

## BECOMING A NO-KILL COMMUNITY: THE IMPORTANCE OF SPAY/NEUTER

### STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

In 2006, San Antonio had the third largest euthanasia rate of pets per capita in the country, with more than 50,000 euthanized annually. Less than 10% of the dogs and cats impounded at the City of San Antonio's Animal Care Services (ACS) shelter made it out alive via adoption, transfer to rescue groups or returned to owners (collectively known as "live release").

In 2006, ACS created a strategic plan to become a No-Kill community. A significant component of this movement was an effort to decrease the population at animal shelters by increasing the volume of spay/neuter surgeries performed.

### WHY IS SPAY NEUTER IMPORTANT?

Spay/neuter is a simple solution to the complex problem of the euthanasia. Stated simply, sterilizing cats and dogs means fewer animals crowding shelters, and fewer animals ultimately being euthanized. Reducing strain on shelter systems also allows them to devote more resources to each animal, thereby increasing each animal's chance to survive.

- It stops unwanted litters of kittens and puppies. This reduces companion animal overpopulation; therefore, the number of dogs and cats surrendered to shelters or intentionally abandoned is dramatically reduced.
- It makes the community a better place. Stray animals can easily become a public nuisance, soiling parks and streets, ruining shrubbery, frightening children and elderly people, creating noise and other disturbances, causing automobile accidents, and sometimes even killing livestock or other pets.
- It saves the community money. The capture, impoundment and eventual destruction of unwanted animals costs taxpayers and private humanitarian agencies over a billion dollars each year. Preventing the births of unwanted animals makes these public burdens unnecessary.
- Trap-Neuter-Return humanely reduces feral cat overpopulation. In fact, it is the only proven method to reduce feral and community cat populations.
- Sterilizing makes a better pet. Spay/Neuter:
  - Reduces the pet's urge to roam. As many as 85% of dogs hit by cars are unaltered.
  - Increases the pet's chance of a longer and healthier life. Altering a dog will increase his life an average of 1-to-3 years; felines, 3-to-5 years.
  - Reduces or eliminates annoying spraying and marking
  - Decreases aggressive behavior, including dog bites. 84% of dog bites are from unaltered males.

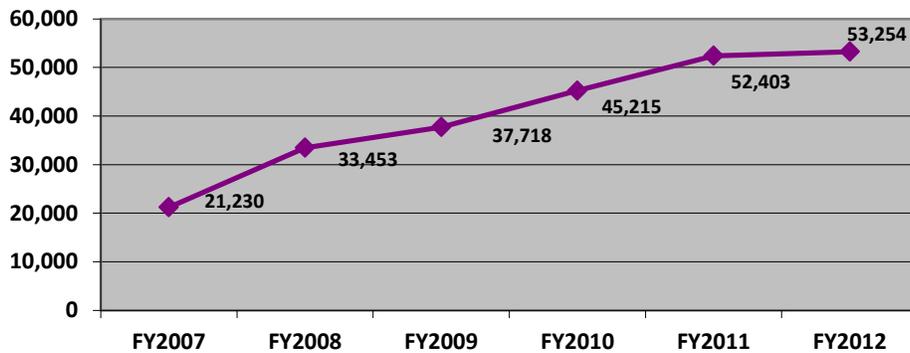
### SPAY NEUTER IN SAN ANTONIO

In 1997, several local nonprofit animal welfare groups, the City of San Antonio, and the local Veterinary Association created the Gladys Harborth Animal Resource Center, now doing business as SpaySA. This was unique at the time. These partners realized the need to create a low-cost spay/neuter clinic in an area of town that accounted for many of the strays entering local shelters.

Since that time:

- The capacity to conduct high-volume, low-cost surgeries in San Antonio has increased from 17,000 to 65,500 when all clinics operate at full capacity.
- The number of spay/neuter surgeries performed annually has more than doubled as shown in the following table.

