

Jacqueline Piñol:

The Canine Condition. Come, sit, stay. Welcome to The Canine Condition Podcast. My name is Jacqueline Piñol. I am an actor, documentary filmmaker, and animal rescue advocate. The Canine Condition Podcast is a platform to bring awareness to dog adoption, and to provide all dog lovers and pet owners with information and resources on how to raise a healthy and well-balanced dog. If you are thinking about getting your first dog or just want to know where and how you can help a dog in need, this is also a place for you.

Jacqueline Piñol:

How many of us wish we had more time in our days? There just never seems to be enough time to do all the things we need or want to do. But since time is an element we cannot control, I guess it's more about learning to do the things we love, and loving the things we do. Whether for duty or pleasure, if we could just stay present in each moment, we would probably get more out of the time we do have and how we spend it. I will tell you who we can learn from: our dogs, and if you don't have a dog, this might be a good time to consider adopting one. Dogs live in the moment. I observe my dog pack, and each one enjoys every morsel of food, every single day. When the sun is out, you'll catch them taking it all in. On our pack walks, talk about smelling the roses. They are so present. I envy that, and I try to work toward being that present every day, because of them.

My guest today is no stranger to a very busy schedule. She is a mom of three humans, and has five Pit Bull type dogs, and two jobs, but she says, you can always find a few hours to give back. It is my goal to do that every day. She certainly does the things she loves. She has been an angel for many years as Communications Coordinator for Angels Among Us Pet Rescue, an organization that operates through a network of volunteers and foster homes in the Metro Atlanta area in Georgia. Due to her experience in animal rescue and advocacy, Darlene has taken an active role as Adoption Director for Two Tailz, that's T-A-I-L-Z Rescue, also a nonprofit licensed dog rescue based out of Roswell, Georgia. And lastly, she runs the hotline as a volunteer for Ahimsa House. Ahimsa means nonviolence in Sanskrit. The organization was founded in 2004. Ahimsa House became Georgia's first and only organization dedicated to helping human and animal victims of domestic violence, reach safety together. It is my pleasure to chat with this angel of a woman, Darlene Price Knight. Welcome to the podcast, Darlene.

Darlene P. Knight:

Thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited with what you're doing, and I cannot wait to chat with you. It's been a while.

Jacqueline Piñol:

It has been. And just so our listeners know, Darlene and I met in Georgia a few years ago. I remember it was 2016, and I wanted to know more about the rescue Angels Among Us. I was filming the documentary series, The Canine Condition, which has been a self-funded passion project of mine, and I wrote an email thinking, "Fat chance they'll have time to respond, but I'll give it a shot," and sure enough, Darlene wrote me back. She even gave me a phone number to reach her. I was floored, because not everyone was that open and welcoming to my inquiries. You better believe I called her. Right, Darlene?

Darlene P. Knight:

Yes ma'am. And we talked.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Oh, we got to talking, and I was lucky enough to go out to Georgia and meet some Angels Among Us dogs and volunteers, and get to know a little bit more about the rescue. So for our podcast listeners, Darlene, I first want to ask you, why do you make yourself so available to people in the work that you do?

Darlene P. Knight:

I have found my niche, and I love it. I love talking to people and I love to educate them about shelter dogs. I love to help them with their own dogs, and besides just their dogs, there's always a story behind those dogs that maybe somebody needs help with, and I have a wealth of resources and I'm always available because I know that if I needed it, I would hope somebody would be there for me.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And you once said to me, "Our mission is always on the dog, but now it needs to be on the person, then the dog." Why is that such an important factor in dog rescue?

Darlene P. Knight:

I feel as rescuers, we focus on the dog. We have to remember that there's so much more. So when someone would call, I would say, "Tell me what's going on. Do you need dog food? Do you need a fence? Do you need a crate? Do you need help with training? What can I do?" My goal is kind of like the Department of Family and Children Services, is to keep that family together. Nobody should be denied the love of a dog or a cat because they don't have food, or they have an issue that they can't fix. So for me, I always felt it was important to talk more with that person to gain more insight, because there is more than just that dog, and we have to remember that as rescue community.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And Angels Among Us has a very large network of volunteers and fosters. Tell us why Angels, being one of the largest dog and cat rescues in the country, still needs our help.

