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DEVON ANDERSON

DA's Animal Cruelty Program Receives National Attention

Animal Cruelty Specialist, Jessica Milligan will speak to more than 100 people across the country about implementing the HOPE Program in their community.

District Attorney Devon Anderson announced today that the HOPE (Helping Our Pets through Education) Program that was created in September to help combat animal cruelty in Harris County is getting national attention. HOPE is an educational program for elementary school aged children to teach them how to properly care for their pets and to understand the consequences of animal cruelty, dog fighting and cockfighting.

"The HOPE Program is a proactive approach to preventing and stopping animal cruelty," said DA Anderson. "Many of the defendants in animal cruelty cases begin abusing animals at a young age. We want to prevent that behavior by educating our youth on how to properly take care of animals and how to recognize and stop animal abuse, and when they see it. This program has educated more than 700 students so far and we hope to reach even more in 2015."

Assistant District Attorney and Animal Cruelty Specialist Jessica Milligan, who oversees the HOPE Program and created the program's curriculum, will hold a webinar presentation through the National District Attorneys Association. More than 100 people have registered to learn about the HOPE Program and why every district attorney's office should be reaching out to their community to stop the commission of animal cruelty crimes, rather than just reacting to those crimes after they have already been committed.

"As a prosecutor who specializes in this area, I have seen several cases involving youth who lack education and compassion when it comes to taking care of animals," said ADA Milligan. "If we can instill empathy in our young people and teach them how to recognize and stop animal abuse, I believe we can stop the cyclical nature of abuse and save countless animals."

The webinar will be held today from 2p.m. to 3p.m. through the National District Attorneys Association Website: www.ndaa.org. For more information on the DA's HOPE Program, or if you are an educator who is interested in having the HOPE Program come to your school, please fill out the form on the HOPE page on our DA website: www.HarrisCountyDA.com, under the "Crime Prevention" Tab.

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