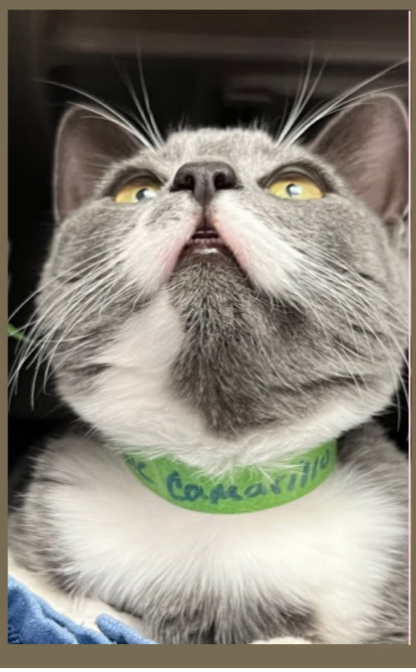

SPAY-NEUTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, INC.

Leading the field in competent, compassionate veterinary care since 1994

FY2023

Review of Programs & Activities

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Stop The Cycle.

The mission of the Spay-Neuter Assistance Program (SNAP) is "to prevent the suffering and death of companion animals and to enrich the human-animal bond by providing excellent, accessible and affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care." Through subsidized and affordable veterinary care—with a focus on high-efficiency spay/neuter—we work toward a vision of a world with no homeless pets. SNAP currently provides services in the two most populous metropolitan areas in Texas: Greater Houston and San Antonio. These areas are comprised of sixteen Texas counties (Atascosa, Bandera, Bexar, Brazoria, Chambers, Comal, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Kendall, Liberty, Maverick, Medina, Montgomery, Waller, and Wilson). According to the 2020 U.S. Census, these service areas are home to over nine million residents, including approximately 1.2 million households with dog companions and 790,000 households with cats.

SNAP nurtures the human-animal bond by (1) enabling low-income families to experience the joy of having a companion animal, and (2) keeping pets healthy and reducing animal overpopulation through accessible, affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care. Now in our twenty-ninth year, SNAP has provided 709,561 spay and neuter surgeries since our founding (as of June 30, 2023).

1. Programs:

All of our clinics offer compassionate care through our three primary programs:

- ***The Solution Begins Here***—affordable spay/neuter (available to the general public),
- ***Caring For Our Companions***—affordable vaccinations and veterinary wellness care (available to the general public), and
- ***Empowering People & Pets***—needs-based subsidized spay/neuter and veterinary wellness care.

Today, 95% of pet owners in the U.S. consider their pets to be members of the family, and many spoil them with treats, toys, and clothes. Realizing the significance of this change, SNAP revised its mission statement to more-intentionally address the human side of the human-animal bond and highlight the vital social services SNAP provides to our human clients, in addition to animal welfare. Sadly, lack of financial resources makes it difficult for low-income families to care for a pet and often deprives these families of the joys and health benefits a pet can provide. The COVID-19 pandemic showed us how important our pets are in times of isolation, grief, and uncertainty. By providing subsidized spay/neuter for income-qualified clients and affordable spay/neuter and veterinary wellness care to the general public, SNAP helps families stay together without having to choose between caring for their pet or paying rent.

2. Outcomes:

In FY2023, SNAP performed 20,750 spay/neuter surgeries. Even with our already-affordable prices, 2,874 (13.9%) of these surgeries were further subsidized, empowering our clients to provide their beloved companion animals the care they otherwise would have been unable to afford and to contribute to the solution of animal overpopulation. These clients were also spared the expense of caring for unintended litters. Both humans and animals will benefit from an enriched quality of life through the deepening of the

human-animal bond resulting from the elimination of undesirable hormonal behaviors. These surgeries have prevented millions of births of puppies and kittens, many of whom would have been unplanned and unwanted and would have been destined for lives of neglect, homelessness, and death on the streets or euthanasia. The generational ripple effect on reproduction is exponential. (See *Estimates of Births Prevented* in the Stats-at-a-Glance table on page 8.) By controlling population through spay/neuter, SNAP reduces the burden unplanned litters place on shelters and rescue groups, allowing them to focus on the animals already in need of care. ***The solution begins when the cycle ends***.

Preventative veterinary care was provided at affordable prices to an additional 8,134 animal patients. 16,263 rabies vaccinations were administered, greatly reducing the chance of this deadly disease spreading to companion animals and humans. Many of our clients live below poverty level or are income-challenged; their visit to SNAP is often the only time their pets will be seen by a veterinarian.

Continuing from FY2022, SNAP partnered with Petco Love (formerly Petco Foundation) to administer distemper vaccines for dogs and cats at no cost to the pet custodians. In FY2023, SNAP vaccinated over 15,000 dogs and cats to protect them against this preventable disease.

SNAP spayed and neutered 2,072 community cats (*i.e.* “feral”) in FY2023. Of these surgeries, about 350 were provided through a “Trap-Neuter-Return” (TNR) partnership with Best Friends Animal Society. TNR programs are very effective in controlling the population of free-roaming cats in our communities.

