Dealing with strays and making our campus safer

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and

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It’s not just students who roam around in packs. Stray cats and dogs are often spotted by students at various locales around campus.

“The biggest [pack] I saw had five dogs of different sizes,” said senior English major Amanda Soto. “Three of them were pretty big.”

Many have complained about the animals; in response, Caroline Byrd, co-director of For Paws, has notified San Antonio City Council of the issue and has kept track of all the dogs appearing on campus.

Byrd’s organization, For Paws, started in 2003 as a means of controlling the large number of feral and abandoned cats that live on campus. Thus far, the group has successfully trapped 111 cats.

“Out of these 111 cats, about half have been adopted. There are currently 12 to 14 cats still living on campus,” Byrd said.

The cats that live near the Louis J. Blume Academic Library are healthy and have been neutered or spayed and vaccinated. Those that have been taken into the For Paws program sport a clipped ear.

In contrast, Soto stated that some of the dogs she saw seemed like they were infected with mange and possibly other diseases.

Students who see a stray dog on campus are advised to contact the Physical Plant, which will attempt to catch the animal before it wanders too far. If ever a student feels threatened by one after dark, s/he ought to contact the St. Mary’s University Police Department.

“A lot of times, the dogs will come up to people, but they seem non-hostile,” said Soto. However, she also cautioned that “starving dogs can attack at any moment.”

As for the stray cats, students are asked to report any felines that do not have clipped ears to For Paws immediately.

Contact For Paws

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Patches is one of the many cats to have passed through the For Paws program to keep the feline population on campus from growing and spreading diseases. This feline is not completely feral but should not be approached.