FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Houston BARC Foundation Names First Executive Director

Experienced nonprofit leader will expand fundraising and strengthen community support for Houston's city animal shelter; Foundation also welcomes new Board of Directors

HOUSTON – November 11, 2026 – The Houston BARC Foundation, the independent nonprofit and philanthropic partner of BARC, the City of Houston's animal shelter, has named Brittany Amend as its first executive director.

Amend brings nearly two decades of experience in fundraising, nonprofit leadership and community engagement. She previously served as Director of Development at Small Steps Nurturing Center and has led Amend Consulting since 2022, advising Houston-area nonprofits across education, youth development, community services and social impact. As executive director, she will lead the Foundation's fundraising, donor engagement and community partnership efforts.

"Every animal that comes through BARC's doors deserves the best possible chance for a positive outcome," said Amend. "BARC serves animals regardless of their circumstances, and the Foundation exists to rally the people, partnerships and resources that help make even more possible. I'm excited to build greater awareness, deepen community support and help more Houston animals receive the care and opportunities they deserve."

Established in 2010, the Houston BARC Foundation brings people and resources together to close the gap between public funding and what's possible for the animals who depend on BARC, the City's shelter. Last year alone, BARC cared for more than 22,000 animals and responded to more than 32,000 service calls across the city while taking in every animal regardless of age, condition or circumstance. Through private philanthropy and community support, the Foundation helps strengthen animal care, keep pets with their families and create more pathways to fostering, rescue and adoption.

"A strong philanthropic partner helps us do more for the animals and families who rely on BARC," said Jarrad Mears, director of BARC. "Brittany brings the leadership, relationship-building skills and community perspective needed to grow support for our mission and the animals we serve."

At a recent Houston City Council meeting, a new Board of Directors was approved and appointed to help guide the Foundation's next phase of growth. The board will work alongside Amend to provide strategic leadership, strengthen organizational capacity and support the Foundation's long-term vision. Board members include:

- Barbara A. Carroll, appointment to Position One, for a term to expire December 31, 2027;
- Malissa Cutaia, appointment to Position Two, for a term to expire December 31, 2026;

- Dr. Julie A. Gonzalez, appointment to Position Three, for a term to expire December 31, 2027;
- Genevieve Marie Graham, appointment to Position Four, for a term to expire December 31, 2026;
- Tracey Shappro, appointment to Position Five, for a term to expire December 31, 2027;
- Virginia Parras, appointment to Position Six, for a term to expire December 31, 2026;
- Emily Smikal, appointment to Position Seven, for a term to expire December 31, 2027;
- Hoang Quan Vu, appointment to Position Eight, for a term to expire December 31, 2026;
- Dr. Rick Q. Ngo, appointment to Position Nine, for a term to expire December 31, 2027; and,
- Kamisha M. Mickey, appointment to Position Ten, for a term to expire December 31, 2026.

The Foundation is focused on investing in programs and projects that improve the lives of animals in Houston and strengthen BARC's ability to serve them. One of those initiatives will be supporting the future City of Houston Animal Adoption Center at Buffalo Bayou Park. Expected to break ground this fall, the center will strengthen Houston's animal welfare infrastructure and help more shelter pets connect with adoptive families.

“Looking at BARC and the resources that it gets versus what it needs, fundraising is a really big opportunity to help fill that gap,” said District H Councilmember Mario Castillo. “We will be better positioned to rally the strong community out there that cares about and supports animal welfare issues.”

To learn more about the Houston BARC Foundation or support its mission, visit www.houstonbarcfoundation.org.

About the Houston BARC Foundation

The Houston BARC Foundation is the independent nonprofit and philanthropic partner of BARC, the City's shelter. Its mission is to raise money to improve the lives of all animals in Houston, especially those under the care of BARC. Through philanthropy, partnerships and community support, the Foundation helps strengthen animal care, keep pets with their families and create more pathways to fostering, rescue and adoption. By bringing people and resources together, the Foundation helps close the gap between public funding and what's possible for the animals who depend on BARC. Learn more at www.houstonbarcfoundation.org.

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