Darlene P. Knight:

It never ends. The animals never stop coming. Last year, 6.5 million animals entered the shelter. We have usually 300 dogs in care, and calls after call, and shelters pleading with us to take animals. So we always need your help. You don't even have to be in Atlanta anymore, we do so much remote. We have volunteers answering emails, helping with applications, fundraising. There's so much that people can give to us, because our mission isn't over. It's just every day there's more, and it's not stopping, so we always need help.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Right. You said 6.5 million animals?

Darlene P. Knight:

Yes, ma'am. They euthanize six animals a minute in the US.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Still today, you know that to be true?

Darlene P. Knight:

Today.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Oh my gosh.

Darlene P. Knight:

These are from 2020.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Oh wow. I wanted to reference, by the way, something so beautiful that I read on the website for Angels Among Us. It says their mission is, "Rescue one, until there are none. The vision of Angels Among Us Pet Rescue is to end animal suffering, and to create a world in which there are no longer unwanted pets." Do you think or feel that at this point, it's impossible, Darlene, or are we making headway? Can we get excited about how much more help there is available, and how we are getting more people on board?

Darlene P. Knight:

Yes and no. The rule that every rescue would tell you to end this, spay and neuter. It's overpopulation.

Jacqueline Piñol:

I think they're advocating for spay and neuter. Can you hear that?

Darlene P. Knight:

Yes, but they're my dogs. It's true. Spay and neuter, spay and neuter. That is Maddie Mayhem, she was rescued from a rural shelter two minutes before euthanasia at seven weeks old.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Seven weeks old?

Darlene P. Knight:

So yes, they euthanize puppies, just like they do adult dogs. When an animal shelter's full, the first ones that came in, there's dogs coming in behind them, so the first dogs that had come in, now we have an influx of more dogs, those are the first dogs to die.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Wow.

Darlene P. Knight:

And owner surrenders, I'd like everyone to know, when you sign your name and you surrender your dog to an animal shelter, they have the right to euthanize it intake. Sometimes those dogs are put down before you hit the second red light, because there are so many dogs that come in daily. So it's just something to remember to explore options.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Right, that if you have to give up your dog, to consider how many other ways there are to rehome it or find another solution, rather than turning it into an overcrowded shelter, right?

Darlene P. Knight:

Correct.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Talk to us about the vet bills, and everything it takes per dog so that a rescue like Angels Among Us or any rescue, really, that you volunteer for, is always facing the challenge of catching up with veterinary bills?

Darlene P. Knight:

That's the most expensive thing in rescue. Vets give us a 20% discount off what y'all pay. So at times, our vet bills have been 250,000 a month, because not only do we have dogs, we have cats, and we take in the cases that maybe no one else will, because of our size, the dogs that need surgeries, or that have been in fight rings, or a variety of different reasons that they need medical care that smaller rescues or animal shelters can't afford.

Jacqueline Piñol:

\$250,000 could be a vet bill for a large rescue like this, right?

Darlene P. Knight:

Yes, and it never stops. And people always question fees when they go to a rescue. Well, that's why, and we have saved this dog, we're not making any money. Nobody makes money in rescue. It's our job just to give them life, give them that second chance. We're their next step in the journey.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And when dogs get adopted out, the adopter's getting a fully vetted, up-to-date dog. Can you tell us how that's different from when people buy a dog from a breeder or a pet store?

