



The Lifesaver Spay/Neuter Program

Project #
18-311

County: Garrett

Number of Cats Spayed:	165	Number of Dogs Spayed:	105
Number of Cats Neutered:	150	Number of Dogs Neutered:	83

Amount Received: \$43,098.00	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$73.00
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Project Synopsis:

The Lifesaver program targeted low-income pet owners in Garrett and Allegany Counties. The program proposed to provide no-cost surgeries to 300 cats and 200 dogs/



Project Description:

The Lifesaver program was given that name because for so many of the animals in our region, this program was truly able to save many lives. HART uses multiple approaches to achieve that objective: rescue and transport of animals from the county shelter; rescue, sheltering, spay/neuter and adoption; extraordinary veterinary care for injured animals, both owned and rescued, under two distinct programs (Neil's Fund and Mocha's Fund); and low-cost spay/neuter (HARThelp) and no-cost spay/neuter (Lifesaver). When HART began operations in 2003, most of the 1,500 animals arriving at the county shelter were euthanized. In 2011, the shelter's euthanasia rate was 50%, and in 2017, it dropped to 36%. In our rural though beautiful counties, there are many people who cannot afford to spay or neuter their animals. We believe that the Lifesaver program has greatly contributed to the drop in the euthanasia rate at the shelter due to the reduction in unwanted births among owned pets.

Summary of Approach:

Outreach: Starting in January, HART used a combination of public service announcements, press releases, posters, social media, and the HART web page to inform potential interested pet owners about the Lifesaver program. In June, there are announcements that the application has been updated in accordance with the WIC guidelines.

Partnering: In 2018, Garrett County for the first-time appointed two sheriff's deputies as animal control officers. HART partnered with the county shelter, the animal control officers, and the county's humane society to spread the word about the Lifesaver program. These partnerships have emphasized the importance of treating animals humanely, which includes the timely sterilization of owned cats and dogs.



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Since the beginning of the Lifesaver program in 2015, HART has maintained a highly professional approach to the surgeries as well as to the process. This has given the no-cost program a great deal of credibility and trust among members of the target population.

Accomplishments:

In 2018, the Lifesaver program performed a total of 503 surgeries: 165 cat spays, 150 cat neuters, 105 dog spays and 83 dog neuters. Most of the calls for the program were from cat owners. Owners of male intact dogs were the least likely to call for appointments. The entire grant amount was used for surgeries, with the exception of \$75.00, which is being returned to MDA at the same time as this report. After four years of the program, we were extremely pleased to see how the community has come to 'believe' in the program, as demonstrated by the many 'word of mouth' referrals that we received this past year.

Lessons Learned:

One of the major lessons we learned this year was that it is impossible to determine why some pet owners fail to show up for their appointments. This happens in spite of being called the day before and having them confirm their appointment. In addition, when they make the appointment, they are told that they will not be re-scheduled if they fail to cancel the appointment. Unfortunately, some of them still fail to call to cancel. We are planning to do a call-back survey in 2019 to determine WHY they have not shown up.

Attachments:

Lists of animals that were spayed or neutered in October, November and December. Summary report for all surgeries throughout the year.

For More Information Contact:

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