

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

On the Positive Side

SNAP offers low-cost spay/neuter services

By Mike Hainer For the Sun-News

Article Launched: 05/04/2008 12:55:56 AM MDT

Our community struggles with far too many pets that end up at our community animal shelter with little opportunity for rescue or adoption. We are still killing over 1,000 animals a month because the vast number of animals that go into our shelter each day. This greatly outstrips the few hundred animals being rescued and adopted each month. Leadership in providing widespread and affordable spay and neuter of dogs and cats is essential. Not hundreds, but thousands of animals must be altered each year if we are going to reduce the needless deaths of healthy, adoptable dogs and cats in Dona Ana County.

On the positive side, our local Spay Neuter Action Program (SNAP) has been altering dogs and cats since their formation of the organization in 1998. Sherry Gara, local animal advocate, along with a few other dedicated heroes saw the need to educate the public about pet overpopulation and together formed SNAP. "We started altering animals in 1999. We did ten that year, and even picked up and delivered the animals. We had no idea what we were doing" says Sherry Gara. That rapidly changed as 64 surgeries were completed in 2001, 384 in 2002, 577 in 2003, 741 in 2004, 828 in 2005, 1093 in 2006 and 1004 animals altered in 2007. Gara believes that SNAP can realistically expect to assist with 1,500 low cost surgeries for qualifying low-income families in 2008.

How does it work? SNAP subsidizes the altering of pets with money from fund-raisers, from grants, and beginning in 2006 with funding from Dona Ana County and City of Las Cruces. SNAP provides low-cost spay and neuter services to anyone receiving any type of government assistance such as Medicaid, EBT, free or reduced-cost school lunch program, unemployment benefits, SSI, and college students who receive financial aid, or anyone else who has income below the federal guidelines for Medicaid. Currently, the pets of eligible individuals or families can receive a surgery with a co-pay of \$15 for a cats, and \$25 for dogs.

You can also help SNAP. On October 25th at 7:00 p.m. is the SNAP Tenth Anniversary Gala Event at the Rio Grande Theatre on the downtown mall. This great event is open to everyone. Tickets are available for the \$50.00 pre-event price at Better Life Pet Foods or at Enchanted Gardens on Avenida De Mesilla, or at the Rio Grande Theatre on the night of the event for \$55.00. You can also contact SNAP at 524-9265, or go online at www.snapnewmexico.org to purchase tickets.

Let's get together, meet new friends, have a good time, and help stop the killing.

Michael Hainer, President
Humane Society of Southern New Mexico