Darlene P. Knight:

When you get a dog from a breeder, they will usually give them maybe two sets of shots. When you get a dog from a rescue, the dog has been heartworm tested, current on all vaccinations, spayed or neutered. They have to be spayed or neutered before they leave us. They're as healthy as we can possibly make them to go out. We don't know where these dogs come from, but a lot of people buying high-end dogs don't know the story of where they come from. It's very common for there to be a middle person, so the backyard breeders will bring in all these puppies to one person, and when you go and answer that ad,

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"Well, which puppy are you here for?", and there's a roomful of puppies in the back, and they don't come from healthy conditions. They can come from overbreeding, a multitude of things.

Jacqueline Piñol:

I've heard that. Is that what they call a broker?

Darlene P. Knight:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Exactly.

Jacqueline Piñol:

I've heard that, and it's awful. I don't even understand how somebody could be okay making a living like that.

Darlene P. Knight:

It's all about the money for a breeder. The animals are products, they're not living beings. Rescues see them as loving souls.

Jacqueline Piñol:

I was reading on the Angels Among Us website too, that they pull from high kill shelters and save from euthanasia lists, that particularly there's a focus on that. What are some other reasons besides overcrowding that dogs will end up on a euthanasia list? Why do they end up on those kill lists?

Darlene P. Knight:

They're on the kill list because they're out of space. The more rural shelters don't have as long of a turnaround time as bigger shelters. So it's about money, it's about what that county can afford. And let me tell you, the people in the shelters aren't horrible people. What a job that you have, that you have to go in every day and mark those tickets with the red mark or the black mark. It takes an incredible human being to be able to do that every day. These dogs are in shelters because a family member passed away, nobody wanted them. They got it as a puppy, it got too big, it got too old. I've seen people turn in 13 year old dogs.

Jacqueline Piñol:

So have I.

Darlene P. Knight:

I know you have. How do you do that?

Jacqueline Piñol:

I don't know. Just actually five days ago, a family surrendered their 10 year old dog that they've had since he was a puppy, because they don't have time anymore. And he's a wonderful dog, he's now with a rescue in foster, he's going to be okay and rehomed, but he knew no other family other than this family, and they literally handed him over in a parking lot to the foster for the rescue. And no questions asked. They just left. It's pretty mind-boggling.

Darlene P. Knight:

Yep, happens every day. I don't know what those people are teaching their children. Well, how do you teach a child compassion?

Jacqueline Piñol:

Right. What about on a happier note, because we want to encourage people to see the bright side of saving dogs and lives, and volunteering and rescuing, because I know it can be gratifying.

Darlene P. Knight:

Yes, we do.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Can you tell us a story about a particular dog that perhaps was on a kill list, or a difficult case, but it was worth every effort because when he or she was adopted, it just was a beautiful new beginning?

Darlene P. Knight:

I can tell you not about one dog, but a group of 70 dogs in Polk County, Georgia. It was a house that was being foreclosed on, somebody had said there were dogs out there. They went out, and as far as the eye could see, there were chained dogs, some without shelter. It was dog, after dog, after dog. I had the honor to be able to go out and help cut those chains. They were happy, their tails were wagging, they'd love to be petted, and then a group of people came in, different rescues and the Humane Society stepped up. I got to go to the small shelter where some were housed the next day and help bathe them, and there was one old girl with no teeth, named Grace. She had chewed her teeth down on the chain. She'd been overbred, it was fight dogs, and I watched a volunteer fall in love.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Yes, yes. I have one from Georgia like that, my Francis.

Darlene P. Knight:

Yes. Well, we could get you some more.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Oh no, no, please. Johnny will kill me.

Darlene P. Knight:

Got a few. But I got to see this volunteer fall in love with this dog, and he kept coming back and checking on her, and taking her out. That dog went to that home, and had the most exquisite life, from a chain to a bed, and a family that loves her, just to see that many dogs saved by people that just truly cared. And the townsfolk came in and would, "I just came to give these babies some love," and these are people that would've never looked at a Pit Bull any other time, but they had read the story. I saw the sheriff get tears in his eyes, and I followed that case all the way to sentencing, and he got 22 years, and I was never prouder of that judge, or the DA.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Oh, wow. That's astounding, because it's so hard to even pursue cases sometimes, or to get a judge to listen to a case. So they really pursued it.

