



Community Support: The Future of Companion Animal Welfare



[Pets for Life]



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES





The Humane Rescue Alliance

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INTRODUCTION

Pets for Life (PFL), a program of The Humane Society of the United States (The HSUS), brings free medical care, services and information to people and their pets in communities with limited or nonexistent access to pet wellness resources. PFL is a proven approach in animal welfare that extends support to underserved areas through strategic door-to-door outreach, establishing a consistent community presence and a unique, comprehensive follow-up process that ensures relationships are nurtured on an ongoing basis.

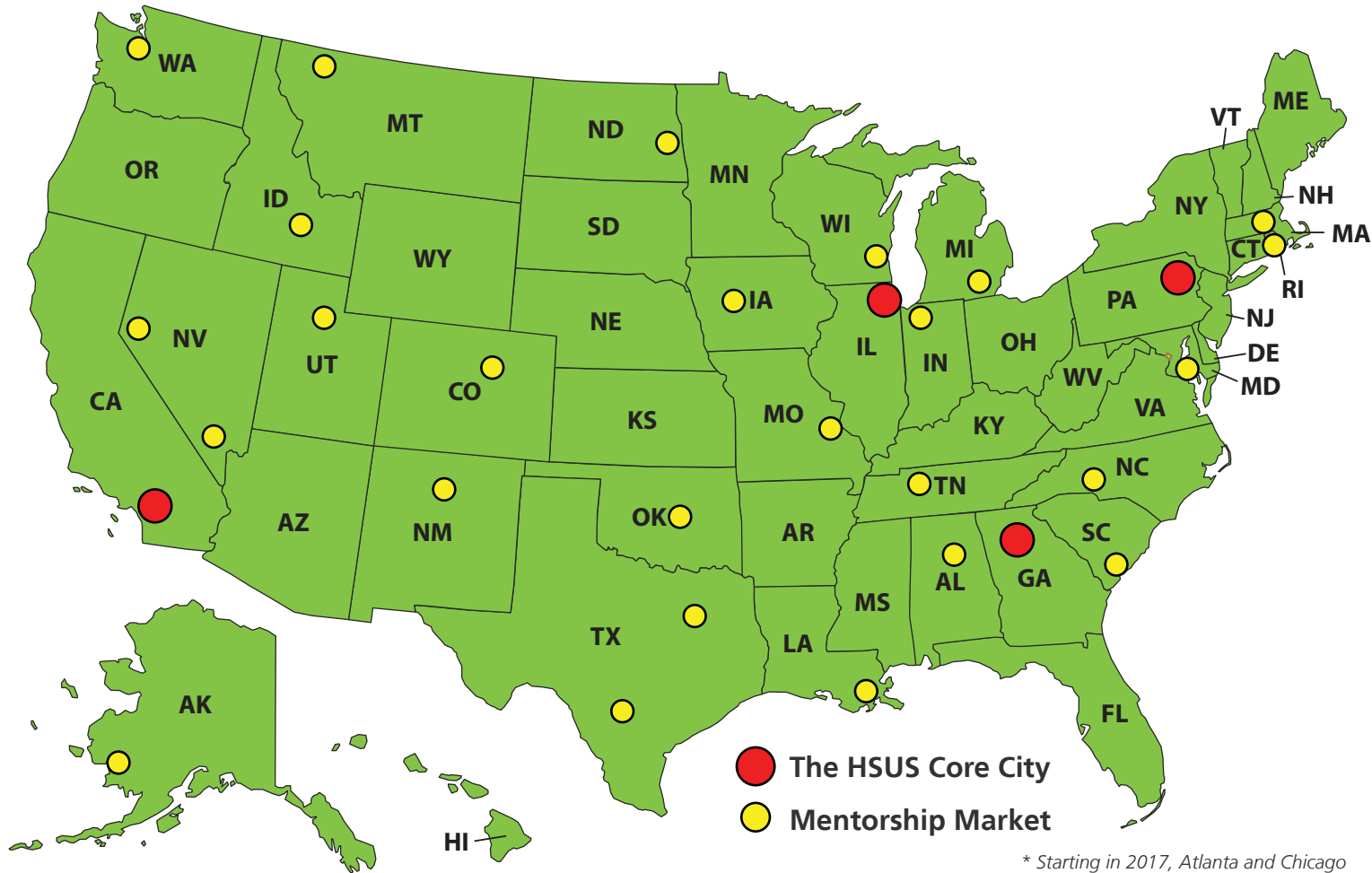
PFL employs a three-pronged methodology to address the systemic challenges people and pets living in poverty face:

Direct Care - Delivers pet services and information to people and pets in underserved communities

Mentorship and Training - Guides and supports local organizations in implementing strategic community outreach programs

Policy and Enforcement Reform - Influences organizations and agencies to be focused more on pet owner support and less on punishment

The program philosophy promotes the understanding that a lack of financial means does not equate to a lack of love felt for and provided to a pet. Everyone's lives can be enhanced by a pet, and those who choose to should have the opportunity to experience the unconditional love and meaningful relationship a pet brings.



