



NETWORK NEWS

SPAY/USA...Saving Lives By Preventing Unwanted Litters!
www.spayusa.org

Mobile Spay/Neutering on Half a Shoestring Budget!

by Liz Jones, Director, Peaceable Kingdom

SCENARIO: Peaceable Kingdom, like so many other animal welfare groups in this country, is small, dedicated, determined and short on funding. When we came into existence in 1998, part of our stated mission was to help reduce the number of stray, feral, abandoned and homeless companion animals. As has been shown time and time again, the availability of low-cost neutering and spaying is essential for the success of any such effort. We quickly began a program with established veterinarians but knew that we needed a dedicated clinic. There were shortcomings with our existing program: lack of openings on a timely basis, veterinarians' hesitation working with feral animals, veterinarian concern over contagion with clients' animals, and the public's unwillingness to drive excessive distances. The high cost of buying/ leasing a building was prohibitive and the zoning issues were complex. What's a group to do?

ANSWER: A mobile spay/neuter-

ing clinic. Great idea! But that wonderful issue of funding comes into play. Quotes for the size/configuration we were inter-



Cape May Animal Control Officer, John Queenan, and Dr. Gloria Binkowski

ested in were about \$95,000. Way out of our budget! We decided to investigate buying a used motor home in good condition, retrofitting and equipping it ourselves. After all, surely among the six members of our group we had plenty of skills for such an undertaking. And of course there was my 85-year-old Pops, skilled in all areas of remodeling, ready and willing to supervise. And so our search yielded a Class A 1989 Mobile Traveler with only 33,000 miles and a price tag of \$18,000.

ACTION: Now how often does one get to be destructive and productive at the same time?! We bought our unit, drove it home and began ripping out parts of the interior. With the free labor of a little old lady (myself) and my wonderful father, we completed the destruction stage. Without ever having seen a mobile clinic, we played with a few designs and then began rebuilding. Amazing what ingenuity and naiveté can produce! Friends later admitted they had little confidence in our



Inside of Ran Van

success. Thanks for not sharing that with me at the beginning! Approximately 100 hours of labor later, our unit has already been

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Mobile Spay/Neutering...cont'd from page 1



Dining Area Before



Dining Area After

R.A.N. VAN THREE-TIER FEE STRUCTURE

In order to provide local animal welfare organizations and individuals with the lowest-cost s/n services, the R.A.N. Van is available for hire on a three-tier fee basis:

- 1) Van & Supplies
\$15/cat
- 2) Van, Supplies & Technician
\$25/cat
- 3) Van, Supplies, Technician and Veterinarian
\$40/cat

Each cat serviced will be: spayed or neutered, receive rabies and distemper vaccination, be treated for worms, fleas and ticks, and for ear mites (if needed), nails will be clipped and mats removed. One-stop service for strays, ferals, the homeless and abandoned!



Sofa Area Before



Sofa Area After

on the road neutering/spaying even as we finish the retrofit. One of the joys of doing it this way is that we use the unit before it is finished and before we have total funding.

BOTTOM LINE: The actual expenditure for the van, including purchase, renovation materials, anesthesia machine, 16 PVC cages, oxygen tanks, surgery table, and surgery boards was \$24,900. Donated labor and equipment, including 100 hours of labor at \$20/hour, a surgery table, regulators, autoclave and linoleum, were approximately \$4,500.

THE END (OR MAYBE JUST THE BEGINNING!): Proceeding on in a positive, simple way, we have established a low-cost mobile spay/neuter clinic. It can easily perform 30 surgeries a day, be used for vaccination clinics and adoption days on the weekend, and is available for national disaster situations on the East Coast, all for about \$25,000 of actual outlay. We have had some labor and equipment donated, but these units do not have to be pricey to be successful. We are on the road, working on a contractual basis with animal welfare organizations and individuals who wish to sponsor the van for a day or days. We have no paid dedicated staff. We hire technicians and veterinarians as needed. We would be happy to discuss our efforts; just drop us a line or give us a call. We would entertain retrofitting a van that your group purchased for cost of materials and minimal labor, with all profit going to support our programs. If interested in using the van or discussing a retrofit for you, I can be reached at ljones@ot.com or 725 N. 29th St., Allentown, PA, 18104. My phone number/fax is 610-433-7422.

MORAL OF THE STORY: Just do it! Spay/neuter is the answer, stupid! And thank you, Esther, for all you have done and will do! ❖