

Mobile Vet Clinic Aims to Help NYC Pet Owners

New mobile clinic offers low-income cat and dog owners affordable veterinary care.

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The Low Cost Vet Mobile in New York City was designed to help pet owners at risk of having to give up their cat or dog due to finances. The Low Cost Vet Mobile, a new mobile veterinary clinic created to help low-income New York pet owners, made its debut July 25 at the Animal Care & Control Manhattan shelter.

To celebrate the launch, AC&C hosted a special pet-adoption promotion. Dogs and cats were available for adoption both inside the shelter and on a North Shore Animal League America adoption van parked curbside. The Vet Mobile offered vaccinations while the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals offered low-cost microchipping.

Elizabeth Cohen, DVM, host of the radio program "Happy and Healthy Pet," was on hand to consult with patients, provide tours of the van and to sign copies of her book "Most of My Patients Wear Fur." Proceeds went directly to AC&C.

The Vet Mobile, developed by Garo Alexanian of Companion Animal Network and staffed by local veterinarians, was designed to help pet owners at risk of having to give up their companion animals because they can no longer afford veterinary care. With the current economy, the number of animals arriving at AC&C shelters has significantly increased, according to the shelter.

"The mobile clinic will help so many pet owners that are having trouble making ends meet and caring for a sick pet at the same time," said Richard Gentles, AC&C's spokesperson. "We applaud Garo's initiative, and the timing couldn't be better."

Alexanian said he expects the Vet Mobile to reduce the number of animals surrendered to city shelters.

"I expect the program will prevent approximately 5,000 surrenders over the course of a year," he said. "This can translate to a 12 percent to 15 percent reduction in shelter intakes."

The Vet Mobile made a second stop at AC&C's Brooklyn shelter on July 29. Moving forward, the mobile clinic will alternate between the Brooklyn and Manhattan locations.

Other low-cost veterinary programs in the area include the Safety Net/Pets for Life NYC program, low-cost vet care at the Humane Society of New York Veterinary Hospital in Manhattan and the Bensonhurst Low Cost Animal Clinic in Brooklyn.