A 2017 study published in The Veterinary Journal recorded surgery outcomes for 113,906 dog (42,349) and cat (71,557) surgeries on animals who appeared to be healthy. The data includes a large number of patients; however, all of the surgeries were performed in a single high-volume spay/neuter clinic, which means that further research is needed to determine how representative of other clinics these findings are. In this study, the overall mortality rate of healthy cats and dogs undergoing spay/neuter surgeries at high-volume clinics is about one-tenth the mortality rate reported for private-practice clinics. Mortality rate for dogs was 0.009%, which is lower than the 0.01% mortality rate of humans undergoing hysterectomies. The mortality rate for cats was appreciably higher at 0.05%. In FY2023, SNAP performed 20,750 spay/neuter surgeries: 9,253 dogs (3,987 female and 5,266 male) and 11,497 cats (5,716 female and 5,781 male). We had 6 cat deaths (4 female, 2 male) and 0 dog deaths. Of the cats, 2 were feral, and did not have a necropsy performed (free-roaming cats have a higher mortality rate than indoor cats). Of the four owned cats, 1 client declined a necropsy, so the cause of death is unknown. 1 had severe complications at the incision site, because post-op instructions were not followed and the cat bit at the sutures. Necropsies on the remaining 2 cats revealed 1 to have had a severe internal infection and the other had a pre-existing lung disease. So 3 could have been considered to be “healthy” (0.03% of total cat surgeries).

3. Transitions:

In FY2023, SNAP saw a small net gain in our total workforce and a considerable gain in veterinarians with twenty-three new hires, including seven veterinarians (two of whom have previously worked for SNAP), and eighteen departures (including one veterinarian).

In September 2022, Dr. Christina Guillory joined SNAP as a full-time wellness veterinarian working in our Houston and Pasadena clinics. The next month, Dr. Cristalle Boyle returned to SNAP—now as Lead Veterinarian. Our bookkeeper, Judy Fritz, left SNAP at the end of March, and a few weeks later, Qian Yang joined the team to fill the position.

What Our Clients Are Saying About SNAP

What a well run clinic! The facility is clean and well maintained. What I especially loved was the skillset and friendliness of the staff. They did an excellent job of keeping track of the early Monday morning rush, and the whole process was exceedingly well organized. Highly recommend!
Bobbie H.

4. Successes and Challenges:

Successes:

Our Executive Director, Dr. Karel Olguin, was selected to participate in the Texas Veterinary Medical Association's *Power of 10 Leadership Program* which took place in Dallas in September 2022.

Writing for the Houston Press in October of 2022, Faith Bugenhagen penned an article about the lingering effects the COVID pandemic has had on animal shelters, entitled "Dogs and Cats Remain Stranded in Houston Area Shelters As Adoptions Decrease" in which SNAP receives a mention.

Over the fiscal year, SNAP had a net gain of six veterinarians, in spite of the fact that—like organizations across the U.S.—SNAP continues to be challenged by a serious shortage of veterinarians.

We finish FY2023 with some exciting opportunities pending, and we look forward to relating those in our FY2024 annual review.

Challenges:

Building repairs presented a number of challenges over the year. Our Pasadena clinic needed some major plumbing repairs, and during that process it was discovered that we had a serious mold problem. Repairs and mold abatement required that the clinic be closed for several months, beginning in August. We were able to shift some Pasadena Animal Care patients to our Houston Durham Drive clinic for their spay/neuter surgeries, but services to the Pasadena community were greatly reduced during that closure.

5. SNAP Finances:

In last year's review, we dispelled some common myths and misperceptions people have about nonprofit veterinary clinics—particularly high-volume spay/neuter clinics, demonstrating that studies show these clinics are not only remarkably efficient, but also very safe. This year we're going to look at some of the things many people get wrong about nonprofit organizations in general. Having nonprofit status is a very important part of what makes SNAP's work in the community possible.

The term "nonprofit" is misleading for many people; nonprofit simply means that none of our income is distributed to shareholders, members, directors, or officers, but all proceeds go back into funding our charitable mission. That doesn't mean we can't make a profit or we can never have money in the bank. In fact, it's essential that nonprofit organizations bring in more than we spend so we have funds for unbudgeted expenses and have the ability to plan and grow, implement new programs, invest in staff training, and expand capacity by acquiring additional property and equipment. As a publicly-supported charity, SNAP depends on a broad base of donor-partners to make these things possible.

SNAP's development team was busy building that donor base over the past year, conducting several major fundraising appeals.

- ***Pets Are Family*** (Summer Appeal) continued from FY2022. $6,094 was received in this fiscal year.
- The 2022 ***Big Give*** in September yielded $37,370. Several matching gifts totalling $15,500 helped us surpass our $30,000 goal.
- ***Pets Are Awesome*** (2022 Year-End Appeal) raised $98,929.
- Our ***World Spay Day*** Appeal in February greatly exceeded our $10,000 goal, raising $48,756. Our friends at Naegeli Transportation provided a $5,000 matching gift once again this year.
- ***Furever Friends*** (Mid-May through the end of June) featured the unveiling of a new Virtual Tribute Wall on SNAP's website. The appeal (which carried over into FY2024) raised $57,263 in FY2023.

