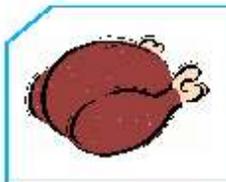
While it is tempting to feed our pets what we eat, their small bodies cannot handle most people food. Try to avoid foods high in fat, sugar, salt and a lot of extra things. For example:



No lunch meat or cheese
No milk
No bread, rolls or biscuits



No grapes, raisins, cherries OR onions
No chocolate or sugar free candies
No snacks like pretzels, chips or cookies



A little bit of these are OK, but not all the time:
Lean cooked meats: remove fat, no skin OR bones
Apples, peaches (no seeds), broccoli, cauliflower



Geneva Oaks
Animal Hospital