



**Helping Hands  
Humane Society, Inc.**



## **Helping Hands Humane Society, Inc and Dillon Stores Press Conference**

WHEN: Tuesday, August 4, 2009 at 12:00 PM

WHERE: Dillons at 5720 SW 21<sup>st</sup> (21<sup>st</sup> & Belle)

\*\*\*Photo Opportunity Available\*\*\*

### **PRESS RELEASE:**

**EMBARGO -- FOR RELEASE ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2009 AT 12:00 PM**

## **HELPING HANDS HUMANE SOCIETY, INC. OF TOPEKA AND DILLON STORES *EM“BARK”* ON A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP**

*Helping Hands Humane Society at Dillons Crossing to become new home for adoptable  
pets searching for caring families*

TOPEKA, KS – August 4, 2009 – In a joint press conference, Helping Hands Humane Society, Inc. of Topeka and Dillon Stores today announced the initial step in a unique partnership to join thousands of adoptable pets with good, caring families.

In 2008, Helping Hands Humane Society began a massive fund-raising campaign to build a new 39,000 square foot facility to replace the rapidly deteriorating and overcrowded conditions at the Society's current shelter. Since then, with the generosity of donors from across the community, over \$4 million has been raised with another \$1.5 million outstanding. Originally, the HHHS had hoped to begin construction on an updated facility in Topeka by the end of 2009, but thanks to the new partnership, the project will begin in a few short months.

Working together, HHHS and Dillon Stores have agreed to a significantly reduced sale price for the 54,000 square foot store located at 21<sup>st</sup> & Belle and surrounding land, following the store's transfer to its soon-to-be renovated location at Fairlawn Plaza. As previously announced, the renovation project at this location is scheduled to be completed later this fall, which would have left the 21<sup>st</sup> & Belle store vacant. This reduction in price has resulted in a contribution in excess of \$1 million to HHHS. With the emerging partnership, the building will now serve as the new Helping Hands Humane Society at Dillons Crossing.

According to HHHS, the contribution of the building and decision to renovate verses new construction presents the community, shelter, and thousands of homeless animals with several benefits and new possibilities:

- The Dillons building is centrally located, making adoptions or locating a lost pet much easier and accessible to more community members.
- Research indicates shelters are more successful when located near neighborhoods in retail areas rather than in remote areas.
- With the physical structure in place, the new shelter is expected to open its door within 9 to 12 months, once renovations commence.

“Not only will we save on construction costs, but we’ll also see our new facility in the heart of the city at a terrific location and we can start the transformation of the building right away,” said Grant Glenn, HHHS Board President. “This is an ideal development for us. When we saw that Dillons would be transitioning to the new location, the idea of renovation instead of construction came to us. The Nebraska Humane Society’s facility in Omaha was once a grocery warehouse, so we have seen how successful a remodel of this sort can be, overall.”

Carol Stubbs, HHHS Executive Director added, “the acquisition helps us to meet our goals and allows us to do the things we simply couldn’t do in our existing space, like offering the opportunity for educational workshops or even air conditioned kennel areas in the summer. Without the contribution from Dillons, this would not have been possible and we would still be waiting to build.”

Upon completion of the renovation, Helping Hands Humane Society at Dillons Crossing will be a state-of-the-art animal care campus focusing on education, animal well-being, and socialization. The new facility will feature:

- Improved Public Spaces: lobby with glass showcases for adoptable dogs and colonies for cats, a gift shop for pet adopters and pet lovers, adoption counselor stations and computer kiosks for adoptable pet details, “get-acquainted” rooms, adoption viewing corridors for cats, puppy parlor viewing rooms, viewing rooms for small animals, and a multi-purpose room for educational seminars, pet training, and other social functions.
- Improved Kennels Areas: dedicated areas for adoptable dogs with special flooring and drains for a clean, healthy environment to reduce the incidence of disease and a special air handling system will eliminate airborne viruses and provide humidification.
- Improved Animal Care: animal receiving lobby for lost and stray animals, separate dog and cat holding rooms to avoid the spread of disease, specially-equipped grooming room, and temperament testing rooms for dogs requiring additional behavioral training.
- Improved Exercise Yard: a large secure outdoor yard for the regular exercise of all dogs. Space will also be used for “get-acquainted” activities, dog obedience training, educational seminars, and social events.
- Improved Clinical Spaces: isolated space for sick and injured animals, surgery preparation room, large surgical suite, and recovery area.

Additionally, the new facility will also feature integrated elements to help lessen stress levels and hygienic systems to reduce disease.

“The Dillons location at 21st & Belle is perfect for our use,” said Bill Acree, HHHS Director of Development. “We can almost take our plans for the new facility and drop them into this existing site, saving considerable expense and time, while still providing everything we need to take great care of the animals.”

When complete, HHHS expects to see animal intake, “return to owner,” and adoption numbers to increase by 30% for the first few years, based on experiences of other newly constructed or renovated shelters. The current HHHS facility was built in 1973 and designed to hold a maximum of 4,500 to 5,000 a year. HHHS receives 9,000 to 10,000 animals each year, which well exceeds original capacity. On average, HHHS reunites or adopts over 3,000 animals each year.

Dillon Stores is proud to partner with HHHS to make Topeka a better place to live, work, and raise a family – complete with the companionship of pets. This latest commitment to the community also provides a sustainable opportunity to re-purpose the building versus simply leaving a large vacant property in the neighborhood. Together, Dillon Stores and HHHS will also explore future partnerships to continue the efforts to bring people and pets together.

“We agree with the Helping Hands Humane Society, the unconditional love pets provide, definitely deserve better conditions than the current shelter,” said Colleen Juergensen, Vice President of Operations at Dillon Stores. Not only is the re-purposing of our 21<sup>st</sup> & Belle location in line with our commitment to sustainability, but it will continue to be a place we can all take pride in, as a result of the good work of the HHHS. For many of us, our pets are part of the family. We’re very proud to help connect so many more animals with loving homes.”

**About Helping Hands Humane Society Inc. of Topeka:**

For over 70 years, Helping Hands Humane Society has been providing compassionate care and housing for stray and unwanted animals in Topeka and Shawnee County. The current facility was built in 1973 and was designed to hold 5,000 animals a year. Today the number of animals that find their way to the shelter has doubled. For more information on Helping Hands Humane Society, please visit our web site [www.hhhstopeka.org](http://www.hhhstopeka.org).

**About Dillon Stores:**

Dillon Stores, headquartered in Hutchinson, KS, is a division of The Kroger Company, one of the nation’s largest retail grocery chains. Dillon Stores operates 93 stores in Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska and employs over 12,500 associates and has been a part of the Hutchinson community for more than 90 years. Dillon Stores focuses its charitable efforts on supporting hunger relief, health and wellness initiatives, local schools, and grassroots organizations in the communities it serves. For more information on Dillon Stores, please visit our website at [www.dillons.com](http://www.dillons.com).

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