



ANIMAL ALLIANCE OF GREATER SYRACUSE

*Making CNY a safer and more humane home for animals
and the people who care about them*

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City Participation in Veterinary Clinics Could Help End Shelter Crisis

Animal shelters in Central New York (CNY) are in the midst of a pressing crisis: a surplus of animals in need of homes, coupled with a decline in adopters. This has led to overcrowded shelters and a surge in the workload of rescuers, who are tirelessly striving to assist.

We are not alone in this struggle. According to Kirsten Brendlen, author of a recent article titled “A Solvable Problem: Brooklyn’s Animal Rescuers Say City-Funded Veterinary Clinics Could Help End the Shelter Crisis,” there are solutions to be found.

In the past decade, veterinary care costs in the U.S. have increased by 60%, as reported by the New York Times. Katy Hansen, Director of Marketing and Communications at Animal Care Centers of New York, noted that only 88% of their dogs were placed in homes this year, with many pet surrenders attributed to housing difficulties. “Finding pet-friendly apartments, especially for dogs, can be costly and challenging.”

Will Zweigart founded Flatbush Vet to provide primary vet visits, vaccines, and spay/neuter surgeries to low-income owners and rescuers on a sliding fee scale.

In emergency situations, owners are expected to pay for the services upfront — if they can’t pay, they can’t provide lifesaving treatment for their pet. That can be “devastating”.

“It’s a moral distress for vets because they got

into this field for animals, and they’re seeing animals put down due to financial constraints,” he said. “It leads to vets leaving the field, which leads to shortages, which leads to higher costs and fewer appointments” for owners and vets alike.

During the pandemic, The [Brooklyn Bridge Animal Welfare Coalition](#) began to provide care out of a cleared-out room at the Brooklyn Cat Café, executive director Anne Levin said. It took about a year and \$200,000 for the organization to fully outfit its clinic. With just one full-time veterinarian and one part-time, the BBAWC clinic currently sees as many as 200 cats per week.

Rescuers carry the City’s burden

The impact of affordable spay/neuter surgeries in curbing the population of feral cats

and preventing more deaths is significant. Consider this: a single cat can have up to 10,000 descendants over four years, with 75% of them not surviving. The current shelter and rescue programs can only assist a small percentage of these cats annually.

In Syracuse, a concerning trend is emerging as venture capitalists increasingly acquire veterinary clinics. This shift prioritizes profit over animal care, placing a heavy burden on pet owners and rescue organizations that strive to ensure CNY's animals receive the care they deserve.

Rescue workers are becoming burned out and financially drained. The City and County need to take some responsibility and contribute their fair share toward solving this problem.

Note: The Animal Alliance of Greater Syracuse is currently looking to lease a property in the CNY area to establish a high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter clinic.

We also expect to be hiring for the positions of Executive Director, Vet and Vet Tech soon!

With her kind permission, we have drawn from an excellent article by Kirstyn Brendlen titled **“A solvable problem’: Brooklyn’s animal rescuers say city-funded veterinary clinics could help end shelter crisis”**. To read her article in its entirety, see:

<http://www.animalallianceofgreatersyracuse.org/news>

Advocates call on the city to help

NYC's Animal Population Control program is funded by annual dog registration fees and run by the city's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, which offers low-cost spay and neuters through the ASPCA.

Supporters say that over time, spending more money on subsidized vet clinics would allow the city to spend less on shelters and other “downstream” expenses.

“More access to spay/neuter alone would have a huge impact on lowering shelter populations,” Hansen said. “They need to make that investment now so that five or ten years from now, their total spend will actually be less on a per-animal basis,” Zweigart said. “We’re going to spend the money either way,” he said. “We’re either going to spend the money trying to shelter animals that are suffering, or we’re going to spend it upstream.”

THE GIFT

A gift almost never brings sadness, yet that's what happened with Neo. That's what makes Neo's story so difficult to tell. It's the tragic story of a three-year-old pup we planned on calling "Neo", an African word meaning "Gift".



Neo was a precious young fellow who deserved so much more than he got in life. He is the very reason the Animal Alliance of Greater Syracuse (AAGS) exists and why your support is desperately needed throughout the year and, especially throughout the month of December.

Here's Neo's story:

One early fall morning, our AAGS' President received a call from the Syracuse Police Department's Animal Cruelty Investigator. She had taken a dog from a local home after someone had called about a starving animal.

The officer arrived to find the dog emaciated and sick. The owner said the dog hadn't been eating but there had been no money for a vet visit so they were choosing to do nothing.

The dog was in distress so the officer brought him immediately for vet care. There, he was found to have an intestinal obstruction.

The owner had surrendered the dog. This had now become a cruelty case. The officer was asking if AAGS' would help pay for the dog's medical care.

Every Board member gave a fast and resounding "Yes!" in their desire to help Neo. He would become the 40th animal to receive medical care in the five years of AAGS' Leg Up Fund existence.

But, after speaking with the attending vet, we learned that Neo was so weak and in such dire straits that his chance of survival, even with surgery, was extremely slim and, if he did survive, the possibility of chronic problems with continued suffering was an almost assured reality.

AAGS' Board was put into the heart-breaking position of deciding that, as one member put it, "We need to allow Neo to cross over the rainbow bridge." We needed to do the most humane and merciful thing for him - we had to let him go. The vet agreed. It was time to lift Neo out of his suffering.

