



Maddie's® Spay/Neuter Project in Dane County Year One Annual Report 2008-09

Summary

The original goal for Year 1 of the *Maddie's® Spay/Neuter Project* was 1250 total surgeries. It was anticipated that private clinics would complete approximately 800 while the non-profit participants would complete the other 450 surgeries. At the end of Year 1, participants had completed 1,842 surgeries, 592 surgeries above goal. This is in part to inviting additional private practices to partner in the project, and all clinics performing more surgeries as they became more comfortable with the requirements of reporting and getting reimbursements. Also, as publicity and word-of-mouth has reached increasing numbers of people in Dane County the non-profit clinics experienced additional growth in demand for services. It is anticipated that we will reach the overall goal of 4,123 surgeries by the end of Year 2.

Dane County Friends of Ferals

History

Since 2005, Dane County Friends of Ferals has organized and conducted monthly 'Spay Days' to sterilize outdoor cats belonging to rural property owners and DCFOF program cats. On average, we have enough supplies, volunteers, and volunteer veterinarians to spay and neuter approximately 40 cats on this day.

Progress

Excluding August, DCFOF continued to increase the number of sterilizations for Dane County outdoor cats July through December 2008 (Figure 1). The winter months tend to be slower for surgeries as it is more difficult to provide a warm location for surgery recovery. Property owners contact DCFOF because there are limited resources available to them for handling of feral cats. DCFOF services are limited to approximately 40 cats per month; therefore, DCFOF refers several Dane County TNR clients to other Maddie's partners throughout each month. DCFOF tracks all the people they have assisted with TNR, and who have been referred to other clinics. These include situations where DCFOF provided traps, trapping assistance, and cat transportation help when needed. DCFOF distributes traps to volunteers across Dane County, and continues its unofficial network to loan out traps to property owners who need TNR services. In addition to monthly spay days, they assisted with the TNR of 312 Dane County cats by referring 230 of these surgeries to SFTS, and the others to DCHS and participating private vet clinics.

DCFOF observed an increase in out of county cat TNR in the last 6 months of Year 1. It seems this increase is in large part due to referring Dane County clients to SFTS or others who could do surgeries sooner, rather than waiting for the DCFOF once a month opportunity. DCFOF provided S/N services for 136 feral cats and received \$8,440 from the Maddie's Spay Neuter project in Year 1.

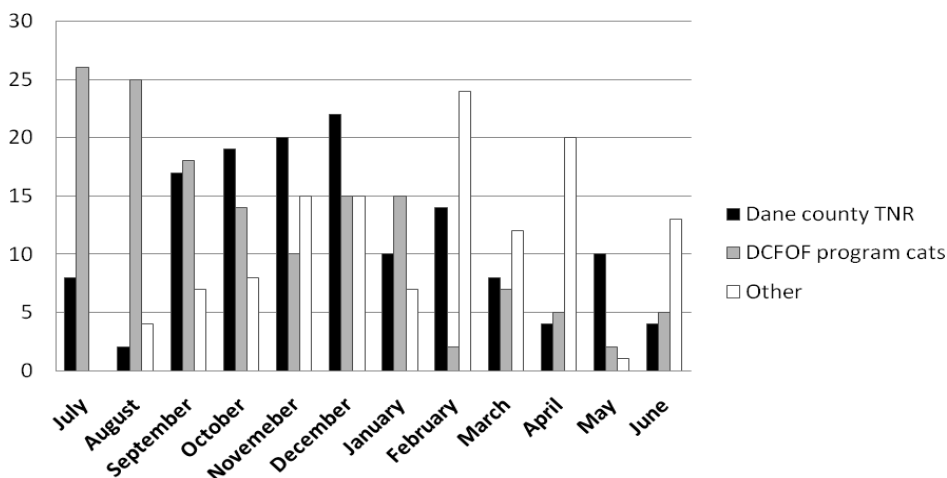


Figure 1: The number of surgeries performed at the DCFOF monthly 'Spay-Day'. The surgeries are identified as either a Dane County TNR cat or a DCFOF program cat. The category 'other' includes primarily out of county feral cats.