● The HSUS Core City
● Mentorship Market

** Starting in 2017, Atlanta and Chicago transitioned to mentorship markets*

Pets for Life operates in core cities that are staffed by The HSUS and serve as integral training markets where best practices are refined, as well as in mentorship markets, where local organizations have received grants, thorough training and ongoing guidance to implement and maintain the program in their communities. Organizations carrying out the work include brick-and-mortar shelters, rescue groups, municipal agencies and spay/neuter clinics. This report represents work carried out in all of these communities over a five year period.

A consistent truth is how the PFL philosophy and approach is effective in all types of communities. Regardless of ethnicity or environment, people are inherently good and have strong bonds with their pets. From isolated rural areas to large cities to Native American reservations, the PFL model is successful.

The HSUS Core Cities

- Atlanta, Georgia
- Chicago, Illinois
- Los Angeles, California
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Mentorship Markets

- Anchorage, Alaska: Alaska SPCA
- Birmingham, Alabama: Greater Birmingham Humane Society
- Blackfeet Nation, Montana: Lewis and Clark Humane Society
- Charleston, South Carolina: Charleston Animal Society
- Charlotte, North Carolina: Humane Society of Charlotte
- Dallas, Texas: Dallas Companion Animal Project

- Denver, Colorado: Denver Animal Shelter
- Des Moines, Iowa: Animal Rescue League of Iowa, Inc.
- Detroit, Michigan: All About Animals Rescue
- Fargo, North Dakota: 4 Luv of Dog Rescue
- Gary, Indiana: Humane Society of Calumet Area
- Hailey, Idaho: Animal Shelter of Wood River Valley
- Jefferson Parish, Louisiana: Jefferson SPCA
- Las Vegas, Nevada: The Animal Foundation
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Humane Society
- Nashville, Tennessee: Pet Community Center

- Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Central Oklahoma Humane Society
- Providence, Rhode Island: Providence Animal Rescue League
- Reno, Nevada: Nevada Humane Society
- Saint Louis, Missouri: Carol House Quick Fix Pet Clinic
- Salt Lake City, Utah: Salt Lake County Animal Services
- San Antonio, Texas: San Antonio Animal Services
- Santa Fe, New Mexico: Santa Fe Animal Shelter and Humane Society
- Tacoma, Washington: The Humane Society Tacoma and Pierce County
- Washington, District of Columbia: Humane Rescue Alliance
- Worcester, Massachusetts: Second Chance Animal Shelter



Jason Schipkowski

IMPACT TO DATE IN ALL MARKETS



80,883
SPAY/NEUTER SURGERIES

127,482
PETS SERVED

313,048
MEDICATIONS & SUPPLIES

Pets for Life is dedicated to bridging the gap between animal service providers and millions of people and pets living in poverty. To date, PFL has connected tens of thousands of families to essential veterinary services that likely would not have reached them otherwise. Now having served over 127,000 pets, the quantity of those served is only a portion of the transformational change achieved by PFL. The profound program impact is also measured by the major steps animal welfare groups across the country have taken to weave the PFL philosophy into the fabric of their missions through policy changes and to focus efforts outside the shelter walls.



Aldwin Roman

Governmental programs such as social security, housing vouchers and food stamps, as well as NGOs, currently exist to provide a variety of assistance to people. In that same spirit, recognizing the emotional, mental and physical benefits a pet brings, PFL is working towards pet services being part of a more robust system of support. More than a traditional safety net program, proactively engaging people within their community to provide ongoing, comprehensive owner support service is a tenet of the program. For example, just as adoptions are a permanent line item in any shelter's budget, so should be community outreach and extending resources to underserved areas. As long as poverty exists, there will be a need for subsidized services including spay/neuter, general wellness care, supplies, adoptions, return-to-owner fees and much more.

"When we started our PFL program, I seriously underestimated the need for wellness care among low-income pet owners. It's been a blast connecting with our community in a new and wholly positive way. People are happy to see me and associate the program and the good we do with 4 Luv of Dog. From a rescue perspective, we've applied the PFL philosophy to some of our established rescue procedures. If someone contacts us and wants to surrender a dog our first thought used to be "Do we have room?" and now it's "Can we help this pet stay in the home?". We've offered training resources, provided wellness care and given hundreds of supplies."

AMY KRACHT | VICE PRESIDENT | 4 LUV OF DOG RESCUE | FARGO, ND



Jason Schipkowski

PETS FOR LIFE: THEORY OF CHANGE MODEL





Wisconsin Humane Society

CREATING A MORE INCLUSIVE INDUSTRY

The program focus on advancing more progressive industry policies and the philosophy of increasing support for underserved communities is just as important as the life-saving and life-changing direct care services. Through animal shelters, animal control agencies, spay/neuter clinics, veterinary schools and private practice veterinarians, the basic principles of equity, inclusion and nonjudgment are spreading across the country.

