

Brothers Run Birthday Drive for Pets in Need

**BY ANGELA
NORTH ZUMWALT**

Special to The Pilot

At the recent Downtown Aberdeen Dog Fair, brothers Liam and Connor Corley darted through the crowds distributing fliers to kids they saw with dogs. They figured that, like them, they would be pet lovers.

The flier read, “Do you love pets? We do! For our birthdays, we asked our friends to bring pet food or money to buy pet food instead of birthday gifts for us. We have enough toys and we love animals! We collected and bought a lot of food — about 1,000 pounds! Many, many dogs and cats will have good food now. Would you like to collect for a Pet Pantry too? Please call Ms. Char at (910) 638-1128. She can help you get started.”

Their message was signed “Liam and Connor, Pet Advocates.”

The Pet Pantry is a program of the Moore County Pet Responsibility Committee (PRC). Donated pet food is bagged into gallon bags that also carry instructions about access to subsidized spay and neuter services. These bags are distributed throughout Moore County in economically challenged areas.

Liam and Connor and their mother, Clayton, found out



Liam Corley, far left, and Connor Corley with donations of dog food collected for the Pet Pantry, a program of the Moore County Pet Responsibility Committee

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHARLENE FAUSZ

about the PRC’s Pet Pantry at the Downtown Aberdeen Dog Fair in 2021.

“Birthday gifts can be so stressful for kids to pick out, parents to buy, and the likelihood that it’ll be played with for long are slim,” said Clayton. “So, we began to encourage the boys to do something meaningful and to make their community a better place instead. We asked them what they thought would be a good idea.”

She continued, “After talking with the boys, they decided that they wanted to collect pet

food. If they could spread a little bit of help and love to the ones that needed it, then that was one less hungry family dog or cat. And, hopefully, one less homeless animal.”

The brothers began their donation collections four years ago and now it’s what they look forward to every year, trying to out-do the previous year, added Clayton. The food collected by Liam and Connor went to the PRC Pet Pantry Program and to other similar programs.

The PRC presents a six session Pet Responsibility Education

Program to Moore County fourth-graders.

“This is the kind of heartfelt act of advocacy that we strive to encourage in the fourth-graders,” said a spokesperson. “We can definitely tell the story of Liam and Connor and inspire the students to think of how they can help.”

A recent joint article from the CEOs of The Food Bank for NYC and the ASPCA stated, “When pet owners struggle, so do their pets, and the appropriate response to that challenge is not to point a finger but offer

a hand. Though some people wrongly assume that low-income and housing-insecure pet owners care less for their pets than others, numerous studies — and personal experiences by both of our teams — demonstrate that the loving bonds and deep dependencies between people and their pets are unaffected by income level or living situations. Most pet owners love and want to care for their pets; the only difference is their depth of resources. A bag of cat kibble makes a powerful difference for people faced with nearly impossible choices when they can’t meet all of their critical responsibilities. Just one form of support can help a person or family overcome several different challenges. Compassion can take many forms, but none may be more valuable than the kind that instantly delivers nourishment and safety, and supports and preserves entire families, pets included.”

Something as simple as free food can do that all that and more.

For more information about the PRC and its programs, go to www.mcprc.org.

Angela North Zumwalt is president of the Moore County Citizens’ Pet Responsibility Committee (PRC).

Birdie, by brothers Liam and Connor Corley, who have quietly spent the past four years collecting food donations for the Moore County Pet Responsibility Committee's Pet Pantry Program.

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The two spent a recent Saturday going around the Downtown Aberdeen Dog Fair handing out fliers to all the kids they saw with the dogs. The flier read, in part: "Do you love pets? We do! For our birthdays, we asked our friends to bring pet food or money to buy pet food instead of birthday gifts for us. We have enough toys and we love animals!"

The two gave more than 1,000 pounds of food to the pantry, which is a resource for those having trouble paying for their pets' food.

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