



# NETWORK NEWS

Linking Members Of North Shore Animal League, Inc.,  
The Pet Savers Foundation, Inc. And The SPAY/USA Networks

## Finding Funding For Fixing Feral Felines (and other cats and dogs)

Ten years ago, we heard next to nothing about feral cats. Thanks to intensive work – particularly by Alley Cat Allies – these cats began to be recognized! By the mid-1990's, small groups all over the country were scrambling to garner funds in order to spay/neuter (s/n) whole colonies of feral cats.

The only way to obtain these funds seemed to be a mix of garage (tag) sales, bake sales, collection cans, raffles and spaghetti suppers. While this type of fundraising launched a very positive movement to correct an enormous (and growing) problem, we feel that the private efforts need the additional boost of public funding. And in some places around the country, that public funding is beginning to materialize.

It is important to note that many of these programs are not only for feral cats; many cover dogs as well. However, most dogs are either in homes or in shelters. Feral cats present a unique niche in the animal world, and institutions are still struggling to find an acceptable way to deal with them.

We have chosen a sampling of programs from various parts of the country illustrating that public funding can be found and used, to solve the problem of growing numbers of ferals. **Those petitioning** for funding vary (individual, humane society, coalition of groups, legislator) as do the **funding sources** (Public Health, Animal Control, Community Development, General Fund).

We can offer a few general guidelines:

- **Have A Working Committee:** Recruit people with skills recognized by mainstream officials (lawyer, bookkeeper, grant-writer, marketing or p.r. expert)
- **Have An Action Plan:** Present a well-thought out plan. You can steal ideas from other communities – no need to re-invent the wheel!
- **Be Flexible:** just because you have a plan, you need not be rigid. Often people will “buy into” (accept) a plan better if they have had input.
- **Plan To Keep Good Records:** Alley Cat Allies and the Feral Cat Coalition have great model tracking sheets and systems.

- **Do Your Homework:** Who makes the decisions? What are the deadlines? How does your city/county work? Do they spend money on animals now? What are the laws?

- **Get Local Numbers:** How many rabies complaints? Dog bites? Euthanasias? Turn negative elements into points for your side.

- **Obtain Nonprofit Status:** This can take several months, but many foundations and municipalities require it for consideration for grants.

- **Find Examples of Success:** Some areas have reduced their euthanasias by close to 50% over five years – find out how they did it!

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### City Of Berkeley Allocates \$10,000 to Fix Our Ferals for Trap/Neuter/Release

By Linda McCormick

By the fall of 1997, all the cat rescue workers in my circle were approaching burn-out, and the kittens just kept coming, in what seemed like a year-round kitten season. We all felt isolated, because though we consoled and encouraged each other, our efforts were in effect, solo.

I researched many good programs around the country, but since I had been involved primarily with feral cats, the Feral Cat Coalition (FCC) of San Diego seemed closest to what we needed in the East Bay area. Just by



Linda McCormick, President, Fix Our Ferals chance a woman with a FCC slide show, Lisa Camasi, responded to my ad for a colony feeder. She was staying just 2 blocks from me.

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## Finding Funding For Fixing Feral Felines continued

### SPCA Petitions County Olean, New York

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Recently, the SPCA in Cattaraugus County, which receives about 7% of its budget from the county, had been trying to convince county legislators that the feline population explosion would only get worse, eventually costing more money for “animal control” unless steps were taken to deal with the situation. SPCA president Kelly Chaffee attended SPAY/USA’s Focus on Ferals conference in Denver in June, 1997, there learning about mobile vans and the trap/neuter/release/maintain programs for ferals.

Upon her return, Kelly formed a Spay/Neuter Clinic Committee, and spent the next four months gathering information on clinics and fundraising.

At the county budget hearing in October of 1997, the SPCA requested an additional \$10,000 for a mobile spay clinic. The pre-

sentation revolved around statistics. Kelly asked the legislators how many of them would like to see an additional 16,000 to 47,000 stray, unwanted cats in the county within the next few years. She proceeded to explain that the number of calls for help regarding stray cats had more than tripled in the past year. The approximately 1,800 calls would cost the county at least \$63,000 (\$35 x 1800) even if they were to destroy each cat. The residents of Cattaraugus County would not approve of that.