Collaboration with the Veterinary Community

When the program starts in a new community, Pets for Life is frequently the first pet care provider families have had the opportunity with which to interact. PFL demonstrates this gap in services to veterinarians, encouraging businesses to find ways to serve communities that have long lacked resources and acting as the accelerator so they can expand their customer base. New private practice veterinarians have opened in PFL focus areas while others have increased staff and expanded surgical capacity to meet the demand of a new audience of pet owners. These businesses are bringing services the community didn't have before.

PFL has also worked to influence the next generation of veterinarians by engaging universities on issues of pets in poverty and exposing veterinary students to an audience of pet owners largely overlooked. Through partnerships with multiple universities, the program has become a required part of the student's curricula. Veterinary students ride along with the PFL teams, visiting clients' homes and providing wellness care. The collaborations provide critical services to people and their pets while allowing students an opportunity not offered through other rotations. As emerging veterinarians start their own businesses or join other facilities, they will do so knowing the importance of including underserved communities in their plans.

A common issue when working with the veterinary community is how the standard of care applies to people and pets in poverty. While everyone should be given quality care, when the gold standard of care option is out of reach financially for many pet owners an alternative option should be offered that accounts for both the pet's health and a way for the pet to stay in the loving home he or she knows.

"Our partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Shelter Medicine Program, which focuses on in-home wellness care visits, has made an immense difference in our ability to serve our clients and their animals. The ability to partner and offer treatment for minor medical issues has made it possible for many families to provide the quality of life they'd wanted to for the pets they love. In addition, providing access to veterinary care has deepened our relationships with clients and the community."

**JILL KLINE | VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNITY IMPACT PROGRAMS
WISCONSIN HUMANE SOCIETY | MILWAUKEE, WI**



Wisconsin Humane Society

A Cost-Effective Approach

Investment in preventative programming is not only less stressful for pets by keeping them in the homes they already have and out of a shelter environment, but also more cost-effective than reactive measures. Consider the cost of sheltering, rehoming or possibly euthanizing a pet. Comparing the proactive cost per pet of PFL with a reactive cost measure like daily housing is instructive. Over the life of the program, the average cost per pet served through PFL is less than \$100. In a shelter, the cost of care for a given pet would quickly reach \$100. PFL strongly encourages the investment of funds be applied to keeping pets in their current homes instead of intaking, housing and rehoming. This includes, but is not limited to, providing pet owners with free and subsidized medical care, assistance with behavior issues and financial support on housing needs like pet deposits.

Community outreach isn't just smart when compared to traditional sheltering and rescue. There is an inherent value in serving the community comprehensively and reaching an audience that would otherwise never interact with the shelter. A family does not have to be in danger of surrendering their pet in order to deserve or benefit from services. PFL has shown that shifting a greater portion of resources to owner support is not only humane for people and pets but the sustainable and reasonable path forward for companion animal welfare.

COST EFFICIENCY OF PROACTIVE PROGRAMMING

Many organizations wonder if it is affordable to start a community outreach program. With reallocation of some resources or reaching out to a new donor base interested in more than sheltering, the PFL approach is not only possible, it's cost-effective. Salt Lake County Animal Services implemented PFL and found that it not only benefits the community in life-saving, sustainable ways, but it costs less than their traditional animal care. After analyzing the shelter's cost per pet, taking into account officer response, veterinary needs, in-shelter care, overhead, supplies, and pet placement, the average cost came in at over \$400. For PFL, the average cost per pet served in Salt Lake City is \$116.

After looking at shelter intake data, it was also apparent that most pets enter their shelter system because their owners have little or no access to basic pet resources. By offering owner support services, pets are being kept in their homes. Animal Services shared this statistical information with community leaders and elected officials to show proactive community engagement reaches a new audience and is an effective form of intake diversion that significantly reduces costs.



Danny Burke



Rachel Thompson

Modernizing Policies

As demographics in the United States continue to change and animal welfare evolves, so must the policies and processes of services providers. National conversations on how community engagement and partnering are more effective approaches than punishment in addressing issues have direct application in animal welfare. There are many ways companion animal work should be more fair and inclusive and where focusing on owner support programming yields results beneficial to people, pets and entire communities.

Return-to-Owner

Shelters will always be necessary safe havens for pets who truly do not have a home, but that is not where the conversation ends. While in recent years more has been done to reunite pets in the system with their families, inflexible policies and expensive fees still leave too many animals branded as “homeless” even when they have an owner. Countless people are faced with the choice of paying exorbitant costs or leaving their pet in the shelter, which for many is no choice at all. Then there are those afraid of reclaiming their pet because of being threatened with citations or criminal charges or treated with suspicion and judgment when entering the shelter.

