Animal Abandonment and Rescue at Rutgers University

Helping Pets Find Good Homes

Tag Words: Rutgers, Pets, Animal, Abandonment

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Summary (DR)

While away at college, many students decide to adopt pets for the comfort they provide. However, most students fail to consider the consequences of adopting a pet that they may not be allowed to have, may not be able to afford, or may not have the time for. Because of this, many students end up abandoning their animals, leaving them to roam the streets of New Brunswick, homeless. By setting up a Facebook page available to the Rutgers community, we will facilitate pet re-homing through a controlled application system.

Video link

RU Pet Re-Homing: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_Jb0Fotgh4
The Issue: Abandoned Pets

Background
Rutgers Policy On Pets (DR)
According to the Rutgers housing website, the official policy on pets is “No pets are allowed in residence halls or apartments except service dogs and other service animals in training”. Though all the Resident and Apartment Advisors are required to make this known to their residents, many students risk the penalties of owning a pet and attempt to keep one anyway. If caught with a pet, it is entirely the student’s responsibility to get rid of it within a limited period of time.

New Brunswick Ordinances for Off Campus Pets (DR)
College students who decide to adopt a pet once they get to school are not restricted to those living on campus. Many students living in on campus housing make the choice to adopt as well. While they are technically allowed to own a pet, they have strict regulations that must be adhered to. These can be found on the Rutgers Off-Campus Housing Service website, which details the New Brunswick Dog and Cat Ordinances.

For dogs, owners must make sure their animal doesn’t disturb the piece between 8:00pm and 8:00am. Additionally, the maximum number of dogs allowed in one residence is 3, and the owner is responsible for feces removal and disposal, as well as ensuring the dog is supervised and on a leash when out in public.

For cats, the website strongly encourages owners to license their cats as licensed cats tat escape are more likely to receive veterinary treatment and be returned to their owner if found. The Cat Ordinance is similar to that of the Dog Ordinance in that there is a limit to 3 per residence but different in that the city of New Brunswick requires cats to be licensed and vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian. Additionally, they must have their license number displayed at all times. In the case of cat bites, the owner must keep the cat in quarantine for 10 days at which time it will be re-examined by a veterinarian and a report will be sent to the board of health. This is done to ensure the cat does not have rabies or any other disease transferable to humans. Because of this, greater care and thought must be taken when owning a cat.

In addition to the New Brunswick Ordinances, the web site advises all pet owners to responsible and either take their pet with them when moving out or bring it to a shelter rather than simply abandoning it. The fact that Rutgers feels the need to state this on the website is indicative of the problem of students being forced to get rid of their animals.

Reasons for Adoption (DR)
Part of understanding the problem involves understanding the reasons behind students’ decisions to adopt animals while at school. The responsibilities of owning a pet are great, so why do so many college students feel the need to have a pet? According to a study published in the journal Society and Animals (2008), done by a group of researchers at Ohio State University, many college students benefit from having a pet, as pets serve as a source of stress relief. According to Sara Staats, the leader of the study, college tends to be stressful for underclassmen as they are experiencing the difficulties of transitioning into life away from home. In the study, a survey was conducted that included 350 college students at a commuter campus as well adults living in the
community. All participants currently or previously owned a cat and/or dog and were asked to
describe their level of health, the types of pets they owned, and if they believed their pets had
affected their health. Additionally, they completed multiple choice and open ended surveys about
reasons for owning a pet. Roughly 25% of participants stated their pets helped keep them active
and 18% of college students and 13% of adults reported their pet was important in helping them
cope with hard times, clearly indicating the strong psychological bond and need that occurs
between pets and pet owners. The top reason given for owning a pet was avoiding loneliness, a
result that supports Staats’s belief of underclassmen dealing with having to leave home and not
having a well-established group of friends at first. According to Staats, “The pets are not a
substitute for human social interaction and support, but they do provide important interaction for
these kids who might otherwise feel isolated from their current environment”, which helps
explain the results of the survey.

