

## Take A Bite Out Of Animal Abuse

Many of us have pets like cats and dogs, but what if I told you that animal abuse is one of the biggest problems in Hawai'i. Animal abuse is when a person fails to properly take care of an animal. This can include physically hurting the animal or even failing to provide the basic necessities in order for the animal to survive. One of the cruelest type of animal abuse is dog fighting. Dog fighting can be broken down into three components, the dogs training, the actual fight and after the fight. In all of these situations the dogs are abused. The part that offends me the most is when the fighting dogs are trained. Innocent dogs are stolen from their homes or even adopted from the Humane Society to be used as bait dogs. Bait dogs are used for training the fighting dogs to be aggressive and to enjoy tearing other dogs apart. Bait dogs are often tied to a rope or put into a confined area for the fighting dogs to attack. When they scream in pain, that only excites the fighting dog to attack the bait dogs even more. These bait dogs often get their teeth pulled out so that they can't fight back or injure the dogs in training.

If nothing is done today, the problem will be much worse in the future. Not only will this affect the well being of the dogs who have fought, it will also affect ourselves and our community. Dogs especially pitbulls, are trained and bred to be aggressive. If people continue to breed dogs for their aggressiveness, they will only become more aggressive in the future. Even today, some pitbulls are banned from residential places because of their breeds' record of attacking people. People especially children are getting killed or injured by aggressive dogs. My father works in the Pediatrics Department and has taken care of many children who have been attacked by mainly pitbulls. Most of the victims come into the hospital with face and neck bites; the first place where dogs who are trained to fight attack. One of these victims was a girl named

Koko. She was bitten by a pitbull when she was 5 years-old. This incident has led to her being diagnosed with PTSD and it has given her night terrors. She takes special medication to help her night terrors. If we don't stop breeders from breeding dogs for their aggressiveness, more dog species might also become banned in residential areas. It isn't their fault for being aggressive, it is the breeder's and trainer's fault. They don't have a choice to fight or not. We don't know for sure if this specific pitbull was trained or a victim of animal abuse. It would need to take some training or even some trauma for a pitbull to be that aggressive. Not only are people getting harmed, but so are our dogs. It is estimated that 16,000 dogs are killed in organized dog fights each year. This number includes dogs who fight and bait dogs. If nothing is done, this number could increase immensely.

The best solution to prevent animal abuse is education. Spreading the word about animal abuse and the effects that it has on our community. Since people are on their phones so much, why not use our resources to our advantage? By posting a picture or video of animal abuse on social media, you will get the people's attention and show them what is happening in their community that they might not be aware of. If we can tell enough people about the negative things about animal abuse, we could enforce stronger anti-cruelty laws. If you witness animal cruelty, you should call your local law enforcement or animal control. They will decide if what you saw was animal cruelty, if so they will investigate for further evidence. The Humane Society has already started a campaign to end animal cruelty and neglect. Joining this campaign will give you a better understanding of the effects of animal abuse and how we can prevent it from happening in our community.

Clarence T.C. Ching's vision was to make Hawai'i a better place to live. When we try to prevent animal abuse, we are improving Hawai'i. People witness animal abuse everyday without even knowing it, but the change starts with us. It is our job, as humans, to make sure that the voiceless are heard. People are given the responsibility of reporting and trying to prevent animal abuse, but most don't. This needs to change! We need to fulfill the vision that Mr. Ching had because it is our way of thanking him for what he has done for our community.

If we act now to stop animal abuse, we could prevent further problems in the future. If we do stop animal abuse, such as dog fighting, dogs will become less aggressive, more friendly and they will be less likely to attack or injure a person or child. By stopping animal abuse now, we could pave the way our children view dogs and animal abuse. They will see dogs as man's best friend and see animal abuse as a serious crime that is not to be tolerated.

We need to do something about animal abuse because it will make our community a better place to live. Mr. Ching's vision was very clear in saying that he wanted people to make Hawai'i a better place. By preventing animal abuse, we fulfill Clarence T.C. Ching's vision and allow his legacy to live on. Think about it, do you want your children and children's, children to be afraid of dogs? If you said no, what are you doing to try and prevent that from happening? We need to start acting now in order to make a change in the future.