



A Rosebud Sioux Tribal elder awaits spay/neuter services for her dog.

Reaching People and Pets On Their Home Turf

This is part one of three in a series of articles on working with low-income publics.

The phone rang one December morning for Ruth Steinberger with an unexpected caller on the end of the line. She listened patiently to a plea for help from a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in rural southwest South Dakota. The tribe member had seen Steinberger's name in a recent article on spay/neuter in their local paper, the *Lakota Country Times*. The request was simple, yet all too common – help us get our pet population under control.

Steinberger recognized that this was not going to be an ordinary spay/neuter project. The Rosebud Sioux Tribe consists of a population of about 25,000 located in an extremely rural and undeveloped area. The community struggles daily in the face of poverty. The majority of the tribe resides in the fourth poorest county in the U.S. And to make matters more difficult, the residents are spread out over five counties with primitive road conditions and little communications infrastructure.

From her experience developing spay/neuter projects in rural Oklahoma, Steinberger knew where to begin. She partnered with the Tribal Health Administration and scheduled regular conference calls. With the important knowledge of the administration representative, they conducted a needs assessment for the community.

The tribe was plagued with dog bites, cruelty cases, attacks on children and stray animals running in packs and killing other pets. They researched the numbers of pets and people, number of bites, the geography, number of people with transportation and without, and who supported the effort.

Overcoming Obstacles

Based on the needs assessment, Steinberger found out that groups had come into the community and done spay/neuter before. However, the small number of surgeries completed previously was never enough to stem the tide of continuous breeding in the community.

The tribe had seen no long-lasting impact and were understandably skeptical about the effectiveness of spay/neuter. What was needed was an effort to tackle the problem on a large enough scale to see sustainable change and reduction of overpopulation.

Reaching every home in the community was a challenge. Not everyone received the local newspaper or had reception for the local radio station. It was very important to have the help and buy-in of people inside the community. For two weeks prior to the spay/neuter clinic, the Tribal Health Administration went door to door to let people know the dates, times and location.

Steinberger also worked with the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Council to enact a resolution endorsing spay/neuter as an acceptable practice in keeping with good stewardship of animals. The tribe believes that animals have a traditional place in the lives of the Lakota people. Respect for animals and life on earth plays a big part in their belief system.

Steinberger then enlisted the partnership of Montana Spay/Neuter Task Force and Arkansas for Animals to help with logistics and conducting the clinic. The project was funded by IFAW, Summerlee Foundation and the ASPCA. In addition, Denver Dumb Friends League and Boulder Humane Society teamed up to accept any unwanted animals. "We did a lot of driving to pick up animals. I put 6,000 miles on the truck throughout the clinic and subsequent transports," recalled Steinberger. The problem of mange had become overwhelming and as a result, mange treatment was included for each dog, which resulted in even more pets being brought in.

The groups set up a MASH-type high-volume spay/neuter clinic. With additional support from PetSmart Charities, over the five-day-clinic, the partnership successfully altered 649 animals. More than 100 pets were relinquished, and not one was euthanized.

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Together We Save Lives

Adoptions through PetSmart Charities® Adoption Centers as of November 11, 2007

3,170,160



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Welcome Aboard

Please welcome Jeannine Alexander, one of PetSmart Charities' newest Program Managers. She will develop, test and implement successful key profile programs that directly impact our animal welfare agency partners.

If it's a variety of experience you're looking for, search no more – Jeannine Alexander has a veritable cornucopia of it.

She taught high school for 14 years, earned a Master's degree in Counseling, worked in criminal justice and owned a restaurant – “But I've always known animals were my true passion,” Jeannine said.

While working on the requirements to apply for veterinary school, Jeannine found herself volunteering at Maricopa County (AZ) Animal Care and Control. Eventually, this led to accepting a position in the animal welfare field. She served as the Public Program Coordinator for Maricopa County Animal Care and Control and later the Public Clinics Manager for the Arizona Humane Society.

At Maricopa County AC&C, she was responsible for the TNR program, humane education, the Pet Food Bank

and spay/neuter programs. At AHS, she oversaw two high-quality, high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter clinics and the mobile spay/neuter program, which sterilized more than 10,000 animals per year. “I am really proud to have been part of that effort because I believe that spay/neuter is the key to resolving the pet overpopulation problem,” Jeannine said.