Still yet are people who simply don't know where to look for their pet because their community is not engaged by the shelter or computer and internet access are not readily available, meaning online postings of picked up animals aren't helpful. Additionally, most viewing hours still exclude evenings and weekends, the only time many people are able to go. As interstate animal transports are becoming prevalent, it is more crucial than ever for organizations to consider the difficulties some pet owners have in redeeming their pets. Transfers to out-of-area shelters after short hold times add even more obstacles for a person to overcome in finding his or her pet.

There is a long-held misconception that redemption fees act as a deterrent to ensure a pet does not end up in the shelter or that they are necessary to offset costs of temporarily housing an animal. Neither is true. A fine is not a deterrent if a person cannot afford to pay it. The idea that a person can prevent an accident from happening or repair a situation that results in a loose pet because there is the potential of a fine is not realistic. Accidents can happen to anyone, and no person should lose his or her pet because of one. The best way to ensure a pet is safely controlled is to provide information and support, not put a solution further out of reach. Returning a pet home as quickly as possible or incorporating field returns where a pet never enters the shelter to begin with can save money. The cost of continuing to house and find new homes for animals will almost always surpass that of what would be charged in redemption fees, especially when considering how many pets could go home if money was not a barrier. Eliminating RTO charges also goes a long way in building trust and rapport with the community, which in the end is better for the shelter, people and pets. An important perspective of which to actively be aware is that all too often the policies organizations enact drastically and disproportionately impact people living in poverty, and it is essential to view policies through an equitable lens.

RETURN-TO-OWNERS SAVES LIVES

Nigeria reached out to the PFL team just before Thanksgiving. Her dogs, Zombina and Big Mama, had been seized by animal care and control after escaping the yard and accused of being dangerous by an upset neighbor. While the claim was inaccurate, a man in the neighborhood unfortunately had an accident while working in his yard around the same time and the authorities assumed the two incidents were related.

Nigeria couldn't afford the fees and had been told her dogs would be euthanized. PFL was able to connect her with an attorney willing to provide pro bono services to contest the dangerous dog declaration and the charges were successfully overturned. PFL negotiated reduced fees, covered the cost and made repairs to her fence so the dogs would be safely confined and cleared to return home.

On her own Nigeria did not have the information or experience to push back against an intimidating and difficult system. After six weeks of stress and worry for Nigeria and the dogs taking up space at the shelter, Zombina and Big Mama went home two days before Christmas. Nigeria told the PFL team that getting the dogs back where they belong was the best Christmas present ever.



Elyse Cannon Photography



Humane Society of Charlotte



Dan Krosse

o Medical Care for Owned Animals

For people in underserved communities, access to veterinary care is a major challenge. Pet owners living below poverty are all too aware of the limited options available if their pet becomes injured or sick. What an excruciating experience when this happens and people reach out to local animal services for assistance only to be told their pet can be provided medical care as long they relinquish them. When people surrender their dogs and cats to ensure they receive veterinary care, the result is a tragic separation of a person and their companion as well as the cost of another pet entering the shelter system in addition to the medical treatment needed. Simple math shows the cost of providing medical care in the home the pet already has is cheaper than medical treatment plus rehoming. The pet avoiding the stress of a shelter environment and a difficult transition is priceless. While it is necessary to have guidelines and set limits for what medical services can and cannot be provided for the sake of long-term financial sustainability, providing medical care to owned pets and allowing them to stay in their homes reduces shelter intake, saves money and is the most humane outcome.

“There is a saying that “you don’t know what you don’t know”. You never truly realize the impact that the Pets for Life program has on a community until you do it. You can’t know the pets that never reach your door or the ones for which you’ve never been a resource. The pet owners we serve truly love their pets but lack access to the veterinary care they need. At Second Chance we have fully embraced PFL, establishing one of our veterinary clinics within the PFL focus area in order to provide full veterinary services at subsidized rates so that no pet goes without medical care.”

**SHERYL BLANCATO | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SECOND CHANCE ANIMAL | WORCESTER, MA**



Joe Blancato Sr.

NOT JUST A SPAY/NEUTER PROGRAM

Winters in Idaho, where PFL operates in an extremely rural community, can be harsh. So an elderly couple loaded up Cookie, their beloved 9-year-old dog, into their old RV and headed south to Arizona and warmer weather as heating their home during the long, cold months had become unaffordable.

The PFL team has known Cookie and her people for a couple of years, routinely providing the valuable service of nail trimming.

While away for the winter, Cookie’s leg became very swollen and necrotic. After seeing two veterinarians and being told by both that a surgery they couldn’t afford was needed, the couple called PFL to ask for help. The PFL team in Idaho reached out to others in the PFL family around the country and a veterinarian who would provide an affordable option to the program was found in Arizona. Cookie’s owners were so excited. They immediately drove 3 hours to the veterinarian, parking their RV in a grocery store parking lot overnight. The surgery was a success and by the next day Cookie wanted to go for walks.

Relationships built through PFL may start with something as simple as a friendly “hello” and a nail trim, but a deeper impact becomes clear when people have someone they can count on to remove barriers and create options when they seemingly don’t exist.



