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# BETA

## BEIRUT FOR THE ETHICAL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

**B**ETA was founded by a group of young women who met while feeding stray cats. Their combined desire to make a difference became a reality in 2006, when the organization became official. Today, BETA is Lebanon's largest no-kill shelter, currently housing 800 dogs, 200 cats, three horses, and two monkeys.

"It's our goal to educate individuals and take direct action to help animals in Lebanon live the life they deserve, for we all belong to this planet and it is HOME to all of us," says Helena Hesayne, vice president of Beirut for Ethical Treatment of Animals (BETA).

Since its inception in 2004, BETA has rescued and cared for over 5,200 stray dogs, cats, donkeys, and horses. In cooperation with municipalities, BETA developed the first TNR program (trap, neuter, and return) — a tried and true method used to control the population of strays and prevent overpopulation. It is a non-lethal method of trapping stray cats and having them neutered or spayed by a licensed veterinarian and then returned to their original environment.

Besides that, BETA has rescued baboons, vervet monkeys, lions, foxes, and birds of prey, from appalling conditions and sent them to sanctuaries. Since the beginning, it has spread awareness about animal welfare and responsible pet guardianship through its local campaigns. This year, it closed down an inhumane puppy mill, rescuing 83 dogs in the process.

For BETA, volunteers are an integral part to maintain its livelihood.

"We have six paid employees, four for the dog shelter and two for the cats. The rest of us are all volunteers," says Hesayne.

### BETA's Board Members:

- John Baret
- Helena Hesayne
- Harriet Joly
- Helen Warde
- Sevine Fakhoury
- Aline Geday
- Dawn Belvis
- Sonja Grujic
- Seka Kaplarevic
- Maya Hussein
- Shireen Flaichez
- Sandra Hussein Norberg
- Michael Meouchi
- Michelle Cassard
- Rana Bizri

Being a volunteer takes more than just courage. According to Hesayne, you also "have to be strong and have patience with the animals. You have to have a big heart."

There are just 12 regular volunteers who together manage the organization, take care of the dogs and cats, go on

rescues, visit schools, help with events and everything else that comes with managing an organization like BETA. However, members of this group have other commitments to worry about; some have regular jobs during the week and families to care for.

"People think we are many people, that we get salaries and have a lot of money. This is not the case. We are in huge debt," says Hesayne. With \$95,000 owed to food suppliers, \$45,000 in vet bills just for the dogs, and very few donations this past year, their debt is consistently increasing.

Currently, they've been suffering a tremendous strain, due to their impending move. "We have to leave the shelter before the end of the year since the owner has decided to sell his land," says the vice president.

An architect by trade, Hesayne has designed the plans for the new shelter. Although they have successfully acquired a new piece of land, they have yet to raise the necessary funds to build the shelter. "We have little events now and then, the major one being the gala dinner. The money we make helps us reduce our debt. We have also just registered BETA in the United States

and have a PayPal so it's much easier to generate international donations," says Hesayne.

This year, BETA's 13th annual gala dinner was held at the Sursock Palace Gardens on September 5, with many celebrities and influential people in attendance. During the dinner, they played a video that unveiled plans for their new shelter and showed scenes of BETA's various rescues throughout the year.

"We've been managing since 2006, and we will keep going. BETA runs with a lot of love, a lot of ups and downs and joy when we see our animals happy.

"We love them and will do anything for them. It would just be great to get more help," she adds.

However, despite all the hardships, Hesayne keeps a bright outlook. "You need to be always positive and always think positive," she says. "You're allowed to be a bit sad from time to time, but we have to look back at what we've done and how many animals we've saved. We can't save them all but looking at the beautiful success stories keeps us going. When we see our dogs happy, it makes up for all the negative things."

By Vivecca Chatila Malkoun

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### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

1. Be kind to all animals
2. Spay/neuter your dogs and cats
3. Adopt don't shop!
4. Become a volunteer
5. Make a donation (information below)

### BETA- CONTACT DETAILS

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Email – [contact@betalebanon.org](mailto:contact@betalebanon.org)  
Website – [www.betalebanon.org/](http://www.betalebanon.org/)

# HOME

## MAGAZINE

THE SOUL OF LEBANON

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