



# The Lifesaver Spay/Neuter Program

Project #  
19-401

County: Garrett

Number of Cats Spayed:	139	Number of Dogs Spayed:	84
Number of Cats Neutered:	138	Number of Dogs Neutered:	75

Amount Received: \$38,204	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): 0
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### Project Synopsis:

HART's Lifesaver Program targeted low-income pet owners in Garrett and Allegany Counties. HART's 2019 proposal committed to provide spay and neuter surgeries to 425 pets. However, the actual number of pets was 436.



### Project Description:

The Lifesaver Program began when HART opened the first low-cost spay/neuter clinic in Garrett County. This was possible thanks to the involvement and veterinary leadership of two retired vets. The clinic opened in 2009 and continued until December 2013 and, during that time, we were able to provide spay and neuter surgeries to 4,781 owned pets. When HART finished the construction of its Animal Center, the Bredel Veterinary Clinic expanded its practice to full service but continued providing spay and neuter surgeries to pets of low-income residents. Since 2014, HART has spayed and neutered 4,538 cats and dogs. Of those, 2,622 surgeries have been possible since 2015 thanks to the grants from the Maryland Department of Agriculture. (The picture on the left is a visiting former patient who takes liberties on the doctor's chair.)

### Summary of Approach:

The Lifesaver Program has matured through the last five years. Pet owners begin to schedule appointments for the following year in the middle of November. By the end of the year, January is generally fully scheduled with people who have called asking whether we will continue the program. In June, we update the Lifesaver application with the latest WIC Income Guidelines and post it on the HART web page. If people are unable to download the application, the front desk mails it to them with a request to call for an appointment.

### Accomplishments:

In 2019, we were able to perform 11 surgeries more than the 425 we had committed to do. This is due to two factors: cat pet owners are more likely to call for a surgery appointment, which costs less than dog surgeries, and not all pets need a rabies vaccination because it may have been administered by the county.



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM



**Lessons Learned:**

In 2019, we had an experience that brought home to all of us the full meaning of pet ownership. An older gentleman brought in his Chihuahua (Tiny Tinker) in a grave condition. She was pregnant and had not been able to deliver her puppy for over two days. He called HART and asked for help. HART's Dr. Jessy performed an emergency Cesarean and stabilized the puppy and the mother. The owner's tears of gratitude touched the staff deeply and reminded everyone why what we do matters. Sadly, the puppy did not survive beyond a week. However, Tiny Tinker is still adoring her dad and being adored in turn.

**Attachments:**

Lists of animals that were spayed and neutered in October and November. The grant funds were exhausted by the end of November.

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