While Staats’s study only involved the people of one community, the basic idea of companion
animals acting as a source for stress relief has been examined by many researchers. In fact,
scientific studies have scientifically proven that interacting with a pet can alleviate stress. One
such study was done by Dr. Karen Allen, Dr. Jim Blascovich, and Wendy B. Mendes on
cardiovascular reactivity and the presence of pets. The study involved 120 married couples, half
of which owned a pet and half of which did not. All participants took part in a math task while
their blood pressure was being measured; however those with pets had their pet freely wandering
about the room during the task. The results showed that, in comparison to non-pet owners, pet
owners had significantly lower resting heart rate and diastolic and systolic blood pressure as well
as lower heart rate and diastolic and systolic pressure during task performance. These also
returned to the resting values much quicker. These results clearly indicate that the presence of
their animal calmed the participants and they experienced less stress while carrying out a
difficult activity. This conclusion can easily be applied to all college students who must often
carry out mentally taxing activities such as homework or studying for exam. Therefore, it should
comes as no surprise that many college students choose to live with an animal during their time
at school.

In addition to stress relief and perhaps at the forefront of the reasons to adopt a pet is the desire
for the bond that comes with owning a pet. In fact, in a study in the Journal of Consumer
Research (1994), E. Hirschman states that the most common reason for pet ownership is so that
the owner could perceive and relate to the animal as a human being. That is, so that they can
have a relationship with their pet that is similar to a relationship with a friend or family member.
This human-animal bond has been extensively studied and the opportunities that come with it
have been clearly defined. According to Morris Holbrook et al (2001), these opportunities
include the chance to be childlike and playful, to be nurturing, and to have companionship and
comfort. All of these appear to be potentially beneficial to stressed out college students living
away from home, again illustrating why adoption by students is so commonplace.

Reasons for Abandonment (general and college) (DR)
It is obvious that strong relationships that are beneficial to one’s health can develop between one
and one’s pet. This makes it all the more shocking when the pet is abandoned and left on its own.
Unfortunately, this happens often among college students for a variety of reasons, most of which
relating to the fact that the students did not fully consider the implications of their decision to
adopt.

In the article “Abandoned animals increase at end of semester” by Allyson Shaw (2010), a student at Kansas University, Shaw discusses the problem of animal abandonment at the school. She cites moving away or moving to another apartment as major reasons why students give up their pets. When most college students adopt an animal, they only have the present in mind but don’t think of the long-term effects. Few take into consideration what will happen to animal once they graduate and leave school. Shaw also discusses the fact that pets demand time and money, both of which are limited to a college student. Students may consider the initial cost of purchasing an animal but don’t necessarily take into mind the cost of food and veterinary expenses. All of these factors don’t immediately come to mind, as students focus more on the fun and excitement of owning a pet rather than considering the responsibilities it entail.

In addition to voluntarily giving up a pet, sometimes students are forced to find somewhere else for their pet to go. Many colleges don’t allow pets in their residence halls, and Rutgers University is no exception. As stated previously, Rutgers has a strict no pet policy. If caught with an animal, a student has no choice but to remove it from the school in a limited period of time. Without having the time to spread the word and look for potential suitable homes, such a student is left with few options including abandonment and relinquishment at a shelter, both of which are not ideal for the animal.

Consequences of Abandonment (DR)
When abandoning their pet, students may not realize that such a decision has consequences that extend far beyond just affecting their personal lives. These affect the abandoned animal and have the potential to affect the broader community as well.

First, one must consider the dangers an abandoned animal faces. For instance, during pleasant weather, an animal such as a cat may be able to survive outside by hunting food. However, when the weather gets overly hot in the summer or bitterly cold in the winter, it becomes much harder for these domesticated animals to adapt and survive. In general, animals that live outdoors face the risks of extreme weather, traffic, mistreatment by humans, and being hunted by other animals. These risks can be far greater and more severe for animals that are completely domesticated and not accustomed to life in the wild.

Second, animal abandonment has consequences that can affect an entire community of people and animals, as seen in the emergence of feral cat colonies. The ASPCA defines a feral cat as “a cat born and raised in the wild, or who has been abandoned or lost and reverted to wild ways in order to survive”. According to the State of New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, such cats may live in a group or “colony” that will breed and settle in areas where they can find food. This can result in property damage as well as wildlife mortality. Additionally, cats, abandoned or wild, that have been living outdoors for extended periods of time are likely not up to date on their vaccinations. This can pose a health threat to any person who comes into contact with such a cat as diseases such as Rabies and Ringworm are transferable to humans. Furthermore, as stated by the ASPCA, such colonies can’t simply be eradicated. Destruction of a colony will likely lead to new cats settling in the area, since the settling of the previous colony indicates that there are reliable food sources in the area. On the other hand, any survivors of the
colony may breed and will be even more cautious to threats.