Animal Shelter of the Wood River Valley

o Cruelty and Neglect

The animal welfare field has been discussing and treating the issue of animal cruelty and neglect the same way for decades, and it's time to take a serious look at the accuracy of this perspective as well as the effectiveness of the approach. While institutional and large scale cruelty situations do exist, what has traditionally been labeled as animal cruelty in individual situations is almost always an issue of access to services or need for financial assistance. The distinction is important in order to move animal welfare away from criminalizing and demonizing pet owners who are faced with socio-economic and geographic challenges to a place where compassion and aid are offered in order to keep pets in their loving homes. All too often underserved neighborhoods are stigmatized as places where cruelty is prevalent. Stereotyping entire communities of pet owners creates an "us versus them" mindset that furthers the trust gap between service providers and the community as well as perpetuates harmful and insensitive myths. By focusing on support instead of punishment, animal control and humane law enforcement agencies can become a resource instead of an enemy. Under a system that has repeatedly labeled people living in poverty as bad pet owners, made access to care close to impossible and created laws disproportionately applied in lower income areas, far too many pets have been removed from loving families and far too many people have been wrongfully labeled abusive. Recognizing the barriers to services that exist for many pet owners and taking a deeper look at imbalances in the system is not only the right thing to do but also the way to achieve long-term, sustainable change.

Animal welfare is an industry of compassion and care, and policies that divide should no longer have a place. Companion animals are companions to people and policies should reflect a desire and goal to keep families and their pets together.

RETHINKING THE DEFINITION OF CRUELTY AND NEGLECT

Roman, known as "Cowboy" to everyone in the neighborhood, was outgoing and friendly when the PFL team first met him. Although there were signs of multiple dogs around the old tire shop where he lives, he only introduced the team to one small dog he calls Mamma. After a few weeks of visits he began to trust the team more and introduced Cocoa. Even though he was very hesitant and warned that she didn't look good, he wanted help for Cocoa as he had tried everything at his disposal to make her better. He was uncertain of how the PFL team would react, afraid he would be judged or Cocoa would be taken from him. In most cases he would have been right, the majority of animal welfare groups would require Cocoa be signed over to them in order to provide medical treatment or worse yet, he would be punished with fines and citations for not providing adequate medical care. But not with Pets for Life.

As soon as Roman brought Cocoa out it was clear that she had mange. The team explained that her condition was very treatable with the right prescription medication. PFL scheduled a veterinary appointment, provided transportation since Roman does not have a car and covered the cost of the exam and treatment. With that Roman produced a third dog, Ace, who also had a severe case of mange. Roman shared how he had been ashamed he had not been able to make his dogs better but how much he loved them and what positivity they brought to his life. All of Roman's dogs are now the picture of health and he is so proud showing them off in the neighborhood! No punishment or rehoming was needed, just support. Roman, Mamma, Cocoa and Ace will have each other for a long time to come.



Andres Salazar



Andres Salazar



Evelyn Albertson

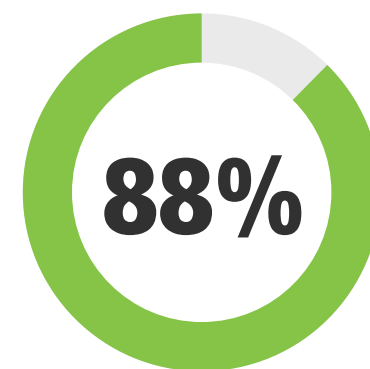
METRICS & RESULTS

Pets for Life has long been a champion of going beyond the shelter walls to not only consider the community perspective but also collect and analyze data, measuring programmatic impact with the entire community considered and included.

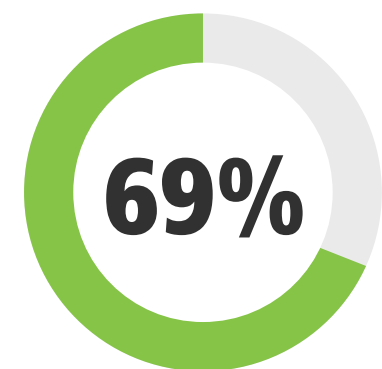
All PFL teams across the country collect the same information in all locations from the people and pets served, resulting in a standardized data set that offers a strong representation of what it means to be a pet owner living in poverty. PFL programs operate in a wide variety of community types with diverse populations such as urban, rural and Native American reservations. The positive impact is evident and consistent from one community to the next.

The importance of community outreach and focusing attention on underserved areas is clear when looking at the status of pets when first met by PFL. Of all the pets met, 88% were unaltered when met and 69% had never before seen a veterinarian. While unfortunate, this stark reality is not surprising when considering the areas of focus lack access to veterinarians. Most have zero veterinary offices and not only is there a considerable distance to be traveled to see a veterinarian but pet owners in the focus areas do not receive communication on pet wellness care. These staggering statistics are due to a lack of accessible services, not a lack of interest or desire from pet owners.