Darlene P. Knight:

Well, they did, and they found 35 dogs the next day at his mama's house, and those were his money dogs that he didn't want to give up. And the court forced him to give them up. So it was such a triumph because as Pit Bull lovers and owners-

Jacqueline Piñol:

Of course.

Darlene P. Knight:

... we're their voice.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Yes.

Darlene P. Knight:

And to be part of this was incredible. It was most incredible experience of my rescue lifetime.

Jacqueline Piñol:

So this was covered in the news.

Darlene P. Knight:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jacqueline Piñol:

Oh, I had not heard about this one, but the reason I like to share stories like this, even though sometimes it's hard to listen to, it's because we have to recognize that if we advocate for better laws, when cases like this come up, we have the backing of law enforcement, and that's what we need. Law enforcement can't do anything for us or with us, if they don't have the law standing behind them.

Darlene P. Knight:

That's right.

Jacqueline Piñol:

So it's wonderful to hear that our voices are multiplying, and that dogs are getting saved because of that.

Darlene P. Knight:

Absolutely. Got to speak for them every day.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Georgia has a lot of rural areas, as do many states in the United States, which lends itself to not enough resources, or veterinary clinics, or spay and neuter clinics. How does Georgia deal with the influx of homeless dogs due to the layout of the land?

Darlene P. Knight:

Rescue has come such a long way. So these rural shelters now will have an adoption coordinator, and rescues that will work with them. I know Angels, we pull so many from the rural. Rural shelters are my favorite shelters, three of my dogs came from there. And then we have Angels Among Us, we have Big Dog Ranch in Florida that comes with their bus and goes to Upson County, Georgia, in South Georgia, or goes to Dublin, Georgia. I mean, there's so many people that even rescues from the north will come and pull dogs, and take them up north where the spay and neuter laws are very strict, so there's not as many dogs in their shelters.

Jacqueline Piñol:

So it's also about the laws within counties or areas of the state, right?

Darlene P. Knight:

The states, right. States up north, they're very strict, and then South, we try.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And it's getting better.

Darlene P. Knight:

It is.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Because like the case you just mentioned, that's a big step in the right direction.

Darlene P. Knight:

It is. In a small county, in a rural county, it was huge.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Right. I want to bring attention to a story we covered in the dog-umentary, and people will get to see that footage on our YouTube channel very soon. It was the story of the two hugging dogs that went viral. Do you remember that?

Darlene P. Knight:

Oh yes. It shut down, our system. Absolutely.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Exactly. What I want to bring attention to, if you can tell us the story for listeners who haven't heard about it, was the fact that you said, "Everybody was calling about these two wonderful hugging dogs in that picture that was captured, but what they didn't see was the 30 other dogs behind them that didn't make the photo."

Darlene P. Knight:

Absolutely.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And that really got to me, that comment, because in watching it in the footage when we were editing the film, I thought, "I didn't get to see those other 30 dogs, and where are they?"

Darlene P. Knight:

They were two dogs in a rural shelter, they were going to be euthanized at 4:00 PM, and a volunteer came by and snapped a photo, and one dog got on the other dog and hugged that dog. And we got it, we got the picture, we decided that we're going to pull the dogs, we put it on our website, and bam. I had L.A. Times calling, The New York Times, I had People Magazine, I had everyone calling us. I was blown away at the number of phone calls I got from people around the country that wanted those two dogs. They knew nothing about the dogs. What kind of breed, male or female? And all I could tell everyone, it was an opportunity for me to say, "Go down to your local shelter. There are dogs dying to meet you. Please, look there first." You don't want to meet two dogs and I'll fly them to Oregon. No, go to your shelter, be a hero, be some dog's hero today.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And you've done that for people, haven't you? They've called you, asking you out of the country, out of the state, for dogs and you've called and found dogs they can go adopt, haven't you?

Darlene P. Knight:

I will hunt them down. You want a dog? I'll get you a dog, I promise you. And the thing is-

Jacqueline Piñol:

I know you will.