Publicity

At the beginning of the *Maddie's® Spay/Neuter Project*, DCFOF publicized via their website including posted the dates of spay days and contact information for the public to schedule surgery. They continue to promote Maddie's Fund, but no longer post specific spay dates. This decision was due to the public bringing in unscheduled cats without contacting DCFOF in advance. In the second 6 months, DCFOF did not initiate other publicity because they already turn away people who need TNR. There is more demand for services than what DCFOF can provide given their resources. In turn, they do refer these surgeries to other participating partners.

Challenges

DCFOF continues to be contacted by many community members who, because of age or disability, cannot bring their cats in for surgery. They strive to allocate volunteer resources to those situations that seem most in need of assistance. Volunteers offer to pick up and return the cats and are not always able to get a photocopy of the owners' drivers' license. Halfway through Year 1, Maddie's Fund approved volunteers making a handwritten copy of the information in lieu of getting a photocopy to alleviate this problem.

The issue of owners' presenting a drivers license is definitely a challenge in trailer parks, truck stops, and neighborhoods where residents are feeding colonies of cats and would like them to stop reproducing, but they do not want to identify themselves as managing the feral colony. Sometimes a volunteer who is helping trap or transport the cats will offer to identify themselves as an 'owner', however DCFOF is uncomfortable with this and feels it is misleading to Maddie's and not a solution. DCFOF attempts to identify owners for farm cats, and rural residents with outdoor pets, but many true feral cat colonies do not have 'owners'.

Shelter from the Storm

History

On July 1, 2008 Shelter from the Storm opened Spay Me, a high volume, high quality, low cost spay/neuter clinic. They began by operating 2 days a week, but due to demand now open their doors 4 days a week and 2 Saturdays a month. SFTS continues to perform approximately 35-40 surgeries each day with the help of two veterinarians. Shelter services are open to the public, as well as other shelters and rescues. SFTS's surgery schedule continually fills a week in advance. They have noted an increase in low income clients and an increase in relatively large outdoor cat colonies in the last 6 months. SFTS averaged approximately 80 surgeries per month since January 2009. SFTS has met their goal of becoming a major resource for the public in need of affordable spay and neuter services for both indoor and outdoor pets.

Progress

SFTS has been paid \$53,365 and performed 927 surgeries in Year 1 of the *Maddie's® Spay/Neuter Project*. The grant funds have been used to buy additional equipment for our spay/neuter clinic allowing them to double their capacity every day. They have hired new staff to help accommodate the increased need for spays/neuters services, including two veterinarians, a certified veterinarian technician, and a technician assistant. Subsidies are used to subscribe to Humane Solutions, a spay/neuter data management program, which has greatly assisted with accurate record keeping.

Publicity

SFTS has advertised the *Maddie's® Spay/Neuter Project* allowing free spays and neuters for outdoor cats in Dane County on flyers and on the shelter website. They have advertised at local food pantries, liquor stores, gas stations and human services. In spring, SFTS implemented an advertising campaign to get cats into our clinic to be spay/neutered before going into heat. This included a booth at the 2009 Pet Expo. The increased numbers of spay/neuter surgeries March through June 2009 indicate this campaign was successful. SFTS attributes the majority of their success to the stability of their clinic, clients having a positive experience, and word of mouth. Informal surveys of clients indicate they heard about SFTS from other clients.

Dane County Humane Society

History

Through continuously evolving services to the public DCHS has made extensive efforts to design affordable, high-volume spay/neuter services for the public. The main program is SNAP, a Spay and Neuter Assistance Program offering services Monday-Thursday from March 1 to November 30th. Through SNAP anyone may schedule a spay or neuter surgery at DCHS for their companion or feral cats, as well as pit bull or pit bull mix dogs. The beginning of *Maddie's[®] Spay/Neuter Project* in July was a valuable augmentation of these services, and demand for scheduled slots initially skyrocketed and remained steady throughout Year 1.