PETS UNALTERED WHEN MET



PETS HAVE NOT SEEN VETERINARIAN

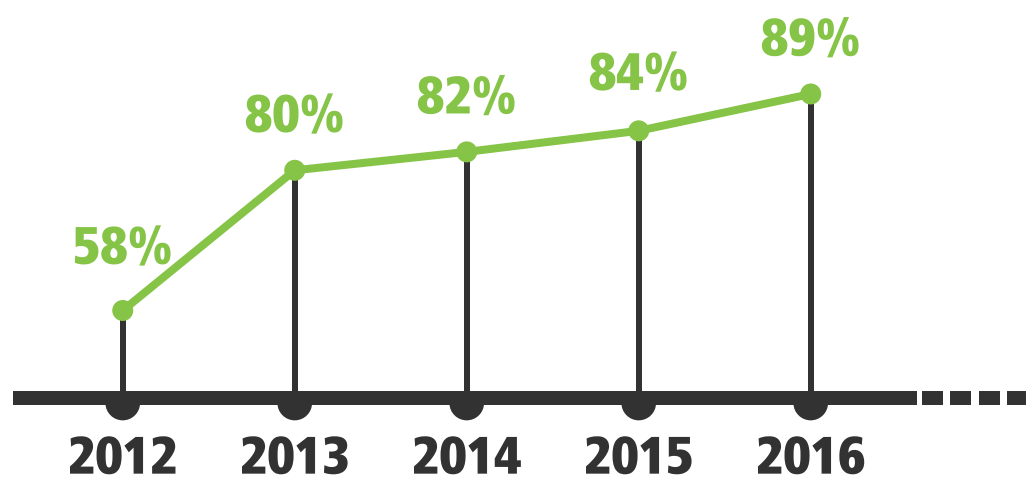




Rachel Delaney

The program conversion rate showcases how remarkable results are achieved when people are engaged positively and both financial and geographic barriers are removed. The conversion rate is the number of pets spayed or neutered out of all the unaltered pets met. The conversion rate for the entire program to date is 74%. This represents the core cities starting in 2012, mentorship groups beginning in 2013 and continuing to the present, organizations just now finishing their first year of the program and others at various intervals in between. In looking at individual communities, the conversion rate improves consistently with each year of operation. For the four core markets having carried out the program since its inception, the conversion rate is 79% for the combined five years. At the end of 2012, 58% of unaltered pets met were spayed or neutered through the program, and by the end of 2016, 89% of unaltered pets met were subsequently altered. The annual growth occurs because over time, familiarity with spay and neuter increases, there is greater community buy-in and confidence in PFL as a reliable service provider flourishes. The program accepts the responsibility of addressing challenges like cost and transportation. All surgeries are free and offering transportation to and from appointments both ensures high completion rates and shows the community the deep investment of the program. These results make an undeniable case for what can be accomplished by working with the community and nurturing long-term relationships. When access to spay/neuter is offered, people in underserved communities choose to alter their pets at high rates, proving wrong the long-held misconception that this segment of pet owners are opposed to the procedure.

CONVERSION RATE INCREASE PER YEAR



PEOPLE ARE MORE ALIKE THAN DIFFERENT



Jason Schipkowski

Time and again PFL has shown that in underserved communities, high unaltered rates in pets are not due to residents being adverse to spay and neuter. Regardless of the environment or the culture, the vast majority of people want this service but live in a resource desert where access is intermittent or non-existent.

On Blackfeet Nation, a Native American reservation in Montana, PFL serves a community where over 95% of pets are unaltered when first met. While some assume this is because spay/neuter is not a priority, PFL has shown this is not true. Over two years, nearly 80% of unaltered pets met have been altered through the program, proving that when access is created and people are engaged in a consistent, positive way, most choose to spay/neuter the same as anywhere else.

Spay/neuter, wellness care, and supplies have been offered to people during weekly door-to-door outreach and provided through high-volume, weekend clinics and a close by veterinarian. While the direct care services are vital, what is just as important is recognizing the immense bond between people and their pets regardless of where they live. This has been exemplified over and over again at the clinics where pet owners stay with their pet throughout the entire process, providing comfort to their dog or cat from the minute they walk into the doors of the elementary school where the clinic is set up until their pet is fully awake from the anesthesia. The love and care has been tangible, a theme throughout every PFL community, continuously transcending geography, race, ethnicity or socio-economic status.