Darlene P. Knight:

The thing is that you have to connect. I mean, there are dogs that you go in there looking for a white dog with short hair, and you come out with an 80 pound dog that's tri-colored and drooling, right? Because my mama always taught me, dogs find you, and it's true.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Yes.

Darlene P. Knight:

You know when you connect, when they connect with you, they're like, "Hey, I've been waiting on you. Here I am."

Jacqueline Piñol:

Exactly. So for anyone who wants to know more about Angels Among Us Rescue, where do we send them?

Darlene P. Knight:

You can go to angelsrescue.org. If you're wanting to volunteer and you don't live in our state, not a problem. We have opportunities posted all the time, just write to volunteers@angelsrescue.org, or I could give you my phone number.

Jacqueline Piñol:

It's that easy. Oh, you would, wouldn't you? You'll help anybody.

Darlene P. Knight:

Yes. I would. Yes, I would. True story.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Our listeners should know that I am not getting paid to advocate for any organization on this podcast. I choose organizations and people that I know are doing the good work for dogs and for people across America. Angels Among Us has The Canine Condition seal of approval from me. Now, Darlene, I do have to ask you about your role with Two Tailz Dog Rescue, because you have a lot of good information for us in other areas of the rescue world, and we want to know it all. I'd love to learn more about wonderful places saving our furry friends. Tell us about Two Tailz Dog Rescue.

Darlene P. Knight:

Two Tailz Rescue is a small rescue in Roswell, Georgia. Another rescue that does good work, they pull Pit Bulls. And I know the founder of Two Tailz, and she had a Puppy Palooza. She had gotten into-

Jacqueline Piñol:

Oh my gosh. That's cute.

Darlene P. Knight:

She had got hooked up with somebody from South Georgia, where there was no animal control, and she was trying to focus on her Pit Bulls but yet, couldn't say no to these incoming puppies, and there were many. So I said, "Hey, why don't you let me help you go through the applications? Let me just do the puppies and work with them, and then when they're gone, I'm going to kind of bow out." But it's an opportunity to see from the inside how another rescue works. There is no book on how to rescue. It is trial by fire, all the time. Any rescue will tell you that. So you can always gather little bits and pieces as you go along.

And I got to also help out, there were 15 bloodhounds that had been abandoned on some property. A guy had been stealing them and breeding them, and he left them for three weeks with no food or water, and we caught most of them. And then I ended up fostering a bloodhound puppy, which is a long story, but that dog got a home, because we don't need another dog. So I got to work with people from South Georgia, I got to work with some true, amazing people, just from their hearts, stepped up, and found them and said, "Please help us." So that was incredible.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Right. And I did read on the Two Tailz Dog Rescue website, it says, "Over one million Pit Bulls are killed each year in shelters, through no fault of their own. They are often silent victims of overbreeding, abuse, and poor ownership."

Darlene P. Knight:

Yep.

Jacqueline Piñol:

I know not everybody is a Pit Bull type dog lover, but how can we express to our listeners why it's so important to at least advocate for them, or spread the message of adopting them out and stop the breeding of Pit Bulls?

Darlene P. Knight:

There's so much miscommunication by our press. They pull the bad stories. The number one bite in America, according to the ASPCA, is a Golden Retriever. I have a Pit Bull that's 125 pounds, and he's a big guy coming down the street. People will either cross the road, or come over to me. He's a big loving dog, because of the other end of the leash. That's what it comes down to, whether it's a Chihuahua, or whether it's a Cocker Spaniel, whether it's a Pit Bull, it's how they're raised. Now, you're always going to have a dog that may bite, any breed, but when you own a Pit Bull, the world looks to you to make a mistake. So you have to make sure that you're that pack leader, that that dog respects you. I read body language all the time with my five. We have to be the ambassadors for the breed and educate, educate, educate, and people are coming around. I mean, I know you see it.

