



Sunshine says "We can do it!" spay and neuter every pet friend

Project #

24-9049

County: Anne Arundel

Number of Cats Spayed: 178

Number of Dogs Spayed: 51

Number of Cats Neutered: 147

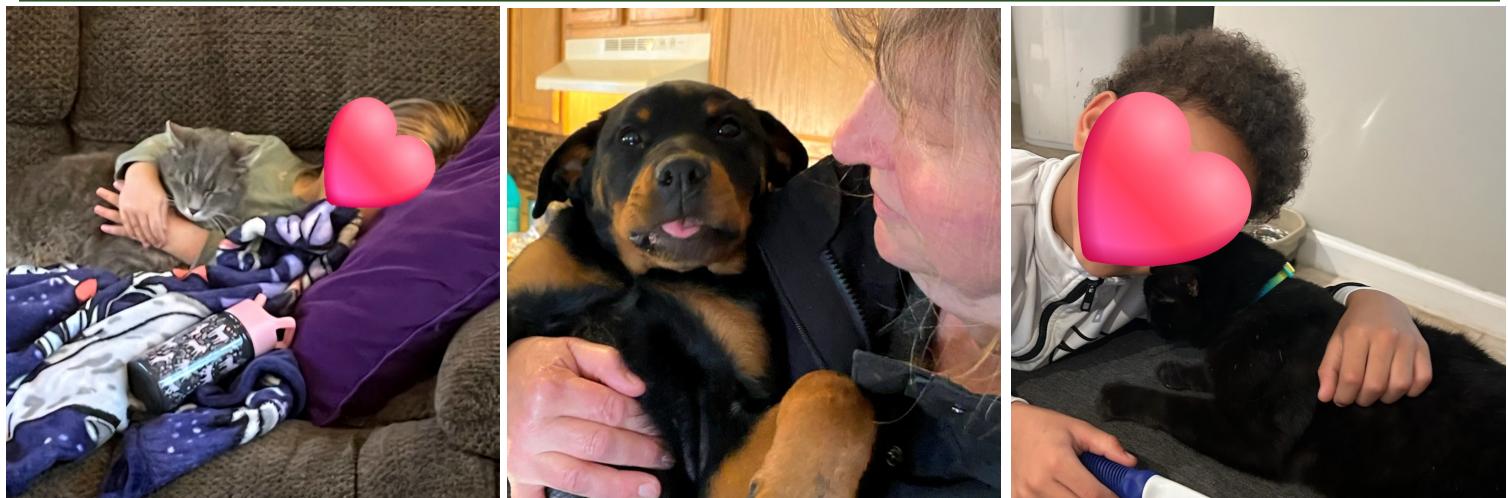
Number of Dogs Neutered: 49

Amount Received: \$30,690

Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$0

Project Synopsis:

This project funded part of a multi-year effort to reduce the number of homeless and unwanted pet animals brought in to the Anne Arundel County and Howard County animal control facilities. This goal is being accomplished through an aggressive, targeted campaign to spay/neuter pets owned by low-income individuals and families in Jessup, Linthicum, Brooklyn Park, and Maryland City. We were funded to spay/neuter 325 pet cats and 100 pet dogs above and beyond our organization's regular pet-focused programs.



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Spay and Neuter Grants Program



Project Description:

Sunshine's Friends Cat and Dog Rescue has been a 501(c)(3) non-profit charity since 2014 operating within 10 miles of our primary location in Jessup, MD. The area is a mix of light industry, warehouses, and residential neighborhoods, and the zones along the US Route 1 corridor and southern Baltimore beltway have a higher than average number of low-income residents who need help. This project, which ran from October 2023 to June 2024, managed to spay/neuter 325 pet cats and 100 pet dogs for low-income families within specific neighborhoods/zip codes in the area. As part of a multi-year effort, we have steadily reduced the number of unwanted pets surrendered to local county animal shelters due to the inability to afford veterinary procedures. The project funded the cost of spay/neuter surgeries and rabies vaccines for the pets. We supplied transportation when needed and covered vaccines, microchipping, and additional medical care if necessary to give the pet a good quality of life.

Summary of Approach:

We start with advertising/outreach. We work with community associations, social service and local groups, speaking at meetings and going door-to-door with brochures. We post on social media and provide handouts to our partner vets and pet stores. We spread the word about spaying/neutering/vaccinating pets in general, and about our projects specifically. We use a dual approach, covering both pet- and feral-focused projects to maximize our effectiveness. Outreach runs continuously, even after completion of the MDA-funded projects. We partnered with 5 vet clinics who substantially discount their rates. Our organization also contributes the costs of extra medical care, vaccines, microchips, and flea treatment for people who can't afford them. This increases our effectiveness and keeps more pets with families and out of animal control facilities. We provide transportation to/from vets to about 75% of pet owners who do not have vehicles, work odd hours, or cannot take off time from work.

Accomplishments:

In just 9 months of a planned year-long project, we managed to spay/neuter 325 pet cats and 100 pet dogs under the MDA grant. These numbers are above and beyond the procedures and other emergency surgeries we provide through our regular in-house programs. We prevented numerous potential pet surrenders due to unwanted litters of puppies/kittens or medical care that people could not afford. We also used our funds to cover the extra costs for testing, vaccinations, microchipping, and flea treatments for pets spayed/neutered under the project. We received comments from several pet owners stating that they were extremely grateful for our program because it prevented them from having to surrender their beloved family pet to the county animal shelter where it would possibly face euthanasia.



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Lessons Learned:

Demand for programs like these is outpacing the available supply due to the current economic situation in the country. A shortage of veterinarians is limiting appointment availability. We cut back our in-person door-to-door canvassing and our on-line social media promotions to avoid overextending ourselves or being unable to accommodate the demand. We were extra vigilant to make sure that very few of the precious appointments were missed and worked with partner vets to fill any vacant slots they had. That close coordination allowed us to react quickly and avoid the typical 90-day wait for appointments.

For More Information Contact:

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