Ashley Mutch



Jason Schipkowski



Lacey Daniels

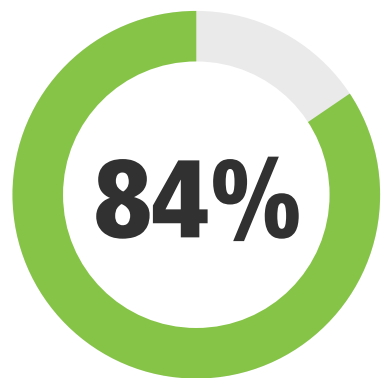


Animal Rescue League of Iowa

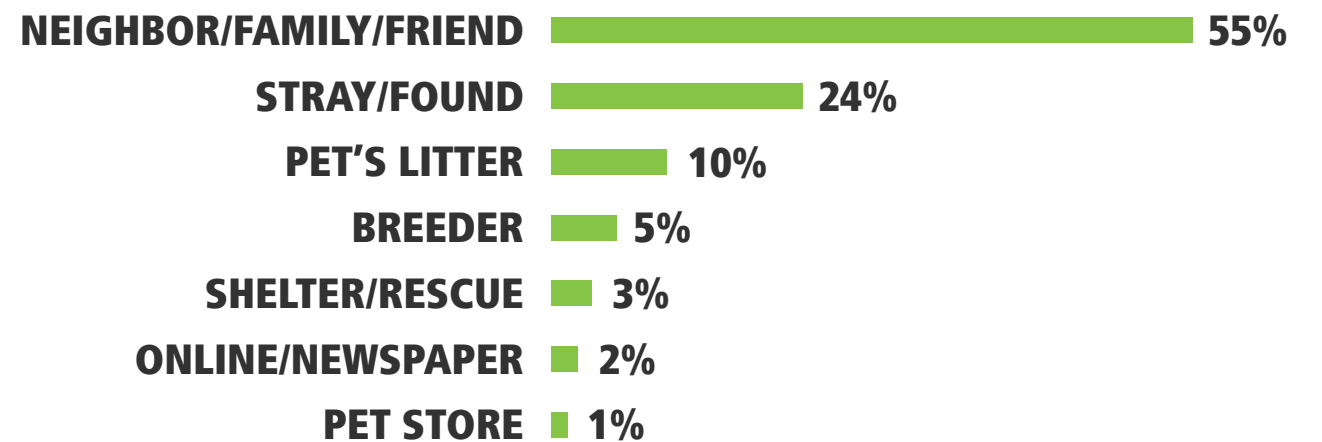
Two other figures are important for service providers to know and understand – the percentage of pet owners who have never contacted their local animal shelter or service agency and from where people acquire their pets. With 84% of pet owners met never having reached out to the local shelter or animal control and 89% of pets coming from within the focus area, these indicators show an extreme lack of engagement between animal welfare service providers and the community.

There are many reasons for connection deficiency. A large majority of people do not know the agencies exist as a potential resource because information is simply not being shared in an effective way with the community's perspective in mind. Some people are apprehensive to reach out for fear of unfavorable outcomes, such as having their pet confiscated or being criticized for not having the resources to provide medical care. The need to build trust and reach out to underserved communities is also evident in the fact that only 3% of pets come from a shelter or rescue organization. The majority of people are taking in pets from neighbors in need or caring for those without homes, showing that many are natural rescuers and care deeply about pets in their community. In many ways, significant opportunities are missed by not engaging communities in a comprehensive way.

NEVER CONTACTED ANIMAL SERVICES



PET ACQUISITION



"In the past we have spent a tremendous amount of energy taking pets out of homes and finding them new ones. Our energy is better spent pulling up a chair and spending the time to talk to those that are less fortunate in our communities. What we will find is that pets are already in loving homes with loving families. And with a fraction of the effort we can help keep families together instead of tearing them apart."

**ALDWIN ROMAN, CAWA | DIRECTOR, ANTI-CRUELTY & OUTREACH
CHARLESTON ANIMAL SOCIETY | CHARLESTON, SC**



Steven McCabe



Jason Schipkowski

While spay/neuter is important, the program is holistic, providing more than just free spay/neuter surgeries. In order to fully serve the community, medical care, supplies and other forms of support are also given. While spay/neuter addresses overall industry concerns, there is value in providing a variety of medical services in response to concerns from individual pet owners. General wellness care ultimately has a greater impact on the immediate health and happiness of a pet. There are times where a simple dose of flea/tick medication relieves intense discomfort of a dog or providing a litter box and litter transitions a cat indoors.

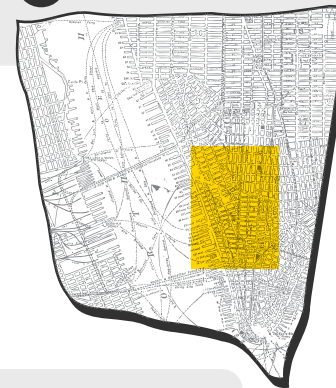
Procedural assistance may be the most life-saving of all support offered by the program. Covering Return-to-Owner fees to reunite people with their pets or serving as an advocate for a pet owner when a landlord issue arises keeps families together. These results are toughest to measure but some of the most vital services PFL provides.

When services and support are offered consistently to a specific focus area for an extended amount of time, a shift happens in the community. The level of connection that is cultivated becomes transformative and results are magnified and sustained through positive word of mouth. Clients tell their neighbors, family and friends about the benefits of spay/neuter and about the affirming experience they had with PFL. People who have been isolated from services gain information about resources that exist for their pets and view PFL as an uninterrupted resource, sustaining the long-term impact of the program.