Jacqueline Piñol:

I do. Hey, look, I came around. Before I met you, I had just adopted one Pit Bull type dog, Dublin, and when I met her, I'd never been close to a dog of her breed, ever, and she found me. And so, listeners who haven't heard my first episode of the podcast and how we introduced The Canine Condition Podcast, you can have a listen to my story of Dublin in my first two episodes, because she is the one who inspired this entire project. So if people want to know more about Two Tailz Dog Rescue, where can we tell them to go read and look more about them?

Darlene P. Knight:

They can go to twotailz, with a Z, rescue.org. There's our dogs, there's our story. It's just one more rescue trying to help. My dream of my lifetime would be if all rescues worked together as one. It doesn't matter what t-shirt you have on, doesn't matter who you represent, it's just that we're all in this for the dog, and what a powerful machine that would be if we worked together.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Absolutely, and that is the goal of The Canine Condition, just to be a platform, a vehicle, and a voice for everyone who is literally on the same mission, which is to end dog homelessness, to end abuse and neglect of man's best friend. I love that you are helping across the board and in many different arenas. What are some other ways people can help, if it's maybe too emotional or too hard for them to get directly involved with the dogs, or a shelter, or a rescue in person? What are other ways that people can help?

Darlene P. Knight:

Well, there's spay and neuter programs that could use your help. There are pet food donation projects that are out there. Especially with COVID, everybody's got Facebook, or next door, you could do a neighborhood collection of dog food and cat food, or whatever you choose.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Oh, that's a good one.

Darlene P. Knight:

Give it to a local rescue, give it to a local shelter. We would take bags of food and put it in two gallon baggies, people would drive up as they were getting their people food, and we would say, "Dog or cat?", and we'd be able to give out some treats and some food, because if you can't afford to feed your children, and in the very beginning, it was very tough, and I know people still have it difficult, that's family to, and so, that helped keep those pets in that home. So there's so many other things that you can do, doesn't have to be hands-on with the animals. So many rescues need administration help.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Right. So if you're computer-savvy and you have some time on your hands at home?

Darlene P. Knight:

That's right. I mean, they need help with Facebook, they need help with social media. There's so many different things you can do and still be involved, and crossposting. People who don't know what that is, it's when you see a dog that's in needed a shelter on a high kill list, say you got it somehow, and then you send it out, you share it with your friends. Crossposting works. Facebook is such a great tool for us to get the word out.

Jacqueline Piñol:

It is. And years ago, before I started the project, I was a little hesitant to share posts about dogs in shelters, because they were sad or because I thought, "Oh, my friends don't want to see this." But one day I'm at work, I was working on a film, and I just couldn't help myself and I shared it. And the guy sitting next to me is an actor, he had just connected with me and he goes, "Oh, I saw your post. I'm going to show it to my wife. We want to adopt a puppy," and I just went, "Oh really?" And he shared it with his wife, within the hour, she was calling him to plan, it was a Friday, they were going on Saturday to go and get a puppy from that post, out of the shelter in Lancaster, California, which is a shelter that is always overcrowded. I couldn't believe it. That was my first experience with that, and since then, I've not been shy about sharing posts.

Darlene P. Knight:

It is that simple and that easy.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Yeah. And the dog's name is Betty, she's wonderful. She's like six years old now, she's a beauty. It's wonderful.

Darlene P. Knight:

And you helped save a life by that one post, one share button.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And all I did was share it. Yeah, it was incredible.

Darlene P. Knight:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jacqueline Piñol:

Let me take you to another organization that you help with, because I'm so intrigued by this, and quite moved, actually, by their mission, the Ahimsa House. This organization seems like one of a kind and I have to be honest, it makes me sad that there has to be an organization that addresses these needs, but at the same time, it's wonderful because we do have a problem with victims of domestic violence having to either leave their pets behind, or stay in a situation because they don't want to leave their pet. Can you let us know more about Ahimsa House and the role that you've taken to help them out?

