March 28, 2012

How do you make children better pet owners? Teach them.

The Burleson Animal Shelter is hosting Paw Pals Animal Care Academy for students who are entering the sixth grade in the 2012-2013 school year. The class is limited to 15 students who must either live in Burleson or attend school in Burleson.

This is a free four-week course. Class is 90 minutes, noon to 1:30 p.m., every Saturday, June 2-June 23. The deadline for students to apply for Paw Pals is Friday, April 20.

The sessions include bite prevention and responsible pet ownership, grooming, animal training and graduation. In the first class, students will tour the Burleson Animal Shelter and talk to a certified animal control officer about the responsibilities and legalities of pet ownership. They will also meet with a licensed veterinarian to learn about basic medical care and the importance of routine check ups and vaccinations for pets. During the second class, a licensed animal groomer will explain why dogs should be groomed and the tools needed to get the job done. The students will help groom shelter dogs. Week three, June 16, focuses on animal training. A professional animal trainer will teach basic animal training techniques, then the students will get to try out what they learned with a shelter animal.

Graduation day is June 23. Families are invited to attend as students receive a Paw Pals certificate.

The Paw Pals Animal Care Academy application, which requires a one-page essay, must be signed by the student's parent or guardian and turned in by April 20. Applications may be picked up at the Burleson Animal Shelter at 775 S.E. John Jones Dr. or downloaded from www.burlesontx.com/pawpals and emailed or faxed to the shelter. Shelter hours are 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Tuesday-Friday and 11 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday. For more information about Paw Pals, call 817-426-9283.