PFL migrates over time throughout focus areas, maintaining relationships with current clients and pets while continuously meeting new ones and responding to increased referrals, never truly leaving an area because as long as poverty exists, the program approach and subsidized services will be needed.

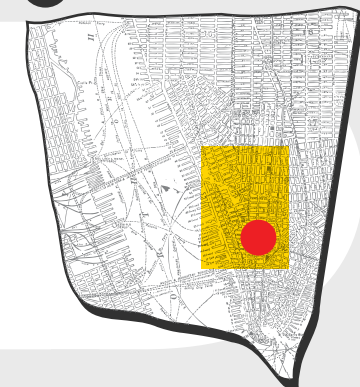
TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE THROUGH THE PETS FOR LIFE OUTREACH APPROACH

1 DEFINING THE FOCUS AREA



A comprehensive community assessment is done to identify the area with the greatest need.

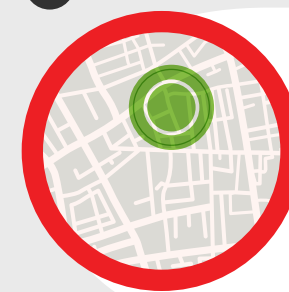
2 LOCATING THE "HOT SPOT"



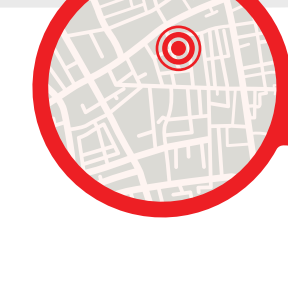
After a deeper dive into the focus area, a spot with a high concentration of people and pets is chosen where the strategic door-to-door outreach work will begin.

The outreach work spreads in a systematic way, radiating out from the first door and hitting every household. This proactive approach ensures everyone is engaged and no person or pet is overlooked.

4 LOCKING THE BLOCK



3 KNOCKING ON THE FIRST DOOR



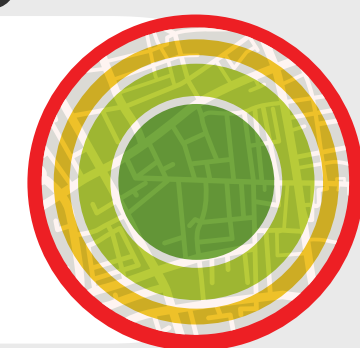
All the planning and preparation has come down to this - knocking on the first door... time to build relationships!

5 BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, WORD OF MOUTH SPREADS

Awareness of Pets For Life spreads throughout the focus area. Clients are reached proactively door-to-door and served reactively in response to word of mouth from the entire focus area.

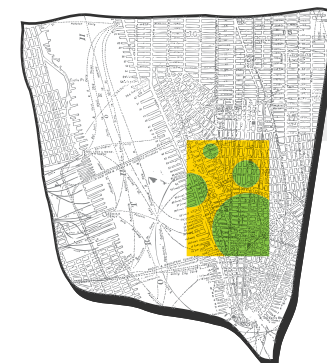


6 SATURATING OVER TIME, CONTINUED SUPPORT



Sustained impact is achieved only with a steady presence over time. New people and pets are constantly met through proactive and reactive outreach, while existing clients are supported.

7 SPREADING THROUGHOUT THE FOCUS AREA



Outreach flows and migrates systematically through the focus area. It takes many years to reach full coverage, and the need for maintenance will remain as long as poverty exists.



Andy Tanguay

CALL TO ACTION

The comfort received from and bond with a companion animal is a commonality shared among the vast majority of people. Unfortunately, what is also commonplace is alarmingly unequal access to pet care resources. With approximately 45 million people living in poverty within the United States, resource deserts exist in most areas, and within those communities there are also tens of millions of pets.

The goal of Pets for Life is to act as a bridge to the services people want and need for their pets and to be a catalyst for widespread availability of veterinary care, supplies and information. More and more organizations are awakening to the critical need for community-based, owner-support programs and implementing the PFL model in their communities. Across the country, an increased understanding of the barriers people living in poverty face on a daily basis is occurring as well as the role animal welfare professionals play in bringing resources to underserved areas. In order to serve pets and people comprehensively and to be considerate of everyone, a major philosophical and strategic adjustment from the entire field is required.

To not factor the challenges pet owners face in underserved communities into the animal welfare mission is to overlook a crucial aspect of the work and to operate in a bubble. PFL is not only generating positive outcomes for people and pets by providing long-term, sustainable direct care services, but the program's distinctive methodology is creating a fundamental shift in industry philosophy and policy, resulting in a more just and inclusive approach to animal welfare work.

For more information on how to start your own community outreach program or implement pieces of the PFL approach into your existing work, visit www.humanesociety.org/pfl-toolkit. The PFL toolkit provides step-by-step information to guide you through the process.





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