Darlene P. Knight:

Ahimsa House was founded by a survivor who lost her cat. She was in a domestic violence situation, she couldn't keep her cat. So she started this group. What we do is we service all of Georgia, we will take in any animal. I mean, any animal, tortoise, horse, goat, lizard, cat, dog, we will foster for up to 60 days and do basic vetting. The women are in shelters, some are in transition, they all have an active case of domestic violence. What I do is I answer the hotline. I'll get the line at five at night until 8:00 AM the next day. I can do weekends during the week, and again, it's just an opportunity for me just to talk with someone and help them through a very difficult time. They're scared and they love their animal, they don't know where to turn. We can help them with safety plans as well.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And I saw their website. Can you tell our listeners how they can find Ahimsa House, and is there a way to also support the organization in other ways, even if you don't need their services?

Darlene P. Knight:

It costs us \$5,000 a month to take care of all of our animals at Ahimsa House. \$1,000 would help an animal that's been injured by the abuser. You could donate \$50 to go towards vaccinations, or you could give money toward spay and neuter. We also supply our fosters with dog food. When we get the animal, it goes right to the vet, then it goes into a foster home. We also have some dogs in boarding, so money

toward boarding. There are 41 organizations like us in the US, in different states. I get calls from the National Domestic Violence Hotline, and they'll patch me through to somebody in Iowa who needs help. All I can do is give references, and hope that we can get them help. We help people that are completely alone and need it the most, and again, I love talking to people. I have no problem with you calling me at 2:00 AM because you're scared and you're lonely. I'm good with that. It's the right thing to do.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Yes. And I love that there is a network where even if you are in Georgia and somebody else's in Ohio, that at least you're not going to just say, "Sorry, we're in Georgia." You're going to be like, "Let me find where you can go find local help," right?

Darlene P. Knight:

Right. We have so many resources that I could send out, and I always tell people, "I'm on call all night, call me back. If you need me, call me," and a lot of times, they do.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And it is all confidential?

Darlene P. Knight:

Absolutely, absolutely. We have very strict guidelines, and it is confidential. It's the simplest act, and people are so grateful, and it's so touching to know that I can help, that my small just picking up the phone made a difference to someone.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Right.

Darlene P. Knight:

And again, I don't go anywhere, it's from home.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Right. And especially with COVID shutdowns and everything we've lived through in the last calendar year, many people have had to remain in situations that perhaps they couldn't get out of, and it's nice to know that there are outlets out there seeking to help. What is a good place to contact, or where do people go to look up Ahimsa House?

Darlene P. Knight:

You can go online to ahimsahouse.org to see our website. If you have any questions, there's someone in the office, but after five, it goes straight to the hotline, they can give you all the same information. We even have options for housing where it doesn't include domestic violence. We can't take those animals in that situation because of our guidelines and our funding, but you just never know what's out there until you ask. All you have to do is ask.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Right. And I know that if you out there are looking for ways to give back, to do a little something, even if it's once a week from home, there are plenty... Darlene is saying, "Call me." She'll put you to work, but there are ways to help and give back. So for anyone who wants more information on Ahimsa House, Two Tailz Rescue, and Angels Among Us, the websites and the live links will be in our show notes for this episode on your podcast app. The complete transcript of each episode is also available as a downloadable file at our website, thecaninecondition.com. Darlene, I want to thank you for the time you have given me and sharing all this knowledge with us, and everything that you do for dogs and for people.

Darlene P. Knight:

It's a pleasure and an honor. My mama taught me two things: to touch the life of someone or something every day, and to speak for those without a voice. I passed it onto my kids. If you have that, you're rich. You got it all.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And you certainly are the living example of that, so thank you for inspiring me too.

Darlene P. Knight:

You're welcome.

Jacqueline Piñol:

If our listeners want to see the documentary interview we filmed with Darlene and other volunteers and dogs from Angels Among Us, stay with us on this podcast, and we will soon be announcing the release of The Canine Condition Dog-umentary series on our YouTube channel. Until next time, hang onto those leashes. The Canine Condition. Come, sit, stay.