

# animal

## WRITES

[www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca](http://www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca)

VOLUME 56 FALL 2013



Loving ROBBIE

pg 3



CRUEL Glue Traps

pg 4



Meat-free GARDEIN

pg 7

## Double your help for dogs like Forest

DONATE BEFORE JANUARY 15, 2014 TO HELP MORE PETS!

Every year VHS saves needy sick and injured animals, keeping them in their loving homes by offering emergency veterinary assistance to animal guardians on low or fixed incomes through our **McVITIE FUND**. This most often involves elderly people, people on disability, or those who find themselves suddenly unemployed. **It's because of donors like you that this fund exists!**

A kind VHS donor, Donna-Mae Moore, has decided she wants to help, too, by issuing a challenge to other VHS donors. Mrs. Moore and her husband established an endowment fund for animal welfare in memory of Irene Joy Stewart and Florence Maud Shedden, two very special sisters who believed that mankind

should respect at all times and in all ways life forms other than our own.

If you donate to the McVitie Fund today **the foundation will match your donation up to \$10,000!**

**The deadline is January 15th, 2014.** To see how much we've raised so far, check our website: [www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca/campaigns/emergency-animal-help/double/](http://www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca/campaigns/emergency-animal-help/double/).



All Smiles now! Forest (right, with friend Arianny) was in extreme pain from an abscessed tooth until VHS helped out. See page 5.

# Animal Welfare – Public Perception vs Fact

WHY ALL THE FUSS ABOUT ANIMALS? THEY AREN'T HUMAN!

Online comments on news stories are probably not the best source of wisdom but they do provide some insight into current public perceptions. One common sentiment, expressed whenever an animal welfare issue dominates the news, goes something like this: *"Why all the fuss about animals? When did they become more important than humans?"*

## HERE ARE A FEW FACTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE WE PLACE ON ANIMALS:

**Wild animals are disappearing, thanks to human domination of the planet.** We are in the middle of a mass extinction crisis, with at least 1219 of the 5487 mammal species on Earth threatened with extinction, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The IUCN estimates that almost 50 per cent of the world's non-human primate species, our closest relatives, are at risk of disappearing forever. Globally, 21 per cent of evaluated reptiles are deemed endangered or vulnerable to extinction, as are 12 per cent of bird species and a third of all amphibian species.

And, according to biologists, human beings are to blame. The Center for Biological Diversity, for example, says: "Unlike past mass extinctions, caused by events like asteroid strikes, volcanic eruptions, and natural climate shifts, the current crisis is almost entirely caused by us — humans. In fact, 99 per cent of currently threatened species are at risk from human activities, primarily those driving habitat loss, introduction of

exotic species, and global warming."

**Meanwhile, down on the farm, humans slaughter about 70 billion animals for food each year.** Two out of three animals are raised on factory farms, where most, like caged hens or crated pigs, cannot even turn around or see the light of day. Another 50 million caged animals on fur farms are killed annually for fashion. Ten million more die in traps.

**And what about our pampered pets?** The Humane Society of the United States estimates that 2.7 million adoptable cats and dogs are euthanized in U.S. shelters each year. According to the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, shelters across Canada in 2010 took in more than 140,000 homeless animals. Of those, nearly 52,000 had to be euthanized, most because they were physically or behaviourally unhealthy. Despite decades of educational campaigns by animal welfare groups, many people still fail to spay and neuter their animals or ensure they are well cared for. Here in British Columbia, the BC SPCA carried out more than 6000 cruelty investigations in 2012 alone and rescued nearly 29,000 injured, homeless, neglected and abused animals.

**The animals we use to entertain ourselves aren't doing too well either.** Some languish in zoos, where they are denied the ability to engage in natural behaviours. Others are compelled to perform tricks in circuses, rodeos and marine parks. Bullfighting and bull runs continue to attract thousands of tourists in Spain and other countries.