Despite the concern of the lawmakers, there was not enough money in the budget at that time for the additional \$10,000. Therefore, the following March, the SPCA went back and requested \$10,000 from the county contingency fund. By that point the SPCA had secured \$20,000 from the D,J, and T Foundation,

\$17,000 from a trust foundation, \$9,000 from an anonymous donor and \$6,500 from local businesses. Dr. John Caltabiano from the T.E.A.M. mobile unit in Connecticut flew in and gave a presentation that entertained even the toughest politicians.

Over 300 signatures were obtained from county residents, and clinic supporters were asked to contact their local representatives. Out of 21 legislators, there were only 2 votes of “no” cast for the \$10,000, which constituted the balance that was needed to purchase the van. Chaffee noted that it is really nice to know that the SPCA is located in a county where elected officials were able to see the benefits of a mobile spay/neuter clinic. Hopefully, she adds, this legislature will serve as a role model for other counties. The mobile van begins operating this winter.

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## Berkeley Allocates \$10,000 continued

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The FCC slide show was a reassuring catalyst. In fact, through all stages of organizing Fix Our Ferals, I sensed that the time is overdue for help for feral cats here. Frequently, we hear comments like, “Finally! I’ve been waiting for this for 10 years!”

Rescue workers have long done much of the city’s job of caring for society’s abandoned companion animals and their offspring. And at that first slide show, a strong member of the Berkeley City Council, Betty Olds, got behind the idea of free monthly clinics to spay and neuter unowned cats. After that, there were many hoops to jump through: gaining endorsement from Berkeley’s Humane Commission, and side-stepping efforts by a disapproving Berkeley Animal Control director to discredit the program. But thanks to council member Betty Olds, one night at the city council meeting, Fix Our Ferals quietly slipped through with a one-time grant of \$10,000.

Our small 3-person Board of Directors allows us to make decisions quickly, and we informally poll other

key volunteers on all important issues. The volunteer staff, meanwhile, has ballooned to over 70 people, with a pool of 10 veterinarians to call on for surgeries.

Fix Our Ferals may opt to try for private funding in the future. City politics take time and energy we would rather spend on the cats, and Berkeley’s grant carried with it the restriction that our clinics be limited to cats living “primarily in Berkeley.” After June 1999 when our contract with Berkeley expires, we want to expand our borders to include more cities in the East Bay area.

But the city demonstrated that government can and should shoulder responsibility. The grant got up and running, and now community participation grows every month. I envision expanding Fix Our Ferals to serve several East Bay cities, and perhaps after our reputation is well established, approach multiple city councils in our jurisdiction for partial funding.



## Finding Funding For Fixing Feral Felines continued

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### The Spay/Neuter Trust Fund San Diego, California

One of the earliest programs was started in San Diego in 1994 with the leadership of County Supervisor Board Chair Pam Slater. A *Beach News* article dated November of that year announced:

In groundbreaking action, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and San Diego City Council are directing a portion of the dog license fees toward a new Spay/Neuter Trust Fund. The establishment of the fund recognizes the importance of making an investment in preventing the births of large numbers of companion animals who will ultimately become the taxpayer's responsibility. The Trust Fund is the most efficient investment the County of San Diego can make toward the reduction of our pet overpopulation problem.

The Spay/Neuter Fund was seeded with about \$40,000 from

dog license revenue. While this fund was not set up to help ferals – it is focused on companion animals – it has indirectly helped reduce the number of ferals by reducing the number of unaltered cats in homes and thereby reducing the number of kittens needing adoption or roaming free.

Since 1992, the enormously successful private program, the Feral Cat Coalition (FCC), has directly aided 10,000 feral cats in San Diego – altering them, providing vaccinations and the most basic medical care. This model program can be visited on The World Wide Web at [www.feralcat.com](http://www.feralcat.com).

The combination of public and private programs has proven to be most effective:

The statistician at San Diego County Animal Control verified the following euthanasia rates for cats. The figures show the most dramatic drop following the start of FCC.

<u>1991- 92</u>	<u>1994- 95</u>	<u>1997- 98</u>
15,525	9,152	8,424

San Diego is one of the nation's fastest-growing metropolitan areas, making the solution to this and other problems doubly difficult. Between 1991 and 1996, the county grew by over 175,000 people.