Jeannine helped expand the Disaster Response Team at Arizona Humane Society and also volunteers as State Coordinator for EARS (Emergency Animal Rescue Service, a national disaster response organization). She recently completed wildland fire classes, and is hoping to become involved in canine search and rescue. She also serves on the Board of the Central Arizona Spay/Neuter Coalition.

Jeannine has four dogs, three of whom are pit bull terriers or mixes (Stoli, Spin and Crash); the fourth is a rough collie named



▲ Jeannine and Stoli

Lachlan. “The mini-ranch is also shared with potbelly pigs, horses, cats and a very understanding partner,” she said.

For PetSmart Charities, she evaluates grants, presents at animal welfare conferences and provides support for our disaster relief program. “Being a part of this team allows me to support animal welfare organizations by providing the tools they need in order to make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable animals in our communities,” she said. Welcome, Jeannine!



Reaching People and Pets On Their Home Turf *(continued from page 1)*

Getting Results

Since the original clinic was held, Steinberger continues to lead tri-annual clinics to maintain the change that was made and ensure that the community doesn't slide back to where it was. Two vets visit the reservation in April, July and late September/early October to nip the breeding seasons in the bud. In 2005, a total of 1,313 surgeries were completed. The community's dog bite rate was cut by more than half, and Steinberger continues to receive letters of appreciation from members of the tribe for her efforts.

Unexpected Impact

The impact of this project was far-reaching, including a change in community perception about animals. When the number of dogs decreased, the residents began to value their pets more, taking a more active role in their health and care. They embraced a value system that says you provide vet care for your pet. Tribal members would bring their pets to every clinic held each year asking for vaccinations. The tribe required continued education about which vaccinations were required and the amount of time for which they were good.

Local retailers reported dog food sales actually went up 25 percent since the original clinic was conducted. This was evidence that pet owners were taking more consideration when choosing what to feed their pets, proving that people try to take care of their pets when the task is not overwhelming.

Advice From the Field

Key to working with low-income communities is the ability to go in with an open mind and let the residents speak for themselves. Learn the nuances of communication within each community from the people who know it best. “We can't go in with an agenda or any preconceived notions,” said Steinberger. “We learned from the people what would work best for them. A voucher program would not work – the location is too remote and there are no local veterinarians. A mobile unit would not work either – it wouldn't allow for the high volume needed to address this community's problem.”

Above all, Steinberger recommends the following steps to achieving long-term impact and success in low-income communities:

- Conduct a needs assessment – find out what is working and what is not.

- Work with the community and its leaders – understand the situation from their perspective.
- Ensure scalability – prepare to have a volume of services that will meet the community's needs.
- Keep the communication channels open – continue the dialogue with local leaders. Don't just visit, do your work and leave – build a relationship and nurture it.
- Be flexible/adaptable – be prepared to adapt your communications methods and style to a new community.
- Be committed – don't start a project in a new community unless you are 100 percent committed and care about the community and the results.



Ruth Steinberger is a board member of the Oklahoma Humane Federation and is a non-voting member of the Animal Welfare Committee of the Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association. In 1999, Ruth gave up a lucrative career to move to Oklahoma to help animals, where 72 of 77 counties lacked any animal shelter. In 2006, the ASPCA awarded Ruth the prestigious Henry Bergh Award for her work there.

Exciting Things are Happening in Canada!



Spread across Canada are animal agencies of all sizes and styles – foster networks, TNR groups, private shelters, municipal shelters, spay/neuter organizations, etc. – doing the vital day-to-day work necessary for the animals. Some are in urban communities and some are in the suburbs, but many are in very isolated rural areas where they may be the “only game in town.” Does this sound familiar? Canadian and U.S. agencies share many of the same challenges... and celebrations.

