

Off Leash



Letting the Cat Out of the Bag

Naughty animals 'fess up online

BY AMY BRIGGS

Party hats? Humiliating costumes? They're so last year. The Pet Postcard Project provides a whole new way to embarrass your pet.

Just ask Nikki Moustaki, creator of *petpostcardproject.com*, where dogs and their owners can spill their juiciest secrets.

Upon seeing the range of dog-related cards at PostSecret, an ongoing online art project in which people anonymously send in secrets on homemade postcards, Moustaki decided dogs needed their own confessional.

The secrets she's received run the gamut from hilarious to heartbreaking, and they're secrets that most pet lovers can relate to. Moustaki created the site in February 2007, and it's since become so popular that she went on to create the websites Dogvice (which features

"advice" from dogs to other dogs and their owners), Catfessions/Catvice, Pugfessions/Pugvice, and Bullyfessions/Bullyvice.

Moustaki started by making 15 sample cards detailing her own dog's secrets, and putting them on a website. She had 10,000 postcards printed asking for "dog confessions," which she plastered all over Madison Square Garden during the 2007 Westminster Kennel Club show. It's been two years, and the cards are still pouring in at a steady stream. Apparently, there are a lot of naughty pets out there.

What makes this project even better is that each postcard benefits shelter dogs: Rachael Ray's dog food brand, Nutrish, has pledged to donate one pound of dog food for each card received. The two charities currently benefitting from the donations are Best Friends Animal

Sanctuary in Kanab, Utah, and Sabbath Memorial Dog Rescue in Miami, Fla., which is Moustaki's hometown.

Moustaki hopes to include more shelters in the future.

"I'm not a big organization—it's just me, my dog, and a laptop," says Moustaki. "But my motto is 'Every Bit Helps.' If every passionate person did a small thing to help their favorite cause, a lot of people and animals could be helped."

She has received thousands of cards, and the project has been noted in many dog-related publications. She's hoping to get more than 6,000 postcards. Participants can win prizes for their submissions, so next time your pets—or your shelter animals!—do something ridiculous, take a picture and send their tales to The Pet Postcard Project, 676A Ninth Ave. #321, New York, NY 10036. **AS**