### The Ballot Initiative Spokane, Washington

In 1995, in Spokane, LaVerne Kettlety and Margaret J. Leonard prepared an initiative proposing that one-tenth of one percent (.001) of the city's general fund be used solely for spaying and neutering of cats and dogs residing within the city limits. The funding was estimated to come to about \$100,000 per year. They brought the proposal to City Council to vote on. They were turned down.

Undaunted, the women took their idea directly to the voters and the initiative passed by 55%. Spokane voters endorsed the offering of free s/n services to city cats and dogs. The plan was voted in for three years!

At the end of the three years, City Council makes the decision to continue the program or to eliminate it. One of the city officials feels it may be better to "fix" roads rather than "fixing" pets. If the program continues, there have been recommendations to "alter" it. Instead of being tied to the general fund, it has been proposed that three dollars from license fees go to cover the s/n expenses. The funds will go further since altering will no longer be free, but will carry a discount voucher instead. Veterinary clinics would set their own fees and accept the vouchers as partial payment. All of the money generated by the \$3 will be used for s/n discounting. Under the old plan about 2,000 animals per year were altered free of charge.

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**Dr. Rebecca Arnold, Cat Captain of Nebraska, won the Rick Akin Award from the Capital Area Humane Society of Lincoln, in recognition of her work for animal welfare. Dr. Arnold was one of the first veterinarians in Nebraska to join the SPAY/USA network!**



## Finding Funding For Fixing Feral Felines continued Coalition Of Organizations Petitions County

Jefferson Parish, Louisiana

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In 1995, the animal control department, local humane society and community development office jointly petitioned the Parish (county) Commissioners for funds to help spay/neuter companion animals, including feral cats.

Community Development staff member Mike Strausser stated, "those who write budgets must be convinced that it is a good thing." He suggested that:

- public officials be invited to see for themselves examples of feral colonies, since many of them do not encounter this problem in their daily lives.
- the general public must be reached; in Jefferson Parish, outreach vans went into local neighborhoods to bring awareness to the people.
- the problem should be couched in language and concerns that the public officials understand – pet abuse and neglect, danger of dog bites, the spreading of garbage, danger of

diseases such as rabies – in short, quality-of-life issues.

• s/n saves taxpayer dollars – to round up, feed, house and kill costs \$68 per animal in this area, while s/n costs about **half** that.

Mr. Strausser feels that what convinced the officials was a two-part campaign: community education/outreach, and a spay/neuter campaign focused on low-income areas of the parish. Activity was funded under HUD's community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. It was found eligible as a public health service and in compliance with HUD's national objectives since CDBG funds were used to subsidize the SNIP program in targeted low and moderate income areas only.

In addition to the veterinarian services, the Jefferson Parish Community Development Department required the local SPCA to conduct a community education program with presentations in local schools and commu-

nity centers as well as various scouting and other youth groups located in targeted low and moderate income areas. Mr. Strausser stresses that a low-cost s/n program **must** be in place before CDBG funds can be used. These funds simply subsidize already-existing s/n services for low and moderate income pet owners.

Also important to note is that the program was only marginally successful before the spaymobile (leased from The Southern Animal Foundation in nearby New Orleans) was used to go to targeted low and moderate income areas to perform s/n and other services.

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### **Full Time Veterinarian Needed**

for brand new spay/neuter clinic and shelter in Killeen, TX.  
Please contact Shirley Klein at (254) 526-0174

## **Spay/Neuter Stamp Makes The Grade**

The U.S. Postal Service's Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) met in Washington D.C. on Oct. 1st and 2nd to consider, among more than 7,000 requests, PaLC's proposal for a commemorative stamp to urge the pet-owning public to "Spay or Neuter—Save a Life." Since PaLC launched its Pet Overpopulation STAMP OUT in Sept., 1997, the CSAC has received THOUSANDS of letters of support from humane groups, veterinary medical associations and colleges, celebrities (Bob Barker, Betty White, Tony La Russa, Olympic triathlete Eric Harr), philatelists, and animal-lovers throughout the nation. As a result, the Committee promoted the SPAY/NEUTER stamp proposal to "under consideration for a future U.S. stamp program." The SPAY/NEUTER stamp is now one of only 200 or so serious contenders for commemoration in the year 2000!

