



Buying Vick's house for rehab is her mission

By Danielle N. Coley
Correspondent

A dog is woman's best friend

Virginia Beach resident Monica Severy found out early on that her purpose is to give a voice to abused animals.

Through the help of Dogs Deserve Better, a nonprofit organization designed to rehabilitate abused animals, Severy has vowed to raise \$600,000 to restore Bad Newz Kennels, the Surry County house where NFL star Michael Vick based his dog-fighting ring before he was convicted and sent to prison.

Severy is a franchise owner of Charley's Grilled Subs, including the restaurants at Lynnhaven Mall and MacArthur Center, where she has set up donation boxes for Dogs Deserve Better.

She organized several fundraisers for the cause, including an online eBay auction, a wine-and-cheese tasting and a private CPR refresher course.

"We've raised \$100,000 alone in online revenue," Severy said. "I, myself, have also committed \$60,000. We're certainly hoping for positive results."

Dogs Deserve Better has to act quickly if it is to raise the purchase price of the Surry house by March 20, because a closing date has been set for March 31.

"We're seeking all of our options, including reaching out to celebrities," Severy said. "We've already gotten some positive feedback, and we've even been invited to the 'Dr. Phil' show."

Severy, a native of Mary-



DANIELLE COLEY

Through Dogs Deserve Better, Charley's restaurant owner Monica Severy, third from left, with employees at her MacArthur Center mall site, has kicked off a campaign to buy pro quarterback Michael Vick's Surry County house, where his dog-fighting operation was based.

land who lives in the Virginia Beach courthouse area, joined the organization two years ago, when she said she had an urge to make a difference.

Helping abused animals seemed to fit her perfectly, because she has loved furry friends since childhood.

"I grew up with a German shepherd that I saw chained up constantly. I always wanted to do something about it, and I couldn't. That's why Dogs Deserve Better is so near and dear to my heart."

Severy didn't see herself going in this direction. She started as an accountant, a profession she committed herself to for 20 years. But after moving to South Carolina about 10 years ago, she was presented with a different venture - owning

interested?

If you want to help Virginia Beach resident Monica Severy and the charity Dogs Deserve Better in their effort to buy Michael Vick's former house and turn it into an animal rehabilitation center, call (877) 636-1408 or visit www.dogsdeservebetter.com. Donation boxes are also set up at Charley's Grilled Subs in Lynnhaven Mall and MacArthur Center.

her own restaurant franchise.

Severy now owns three Charley's franchises in Virginia and two in South Carolina.

She has brought her employees to the cause.

"All of the employees wear

buttons that read, 'I'm turning bad newz good,'" Severy said. "We also have a Dog's Deserve Better donation box for anyone that eats here."

She has several hopes for the Surry County property.

"We want to restore the home so that it fits the needs of the animals, but we also want to keep the old kennels as a memorial to the dogs that we've lost so that no one forgets."

Forgetting is certainly not an option for Severy, who has dedicated so much time and effort to the cause that she can't wait to see the outcome.

"All I want to do is give a voice to those who can't speak for themselves."

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