

# THE PAW FUND

## THE PETS & WELLNESS FUND

supports community members keeping their animals safe, healthy and part of the family. We nurture the unique bond between humans and our companion animals by assisting owner/guardians to vaccinate, spay or neuter or provide veterinary care for their pets. Animals who stay healthy in their homes are less likely to be surrendered to animal shelters.

PAWFUND.ORG



## Low-cost and free medical care for companion animals

We are a group of animal welfare advocates who believe that if you help families and individuals be the best owner/guardians they can be, we can slow the constant flow of pets into our animal shelters. Most people want 'to do the right thing' for the family pet, but even in good times, the cost of vet care, regular vaccinations and spay or neuter surgery can stretch the family budget to the breaking point.

Many families on low or fixed incomes, senior citizens, the disabled and Veterans, the homeless or those who have hit a financial crisis, find they cannot care for the animal they love so much. Increasingly, animal shelters are taking in animals with health issues, pets which may have stayed in their homes if their owners could access a 'public health' model of pet wellness care.

- People should not have to choose between fixing their broken truck which they need for work, or taking their pet to the vet for that ear infection which has been getting worse day by day.

- Low-cost spay or neuter surgery should be so easily accessible that 'accidental' litters don't happen.

- When vaccinations are so effective in preventing fatal diseases like parvo virus, shelters and veterinarians should not be seeing an increase in these conditions.

- Education and information is easy to distribute. Every household should be able to find out about animal wellness with information in different languages.

Over the last 4 months of 2010, I crafted and managed programs which provided emergency medical care, free spay or neuter and other services for 81 animals.

Thirty four dogs were spayed or neutered in one month; an additional 14 animals were fixed while receiving care for other conditions; over 50 vaccines were given. Among the conditions treated were gum and dental diseases, ear infections, fractured legs, parvo virus, mammary tumors, pyometria, hypothyroid, mange, hernia removal. Diagnostic tests were run, medications provided and humane euthanasia paid for when there was no hope left of recovery.

One of the vets I work with said 'When we do this, we are not just providing animal treatment, but treatment for people'.

I could not agree more.

# PROGRAM WORKS

SPAY NEUTER

MEDICAL  
EMERGENCY

VACCINE CLINICS

EDUCATION

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## How it works and how you can help

The Medical Emergency and Spay/Neuter Programs run on a referral basis. Berkeley Animal Care Services (BACS), Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society (BEBHS), veterinarians and community groups like Fix Our Ferals (FOF) have all referred clients to us. When they hear of a person in need, and cannot provide services themselves, or if an individual calls a vet clinic and is unable to pay and cannot access other low-cost or credit programs, I often get a call. I return all calls.

Most people have seen a veterinarian for a consultation within 24 hours and when in crisis, animals have been at a vet office within hours.

Through negotiation with the vets or service providers, we are able to cut costs without cutting care. When they are able, the clients contribute to the cost.

This enabled us to provide **medical emergency care to 47 animals over 4 months at an average cost of \$200 per animal.** Even though some animals required extensive treatment, our relationships with veterinarians ensured that the budget went a long way. **During Spay/Neuter Month in December 2010, 34 dogs were fixed and over 75% of those were vaccinated, microchipped or treated for other conditions at the same time; at an average cost of under \$150.00 per dog.**

There are inevitably conditions and treatments we cannot afford. These programs are not intended for those who can afford to pay or for ongoing treatment for cancer or expensive diagnostics. The realities of budgeting and the cost of vet care impacts us also.

But doing nothing is not an option.

This Fund has touched the lives of many, like Don who lives in his van with Number One Kitty. When his beloved cat developed an abscess, Don had nowhere to turn. He called agencies and vets, and someone referred him to me. I scheduled a vet appointment within an hour.

Number 1 stayed overnight at the clinic and had surgery the next morning to drain and clean the injury. When Don picked up his cat along with the medications the next evening, he gave me the beaming smile. The vet bill was paid and Don returned home to his van with # 1!

Support this work by donating to our sponsoring non-profit at:

[www.Brighthaven.org](http://www.Brighthaven.org)

Be sure to specify your gift for THE PAW FUND. Your gift will be used only for these programs.

JILL POSENER