### Number of High-Volume, Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Surgeries in Bexar County



*Note: This data is for high volume clinics only: ACS, ADL, HCAL, SAHS, SNAP, SpaySA and SNIPSA MASH clinics.*

In late 2013, the City-owned Petco Spay/Neuter Clinic at Brackenridge Park will expand the capacity for an additional 10,000 surgeries annually. In 2006, SpaySA performed 8,800 surgeries. Another 20,000 estimated surgeries are performed by private veterinary clinics each year.

### SAN ANTONIO AREA FOUNDATION NO-KILL INITIATIVE

The San Antonio Area Foundation is committed to helping San Antonio become a No-Kill community. In 2006, the Area Foundation Board of Directors voted to establish a No-Kill program office. From 2007 to 2012, the Area Foundation provided over \$1.75M for educational materials, awareness and adoption events, and coordination of No-Kill activities around the city and Bexar County. In addition, the Area Foundation has made over \$3M in grants to animal welfare nonprofit agencies for No-Kill related projects; and \$1.3M was specifically for spay/neuter projects. From 2007–2012, the Area Foundation has attracted over \$1M from corporate and private donors to help fund the program office activities and to provide spay/neuter grants.

### LOCAL AGENCIES PROVIDING SPAY/NEUTER PROGRAMS:

Spay/Neuter Clinics:

- Animal Defense League of Texas – <http://www.adltexas.org>
- City of San Antonio Animal Care Services -- <http://www.sanantonio.gov/animalcare>
- Hill Country Animal League -- <http://hcaltx.com>
- San Antonio Humane Society -- <http://www.sahumane.org>
- Spay-Neuter Assistance Program (SNAP) -- <http://www.snapus.org>
- Spay Neuter Inject Protect San Antonio (SNIPSA) -- <http://www.snipsa.org>
- SpaySA -- <http://www.spaysa.org>

Animal Welfare Organizations that facilitate public spay/neuter surgeries:

- Alamo Area Partners for Animal Welfare (AAPAW) -- <http://www.aapaw.org>
- Helotes Humane Society -- <http://www.hhsanimals.org>
- Homes for Pets/Schertz Humane Society -- <http://www.homesforpets.org>

Feral/Community Cat Trap-Neuter-Release Programs:

- San Antonio Feral Cat Coalition – <http://www.sanantonioferalcats.org>

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Best Friends Animal Society Resource Library available at: <http://www.bestfriends.org/Resources/No-Kill-Resources/>

City of San Antonio – Animal Care Services Report to the Animal Care Services Advisory Board on Fiscal Year 2012 Goals, Strategies and Initiatives available at:  
[http://www.sanantonio.gov/animalcare/forms/Docs/ACS%20Strategic%20Plan\\_2011.pdf](http://www.sanantonio.gov/animalcare/forms/Docs/ACS%20Strategic%20Plan_2011.pdf)

Maddie’s Fund Resource Library available at: [http://www.maddiesfund.org/Resource\\_Library.html](http://www.maddiesfund.org/Resource_Library.html)

North Shore Animal League America’s Spay USA available at: <http://spayusa.org>

Talk About it! San Antonio - <http://talkaboutitsa.org>

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## References

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ASPCA, “Pet Statistics,” <http://www.aspc.org/about-us/faq/pet-statistics.aspx> (accessed February 6, 2013).

The American Veterinary Medical Association, “AVMA Collections: Spay/Neuter,” <https://www.avma.org/News/Journals/Collections/Pages/AVMA-Collections-Spay-Neuter-Summary.aspx> (accessed February 14, 2013).

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The Humane Society of the United States, “Pet Overpopulation,” [http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/pet\\_overpopulation/](http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/pet_overpopulation/) (accessed February 5, 2013).

No Kill Advocacy Center, “Dollars & Sense: The Economic Benefits of No Kill Animal Control,” <http://www.nokilladvocacycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/econbenefits.pdf> (accessed February 5, 2013).

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PETA, “Companion Animal Overpopulation,” <http://www.peta.org/issues/companion-animals/overpopulation.aspx> (accessed February 1, 2013).

Spay Texas, “Benefits of Spaying/Neutering,” <http://www.spaytexas.org> (accessed February 14, 2013).