

## **Winners of Best World Rabies Day Event 2008**

The results of the competition for the best 2008 World Rabies Day events in Latin America and the Caribbean were announced recently. Out of 66 entries across 16 countries, 25 were submitted for consideration for the prizes, and a panel of five people from different countries chose winners in three categories: local award, regional/departmental award and national/international award.

The winner of the local award was a theatre performance called "A Day of Rabies Vaccination with Mimi and Tobi", presented to 50 children aged between 3 and 5 in state schools in São Paulo, Brazil. The children, their teachers and 30 other adults received educational material about vaccinations, rabies prevention and animal health. Special attention was given to rabies transmitted by bats, and the children were invited to participate by asking and answering questions.

The winner of the regional or departmental award was Rio de Janeiro Against Rabies. Several days of awareness-raising events on rabies prevention included a radio programme, classes for children aged 4 to 10 years, a tribute to professionals involved in rabies control in the state of Rio de Janeiro and two social events where folders were handed out with information on control and prevention of the disease.

The winner of the national and international award was an academic forum on animal welfare coordinated by the Mexican Ministry of Health. It was attended by more than 6,000 people from multidisciplinary and cross-institutional groups throughout the country, and was held alongside a best poster competition in primary schools in 32 states.

Two other projects received special mention certificates. The first was a pilot project where sixth year primary classes in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, received material on rabies prevention and responsible pet ownership. The second project, in La Lisa, Havana, Cuba, involved 20 days of community-based activities in schools and health centres. Information was distributed on dog sterilization, animal care and anti-rabies vaccination, and a canine rabies vaccination programme was conducted in the area. Other activities involved a violin presentation, and the event received good radio and TV coverage.

The aim of the competition is to highlight examples of good practice in rabies prevention throughout Latin America, and the quality of the reports received was so high that descriptions of them all will be posted on a new Alliance/PAHO partnership website within the next two months.