

# The Story So Far...

► By Michael Mountain

“Kindness is the key to a better world for all of us, and there is no problem that cannot be helped with a little kindness.”

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Best Friends magazine is now available on news stands in several cities. So here's a big welcome to those of you who are joining us for the first time. Here is an introduction to the work of Best Friends:

**The Sanctuary.** This magazine is not part of some big publishing company. Rather, we are the nation's largest animal sanctuary – Best Friends Animal Sanctuary.

On any given day, there are up to 1,800 abused or abandoned dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, birds, and other animals here.

Most of the daily new arrivals – roughly three out of every four – just need the time and space to heal and recover before they can go to good new homes. But for those who have suffered extra trauma, or who are older or sicker and not suitable for adoption, the sanctuary becomes their home and haven where they can make new friends among their own kind and be given loving care for the rest of their lives.

**The Golden Circle.** The sanctuary is in a beautiful red-rock canyon at the heart of the famous Golden Circle of national parks that includes the Grand Canyon, Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon, and Lake Powell.

If your vacation plans bring you out this way, your furry friends will be delighted to see you. You can spend a day or a week or even a month or more here. Some people simply can't bear to leave at all, which is why the local town of Kanab, Utah, is becoming known as something of a mecca for animal lovers from all over the world!

**How It All Began.** Best Friends grew out of a group of friends, back in the 1970s, who used to pay regular visits to our local shelter to adopt as many as possible of the dogs and cats who would otherwise have to be killed.

We would nurse them back to health and



find homes for many of them. Those who remained formed a delightfully quirky group of unadoptables who were truly the founders of the new sanctuary.

**Members and Supporters.** As word spread about Best Friends, we soon discovered that there were people just like ourselves all across the country and, indeed, all over the world. Most of their letters, phone calls, and faxes would begin the same way:

*“Dear Best Friends,*

*“I thought I was the only person who felt this way about animals! Now I know I’m not.”*

Best Friends is supported entirely by kind and generous people like you. Most of them also support their favorite local shelter or rescue group, too. And many of them are part of the Best Friends Network – members who let us know they are available to help animals in their own neighborhood should we hear of a special need.

**No More Homeless Pets.** Together with more and more humane organizations around the country, we're working toward a time when there will be no more homeless pets.

Just 12 years ago, there were still more than 17 million dogs and cats being killed in shelters every year. Today the number has dropped below 5 million. With more spaying and neutering, more people adopting animals rather than buying them from stores, and more people understanding that a pet is for life, we are confident that, within about ten years, there will be no more homeless pets.

**Kindness is the Key.** The philosophy of Best Friends is very simple: to treat other people – including, of course, the animals – as we ourselves would want to be treated.

Kindness is the key to a better world for all of us, and there is no problem that cannot be helped with a little kindness. 🐾