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### **DOGS DESERVE BETTER SENDS MORE THAN 10,000 VALENTINES TO CHAINED DOGS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES**

#### **DOGS FREED FROM CHAINS, PENS AS A RESULT OF UNIQUE DIRECT MAIL CAMPAIGN**

March 3, 2008 – Tipton, PA. – Dogs Deserve Better, the only national non-profit focused exclusively on ending the suffering endured by dogs that spend their lives at the ends of chains or in pens, last month sent 10,435 valentines to chained and caged dogs across the United States. The group exceeded its goal of sending 10,000 valentines.

The annual “Have a Heart for Chained Dogs” campaign is an unusual direct mail program designed to educate dog caretakers about the inhumanity of staking a dog in the yard and leaving it there for years on end, often for the dog’s entire life. Perpetual chaining is legal in most places in the United States and even widely accepted in certain areas. For six years, the non-profit has, through its nationwide volunteers, gathered the addresses of tens of thousands of chained dogs, then sent the dogs hand-made valentines, most of them made by school children and youth groups. Included in the envelope are coupons for dog treats and educational materials for the dogs’ caretakers discussing the inhumanity of keeping dogs constantly chained or caged.

One of the first success stories in the 2008 campaign came from northern Ohio, where a family that kept a German shepherd in a concrete cage decided, after receiving one of Dogs Deserve Better’s valentine packages, that their dog did, in fact, deserve better. The family relinquished the dog to Dogs Deserve Better, which found a new home for Harley.

Others have responded to Dogs Deserve Better’s valentine mailings and have asked the non-profit to help in re-homing, socializing or housetraining their chained dogs. Others have requested Dogs Deserve Better’s help in providing free or low-cost fencing in exchange for releasing their dogs from their chains.

Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of “backyard dogs” in the United States live out their lives without exercise, companionship, or any respite from life-threatening extremes in weather. A dog kept chained alone in one spot suffers immense psychological and physical damage. A once- friendly animal becomes neurotic, depressed, anxious, and often aggressive, thereby posing a danger to people. Chains wrapped around trees or debris can strangle dogs or limit movement so severely they cannot access food and water, assuming food and water is even provided regularly. Some chained dogs end up with collars embedded in their necks, the result of years of neglect at the end of a chain.

Although the practice of 24/7 chaining is pervasive in many parts of the country, especially in rural areas, states and cities have, in recent years, started to pass laws that put time limits on how long “man’s best friend” may be chained. California passed a law in 2006 and Texas followed suit in 2007. Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and South Carolina are among the states currently considering laws that would put reasonable limits on how long a dog may be chained outdoors. Hundreds of cities have passed, or are considering, similar legislation.

State-by-state statistics relating to the Valentine's Day outreach, success stories, and further explanation about the campaign can be seen here: <http://www.dogsdeservebetter.com/vdaywrap2008.html>.

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Note: For hi-resolution photos, please visit the site at  
<http://www.dogsdeservebetter.org/Valentines2008.html>.