Things to consider before getting a pet (SO)

Fish
It is recommended that goldfish be kept in at least a ten gallon fish tank. Anything smaller will not allow them enough room. Fish bowls should not be used for goldfish. Also, they need to have a 10 to 15 percent water change weekly. Even Betta fish are recommended to have at least 5 gallons of water to swim in. A vase or bowl is not acceptable for these fish.

Reptiles
Small lizard or Snake
10 gallon aquarium- $20
Initial light bulbs and fixtures- $50
Branches and plants- $25
Food- $300 per year
Additional Light bulbs- $60 per year

Dog
Spay/Neuter Cost $75-100
Food- $125-500 per year

Cat
Spay/Neuter Cost $60-65
Food- $100-200 per year
Litter- $360 per year

Rabbit
Cage- $150+
Litter Pan- ~$9
Litter- $415 per year
Hay- $15 per month
Food- Pellets $4.50/month and fresh veggies $40/month
Vet- Rabbits are considered exotic animals when being taken for veterinary care. From experience, a vet visit in New Brunswick costs $75 just to have the rabbit checked over. This does not include any diagnostic testing which would cost much more.
Time- Rabbits confined to a cage need at least 3 hours of free roaming time each day.

Guinea Pig
Cage- $150+
Hay-$15 per month
Food- $105 per year
Litter-$415 per year

Hamster
Cage- $25-100
Food- $50 per year
Litter- $215 per year

*Note: These estimates don’t include extra’s such as treats, collars, leashes, crates, carriers, bedding, water bottle, food dishes, and toys, which will raise the cost of owning a pet by quite a bit. Also, price estimates are estimated rather low. They are just estimates and a pet owner can expect to pay much more throughout a year of pet ownership.

- On top of the financial aspect of owning a pet, there is also time commitment to consider. Even small animals such as rabbits and guinea pig’s need time to socialize with their owner. For cats and dogs this time is even greater. For most students, full time classes are a big enough of a time commitment and they do not have the time to play with or care for a pet. This doesn’t even mention full time students who may have one or more jobs. All of this can become hectic for the student alone and can add to reasons why you may not be able to adequately care for a pet.

Our solution to the problem: (SO)
We would like to make it possible that people who have found that they can no longer care for their pet should not have to throw them outside when they go to leave for the summer or leave Rutgers. We would like to provide a service that “Re-homes” unwanted pets. We think that this would give peace of mind to the pet owner and would also be beneficial to the Rutgers community.

Included in our project we would like to make people more aware of the responsibilities involved in owning a pet. And to help students realize that this may not be the time in their lives to be taking on that responsibility.

Since the members of our group will not remain at Rutgers forever I have decided to contact Rutgers United for the Welfare of Animals (RUWA). I am hoping that once we graduate the group will be able to continue our project when we are no longer able to.

Problems we may run into (SO)
Sites such as Freecycle and Craigslist do not promote re-homing of animals. Finding homes for animals may take more time than the people giving them up have left to keep them. For example, students moving out at the end of the semester may only give us days or weeks to find a home for their animal but an adopter may not be available immediately.

Students may fear losing housing or fear other possible consequences by acknowledging that they have a pet.

We may find that some people that are willing to re-home are unfit to adopt a pet. People that provide a new home may later find that they cannot keep the pet either. This could create a terrible cycle of re-homing for a poor pet.

An owner that gives up a pet may want to reclaim that pet later.
Information about Local Shelters and Rehoming (KW)

Under New Jersey law, an animal shelter is required to hold a stray animal for 7 days. This is such a short period of time that it is difficult for many animals to be adopted and many are put down. “Four million cats and dogs—about one every eight seconds—are put down in U.S. shelters each year (http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/pet_overpopulation/).” Animals are put into shelters for many reasons, the reason we will focus on in our classepedia and service project is moving out of school living. When students adopt an animal and are not aware of the care and lifelong commitment the animal needs, many of them end up on the streets unable to fend for themselves when students leave college living. Stray animals cannot survive on the streets, and may also cause a hazard to people in the surrounding area. Stray cats can form feral colonies whose population’s sky rockets and can be difficult to control. These cat’s lives are short and usually very strenuous, having to find scraps of food and water where and when available, which is not often (http://www.aspca.org/adoption/feral-cats-faq.aspx). Stray dogs can become vicious and attack other dogs and even people if they feel threatened. A stray animal can be difficult to catch to bring to a shelter or to adopt yourself. This is another reason why it is always better for owners to find the animal a home rather than putting it out on the street (http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/resources/tips/what_to_do_stray_pet.html). A life on the street (especially in a developed city such as New Brunswick) is not life to live for a domesticated animal.