In the past 10 years:

- Canada has seen a decrease in euthanasia and a rise in adoptions. Agencies are actively collaborating with each other to continue this trend.
- Although veterinary costs are still very high in Canada, more low-cost options are becoming available. Pediatric spay/neuter is more rare than in the States, but that, too, is progressing.
- Finding the right adopters (we know they're out there!) can still be a challenge, but online adoption exposure is helping to get the word out.
- Provincial and national legislation activity has updated and improved regarding animal protection.
- Financial resources are always needed, but that also improves as public awareness about animal welfare increases.
- The Canadian Federation of Humane Societies celebrated 50 years as “Canada’s voice of animal welfare.” Canadian organizations who are member agencies enjoy many benefits, including an excellent Web site filled with practical resources. For more information, visit them at www.cfhs.ca.
- PetSmart Charities encourages cooperation, collaboration and sharing among agencies no matter where they are. Canadian and U.S. organizations have much they could learn from each other, and it is always good to know that you have the support of someone who really understands what you are accomplishing. If you would like to match up with a “sister” agency with similar interests and challenges, please contact Kit Jenkins, Program Manager, at kjenkins@petsmartcharities.org.

A culture of growth and change is evolving in Canada for PetSmart as well. In February, PetSmart announced its plans to add 19 new SuperPet stores to the PetSmart chain, bringing the total up to 52 Canadian stores.

The new stores are located in the provinces of Alberta and Ontario and have fully transitioned to the PetSmart brand as of the end of September. The additional stores create adoption opportunities at 19 new locations. This truly is a great leap forward for PetSmart Charities of Canada, and we hope to play an even larger role in supporting the continued progress of animal welfare in North America.



PetSmart Charities Made A Difference— Did Our Report?

You should have received the PetSmart Charities 2006 annual report by mail a couple months ago, and we'd like your opinion on how we can make it more relevant to you. We've developed a quick six-question survey to gather your feedback and enable you to share suggestions for improvement.

Your thoughts and opinions are important to us. We encourage you to visit the following links today to let your voice be heard:

2006 annual report (online)

<http://www.petsmartcharities.org/newsroom/annual-reports.php>

2006 annual report survey

<http://www.petsmartcharities.org/newsroom/Survey.php>



PetSmart Charities 8-Week Online Grant Writing Class

A group of students recently went through an eight-week online course on Grant Writing taught by Patty Finch, PetSmart Charities' Manager of Grants and Research. The students in this class were from animal welfare agencies across the country of all different types and sizes. Patty developed this course to help agencies learn how to write a comprehensive grant application, starting by researching funders and ending with a completed application. Each attendee chose a program and then researched funders to determine where they would submit their grant application (they were not submitting to PetSmart Charities). Each week as students learned about a different part of the grant application, they also had a chance to go into online breakout sessions and critique each other's work. Patty provided feedback on each individual application throughout the course. Eight students graduated from the class, and they will all be meeting online again in one year to find out how each of them did on their grant application.

The feedback from attendees was great, and we can't wait to see if they will be successful in receiving funding.

Deborah Millman from the Humane Society of Sarasota County said, “I am learning so much and would jump at the chance to do other in-depth classes in the future. Thanks for all you are teaching me!”

“Thanks, Patty, for all your very valuable feedback. I feel very lucky to have been part of this class. I've learned a lot. And I appreciate all the hours and hours, maybe days and days, of extra time you had to put into this, with all the personal consulting time you gave each proposal. Being a trainer myself, I know how much personal time you had to put into this. You are a gem and I can't thank you enough. I will definitely let you know about the successes I fully expect to result from my taking this course.” -Rosary Immordino, SaveKitty Foundation

All online sessions are recorded and available for viewing anytime at www.petsmartcharitiesblog.org/webinars.



Bones of the Business

Tips for Working Smarter

Creative ways to re-think a specific element of the important work you do.
If your organization is stronger, you can do more for the animals!

This quarter's topic: The Power of Focus

Challenge: There are thousands of animal welfare agencies in North America, hundreds in your state or province, and perhaps dozens in your local community. Donors are overwhelmed, your resources are spread very thin, and your board just added another program to your "to-do" list.

Solution: Claim your identity! Show yourselves, your donors, and your community how your agency is unique by reassessing (and communicating) your mission and your goals. The key is FOCUS.