The Committee, which convenes quarterly, will meet again in January 1999. We must keep the STAMP OUT's momentum high; otherwise, we risk losing hard-won ground. Accordingly, please direct your requests for the SPAY/NEUTER stamp to:

Dr. Virginia Noelke, Chair  
Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee  
United States Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW., Room 4474E  
Washington, DC 20260-2437  
To receive a complimentary copy of PaLC's form letter and brochure, "Tips on STAMPING OUT Pet Overpopulation," contact:

PaLC's Pet Overpopulation STAMP OUT  
Hope C. Tarr, Project Coordinator  
P.O. Box 16486  
Alexandria, VA 22302  
Tel: (703) 818-8009, mailbox #1  
Email: pawunit@aol.com

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## Cat Contraceptive Approach Developed By Student Intern

Veterinary student Michelle Meister-Weisbarth, working in conjunction with Dr. Stephen Boyle in the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, used her recent summer internship grant from the Dodge Foundation to develop a genetically-altered bacterium that may be able to serve as an oral contraceptive for feral cats.

Using a modified strain of *Salmonella bacterium*, Meister-Weisbarth developed an immuno-contraceptive approach that potentially could be delivered to free-living cats via an oral bait. An oral "inoculation" with the bacterium containing a protein from

the zona pellucida, which surrounds the mammalian ovum, causes the cat's system to produce antibodies which block sperm from fertilizing the egg. With the preliminary phases of research accomplished, the researchers are seeking funds to continue with laboratory testing of the technique.

At this time, the antibody study is underway, and in vitro work should be finished by January. A refined version of the vaccine will then be developed. The questions regarding efficacy of the vaccine should be answered by late 1999.

Readers interested in finding out more about this project can visit



the web site at [actioncat.com/research.html](http://actioncat.com/research.html) or e-mail Dr. Boyle with specific questions at [samboyle@vt.edu](mailto:samboyle@vt.edu).

This vaccine obviously has immense implications for reducing numbers of homeless cats worldwide.

## Finding Funding For Fixing Feral Felines continued Nonprofit Organization Initiates Volunteer-Run City S/N Fund San Jose, California

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In 1991, the county of Santa Clara was putting to death 30,000 animals a year, over 22,000 of whom were cats. There was no plan to reduce the number of animals being born, only more efficient ways of killing the unwanted animals.

Ellen Dimond and Judy Jones organized The Coalition for Humane Legislation to reduce dog/cat overpopulation. San Jose was the target area. San Jose City Councilman Jim Beall agreed to be the political sponsor.

Public awareness was raised through outreach at community events, and a mailing list was developed. Some seed funding was raised through the sale of tee shirts, comedy night parties, an art exhibit, and an elegant garden party. A postcard campaign urged the mayor and city council to adopt an ordinance requiring pet owners to obtain a permit for their dogs/cats who produced litters (purposely bred or not). Cat

breeders and feral cat colony caretakers were strongly opposed.

The City Council did not approve a breeding ordinance; however, following a proposal by Councilman Jim Beall, they adopted a free s/n program available to all residents of the City of San Jose. The program included feral cats. Not only does the voucher program pay for the s/n, but it pays for cats who are pregnant, in heat, cryptorchidism and other maladies that need to be taken care of at the time of surgery.

The application process is simple – people request vouchers in person or by mail. Volunteers run the program so the city does not have to hire anyone. Simple proof of residency is required, and there is no limit on the number of cat vouchers a resident can obtain (although they can only get eight at a time).

Since the beginning of this program, some changes have been made:

- Dog vouchers have been eliminated
- An application form must be filled out
- There is a \$5.00 co-payment per cat
- "owned cats" must have a license

At this time, 15 veterinarians participate in the program, five of whom do early spay/neuter. San Jose contributed \$65,000 from its general fund to the program for fiscal year 1998/99.

Readers, keep in mind that in 1974, the National League of Cities annual Congress of Cities adopted the following national Municipal Policy on Pet Control:

**Dog and cat overpopulation in urban areas is now recognized as a threat to health as well as an assault on urban aesthetics, a pollutant, and a safety hazard. It also represents a major city expenditure. Citizens and governments must be made aware of the seriousness of the problem.**