There are many options available for students and other animal owners other than forcing their pet to live on the street. Students are Rutgers University should be aware of their options when getting rid of a pet and have a safe outlet to send their animal to if they choose they can no longer care for it themselves. By providing a group on Facebook that students can contact when they need to give up their pets, we hope to provide these animals with a new home that will be able to care for them for their lifetime. This site will have a no questions policy so that students living in dorms and other living situations that do not allow animals will not be reprimanded for having the pet in the first place. We are more interested in providing the animal with a safe and secure home than with getting these students into any type of trouble.

The average cost for adopting an animal from a shelter is $45.00 for a dog and $35 for a cat (http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/29485/animal_shelter_statistics_pg2.html?cat=53). Although this may not seem like a fortune, we will use free adoption as an incentive for potential new owners to go through our rehoming process rather than through a shelter. We will set up a Facebook page in order to link owners needing to rehome their pets, to new potential owners able to adopt and care for these pets. We will provide a screening survey in order to ensure that the new owner is capable of caring for the animal for the duration of its life so that the cycle of rehoming does not continue. We will provide a detailed version of the survey in the Classepedia Part 2. The survey will include monthly income (to make sure the new owner is capable of supporting the animal with food), a reference to call or email (to make sure the new owner is responsible enough to care for the animal), and a list of any previous experience with animal care as well as some other information.

The local NJSPCA (New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) is located at 1119 Livingston Avenue in New Brunswick NJ 08901. The NJSPCA is focused on preventing animal cruelty and mistreatment. They do not have a shelter at this location; their main goal is to educate people about animal abuse. I think that providing this source on our site will be
important so that students know where to look to receive information about how dangerous it is
to leave their animals outside when they can no longer care for them.
In addition to the Facebook page as an outreach for students looking to rehome their pets, we
will also use petfinder.com to list the animals in need of a new home. This website has a search
database of animals listed in the area and is an easy access for individuals looking for a pet. As a
last resort we will bring the animals that we were unable to rehome to a local shelter. The
Animal Rescue Force is an animal shelter located at US Highway 1, New Brunswick, NJ 908-
846-0226 (http://members.petfinder.com/~NJ16/default.html). This is the shelter that we will
bring animals we are unable to rehome though our program.

Statistics (KW)
It costs U.S. taxpayers an estimated $2 billion each year to round up, house, kill, and dispose of
homeless animals. (USA Today)

Over 56% of dogs and puppies entering shelters are killed, based on reports from over 1,055
facilities across America. (National Counsel on Pet Population Study)

In six years one unspayed female and her offspring, can reproduce 67,000 dogs (Spay USA)

Seven dogs & cats are born every day for each person born in the U.S. Of those, only 1 in 5
puppies and kittens stay in their original home for their natural lifetime. The remaining 4 are
abandoned to the streets or end up at a shelter (The Humane Society of the United States)

The public acquires only 14% of its pets from shelters; 48% get their pets as strays, from friends,
from animal rescuers, 38% get their pets from breeders or pet stores (The Humane Society of the
United States)

The top 10 reasons owners have given for voluntarily relinquishing their pets are:
Dogs:
1. Moving
2. Landlord issues
3. Cost of pet maintenance
4. No time for pet
5. Inadequate facilities
6. Too many pets in home
7. Pet illness (es)
8. Personal problems
9. Biting
10. No homes for littermates

Cats:
1. Too many in house
2. Allergies
3. Moving
4. Cost of pet maintenance
5. Landlord issues
6. No homes for littermates
7. House soiling
8. Personal problems
9. Inadequate facilities
10. Doesn't get along with other pets


As is shown in the above data of why owners voluntarily relinquish their pets, moving is on the top of the list. It is the number one reason why owners give up dogs and number three reason why owners give up cats.

The Service Project: Adopting Pets

Because we are addressing the problem of students adopting and abandoning pets here at Rutgers, we felt the best way to spread awareness and create a solution would be through a facebook group. The group would serve as a forum for those looking to adopt a pet and those looking for a home for a pet they can no longer care for. Additionally, the group would provide information about pet adoption and animal shelters in an attempt to help students make more informed decisions when considering getting a pet. Also, the group would provide the service of bringing a pet to a shelter in the event no other alternative home can be found for the pet. Finally, while we will originally manage the page, we plan to reach out to animal science clubs at Rutgers such as the Society of Animal Science and Rutgers Animal Welfare club to see if they would be interested in taking on the page and service as a part of their club.