**In the horse racing industry, thousands of healthy horses are slaughtered because they are surplus to requirements.** More than 10,000 U.S. thoroughbred horses are shipped annually to slaughterhouses in Canada and Mexico. Most of these are young, healthy horses — their racing careers can end at three

years old but they can live to 30.

What happens to animals in North America, Europe and a handful of developed countries is bad enough, but many states have much weaker animal welfare legislation. China, the world's most populous country and second largest economy, has no animal welfare laws at all.

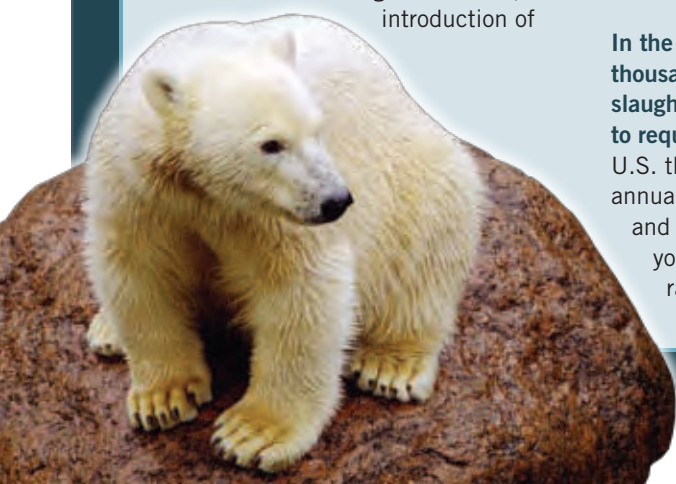
Public reaction to all this, at least in Canada, is mostly one big collective yawn. Charitable giving to animal causes is less than two per cent of total giving. (Religious groups receive 40 per cent.) Government spending on animal welfare is negligible. Animal welfare has never been an election issue.

Yet some people still complain that too much attention is paid to animals. They say they are appalled that time and money are spent on animals when there are humans suffering around the world from famine, disease and war.

Do they have a case? Well, before we stop lavishing those appallingly generous resources on animals and end our shameful pandering to their selfish whims, perhaps we might consider some other things we could cut back on. Some statistics might help:

- Canadians spend about \$21 billion a year at beer and liquor stores.
- Canadians spent more than \$35 billion on foreign travel in 2012.
- On average, Canadians spend \$310 a month on items they want but do not need.

It's funny how famine, disease and war rarely enter our thoughts when we're having a drink by the pool in Maui, admiring the cool sunglasses we just bought. No, those thoughts only emerge when someone dares to say we should do more for animals.





# THE POWER OF LOVE

## How compassion conquered disability

By Nicholas Read

Leanne McConnachie has arms even Michelle Obama would kill for. Slim, strong and tight as coiled steel. At age 47 she is a picture of athletic grace.

Yet she never goes near a gym. Or a track. The reason McConnachie, the Vancouver Humane Society's director of farm animal programs, looks so good is love and the sacrifice that goes with it. McConnachie is the "mom" of a ten-year-old boxer dog named Robbie with degenerative myelopathy. Robbie can't use his hind legs anymore, which means if he wants to go anywhere — and he does, constantly — he has to be carried there.

Never mind that he weighs 33 kilos, or 10 kilos more than the largest suitcase Air Canada will allow you to take free from Vancouver to Toronto. Never mind that McConnachie only weighs 20 kilos more. Robbie still has to be carried, so McConnachie carries him. It's what love is about.

Robbie wasn't always this way. When McConnachie, and her husband, Rob, adopted him from Boxer Rescue five years ago, he was fine. As lively, playful and spirited as most boxers are. But three years later he started to drag one of his hind paws. Then he had trouble moving his legs. Eventually when he was diagnosed with myelopathy, a disease in which his immune system literally attacks his nerves and spinal

cord, Robbie became paralyzed.

