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N. Carolina sheriff puts dog's euthanasia on TV

Program intended to emphasize responsible animal ownership

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Guilford County Sheriff B.J. Barnes

[GREENSBORO, North Carolina](#) (CNN) -- A North Carolina sheriff frustrated by the numbers of unwanted dogs and cats coming through his animal shelter has come up with a novel solution -- televise an animal being euthanized.

"We had done public service announcements. We did brochures. We appeared on all the radio and TV talk shows," says Guilford County Sheriff B.J. Barnes. "We tried everything we could to get people to realize that spay-neuter is responsible ownership and that this is a very serious problem."

So Barnes, who hosts a cable public access show called "Sheriff's Beat," decided to show the euthanization of a dog, a collie mix, hoping to bring home to people the unfortunate fate that awaits some 10,000 unwanted animals who come through the county's animal shelter each year.

The sheriff's approach has been controversial. While some in Greensboro think it might wake people up, others express reservations about having their kids watch a televised animal execution.

However, in the week after the show aired, adoptions at the shelter tripled. Little Jonathan Griffin came to adopt a kitten after his parents told him what was going on down at the animal shelter.

"We told him the animals are being put to sleep up here. He said, 'Let's go save them,'" says his father, Robert Griffin.

The Griffins took home a kitty called Frisky.

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