



# Sunshine's 2020 Vision For Pet Spay/Neuter

Project #  
20-533

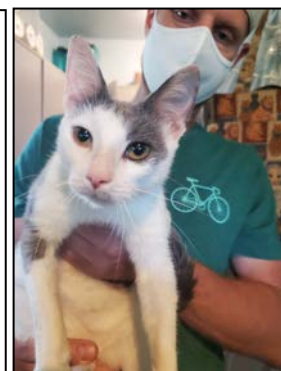
County: Anne Arundel, Howard

Number of Cats Spayed:	134	Number of Dogs Spayed:	38
Number of Cats Neutered:	124	Number of Dogs Neutered:	37

Amount Received: \$20,882.00	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$0.00
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### Project Synopsis:

This project funded part of a multi-year effort to reduce the number of homeless and unwanted pets brought in to the Anne Arundel and Howard Counties animal control facilities through a targeted campaign to provide no-cost spay/neuter/vaccination of pets owned by low-income residents of Jessup and parts of Glen Burnie, Elkridge, and Columbia. We proposed to spay/neuter 250 pet cats and 75 pet dogs above and beyond our regular programs and to provide transportation for the veterinarian appointments if necessary.



### Project Description:

Sunshine's Friends Cat and Dog Rescue ([www.sunshinesfriends.org](http://www.sunshinesfriends.org)) has been a 501(c)(3) non-profit charity since 2014 operating within 20 miles of our main location in Jessup, MD. The area is a mix of light industry, warehouses, and residential neighborhoods, and the area along the US Route 1 corridor and southern Baltimore beltway has a higher than average number of low-income residents who need help.

This project, which ran from October 2019 to July 2020 (including a period of suspended operations during the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic), sought to spay/neuter 250 pet cats and 75 pet dogs for low-income families within specific neighborhoods/zip codes in the area. As part of a multi-year project, we are steadily reducing the number of unwanted pets surrendered to local county animal shelters due to overpopulation or inability to afford veterinary care. The project funded the cost of the spay/neuter surgeries and rabies vaccines for the pets and included a transportation component to bring the animals from the targeted neighborhoods to our partner vets' clinics for those people unable to take their pets.

### Summary of Approach:

We started with advertising and community outreach: we worked with local community associations as well as social service and church groups by speaking at their meetings and by going door-to-door with brochures and pamphlets. We ran announcements on our social media and web pages and we left handouts at vet offices and pet stores. We not only spread the word about spaying/neutering and vaccinating pets in general, but also about



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our project in particular. We began outreach activities as soon as we knew we were awarded the grant and continued them until project funds were expended.

We partnered with three geographically separated spay/neuter vet clinics to provide services through an in-kind contribution in the form of substantially discounted rates. Our organization also contributed the costs of additional medical care, vaccines, and flea treatment not covered by grant monies if pet owners could not afford it. This increased the effectiveness of the program and kept more pets with their families.

A project coordinator managed our efforts, engaged with the community, and lead the outreach portions of the project, making personal connections with pet owners and determining what their transportation and after-care needs were. Some pet owners had their own transportation, but about 80% of the time we needed to pick up the pets, take them to and from the vet and then deliver them back home after surgery. Many owners either did not have transportation, worked odd hours, or could not take off time from work to go to the vet. By including mileage in the grant, we were able to increase the number of animals we spayed/neutered and improve our effectiveness.

### **Accomplishments:**

In just 9 months of the planned one-year project, we managed to spay/neuter 258 pet cats and 75 pet dogs above and beyond the procedures and other emergency surgeries we provide through our normal 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 covered medical costs, tests, vaccines, and flea treatments for project pets from our own operating budget. Some of the people that we helped stated that if not for our services, they would have had to take their pet to the county animal control facility for surrender or euthanasia.

### **Lessons Learned:**

We increased the number of pets that we spayed/neutered by 25% over last year's projects. We increased our outreach activities, especially via social networking and door-to-door neighborhood canvassing, but had to drastically cut back physical activities and shift to virtual ones when th COVID-19 pandemic hit. In particularly poor neighborhoods, we met other needs of pet owners beyond spay/neuter such as supplying pet food and paying for emergency surgeries for extreme cases. Our increased outreach and non-spay/neuter services drove up demand for our programs and also resulted in increased exposure through word-of-mouth from previous participants.

Restictions on spay/neuter activities due to COVID-19 severely impacted our programs. When spay/neuter surgeries were declared non-essential, we had to effectively shut down our activities involving vets. When restrictions were lifted, there was a month-long back-up of surgeries that vets needed to work through before returning to a "normal" case load. Our partner vets did a tremendous job clearing the log jam by working longer hours and weekends, and we have moved forward with them to a new normal.

### **Attachments:**

List of pet cats altered,  
List of pet dogs altered

### **For More Information Contact:**

#### **Name:**

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#### **Organization Name and Address:**

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