FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Help your pets enjoy Halloween

Halloween can be an exciting and fun time of year. Costumes and candy, parties and friends. Many of us love to include our pets in these festivities, just remember a few safety and kindness rules.

The bag of candy is for the trick-or-treaters. Keep it away from pets. Chocolates, especially those with high cocoa content, are potentially lethal to both cats and dogs. Xylitol, a sugar alternative is also dangerous. If your pet is inclined to get into food, keep the candy in a secure cabinet or pantry that they cannot get into. If you suspect your pet has gotten into either, bring your pet to the nearest emergency veterinarian as quickly as possible.

Keep your pets indoors on Halloween. With trick-or-treaters and possible tricksters about the neighborhood, your pet may decide to leave your yard.

If you are expecting trick-or-treaters, it is best to keep your pet away from the front door, preferably in a closed room. With the front door opening and closing all evening, your cat or dog may decide to make an unexpected dash out of your home. Spending Halloween searching for your pet is probably not how you want to spend your night.

Decorations can be dangerous. Jack-o-lanterns with candles (battery-powered plastic candles are a safer alternative), dangling light fixtures (a favorite of kittens) and certain costume accessories are potential playthings to mischievous pets. Keep your pumpkins and decorative corn out of reach of your pets. They aren’t toxic but if consumed in large quantities, they could make your pet sick or even experience an intestinal blockage if large pieces are consumed.
Be considerate with your pet’s Halloween costume. Have them try it on ahead of time, and make sure they can eat, drink, and move comfortably. You don’t want them to wear it if it prevents them from walking, drinking, breathing, or even relieving himself. Even if she looks super cute, if she hates it, go ahead and take it off. Your pet will be much happier.

As always, have your pet’s ID, including county-issued tags, on their collar on Halloween night. If they happen to slip out, these identifications will make it easier to return your pet to you. If your pet is microchipped, that is even better. Be sure your contact information is up to date with your microchip company.

These tips can help you AND your pet to have a safe, fun and kind Halloween!

**Suncoast Humane Society has served animals and people as a regional humane society since 1971.** Operating one of Florida’s few “open admissions” animal shelters, no animal in need is ever turned away, regardless of health, temperament, breed or size. Reaching over 450 square miles and 11 communities, the organization’s services reach Charlotte and Sarasota counties, Boca Grande, and beyond. These programs and services are made possible solely by individual donations, wills and bequests and limited grants from foundations. No funding is received from national humane groups or local, state or federal government.

Suncoast Humane Society accepts animals surrendered by previous owners, lost and straying pets, homeless and abused. The organization operates comprehensive adoption program, placing pets from the shelter and from 6 satellite adoption centers, into permanent loving homes. The “Dog about Town” program features adoptable pets away from the shelter, at venues throughout the community. Lost pets are reunited with their families through the Society’s lost and found services.

The Preventive Health Care Clinic provides spay/neuter, microchipping, vaccinations, flea, tick, and heartworm prevention, plus other preventive services at affordable costs. Adoptable shelter animals in need of extensive and expensive medical care are treated through the “Shelter Angel Program” supported by generous donors. The Society’s No Birth Campaign promotes the reality that spaying/neutering = No Birth = Less Euthanasia.

Thrift stores in Englewood, Port Charlotte and Venice sell gently-used household and other items, donated by the public. All proceeds benefit the programs, services and animal care. Over 300 volunteers assist at the shelter, thrift stores, satellite adoption centers, and with fundraising projects and events.

Pet Therapy teams bring smiles to faces at retirement homes, schools, and health care facilities. The “Doggie Tales” reading program for children is featured at area public libraries.

In addition, the Pet Food Pantry program helps keep pets in their loving homes by providing food assistance for pets belonging to families in need. Suncoast Humane Society also partners with the Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies (CARE) providing temporary housing for pets belonging to abuse victims, and the One More Day Foundation, who provides end-of-life foster care for pets.

**For more information, contact Suncoast Humane Society at (941) 474-7884 or visit www.humane.org**

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Photo submitted by Suncoast Humane Society