We tell this sad, hard story so that our supporters are aware that such suffering goes on daily in our neighborhoods.

Note: The Leg Up Fund is currently on hold as we turn all of our fundraising efforts towards the new clinic.

Your GIFT will help!

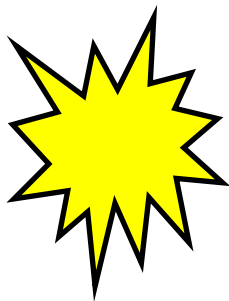
Many of our supporters know that AAGS' most recent effort is to provide our community with a spay-neuter clinic that will address the animal suffering caused by our local cat and dog overpopulation problem.

One clinic component will be to educate the public about caring for and honoring our animals as living, feeling, interactive beings.

The new CNY spay-neuter clinic will offer low-cost, high volume, spay-neuter services to those who need help caring for their pets.

Had the clinic been in place, and up and running to capacity, it's likely that Neo would not have been born into the hunger, hurt, and neglect he endured. The clinic would have been there, providing services to "fix" as many animals as possible and to greatly reduce the number of unwanted, uncared for pets, strays, and ferals in our community.

Neo's story is why we look to you, those who love and care so deeply about our animals.



The first \$10,000 in "GIFTS" to AAGS during the month of December 2024 will be matched by devoted AAGS supporters, creating a "voice" for suffering local animals. See Pg 5 for more info!

Please give to "AAGS' Clinic Fund" so we can address the heart-breaking suffering of numerous homeless and unwanted animals.

Please give so Neo's short, sad life will not have been in vain.



AAGS is actively searching for a building to lease for our long-anticipated clinic.

We need a building located on a bus line in the city, about 3,000 sq ft with heat, water, electric and abundant parking.

Please let us know if you think you might know of such a place!



A huge **Thank You** goes out to **The NoiseSource**, an online and physical retail shop specializing in new & used synthesizers, Eurorack, drum machines and other electronic musical devices.

They donate all net proceeds from one featured item per month to benefit AAGS' LEG UP program.

They are open by appointment Wednesday - Saturday.

Book your visit at www.thenoisesource.com.



Not so many years ago, homeless animals in Central New York were euthanized in large numbers. AAGS vowed to strengthen the safety net for our community's animals. With others, we continue to work toward the day when there are no more homeless pets.

- Leg Up sponsors treatment for ill or injured strays brought to the municipal shelter.
- Keeping Faith offers rewards for information about unsolved animal cruelty cases.
- Court Observers attend court hearings for animal cruelty, abuse, and neglect cases in CNY.
- High-Volume, Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic will soon serve those with the greatest need. It continues to be our goal.

Your support is essential if we are to maintain these programs and the goals we continue to work toward. Please donate generously today!

We have OUTSTANDING NEWS!

The first \$10,000 in donations to AAGS during the month of December 2024 will be MATCHED!

Just go to <https://www.givegab.com/campaigns/aags-spot> to pay by credit card or send us a check to PO Box 94, Liverpool NY 13088.

If you're interested in donating \$2,500 or more, we have an exciting matching fund opportunity for you. Connect with us today!

FROM OUR PRESIDENT



To our AAGS supporters,

Several months ago, Syracuse.com told the story of two dogs turned away by every shelter in the area. Their owner(s) had abandoned them, and the citizens who found them soon learned there was no safe place to take them due to the desperate truth that the shelters and rescues are beyond full.

The extreme crisis in which these rescuers and shelters find themselves leaves AAGS members, volunteers, and numerous other animal welfare organizations, along with caring residents of our community, discouraged and disheartened by the lack of attention given to one of the most vulnerable groups in CNY—our animals.

The reality is that the safety net for our neediest animals has been broken for years, and the problem has only grown. Advocates fought for the “no-kill” care and control model, as well they should have; however, our city/county municipalities did not listen nor did they learn how to turn down the pipeline of cats and dogs flooding the system.

The solution does have several components. Adoption, for example, plays a role, but as one animal welfare worker has said, “We can’t adopt our way out of this crisis!” And some seem to think that the overpopulation of our animals can be controlled by euthanizing everything that comes through a shelter’s doors. We know that this is a cruel and medieval way to try to solve a problem. And bottom line, it doesn’t work!

The true fix is low-cost, high-quality, high-volume spay and neuter.

We would like to suggest that the media begin to take a closer look at whether CNY residents, animal groups, and our government officials will team up to rescue our local animals from this plight.

We propose that a committee be formed with representatives from various segments of the community and every organization with a concern for cats and dogs. The hope is that, working together, we can develop short...and long-term...goals that will protect our animals while being agreeable and beneficial to all.

Is there an immediate, easy solution to shelter and rescue overcrowding, owners abandoning their pets, etc? Unfortunately, no. However, for years AAGS has been promoting the idea of significantly increasing the number of animals being sterilized.

Utilizing low-cost, high-quality, high-volume spay and neuter, fewer litters of animals will be dependent on shelters and rescues. As it is now, any homeless animal finding its way into a shelter can be seen as lucky. The rest end up on the streets, frozen to the sidewalk, hit by a car, shot at, dying of easily vaccinated diseases, etc, etc.

(Ask a rescuer, they will tell you some stories.)

We need to stop talking about it and saying, “How sad!” with every tragedy. Instead, we need to begin working on the solution—TOGETHER.

Jacqui Foss

President

Thank you for your support!