



Inaugural Mobile Spay/Neuter Clinic a Huge Success Next Tacoma Mobile Clinic August 11 & 12

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TACOMA, WASH. – Pierce County now has 62 fewer dogs and cats contributing to pet overpopulation thanks to a mobile spay/neuter clinic, which rolled into the county for the first time the weekend of July 14 and 15. The mobile spay/neuter clinic will be coming to Pierce County the second weekend of each month through December with the next Tacoma dates being Aug. 11 and 12.

In a short period of seven hours, a licensed veterinarian and two assistants performed approximately 30 spay/neuter surgeries each day during the inaugural weekend in a fully contained surgical unit parked in the Safeway parking lot at South 38 and 'M' streets.

These surgeries were done at no cost to pet owners who could prove public assistance, and at low cost to all others. The project was orchestrated by the Dugan Foundation and funded by a dedicated team consisting of the Dugan Foundation, the city of Tacoma, the Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County, Pierce County and Pasado's Safe Haven, and Protect Adoptable Labs

Owners and their companion pets began lining up in the parking lot shortly after 5 a.m. both days July 14 and 15, according to Elliot Weiner, project manager for the mobile spay/neuter clinic. Susan Burk, strategic manager with Pasado's Safe Haven who provided the mobile clinic to the Dugan Foundation, stated "The Spay Station is the Northwest's only mobile 'big rig' state-of-the-art pet sterilization clinic. Our Spay Station has performed over 20,000 spay/neuters, most of them free-of-charge." Pasado's Safe Haven also uses the clinic in times of natural disaster when animals are in need and power and water are not available.

Some local residents went to extremes not to miss the opportunity to get free or low-cost spay/neuter surgeries for their pets right in their neighborhood. For example, the Stottlemeyers were concerned they wouldn't be able to come, as Rebecca Stottlemeyer's baby was due July 15. However, little Carol decided to help out and arrived a week early. The three generations of Stottlemeyers,

including proud grandmother, also named Carol, came out before 6 a.m. July 14 to get two female cats fixed, Tehallah and Indiana. The Stottlemeyers, residents of Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood, saw the listing on Craig's List and jumped at the chance. "I really appreciate what they're doing," Carol Stottlemeyers said, noting she hadn't been able to get her domestic, short-haired alley cats fixed.

That fact was echoed by Janis Flauding, another Tacoma resident. "It's expensive to get it done and sad when you have pets and can't afford the surgeries," she said. "You really need to get it done in order to be a responsible pet owner." Tears filled the eyes of Flauding's daughter, Zoe, as their five-year-old miniature dachshund was carried into the van for surgery. All were reunited later that same day, as pets and their people companions came together following the successful surgeries.

Carol Stottlemeyer's daughter, Rebecca, said bringing a mobile/spay neuter clinic to Tacoma was a "very good idea as Tacoma needs the help."

Pierce County has one of the highest shelter volumes and animal euthanasia rates in the state of Washington. The goal of the animal welfare nonprofit, the Dugan Foundation, is to create a no-kill community by 2010. "We're so overpopulated," Flauding said. "People who are responsible need to get their animals fixed."

The pet owners who came out July 14 and 15 were very appreciative. "I was incredibly grateful it didn't cost anything," Flauding said. "I think it's really important to have a place like this to get surgeries done at low to no cost."

The mobile spay/neuter project recently received notification of a successful grant application, which will provide \$25,000 for future growth of the program in Pierce County.

In addition to creating a proactive approach to the animal overpopulation problem in Pierce County, the mobile/spay neuter clinic also saved the lives of two cats, as the veterinarian was able to detect a potentially fatal uterus infection. This illness known as pyometra, according to Weiner, could eventually cause death in those cats if it remained untreated. "Saving those cats' lives was very rewarding to us all, and we also helped save future animal lives," he said.

Residents are encouraged to arrive at the mobile spay/neuter clinic early to ensure a slot, and volunteers and donations are currently being sought. For more information, visit www.duganfoundation.org.

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