But not immobile. The McConnachie's saw to that. Three times a day they hauled him out for walks. They picked up his hind end using a specially designed harness that let him "run" using his front legs only. The catch was that they had to run too. When that got to be too much, they bought a special doggie wheelchair for him. Now they use it to "walk" him to the beach, where he digs in the sand.

Because the remarkable thing about Robbie, says McConnachie, is that he doesn't appear to know he's sick. *"I see him trying to stand up all the time," she says. "Another dog will come by and he'll want to chase him. Or he'll want to chase a ball. He's completely oblivious to the disease. So we joke 'He's okay as long as someone's got his bum'."*

Except it can't go on forever. One day the disease will reach Robbie's front legs, and he'll have to be euthanized before they too become paralyzed. McConnachie knows that day is

coming very soon and she will have to summon the courage to do what he needs her to do.

The only thing she is certain of is that when Robbie goes, she'll never get another boxer. Because like so many other owners of so-called purebred dogs, she's learned they're too fragile, too delicate, too prone to illness to lead strong healthy lives. Selective breeding has seen to that. Toys and miniatures suffer from dislocated kneecaps. Large dogs succumb to heat prostration because they can't cool their bodies properly. Bulldogs' large heads and narrow hips mean they now can only be born by Caesarian section.

There's now a genetic test for degenerative myelopathy, so Dr. Andrew Forsyth of Como Lake Veterinary Hospital advises anyone hoping to adopt a dog that's prone to it — German shepherds, corgis and boxers are among 43 breeds that are — should adopt that dog from a "responsible" breeder who's tested their breeding pairs.

That's no longer enough for McConnachie. *"So many of these terrible diseases and skeletal problems are the result of us selfishly breeding in genetic traits to achieve an arbitrary look. Maybe if we expanded the genetic pool and allowed them to revert back to a more natural look, they've have fewer problems and their owners would suffer less heartbreak."*

In the meantime, however, love is going to see her and Robbie through. **It's what being a good mom — even a good dog mom — is all about.**



# The cruelty of glue traps

## PESTICIDE-FREE BUT INHUMANE

By Debra Probert

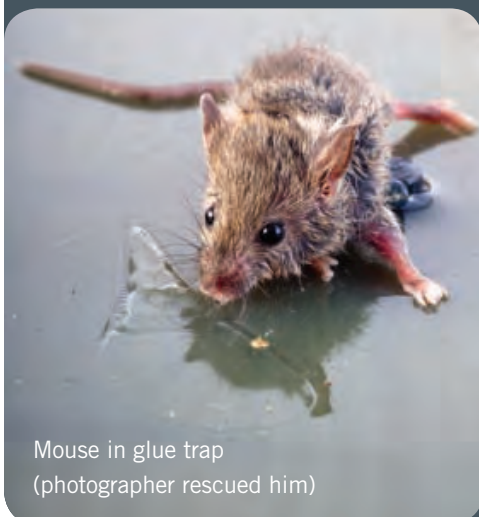
Imagine walking to the store. Suddenly, you can't lift your feet from the ground – they're mired in glue so sticky that you can't lift them out. You scream and fight to get loose, but nobody helps you. You get thirsty and hungry, but there's nothing you can do. After hours, maybe even days, you eventually succumb to dehydration, starvation, exhaustion and/or exposure. Can you think of a more inhumane death?

Glue traps are the method of choice for removal of rats and mice, because they're pesticide-free. But they are extremely cruel, causing an agonizing death. And they're indiscriminate – they can capture birds, squirrels, and other small animals.

They are also unsafe for humans. Mice or rats will void their bowels when they're caught. This exposes humans to dangerous diseases like Hantavirus which are carried by rodents. Even Health Canada says they shouldn't be used (<http://hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/promotion/public-publique/hantavirus-eng.php>).

The best way to deal with rodent infestations is to alter the habitat so it's no longer attractive to them. This means carefully closing off every possible entry point (after you've safely removed the animals) so it's inaccessible. We recently had mice in our small cottage, and we waited until night when they were outside and used fine wire mesh to seal every hole in the crawl space and the entire house. We then installed an inexpensive sonic repeller on each level and we haven't had mice inside since. These electronic devices are available everywhere, even on Amazon.ca!