The vast majority of students have a facebook page and use it to get information and search for things that interest them. So, we created a facebook group entitled “RU Pet Rehoming” and invited all our Rutgers friends while making the group open to the general public on facebook. Through the group, we offer to help those looking to adopt a pet and those looking to find a new home for their own pet connect. In this way, we can help pets find new homes without having to go to a shelter or be turned out on the streets. Additionally, we offer to have those wanting to relinquish their animal contact us anonymously, giving further motivation to seek our help. Also, by inviting our Rutgers friends to join and invite their friends, word of our group and purpose can be spread quickly throughout the Rutgers community and students will be able to take advantage of it before the end of the year. Also, by keeping the group open to people outside of Rutgers, we hope to reach out to people in the nearby community who also may have problems with their pets. While the group may be initially slow to start, we believe that with time and as more members join, our facebook group will be able to make a real difference in the problem of pet abandonment at Rutgers.

We understand that we will most likely not be able to find a home for every single animal that is presented to us. Because of this, we offer to help the owner bring their animal to a local animal shelter. While this outcome is not ideal, it is still a far better alternative to setting the animal loose on the streets to fend for itself.

In addition, we know that once we have all graduated, we will need to find someone else to keep the group going. Because of this, we are reaching to the animal science clubs mentioned to
incorporate our service project as a part of their club. In this way, someone will always be managing the page as members flow through the club. Also, since these clubs are affiliated Rutgers and well established in the Rutgers community, it is likely they will have resources currently unavailable to use that they can use to expand the page and create more awareness.

In the case that we do find a person who wants to give up a pet that matches well with a person who wants to provide a new home, we have created an agreement to be signed by both parties to avoid any ownership issues.

**Re-homing Agreement**

I ____________ agree that on ______________ I surrender ownership of my pet ______________ a ______________ to ______________. He / She will be responsible for the proper care and treatment of this animal from this date forward. If he / she finds that for any reason they can not care for the animal any longer he/ she will be responsible for making all possible attempts to find a new home for the animal.

Former Owner Date

__________________________ _____________

New Owner Date

__________________________ ______________

**Pet Details:**

Breed Age

______________ __________

Color Weight

__________ ___________

**Animal Medical History**

Vaccinations (please list) ____________________________________________
Spayed or Neutered? Yes / No

History of any diseases or seizures? Yes / No
  if yes, does the animal require medication? Yes / No
  if yes, please list condition(s) ________________________________________

References

Editorials

A. Editorial- Divya Ramnath

Attention College Students: Leave Your Pets at Home!

After a long, tiring, stressful day there is nothing like coming home to the excited greeting of an animal who has been anxiously awaiting your return. This is a feeling almost all pet owners know well and stress relief is in fact one of the many reasons prompting the decision to adopt a pet. It would then appear to be true that is logical for a college student, who experiences stressful situations on a daily basis, to adopt a pet, right? Wrong. While pets do provide love, companionship, and a source of stress relief, they also require great responsibility. Unfortunately, most college students don’t think about all the responsibilities they are taking on when they adopt a pet and this can have some serious consequences.

Walking into an animal shelter and seeing all the loving animals waiting for a home makes it easy to get swept up in the moment and to take one home, especially for a college student who may already be missing their pet from back home. However, there are many other factors that must be considered for the sake of the animal. First, there is the issue of cost. While students may take into account the initial adoption fees, they may not consider veterinary expenses and the cost of food. Most college students don’t have enough money to adequately buy food for themselves on a daily basis, let alone buy additional food for an animal. Additionally, should a veterinary emergency arise, it is unlikely that a college student will be able to afford the care that the animal needs, which can have dire consequences for the animal. Second, there is the issue of time. The relationship between a pet and pet owner is one of mutual companionship, meaning they need your attention just as much as you need theirs. College students are generally extremely busy once they start getting into the semester with studying, hanging out with friends, attending sporting events, and participating in extracurricular activities. This can result in an animal being left alone for long periods of time. This is extremely unfair to the animal who may act out in some way, such as destroying property as a result of being left alone for so long. Third, there is the issue of the future. What will happen to the animal when graduation day comes? While many students have an acceptable place for the animal to live during the school year, they don’t consider where they will be and where the animal go once they leave school. Similarly, students who attempt to keep a pet in university housing with a no pet policy may not consider where they can bring their pet should they get caught. Without having an idea of where their pet will go when and if they need to move it many students have no choice but to abandon their animal, perhaps the most serious potential consequence of student adoption of animals.