The DCHS spay/neuter coordinator position remained unfilled until October, which slowed the development of special spay/neuter events or issuing press releases at the beginning of the grant. Amy Tomkiewicz was hired in October and took great initiative in working to reach out to feral cat caretakers and low-income residents of Dane County. One of her first actions was to update DCHS brochures for all S/N programs, and include information about the grant and eligibility for free services. She also made much-needed updates to the web page on our site detailing S/N services at DCHS. Because DCHS does not offer feral spay/neuter services from November 30 to March 1 Amy organized an all Maddie's[®], all feral cat spay/neuter event on October 29 that served about 30 animals.

Progress

DCHS served 619 animals under *Maddie's[®] Spay/Neuter Project* in Year 1, which is approximately 11% of the total number of animals (5791) that were spayed or neutered within our shelter or through our Shelter Outreach Services (SOS) program.

Publicity

In an effort to increase DCHS' outreach to low-income cat owners Amy visited Dane County Human Services and made great connections with the staff there. Information was made available for distribution to participants in the Quest/Forward card programs in Dane County. In the spring, Amy attended the Stoughton County Fair a precursor to the Dane County fair to promote the spay/neuter project.

Private Practice Veterinary Partners

History

There was a very slow start to the program for private practice partners. It is unclear what information private clinics had received about the project and within the first few months we discovered that most had little to no understanding of the Project. Becky Rauwald started as the Maddie's[®] Development Assistant in the fall and made extensive connections with Dane County clinics and physicians. Through her efforts a total of 18 private veterinary clinics are participating in Maddie's[®] Project and only 2 clinics have dropped completely. Of these 18 clinics only four did not complete at least one qualifying surgery in Year 1.

Progress

September was the first month that every clinic in the Project appeared to understand the details of reporting requirements and getting their subsidy payments. As of June 2009, only four clinics have yet to perform a single qualifying surgery. While the remaining clinics regularly have at least a few surgeries each month, it appears that they are performing primarily discounted services for ferals. Participation in Maddie's[®] Project has enabled these clinics to fulfill that need. The clinics who have done very few to no surgeries in Year 1 are situated within the city of Madison, which might limit the number of feral cat clients they would see. Many clinics are reluctant to extend the low-income services due to the reporting requirements (copy of Quest card), or because they require regular clients to have additional exams, which the clinic cannot charge additional fees for. Overall, there was a dramatic increase in participation between March and June 2009.

Publicity List

(Included as electronic attachments)

Exhibit A- S/N brochures designed for each participant.

Reporting

Throughout Year 1, there were multiple employment changes within the lead agency resulting in some reporting delays, miscommunications among partners, and generally less public awareness of the *Maddie's® Spay/Neuter Project* in Dane County. Jo Withers took over as the Maddie's Fund Grant Coordinator in April 2009 as Becky decided to continue her college studies. Jo will be completing the monthly reporting and payment duties, in addition to tracking budgets and completing other administrative duties. Our goal is to continue to communicate with and encourage private veterinary clinics and our nonprofit partners to participate in the Maddie's® Spay Neuter Project. By the end of Year 1, many participating private clinics indicated more comfort with the reporting requirements and increased public interest in their programs.

Reporting Certification

Dane County Humane Society (DCHS) hereby certifies

- ✓ That DCHS has received and retained in its records , for every spay/neuter surgery for which DCHS provides reimbursement, documentation demonstrating that, in the case of feral cats, the owner/caregiver of the cat receiving the surgery resides in Dane County, and, in the case of cats other than feral cats, that the owner/caregiver of the cat receiving the surgery receives Assistance and resides in Dane County
- ✓ That no reimbursement has been provided for any spay/neuter surgery performed in a city, county, or other jurisdiction that Maddie's Fund, in its sole discretion, has determined to have in force a law or regulation that mandates that the surgery be performed
- ✓ That no reimbursement has been made for any spay/neuter surgery performed 30 days after the date Maddie's Fund has notified DCHS that Maddie's Fund has not received the required data and other information as described in, and in accordance with the time tables specified in the Letter Agreement