

# SANDHILLS SCENE

THE PILOT

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LYNN ALBERT PHOTOS

Above, a dog receives his vaccination with Kristen Seawell, Trinity Maurer and Dr. Janice Baker. Left, the Southern Pines Pet Care Day team: Dr. Janice Baker, Trinity Maurer, Peyton Caldwell, Tammy Foster, Stacey Caldwell, Kristen Seawell, Angela Zumwalt, Ray Lizzio, Barbara Ross, Stephanie Ferguson Brown, Judy Pund and Ann Rothe.



# PRC Adapts Program, Adds Pet Care Days

**BY ANGELA N. ZUMWALT**

*Special to The Pilot*

When Moore County's school doors were abruptly closed earlier in 2020, two- and four-legged volunteers from the Moore County Citizens' Pet Responsibility Committee (PRC) were in their 12th year of presenting a six-session Pet Responsibility Education Program for fourth-graders.

The PRC quickly shifted gears and placed its program materials online as part of a home learning plan for students and their families to access.

Over the course of 2020, the materials were improved, videos added, and therapy dogs and their owners featured reading books. The books emphasize being kind, respectful and responsible pet owners, and making a difference for the animals that share our lives.

When the PRC shared with the Moore County school system that they had created a home learning plan, Tammie Earhart, a Blend+ed Program teacher, immediately

stepped up and said she would like to incorporate it into her students' schedule.

"They absolutely loved it!!" she reports. "They really enjoyed the program. In fact, when it was done, they said, 'That's it?' and were sad that



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Pets waiting to be seen

it was over."

Earhart adapted the PRC plan to Google Classroom for use by other schools in Moore County.

While PRC volunteers wait to be reunited with fourth-graders in the schools, they are meeting the needs of pets in our county in other ways.

Realizing an increased need in the community, the PRC expanded its already existing Pet Pantry program, distributing repackaged pet food for the pets of families facing hardship.

Each pet food package also contains information about access to free or subsidized spay and neuter procedures.

Taking this a step further, the PRC organized Pet Care Days in November in both the Robbins and West Southern Pines areas.

Held at Tina's Country Store on Spies Road, the Robbins event offered rabies shots, administered by Animal Services, pet food and information about subsidized spay and neuter services, and transportation to the spay and neuter clinic in Vass.

The PRC built on the experience gained at the Robbins event and included a veterinarian at the West Southern Pines event.

The event was held in the parking lot of the Southern Pines Primary School. The PRC subsidized rabies vaccinations, and the veterinarian offered complete physical exams and additional vaccinations at a reduced cost.

Dr Janice Baker and veterinary technician Trinity Maurer, from the

Veterinary Tactical Group (VTG), a mobile veterinary practice out of Vass, enthusiastically teamed with the PRC for the event.

Participants were able to discuss their concerns with the veterinarian, and were also able to talk with PRC volunteers about the availability of spay and neuter services. Pet food was also distributed.

"With our continual focus on prevention, these Pet Care Day events are a natural evolution for our organization," says a PRC spokesperson. "We strive to give pet owners the information and access to resources they need to be responsible pet owners. For the most part, people want to do the right thing but often need advice and sometimes help to get it done.

"Our aim is to offer Pet Care Days in underserved communities in both the north and south of the county several times a year, becoming a 'fixture' event that people can count on. We are thrilled to be partnering with VTG for these efforts."

For access to the home learning plan and book readings, visit [www.mcprc.org](http://www.mcprc.org).

*Angela North Zumwalt is president of the Moore County Citizens' Pet Responsibility Committee.*