Mice and rats are social, intelligent creatures and every bit as capable of experiencing pain as the dogs and cats we have in our homes. Excluding wildlife is the kindest way to live alongside them. But as an absolute last resort, a snap-trap is less inhumane than a glue trap or poison (which also causes an excruciatingly painful death). Snap-traps kill instantly.



Mouse in glue trap  
(photographer rescued him)

Unfortunately, glue traps are available everywhere. Please write or email stores who sell them and tell them to remove them from the shelves. Call the office or check our website for a list of retailer contact information.

# Calgary Stampede Review

## VHS AD ATTRACTS NATIONAL MEDIA ATTENTION WHILE MORE ANIMALS NEEDLESSLY DIE

Despite the focus on the floods in Calgary, VHS's Stampede campaign attracted considerable attention. Sadly, there were more animal deaths this year – a steer had its neck broken in the steer-wrestling event and a horse died in the chuckwagon race. VHS called for both events to be suspended.

VHS was quoted in 36 media outlets during the campaign. Our full-page 'Ban calf-roping' ad in Calgary's Fast Forward Weekly newspaper, published on July 4, was described in a Canadian Press news agency story that appeared in media across Canada. The ad was also covered locally, including a story on Global TV Calgary.



We had two opinion editorials published, one by the Vancouver Sun, the other by the Calgary Herald (which was also repeated in the Vancouver Province.)

VHS also used its blog, Facebook posts, Twitter, email action alerts and Facebook advertising to raise awareness of the issue and to help recruit protesters to help local activists with demonstrations against the Stampede.

**Thank you to everyone who supported and continues to support our campaign.**





# McVitie Fund saves lives

HAPPY ENDINGS FOR COMPANION ANIMALS WHO NEED OUR HELP!



**THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT.** Sometimes VHS is the last hope for these animals. We're grateful to you, the Endowment Fund, the Jamie Lee & Punky Fund and the McVitie Fund for all the hope and happiness that we're able to provide.



## LILA

This beautiful little rabbit had a blockage in her digestive tract and was in dire need of veterinary help. Her guardian is off work on disability and could not imagine losing her best friend, but did not have the means to pay a veterinary bill. Thankfully, VHS was able to step in.

Lila's guardian sent a note with this message: *"I can't thank you all enough for playing a huge role in saving my rabbit's life. She is the light of my life. We play tag. She wins. I know she's laughing inside! She is beautiful in every way, inside and out."*



## LUKA

A five-year-old Shih Tzu, Luka is part of a family that includes a single mom and two children. When one of the children opened the door to greet a friend, Luka ran out and was hit by a car, badly fracturing his pelvis. The children were extremely upset – even more so when they found out that the person who hit Luka had driven away. Times are tough for this family and they had no idea how they could possibly afford surgery to help the children's 'brother'. Thankfully, due to the James and Donna-Mae Moore Foundation's Challenge Grant, we were able to help Luka. He's back at home, healed and healthy.



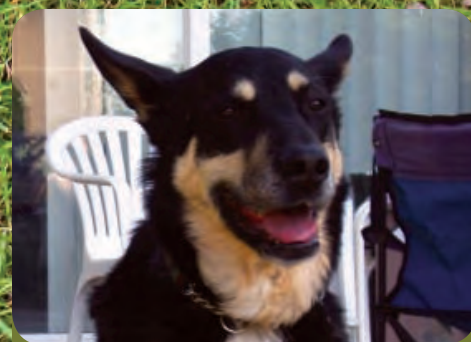
## BUDDY

This handsome white boy was having a terrible time. After already having surgery for a broken leg, it fractured again, requiring another operation. At the same time, his bladder ruptured – the cause was never determined. His guardians were down on their luck and couldn't afford another vet bill. Fortunately, VHS and other organizations came together to help and four months later, Buddy is doing (in his mom's words) AWESOME!!