Celebrate

- What you do well
- What makes you special in your community
- What you have accomplished



Evaluate

- WHO you are: What is your role in your community? What do you provide that makes you unique?
- WHERE you're going: Do you have a clear mission statement about your agency's specific purpose? Does each program or decision firmly connect to that purpose?
- HOW you use your resources: What best reflects your use of resources: a wide, shallow pond – mossy and sitting still? Or a deep, narrow, stream – powerful and on the move? Your resources (time, energy, people, space, funding) are like that water. The same amount of resources can either sit stagnant or move boulders.

An example: A breed-specific dog agency struggled to make ends meet, paying for boarding space because they didn't have enough foster homes. Still, they continued to take every dog that needed them. They had trouble providing for the medical needs of their dogs and were afraid they would have to disband. Sadly, that would mean no breed resource for shelters in half of their state. Faced with a decision of helping NO dogs or helping FEWER dogs, the agency revisited their mission and determined:

- They were very good at understanding and addressing the needs of their chosen breed.
- The majority of the dogs in need were long-term projects with orthopedic and/or behavior issues best dealt with in foster homes.
- The most urgency was in the cases of dogs in shelters, not dogs in homes.

Although it was a difficult decision (it's never easy to say "no"), the agency decided to:

- Limit themselves to available foster homes, saving over \$60,000 every year in boarding fees and using that money for medical expenses.
- Optimize foster homes with the right dogs for the right people.
- Focus primarily on shelter dogs, rather than owner release calls, providing education and support for those situations.

If you could focus solely on your primary purpose, what could you accomplish? Of course, before you make any major changes you should take all elements into account: costs, income, human resources, space, and mission. For more ideas and information, contact Kit Jenkins, Programs Manager, at kjenkins@petsmartcharities.org. 🐾



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Lifesaving Volunteers

This could be your volunteer! Submit stories to us and if selected, your organization will win a one-time award of \$500 in honor of your special volunteer. Send your nominations and supporting photos to mkrause@petsmartcharities.org. A nomination form is now available under the Animal Welfare Agencies section of our website at www.petsmartcharities.org.



▲ Deb Peña-Cutler

Deb Peña-Cutler

Second Chance Animal Rescue
Puerto Rico

High in the mountains of Puerto Rico, at Second Chance Animal Rescue, Deb Peña-Cutler is at it again.

"It" is whatever it takes to save the lives of the homeless pets on this island – transporting dogs, playing handywoman, housing litters of puppies when the rescue is full... and more.

"With an island populated with low-income families, the plight of the animals falls sadly to the wayside," explained Ronda Moren, the rescue's volunteer adoption coordinator. "The struggle of the island dogs is simply something people have always seen and fail to make a priority."

Not Deb. She's been volunteering at Second Chance for more than four years, and to her, it's everything.

"I volunteer because the number of rescues far outnumbers the people who are able to help," Deb said. "But there's also more to it; nothing beats the gratitude and affection of a rescued dog. It's all about the kisses that follow the touch of affection, security, a gentle hand and a voice that says softly, 'You're going to be OK.'"

For these kisses, Deb drives hours in the middle of the night for a shipment, repairs fencing from the high winds, pieces together broken crates from years of use, builds a wheelchair for a dog in need when none can be found.

"Most important, she's a powerful spirit who keeps our chins up when they begin to fall," Ronda said. "She's a rare woman with a heart big enough to carry us all."



Maryjane Minks

Rusk County Animal Shelter Ladysmith,
Wisconsin

Maryjane Minks is not one to seek the spotlight. Going on five years volunteering for the Rusk County Animal Shelter in Ladysmith, Wisconsin, she quietly goes about her work – which includes, due to her efforts alone, doubling the shelter's adoption rate.



▲ Maryjane Minks

"She is our biggest advocate," said Carol Lynn Arndt, the shelter's manager. "She started out offering to take pictures of our animals and post them on *Petfinder.com* and other sites. Then she developed our shelter's new Web site. She did a wonderful job and she is continually making improvements."

A talented crafter, Maryjane makes and sells wooden animal ornaments for the group's annual "Cause for Paws" Christmas fundraiser, which she started three years ago. She also makes homemade cat and dog treats for their "Have a Heart" Valentine fundraiser.

