

# Pet Overpopulation Prevention Programs Pay Off

**BY LAURA DOUGLASS**

Staff Writer

Increased funding last year to help curtail the number of dogs and cats admitted to the county's Animal Services shelter in Carthage is paying off, local animal advocates told county commissioners on Tuesday.

Targeted outreach events in Pinebluff, Robbins and West Southern Pines in recent months resulted in more than 380 rabies inoculations. Of those, 197 were administered to animals that had never been vaccinated before.

The ripple effect of more than 100 spay and neuter surgeries has saved the county an estimated \$20,000 in animal services expenditures, said local veterinarian Dr. Tom

Daniel, a founding member of the Companion Animal Clinic Foundation. The outreach efforts also provided around \$11,000 worth of veterinary services and vaccines and nearly \$10,000 worth of pet food to needy families.

"We gave you back \$20,000 in services and saved you \$20,000," Daniel said, noting that rabies control measures are particularly important. He was joined Tuesday by Angela Zumwalt, chairwoman of the Moore County Citizens' Pet Responsibility Committee. Founded in 2007, the committee's mission is to provide and drive, with the support of commissioners, solutions to the local pet overpopulation problem. The organization coordinates a team of more than

60 volunteers who present a six-session program on pet responsibility to all public schools and a number of private schools in the area. The program is integrated with Moore County Schools' character education program, focusing on good judgment, integrity, kindness, perseverance, respect and responsibility, and is also linked to the N.C. Standard Course of Study.

Zumwalt said committee members shifted gears in 2020 to accommodate virtual outreach with school children, and the pet pantry team expanded its distribution sites in the county to assist more families. In addition, 190 pets in the Robbins area were spayed and neutered thanks to a partnership with the Sandhills Cat Coalition

and Sandhills Spay Neuter Clinic in Vass.

Commissioner Catherine Graham said she was heartened by the large contingent of volunteers and their therapy dogs who accompanied Zumwalt and Daniels.

"We hear a lot of negative news. The good news never seems to make the news. But this reminds us that Moore County is a good place to live," Graham said. "Certainly the taxpayers have received so much more...just the rabies vaccines in itself are worth the funding."



JAYMIE BAXLEY/The Pilot

Angela Zumwalt and Dr. Tom Daniel addressing the Moore County Board of Commissioners in 2020