## QUINCY

This senior dog was not himself at all. He was unable to eat and obviously in a lot of pain. It turned out he had a tumour under his tongue. Once it was removed (thanks to VHS donors), he turned into his happy former self and is now back on his paws!



## FOREST

A rottweiler cross, eight-year-old Forest had an extremely painful abscessed tooth. A rescued dog, he was fearful but loving his new forever home. However, his guardian had recently been disabled and was having difficulty surviving and providing for her beloved friends and could not afford the surgery to relieve Forest of his pain. VHS was happy to step in and pay for the desperately needed dental work.

# DONATIONS & THANK YOUs

## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Kim McFadden, in memory of Mac McFadden;  
Judy Werts, in memory of Joanie Hill;  
Alvina Weigum, in memory of Sheldon Hermann;  
Vivian & Wade Crandall, in memory of Sheldon Hermann;  
Muriel Roberts, in memory of Shannon Hocking;  
Anonymous, in memory of Lady Lea;  
Judy Werts, in memory of Vanilla;  
Anonymous, in memory of Elvis;  
Sheryl Smith, in memory of Gypsy;  
Theresa & Dennis Pirie, in memory of Buddy;  
Dr. Margaret Blom, in memory of Bowser;  
Leanne McConnachie, in memory of Shep;  
David & Halina Mitton, in memory of Blanca;  
Leanne McConnachie, in memory of Blanca;  
Leanne McConnachie, in memory of Deefur;  
Leanne McConnachie, in memory of Charlie;  
Leanne McConnachie, in memory of Rupert;  
Debra Hadley, in memory of Sabin & Nissa;  
Leah Skretkowitz, in memory of Owen Hertzman.

## DONATIONS IN HONOUR OF THAT SPECIAL SOMEONE:

Fearn Edmonds, in honour of June Humphrey's birthday;  
Marsha Harris, in honour of Lindy and Frankie Harris;  
Gitte Rahbek, in honour of Astrid Blue's birthday;  
Anonymous, in honour of Natasha Carpio;  
Anonymous, in honour of Corrie Mosier's retirement;  
Brenda Burns, in honour of the wedding of James Ward & Jodi Watt.

## THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING, WHO HAVE DONATED THROUGH THE UNITED WAY:

Inger Hummelshoj  
Barbara Miles

We owe a huge thank you to **Jamie Lee**, who sponsors the **Jamie & Punky Fund**, used to spay and neuter cats in Surrey. Since 2010, Jamie has spayed and neutered 158 cats!

And a big thank you to those of you who became monthly donors through [CanadaHelps.org](http://CanadaHelps.org), taking advantage of VISA's offer to donate \$10.00 for each new donor.

**TELUS** provides employees with numerous ways to support their charity of choice, including matching donations and donating to a charity on behalf of an employee who has performed volunteer work in the community. *Thank you TELUS and employees!* (We mention individual names if they are indicated on the communication from TELUS).

Lezlie Rodrigues  
Lorraine Lamb  
Saundra Keayes  
Gillian Stewart

## THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES WHO CARRY OUR DONATION BOXES

Pet Solutions, North Surrey  
Finlandia Pharmacy  
Nutraways Vitamins  
Highlands Veterinary Hospital  
Karmavore Vegan Shop

## AND TO THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES THAT SUPPORT OUR WORK:

Jamieson Vitamins;  
Cambridge Plumbing Systems Ltd.;  
Whole Foods on Robson;  
Kama Natural Soap;  
Urban Impact Recycling;  
Scotiabank;  
Kali Yoga;  
The Vancouver Sun.

## WE'RE GRATEFUL TO THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR THEIR SUPPORT:

Eden Conservation Trust  
Vancouver Foundation  
Humane Society International/Canada  
James A. and Donna-Mae Moore Foundation

Confused about egg labels?



