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Be they cats, dogs, or other less common types of animals, pets need attention and care from their owners, and, of course, a steady supply of food and water as well.

Working strictly on a volunteer basis, she has created a network of communities on social media, many of which are specific to certain districts and neighborhoods of the city, to allay residents' concerns about pets and help facilitate the legal transfer of pets to shelters and other safe places in times of need.

Ang has spent time creating these communities, moderating their content so that baseless rumors aren't spread, creating posters and graphically designed content containing important information about preparatory materials and facilities that are able to house animals of quarantined residents, and more.

These communities have been of great benefit to many so far. As a pet owner myself, I have been a member of her pet-help community during the recent COVID-19 surge as well, and am much better prepared as a result.

Many thanks to Ang, the other folks who've been helpful in disseminating helpful, factual information to pet owners, those helpful volunteer workers who've assisted in walking dogs and transporting pets to safe locations, and everyone else in the city for staying calm and helping Shanghai fight this battle.

Shanghai Daily caught up with Ang to learn more.

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Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself: Where are you from, what do you do here in Shanghai, and how long have you been here?

A: I'm from Singapore. I'm currently studying as a university student for 3D animation and visual effects for film.

But I am also a freelance makeup artist for film shootings and photoshoots from time to time. I have been in Shanghai for nine years now.

Q: You are an animal lover. Did you grow up with pets when you were young? What pets do you have here in Shanghai?

A: I am a HUGE animal lover. I grew up with hamsters and fish back in Singapore, and when we came to Shanghai, we got a poodle. Currently, the pets that I have are a poodle, cat, three snakes (two corn snakes and 1 California kingsnake) and a leopard gecko.

I also help rescue dogs and cats in Shanghai as much as I can, and I helped set up a kitten nursery for orphaned newborn kittens. So, I am always surrounded by animals.

Q: Tell us a bit about the group/network of groups that you've created. When did you start it and how? What sort of assistance are you providing for the group members, and how do you think it has helped during this time?

A: It started on March 7 in a group chat for neutering stray cats in Shanghai. We (pet owners and rescuers) were talking about what will happen to our pets and rescues if we were put into central quarantine. I then started a group, as it was a very big topic for many pet owners. So that's where it all started; a group of concerned pet owners and rescuers who came together, looking for advice, assistance and resources.

We are getting new members in the quarantine chat every day, and we remind them to always plan, have a plan A, B, C and D. Owners should have already stocked up on their own

food and their pets' supplies (food, pee-pads, cat litter, etc) and packed essential pet items and create a list of emergency contacts.

We also have a list of boarding facilities, pet transportation options and pet stores from which to get pet supplies. If any pet owners have tested positive, we will try our best to help resolve the situation with the help of Spare Leash, as they have a database of pet-sitters' locations. Usually, in a day or two, an animal can be picked up and sent out of a home while its owner is under quarantine. We want to make it clear that we are not in any way an association or company that can come to a home to pick up pets; we are just a group of pet owners and volunteers that will help out as much as we can.

Leaving your pets at home alone would be the LAST and FINAL option. If you do have to do this, you have to be very, very careful. Do not rely on an automatic food dispenser or automatic litter box. They might malfunction and break down, and your pet would be left with no food. Instead, provide multiple feeding places and multiple litter boxes. Leave the toilet seat up as well (only if you do not use a blue tablet; if you do then close it).

When the doctors and volunteers in hazmat suits come in, make sure to tell them that you have animals inside and ask them to cover and bag up food and water, put the pets in a carrier or leashed outside the hallway safely, and put them back to where things were before they leave.

Q: The posters are very helpful... Where have you been able to compile the information from? Also, they look great... Do you have a background in graphic design?

A: The information was gathered with the administrators of the different sub-groups. We will share any tips with each other. Instead of sharing a chat history with everyone, I started to make posters so it would be

appealing to the eyes of pet owners and would be easy to share.

As of now, these posters have been shared all around WeChat and on Weibo as well. I do have a graphic design background; I have always loved doing art, hence the courses I'm learning now.

Q: What is some advice you'd give to the pet owners of Shanghai?

A: Currently we are always thinking of different ways but the advice stays the same. It has been a month since these groups have been opened and many have positive outcomes, if one way doesn't work, we will find another way to help the pet and owner.

If boarding facilities can't pick them up, we can try and call for pet taxis or call for a flash delivery (闪送). Some flash delivery drivers have motorbikes to bring smaller dogs/smaller pets and cats, while some have cars to bring larger dogs. There are drivers as well who have been given a green pass and helped with transporting the pets to boarding facilities.

Because of the major lockdown in Shanghai, dog owners learned about how to help dogs who are trained to relieve themselves outdoors, and what we as owners can do to help them do their business at home comfortably. Many creative ways were thought of, including bringing in dirt, leaves and bushes from outside and putting them on balconies or in hallways. Some bought real grass, and some bought fake grass to help them out. It was really fun to see some of the artwork being made and shared in the groups.

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