

# HIGHWAY

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*The Kids are Alright*

# BETTER TOGETHER

**OUTSIDE THE FRONT DOORS** of the North Central Animal Shelter in Los Angeles, California, a woman sits at a table, unassuming and kind, with pamphlets and a sign-up sheet. She does not wear a cape or have superhero powers, but she is often a person and their pet's last chance before crossing the threshold—the last chance they have before they are separated from each other forever.

Her name is Kerry Armstrong, and she is Home Dog LA. Kerry and her intervention counselors have been here for 8 years offering information, resources, and assistance to low-income community members, senior citizens, and struggling pet owners looking for options other than surrendering their beloved pets. Offering pet food, assistance with vet costs, and resources for pet friendly housing, Home Dog LA finds ways to help people and their pets to stay together for a lifetime.

A few miles away, Christy Schilling and her band of volunteers at Bark Avenue Foundation hold a Wellness Clinic for people experiencing homelessness with their pets. Cats



and dogs receive a checkup from a veterinarian, vaccinations, nail trims, deworming and flea treatment. Spay or neuter surgery is scheduled along with urgent vetting if needed. For over 17 years, Bark Avenue Foundation has been embedded in underserved communities, helping pet guardians through their roughest times in life. With community support and grants, BAF offers everything from vaccinations to Emotional Support Animal (ESA) assessment and certification so people can be assured that their companion can stay with them no matter where housing is found.

During this pandemic as the world socially distanced, Christy and Kerry came together, their organizations meeting like a pair of soulmates. They vowed to venture into resource

desert communities and plant the seeds of hope. By connecting financially struggling families to free and low-cost resources for pet care, pets can stay safely with the people they love and never end up at the shelter.

This union of Bark Avenue Foundation and Home Dog LA is betterTogether Forever, a powerhouse of compassion blanketing the entire Los Angeles area. Providing resources on the ground in underserved communities right up to the front door of the shelter, BTF gives people options other than surrendering their pet when they face the most difficult life challenges.

Through Unsheltered People with Pets (UPP), Shelter Intervention, and Community Engagement, betterTogether Forever offers everything from pet wellness, pet food, and

supplies to access to vet care, assistance with landlords, and even fence repair.

Bark Avenue Foundation and Home Dog LA aren't just doubling their impact with this union but increasing it exponentially. The bags they hand out are filled with food and supplies, but what they're really providing is Hope: hope to make it to the next day, the next week, the next year; hope that they will never be forced to part with who may be the only family they have; hope that there is someone there to help: betterTogether Forever.

Join us, along with our donors, supporters, volunteers, and partnering organizations in being betterTogether Forever, to help people and their pets stay together no matter what obstacles they face along the road. **HE**



**better**TOGETHER  
f<sup>🐾</sup>ever

[www.peopleandpetsbtf.org](http://www.peopleandpetsbtf.org)

HELPING PEOPLE AND THEIR PETS STAY  
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