



Edilia Vazquez is the cofounder and president of All Sato Rescue, an animal rescue organization in Puerto Rico that helps strays find families in the United States.

To the Rescue

When Edilia Vazquez first moved to Puerto Rico in 1984, she loved the beach. But now she tries not to go, because she's likely to return home with a new responsibility. "I avoid places where I know that I'm going to probably have to rescue a dog," says Vazquez, cofounder and president of All Sato Rescue, an animal rescue organization that helps hundreds of strays find families in the United States each year. "I can't save them all, and I have to tell myself that."

Still, Vazquez LC'72 is temporarily caring for 30 rescued animals, along with her own 15 cats and dogs. A puppy playpen stands in her living room; a kennel occupies the terrace. She spends thousands of dollars a year on food and veterinary bills. And there are the cats and dogs saved through All Sato Rescue ("sato" is Puerto Rican slang for "stray mutt"), which since its incorporation in 2008 has saved, Vazquez believes, 1,100 animals. She is seeking grants to fund spay and neuter programs to reduce the island's estimated 100,000 to 200,000 strays.

Vazquez, whose family emigrated from Cuba in the early 1960s, enrolled at Rutgers–Newark before graduating from Livingston College, majoring in, she jokes, "protest." After years as an urban planner in New Jersey and Puerto Rico, she earned a law degree and spent 20 years as clerk to a federal judge. In 2007, she helped draft a comprehensive new animal-cruelty statute, which became Puerto Rican law the following year. She has attracted organizations such as the Animal Legal Defense Fund to raise awareness among local college students of abuse and facilitated workshops by the World Society for the Protection of Animals.

"There is cruelty in this world, and animals suffer just like we do," Vazquez says. "We need to get that message across." — Deborah Yaffe
For further information, visit allsatorescue.org.