If you buy eggs,  
choose certified organic

Put the chicken before the egg.  
Help the Chicken OUT!

## HELP THE CHICKEN OUT!

Are your friends finding it difficult to read egg labels? VHS has a pocket-sized egg label guide (in English and in Mandarin) that you can use to educate them! Just call the office and we'll send a few out to you!

How else can you make a difference for the 28 million egg-producing hens in Canada? Whenever you're in a restaurant, ask if they use cage-free eggs. Every time we're in public, it's an opportunity to educate. Surprisingly, some people still don't know the cruel facts. **Speak out for the hens!**



# Go meat-free with alternatives like Gardein

## FINDING IT HARD TO GIVE UP MEAT? NEW MEAT-FREE PRODUCTS CAN HELP

VHS encourages people to transition to a plant-based diet because reducing or eliminating meat consumption ensures fewer animals will suffer on cruel factory farms or be killed in slaughterhouses.

But many people who have always had meat at the centre of their meals find making that transition difficult. Sure, there are plenty of vegetarian and vegan cookbooks and lots of resources online, but for those who don't like cooking or are pressed for time it can still be a challenge.

This is where meat-free convenience foods have a role to play. The market for these products is currently booming, with new producers emerging and established ones growing fast. One of the most successful is B.C.'s own Gardein, which produces a wide range of plant-based foods (everything from Chick'n Scallopini to Stuffed Turk'y to Meatless Meatballs). With most of its sales in the U.S., Gardein is now in more than 18,000 stores and sales are almost doubling every two years.

Gardein's founder and president Yves Potvin met with VHS staff recently to discuss the growth in plant-based products and Gardein's place in the market. Potvin, who pioneered the first veggie dog with his previous company, says the meat alternatives industry, with about \$1 billion in sales, is still relatively small but has great potential. "The cattle meat business is over \$100 billion, so we're not even touching one per cent," he says. "It's a young industry." Nevertheless, Potvin sees encouraging precedents such as dairy alternatives (e.g. soy, almond milk), which he says is about eight per cent of the dairy market.

The growing demand for alternative sources of protein is being driven by several factors, says Potvin. One is the unsustainability of meat production, which is environmentally damaging and resource intensive; another is the health risk associated with overconsumption of meat (obesity, heart disease, diabetes); and, of course, ethical concerns about eating animals, especially those raised on factory farms.

Potvin believes his customers, who are mostly between 18 and 40, understand these issues and are open to change. "The young consumer gets it," he says, adding that younger women are especially attracted to Gardein products' low calorie count. There's no doubt that Gardein's brand emphasizes healthy ingredients (such as non-GMO soy protein, organic ancient grain flour, wheat and pea proteins, vegetables) and health benefits (cholesterol free as well as trans and saturated fat free), but convenience is a major selling point.

"We are in the convenient food business," says Potvin. "We're really into healthy, convenient food made from plant-based protein." But convenient, processed food has its critics – and Potvin takes them head on:

"There are the Michael Pollans of this world that say well, it's processed food. Okay. Bread is processed. Pasta is processed. Our process is very similar to bread or pasta. If you eat bread or pasta, yes its processed food. And other arguments are 'well why do you have to do it like a McDonald's nugget?'. Well, one of the biggest things that I heard from consumers in their letters is 'my son plays baseball and after the game we

all end up at my house and if we have your nuggets the kids don't know the difference.' He's happy. He fits in. It's inclusive.

"And let's face it. When you finish a game of baseball you're not going to go and eat kale!"

Gardein works to make its products fit into familiar, mainstream patterns of eating, avoiding the negative stereotyping of vegan and vegetarian foods. "There's a perception that you have to be wearing Birkenstocks or be a hippy to eat this kind of food," says Potvin, explaining why it's important to make people feel comfortable and at home with Gardein meals, right down to every detail of production. "We use similar shapes and forms that people are accustomed to."

