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A successful pet adoption largely depends on the behavior of the dog once it is in its new home. For that reason, the Burleson Animal Shelter is joining with the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) to promote January 2012 as Train Your Dog Month.

January is Train Your Dog Month because so many dogs and puppies are adopted or purchased from breeders and brought home during the winter holidays. The goal is to promote using training methods that are kind, gentle and have an emphasis on building a relationship with your dog.

In 2011, the Burleson Animal Shelter adopted out 415 dogs. Of that number, 66 were returned. The most prevalent reasons were unrealistic expectations, the owner was moving, behavior issues, the dog was too active, family was allergic to the pet, and the dog was destructive outside.

Train Your Dog Month focuses on promoting the importance of training and socialization in order to provide a safe, happy and positive relationship with canines. Proper dog training and socialization can reduce the number of dog bites, create healthier relationships between dogs and owners, and decrease the number of dogs turned in to shelters.

Socialization is introducing your puppy to a broad range of new experiences, people, environments and activities. Well-socialized dogs are more secure, confident and self-assured.

Use all of your dog's behaviors to earn him what he wants. Make getting anything that your dog desires a learning opportunity. If your dog wants to go out, he has to sit for his leash to be put on, or lie down at the door, or do a trick instead. Do the same when your dog wants his dinner, or to play or be petted or get attention. It doesn't really matter what behavior you ask for, as long as you ask the dog to do something in exchange for a valuable reward.

To learn more, go to the Train Your Dog Month website link on the City website, www.burlesontx.com, Departments, Animal Services.