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Sally Ellertson
Public Information Officer
141 West Renfro
Burleson, Texas 76028-4261
817-426-9622
F: 817-426-9390
sellertson@burlesontx.com
www.burlesontx.com

If you want to make a difference in the life of an elderly or homebound resident, and their pets, become a part of the Ani-Meals pet food program.

Ani-Meals is a partnership between Meals-on-Wheels of Johnson and Ellis Counties and area animal shelters. Burleson touched base with Meals-On-Wheels in June 2008 to see if the non-profit agency could use food that was donated to the shelter (shelter animals are kept on a Pedigree program, so food donated to the Burleson shelter is not used for the rescued animals). Meals-on-Wheels was already exploring the idea of a pet food program, so the two combined efforts and the program was launched in 2009. Ani-Meals now includes eight communities within the Johnson-Ellis county area.

“This program was started because Meals-on-Wheels staff and volunteers found that the homebound elderly clients were sharing their own meals with their pets because they could not afford to buy pet food,” Whitney Patterson, director of development for Meals-on-Wheels, said. “The Ani-Meals program was developed to help these individuals properly care for their companion animals. It has been very popular with our clients and volunteers.”

The Burleson Animal Shelter helps coordinate the program and stores the donated pet food. On the first Saturday of each month, Meals-on-Wheels volunteers meet at the Burleson Animal Shelter on John Jones Drive to pick up and deliver the donated pet food to more than 10-20 Meals-on-Wheels recipients in Burleson.

“Every month the shelter staff pulls the pet food for each Meals-on-Wheels home based on what pets they have, for example, two medium sized dogs and a cat; a large dog; or three cats,” Kim Peckler, animal control supervisor for the shelter, said. “When supplies are available, we also make up bags that include treats and toys for the pets.”

Anyone who wants to be part of Ani-Meals may drop off donated pet food, treats and toys at the Burleson Animal Shelter, 775 S.E. John Jones Rd. The shelter is open 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Tuesday-Friday and 11 am.-4 p.m. on Saturday. For more information about Ani-Meals call 817-426-9283 or email animalshelter@burlesontx.com.

Meals-on-Wheels is a community-based, non-profit organization serving the homebound elderly and disabled residents throughout Johnson and Ellis Counties for 36 years. If you are interested in Meals-on-Wheels services or would like to be more involved with the organization, contact Meals-on-Wheels at 817-558-2840 or go to www.servingthechildrenofyesterday.org.