

Los Angeles Spay/Neuter Efforts Get \$13.8 Million Boost

Goal of five-year plan is to reduce shelter intake and euthanasia of cats, dogs.

Posted: Oct. 1, 2008, 3 a.m. EDT

A PetSmart Charities grant will help provide low-cost spay and neuter services for companion animals in the Los Angeles area. The current state of the economy makes this a crucial time to provide pet owners with affordable spay/neuter services for dogs and cats. With a new ordinance that takes effect Oct. 1 in Los Angeles, requiring cats and dogs 4 months and older to be sterilized unless exempted for a specific reason, a PetSmart Charities pledge of \$13.8 million will help low-income residents comply with the law, said spokeswoman Kimberly Noetzel.

The Spay Los Angeles Initiative consists of a five-year grant for the development and operation of eight high-volume, high-quality spay/neuter clinics for cats and dogs in the city and county of Los Angeles. With all the clinics operating at full capacity during the length of the program, they are projected to sterilize as many as 720,000 pets.

Spay/neuter costs in Los Angeles County range from \$100 to \$200 for dogs and from \$50 to \$100 for cats. Two local nonprofit agencies are aiding PetSmart in administering the funding and providing low-cost services for pets.

The first, Clinico Inc. in Downey/Pico Rivera, provides spay services for female cats for \$35 and for female dogs for \$55; neutering for male cats for \$25 and neutering for male dogs for \$45. And FixNation Inc. in Burbank offers services specifically for cats, ranging from free to \$50, depending on gender and whether the cat is owned or free-roaming.

Noetzel said the clinics will be open to any pet parent and rescue group that wants to take advantage of the services. Los Angeles was selected for funding based on its high population, cost of living and lack of subsidized spay/neuter services.

These clinics also accept coupons and provide other services such as pain medication and, if necessary, vaccinations, fluids and antibiotics. The goal of the initiative is to extend the life-saving impact of Spay Los Angeles by demonstrating large-scale success, and encouraging other communities to pursue their own comprehensive spay/neuter initiatives.

“The best solution for reducing the steady stream of homeless companion animals into the shelter system, and ultimately reducing the tragedy of euthanasia, is to reduce the number of unwanted pets,” said Susana Della Maddalena, PetSmart Charities executive director. “That is achieved with spay and neuter efforts. We need to increase dramatically the availability of low-cost spay/neuter services in neighborhoods where they are needed the most, such as where shelter intake is high, income is low and resources are limited.”