Maryjane and her mom Becky foster dogs that the shelter is unable to adopt. "She fosters the hard-to-place animals until they get a good home," Carol Lynn said. "She spends many hours volunteering for us, and never says no to anything. I don't know what we would do without her."

What drives Maryjane to do so much? "I volunteer because I feel a special connection with animals and believe that each deserves a loving and responsible home," she said. "I find it endearing that no matter what they have been through they are still willing to trust us."

"Plus, it's nice to have a place to go where you're always greeted with 'smiles' and wagging tails!"



"The Check is in the Mail" to Our Adoption Partners

PetSmart Charities is honored to help you with your adoption programs, and one of the ways we do that is through quarterly rewards checks for in-store adoption partner agencies. But are you making the most of this opportunity?

- **Accurate Addresses:** Amazingly, every quarter rewards checks go uncashed! Does a designated person check your mail regularly and promptly deposit checks? If your organization's official mailing address has changed, have you updated that information with PetSmart Charities?

- **Prompt Scanning:** Rewards checks are based on the adoption forms scanned through the register at your PetSmart store during each quarter. Do you let those forms pile up, or do you have them scanned when each adoption is completed?

- **Increased Rewards Potential:** Agencies receive rewards at \$5, \$10, or \$15 per in-store adoption to help with your adoption expenses. That amount is based on whether you have applied and qualified for the enhanced rewards incentives program. Only half

of all adoption partners have applied for this opportunity to increase their rewards, even though we have mailed out applications twice in the past year. Has your agency responded?

Kit Jenkins, Charities Program Manager, is responsible for getting your rewards checks to you: kjenkins@petsmartcharities.org. Please contact her with any questions about adoption rewards.





PetSmart Charities kicked off sales of its annual Luv-A-Pet holiday ornaments on November 6. The ornaments are limited edition and hand-painted; shoppers can choose between a cute kitty and a delightful doggie. PetSmart Charities uses 100 percent of the proceeds to fund vital programs such as spay/neuter, adoptions and emergency relief. Each ornament sells for \$10 and is available in PetSmart stores through December 26. 🐾



19601 North 27th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85027



Give two gifts in one! It's our second annual holiday gift wrap campaign. Throughout the holiday season, shoppers can buy exclusive dog- and cat-themed wrapping paper for \$1 in all PetSmart stores. All proceeds benefit animal welfare programs across the U.S. and Canada funded by PetSmart Charities. 🐾



Charity Navigator designates PetSmart Charities as a Four Star charity, its highest ranking for efficient use of donations. (www.charitynavigator.org)

Calendar of Events

At your local PetSmart store

Holiday wrapping paper

Four designs
\$1 in all U.S. and Canadian stores
While supplies last

Luv-A-Pet cat or dog ornaments

\$10 in all U.S. and Canadian stores
While supplies last

Science Diet in-store promotion

Buy any Nature's Best dry dog food through Jan. 2 and Hill's Science Diet will donate \$5 to PetSmart Charities. (U.S. stores only)

Photos with Santa Claws

Dec. 1-2, 8-9, 15-16
11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
\$9.95 in all U.S. and Canadian stores

PetSmart Charities Online Conference

In June, PetSmart Charities held its first-ever online conference. The conference consisted of two days full of webinars on fundraising and operations. Attendees were able to attend six online presentations and participate in an online community where they were able to introduce themselves, ask questions of the presenters and participate in polls. During the two days of training more than 270 people attended at least one session with over 50 people attending at least four or more. We had representatives from animal welfare organizations in 41 states and four provinces in attendance. Recordings of all of these sessions, as well as any documentation the presenters shared are available at our blog: www.petsmartcharitiesblog.org/webinars.

Dear Robin,

Heartfelt thanks to you, Petsmart Charities and all the wonderful staff and presenters who made the whole conference happen. It was wonderful to take advantage of the all that great information without having to *leave town* for days. I even got to keep up with bottle-feeding an orphan kitten while I was soaking up all that knowledge.

Great job everyone!!!

All the best,

Joan Phillips
Animal Lovers League
Glen Cove, N.Y.

