

Let's Rally Around Spaying/Neutering our Pets

It is estimated by the World Health Organization that there are 200 million homeless dogs in the world and a similar number of homeless cats. Shelters are often not high priorities for governments. There are often competing priorities (i.e. schools, police and fire, parks and sanitation) for limited resources. These numbers are astronomical and it seems like an unsolvable problem, but it is not. For the first time there is now a country that no longer has homeless dogs. The Netherlands implemented a country-wide sterilization program. Every dog that was brought for sterilization was given a medical exam and brought up to date on vaccinations, if needed.

Marianne Thieme, leader of the Party for the Animals states "Animals - and our entire society need the animal place. There is a direct link between violence against animals and violence against humans. Now more than 90% of Dutch residents own a dog, having taken a million of them off the streets. It's a happy ending for humans too!" In Nevada County we have been spaying/neutering the shelter animals for a very long time. Sammie's Friends, AnimalSave, the Grass Valley Shelter and Pound Puppy Rescue have been working hard for many years to spay and neuter the many animals in our community who without this help would continue to reproduce literally thousands of unwanted puppies and kitties. Rescues, such as Scooter's Pals and For Pets Sake Rescue spay/neuter any last chance animals that they take into their rescues.

When animals are not spayed/neutered we see the sad affects. We see young animals frequently that have not been properly cared for. We receive kittens as young as a day old with no one to care for them. Of course we do when they are found and brought to us. There is no reason that the many mixed breed dogs and cats in our community should be reproducing. I don't think that people that are not in the animal rescue world can understand how many of these unwanted creatures we see and how sad it is. For instance, Sammie's Friends receives over 400 unwanted kittens each year. This is completely preventable. Although, with all of us working together the euthanasia rate at the county shelter has been less than 2% since 2006, it takes an enormous effort to place all these animals that really should not have been born, because whoever allowed that to happen didn't want them. Of course, once they are living breathing creatures we love them and wouldn't ever kill them.

What can you do if you want to be responsible and get your pets spayed/neutered but have a hard time scraping together the cash to do it. There are two non-profit low cost clinics - AnimalSave in Grass Valley and the Animal Spay/Neuter Clinic in Auburn. You can also get assistance from Sammie's Friends and Pound Puppy Rescue. If you own a Pitbull, Chihuahua, Malamute, or Husky you can call Pound Puppy Rescue at 530-272-1716 and they will pay to have your dog spayed/neutered. If you own any other breed or a cat you can go to Sammie's Friends at 14647 Mc Courtney Road, Grass Valley and pick up a voucher. If everyone does there part we will move a far ways toward "No More Unwanted, Neglected, Abandoned and Abused Pets." While all homeless pets in Nevada County go either to the Grass Valley Shelter or Sammie's Friends we are always overcrowded and struggle every day to get them out and adopted as fast as they come in. It would be so wonderful to have a more moderate population and if everyone teams up and works together we can accomplish this.

While Nevada County is not the entire United States we must do what we can to be a good role model, something we have been for a long time. When I began this work in 2001 there weren't many people doing what Sammie's Friends does. I have noticed over the years that so many more people are working towards "No More Homeless Pets." all over the United States. In 2001 it was estimated that 17,000,000 animals were being euthanized in our shelters in the U.S. Now the number is estimated to be 3-4,000,000. This tells me that many somebodies are doing good work. If every person decided today to get their pets spayed/neutered the problem would be solved by next year.

Cheryl Wicks is the Co-Founder and President of Sammie's Friends