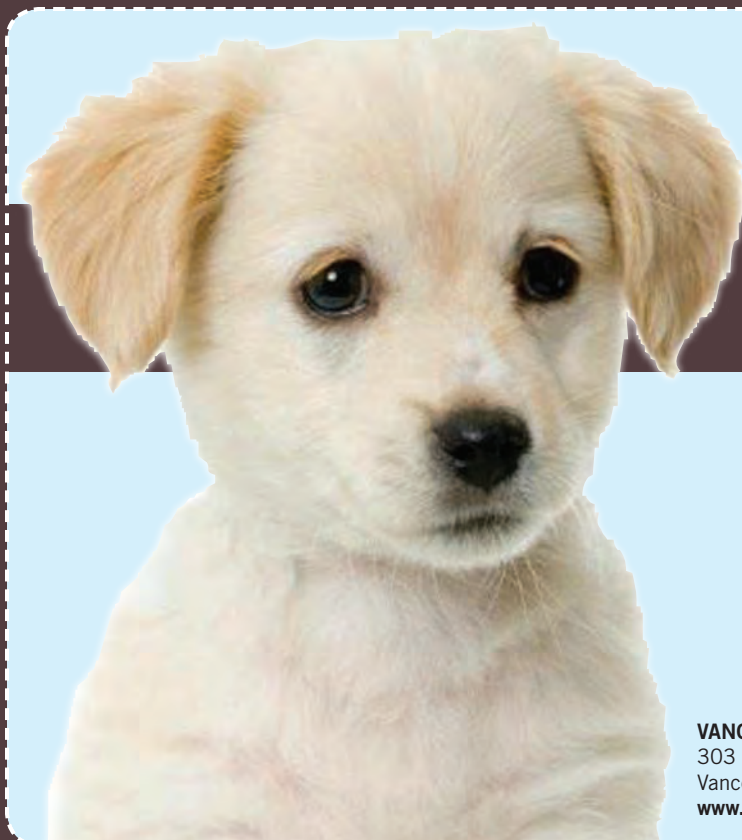
But Potvin, a trained chef, is no enemy of traditional cooking from scratch. He simply acknowledges the reality of today's culture, in which convenience food is a major element. If people are going to eat it anyway, why not make it healthier, cruelty-free and environmentally friendly?

From VHS's point of view, anything that reduces meat consumption and helps people transition to a plant-based diet is welcome. For the billions of animals suffering on factory farms, the transition can't come soon enough.

For more information on Gardein products visit [www.gardein.com](http://www.gardein.com)

For information on VHS's Eat Less Meat project visit: [www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca/campaigns/eat-less-meat/](http://www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca/campaigns/eat-less-meat/)





**CHARLIE**  
**looked healthy.**

**But the  
breeder LIED!**

**In fact, Charlie was gravely ill.  
He needed help and we were there.**

**Help us be there in the future  
REMEMBER VHS IN YOUR WILL**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

call Debra Probert at 604.266.9744

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## **SCOTIABANK CHARITY CHALLENGE 2013**

Thanks to all of you who came out to run or walk and raise money for your favourite charity!! And thank you as well to the 273 donors who made our event such a success. **WE RAISED \$26,661.01! YES!**

Although we stayed in the top 10 for most of the race, we did not win the extra \$5,000 prize for most dollars raised per runner. But there's always next year!! We're looking forward to seeing some new faces next year – remember, you don't have to run, you can walk with the Chicken Runners Team!

And a big thank you to Scotiabank, the event sponsor. They handle all the logistics – this is an event VHS could never manage on its own.

**Scotiabank, you're the best!**

## **MONTHLY DONORS – OUR HEROES!**

You know who you are. You faithfully support the work we do for animals, month after month. You trust in our work. And we depend on you – for our work today, but also for our work tomorrow and the day after that.

**Do you know exactly how fantastic you are?** You are the backbone of VHS. All of us – staff, directors and volunteers, are grateful every single day for every single one of you. (All VHS staff and directors are also VHS donors – we believe in what we do!)

**THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!!!**



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