



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANGELA ZUMWALT

Left, Kristen Seawell checks a dog's weight. Right, Dr. Janice Baker and Trinity Maurer examine a patient.

Moore County PRC Intensifies Efforts With Events

BY ANGELA ZUMWALT

Special to The Pilot

On a quiet, but unusually hot, Saturday morning in March, downtown Robbins stirred to a flurry of activity on Horner Street. Signs were placed at the entrance to the street; tables were strategically positioned and loaded with clipboards and forms or bags of dog and cat food and other giveaways. A tent was erected to house a kind of "MASH" unit for pets, complete with a medical staff and all the needed supplies. Thirty minutes before the "Pet Care Day" was due to start, the cars were already entering Horner Street to secure a place in line.

The event was a culmination of ideas and efforts throughout the pandemic experience. When Moore County's school doors were abruptly closed a year ago, 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.

While PRC volunteers wait to be reunited with fourth-graders in the schools later this year, they are meeting the needs of pets in our county in other ways that they plan to continue long after the pandemic subsides.

Realizing an increased

need in the community, the PRC expanded its already existing Pet Pantry Program, led by Barbara Ross, 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 two "Pet Care Days" last November in both the Robbins and West Southern Pines areas.

The PRC built on the experience gained at last year's events and expanded the services offered at two additional events in Robbins and West Southern Pines.

At the two recent events, the PRC subsidized rabies vaccinations and teamed with a veterinarian who offered complete physical exams and additional vaccinations at a reduced cost. Additionally, for each pet that was examined, the PRC donated a topical application of flea and tick medication to last one month. The veterinary technicians showed the pet owners the correct way to apply the medication.

Dr. Janice Baker and her team from the Veterinary Tactical Group (VTG), a mobile veterinary practice out of Vass, enthusiastically teamed with the PRC for the events.

With limited access to veterinary services in the Robbins area, the event,

held on Horner Street, was an overwhelming success. Horner Street and the surrounding area were filled with parked cars. Pets and their owners waited patiently. Some families sat on the pine straw with their pets, quietly chatting in the sunshine.

The event was scheduled from noon to 2:30 p.m. More than 90 pets were seen during this time, and the team actually had to send out for more rabies vaccinations.

"We are truly grateful to the residents of the Robbins area for making the time to provide care and attention for their pets," says a PRC spokesman. "This was our first full-service pet care event in Robbins, and so we took notes on how to improve the flow for the next one. We want to thank those who came with their pets for their patience and willingness to wait. Everyone was so polite and appreciative."

Pet owners were able to discuss their pets' health concerns with the veterinarian and veterinary technicians. They were also able to talk with PRC representatives about the availability of spay and neuter services and sign up for a future transport from the Robbins area.

Sarah Monzillo, prevention program coordinator for the PRC, will call each pet owner who signed up for the spay and neuter service for their pet to discuss funding options and paperwork. The PRC also provides transport from Horner Street to and from the Sandhills Spay Neuter Veterinary Clinic in Vass.

As each pet owner left the event, they were given pet food and additional information. The children

received coloring books about staying safe around pets.

"With our continual focus on prevention, these

Pet Care Day events are a natural evolution for our organization," says the spokesman. "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,

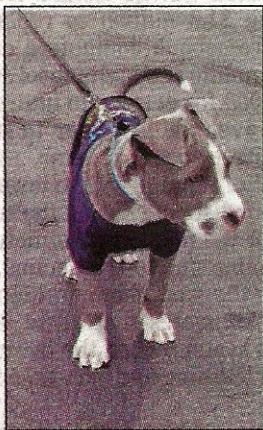
but often need advice, and sometimes help, to get it done.

"Our aim is to offer Pet Care Days in underserved communities in both the northern and southern ends 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."

The discounted rabies shots and the flea and tick medications were made possible by a grant from Walmart to the Pet Responsibility Committee (PRC). The local Aberdeen Walmart supported the grant application. The other discounted services were generously supplied by Dr. Baker and VTG. The pet food was donated by the Walmart Distribution Center in Pageland, S.C. Free and discounted spay/neuter services are provided to qualified residents through subsidies from the county of Moore.

For more information, go to www.mcprc.org, www.vettacgroup.com and www.spayurpet.org.

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



Waiting his turn