With all these problems it is no surprise that many universities face the problem of students abandoning their animals. Students don’t realize that these domesticated animals are unlikely to know how to survive out in the wild on their own and conditions such as extreme cold in the winter and heat in the summer makes it even more challenging. While some students are
responsible enough to surrender their animal at an animal shelter, this isn’t the best option for the animal either, as not all shelters are “no-kill” shelters and many may not even have the space to take another animal. Additionally, it is cruel to the animal, who has developed a bond with the owner and has become accustomed to a home and will not be able to understand this drastic change in their lifestyle. Similarly, it is difficult to imagine an animal lover being happy to say goodbye to their pet so why take that risk?

It is because of all this that I strongly urge those heading off to college to seriously think about what it will mean for them if they choose to adopt a pet. It is understandable that owning a pet may relieve their stress or help them miss home less, but unless the student can account for all the responsibilities I have mentioned, it is still an unwise decision. Students should try volunteering at a shelter where they can still be around animals but are not responsible for what happens to them. It may be hard for people who have always had pets to live without one, but it will be even harder if they need to give one away.

Letter to the Editor
Response to “College Students Say Home Is Where Their Pet Is”
Sara Omar
Rutgers University
New Brunswick NJ 08901
551-208-9251

Though pets may provide many benefits to their owners, such as reduced stress and motivation for increased responsibility. This point of view seems selfish and one sided. It does not take into consideration the pet’s side. I’d like you to consider the question, what about the pet’s well being while living in a dorm? Is a dorm an appropriate environment for a cat or dog, whether big or small?

People can live in smaller spaces because we have the means, to go to the gym and leave a dorm when we need time to go for a walk or get exercise. For example, consider a cat living in a dorm. A cat can not decide to take itself to the gym when it wants to. It can not take a stroll around the block so it can get some exercise. Another common problem that occurs involves students that can no longer keep their pet after 4 years. Most pets have lifespans well beyond 4 years. What happens to that pet when the student can no longer dorm?

The issue of whether or not to allow students to keep pets while in college dorms is gaining greater attention as more students run into this problem. As the article “College Students Say Home is Where Their Pet Is” says, students will keep pets in dorms even at risk of losing their housing or at the risk of other consequences. This occurrence is not only prevalent in Maryland but in NJ as well.

Being a college student in NJ I have been able to see first hand what happens to the pets of room mates and friends. Some of the animals end up in shelters, and for some its much worse. Animals will be placed outside at the end of the semester and left to fend for themselves.
Before considering allowing college students to have pets, many of which are unable to appropriately care for themselves, we need to consider what can we do about those students that can not handle the responsibility? There needs to be more options and more consideration for what happens to the pets.

sent to: letters@sunherald.com
Sun Herald Newspaper in Mississippi

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RU Pet Problem

A growing problem on many college campuses, Rutgers especially, is the adoption of pets into school housing. Once students move out of college, many abandon their pets to the streets thinking that the animals will be able to survive on their own. This is not the case. Another reason that students feel they need to resort to putting their pets out on the street are that they do not realize how much it costs to feed the animal. It can cost anywhere from $100-500 to feed a cat or dog for a year. For students, many of which are unemployed, this is an unattainable amount of money to spend on a pet.

These animals that are turned out to the street are forced into a difficult life they were previously unaccustomed to and will not survive long. These stray animals become a nuisance to society and can become ill and dangerous to the community. As stated by USA Today online, it costs U.S. taxpayers an estimated $2 billion each year to round up, house, kill, and dispose of homeless animals.

This stray animal problem is a growing concern of the Rutgers and New Brunswick community. It is important to educate Rutgers Students and the community about the costs and care that animals require and the factors that are important to consider before adopting or buying a pet. It may be the case that most students are not able to care properly for an animal while in school and should wait to do so until after graduation.

It is important to bring all these factors into light in the Targum. If there are any questions, please contact me by email at karen.walentek@gmail.com or by phone at (973)-462-7841. Thank you for your time.

Sent to: eic@dailytargum.com
Mary Diduch, Editor-in-Chief - The Daily Targum

* This letter is planned to be published in the Targum according to Editor-In-Chief, Mary Diduch.