In FY2023 SNAP received $266,402 in ***Foundation support,*** including grants from the following foundations for whose support we are most grateful:

- An anonymous foundation which has been a long-time partner with SNAP
- The Leslie L. Alexander Foundation (two grants)
- The Bernice Barbour Foundation
- The Harry S. & Isabel C. Cameron Foundation
- The Faye L. & William Cowden Charitable Foundation
- The Mary M. Diggs Foundation
- The Huffington Foundation
- The Amy Shelton McNutt Charitable Foundation
- Petco Love (formerly Petco Foundation) supported SNAP's lifesaving work through grant funding as well as in-kind donations of vaccines to be made available free to dog and cat guardians. In FY2023, distemper vaccines were given to over 15,000 cats and dogs.
- The Robertson-Finley Foundation (two grants)

- SNAP received year two of a three-year grant from:
  The Aid to Helpless Animals Trust, Max and Victoria Garbich Memorial Fund, Alice E. Jacques Animal Support Fund, Jesse Wright Boyd, Jr. Animal Assistance Fund, Ruth Lang Charitable Fund, Gaynelle and Gene Rankin Endowment Trust, Frances Margaret Seaver Fund, Winnie Converse Tappan Charitable Trust, and the Dr. Thomas E. Vice Fund of the San Antonio Area Foundation.
- The R.E. Smith Foundation
- The Vivian L. Smith Foundation
- The Keith & Mattie Stevenson Foundation
- The Dixie Starnes Wenger Foundation

San Antonio Area Foundation
Where Giving and Community Connect

The ***Circle of Champions*** Sustaining Partners Program brought in 1,119 donations totaling $55,187. This sustained monthly giving helps SNAP forecast our monthly income, making budgeting more reliable and keeping cash flow steady. Sustaining Partners can commit to as little as five dollars per month.

Effortless Giving continues to bring in income through our partnerships with Amazon Smile, Kroger, Randalls, and Good Charlie Energy ($3,192). Peer-to-peer donation drives on Facebook gave SNAP supporters opportunities to celebrate a birthday or honor a loved one in support of SNAP ($2,195).

Workplace giving gives donors the convenience of having contributions to their favored charities taken directly out of their paychecks. In FY2023, workplace giving to SNAP totaled $10,983.

Our **Spay-It-Forward** effort—a year-round solicitation for in-clinic donations over-and-above invoiced service fees—brought in 14,496 gifts totalling $104,833 during FY2023. This is an important way to remind our clients that SNAP is a publicly-supported charity, giving them an opportunity to have personal “buy-in” to our mission.

Our **In-kind Donation** drives bring in paper towels, toilet paper, trash bags, copy paper, towels and blankets, and other consumable products, allowing SNAP to budget the savings for other needs. In FY2023, SNAP held donation drives in the fall and spring, as well as Twelve Days of In-Kind Giving in December. Many of our supporters continue to donate items regularly throughout the year. In FY2023, we saved approximately $77,372 by having these supplies donated (includes $33,771 in vaccine value from Petco Love and a shipment of facemasks valued at $30,000 from Greater Good Charities). Another $52,800 was saved on donated clinic space, for a total of $130,172 in in-kind donations.

In FY2023, SNAP was a beneficiary of $43,200 from the **Estates of Constance R. Catron, Dennis Fitzgerald, and Nancy White Magee**. SNAP has been fortunate to have been a recipient of planned giving from a number of donors. We are honored to carry on their legacy through stewardship of these gifts in support of SNAP’s important mission.

In February, SNAP announced a new partnership with FreeWill which emphasizes **Legacy Giving**. FreeWill provides tools to help SNAP’s clients and supporters in the important task of writing a will. Since we began our partnership with Freewill, we have

received $1,413,600 in Legacy Commitments. In April—just in time for "tax day"—we introduced giving to SNAP through appreciated stocks. FreeWill's **Stock Donation** platform simplifies this process so that donors can give stocks in about ten minutes.

A SNAP Snippet—Sadie's Story

Tammie was driving along a busy freeway when she saw a dog wondering on the side of the road. Since she had an Australian Cattle Dog at home, Tammie was able to identify this lost dog as being the same breed. Of course, Tammie wasn't about to leave this poor dog roaming in heavy traffic, so she stopped to pick her up. Once safe in Tammie's home, the dog settled in and quickly fell in love with everyone, including Tammie's resident dog.

When Tammie took the new dog to her veterinarian's office for vaccines and microchipping, the clinic staff scanned the dog and informed Tammie that she was already microchipped and registered as "Sadie." Because she had already become quite attached to Sadie, Tammie's heart sank, but she knew she had to reunite Sadie with her human family. She called the number registered on the chip and made arrangements to return Sadie. It turned out that Sadie had somehow traveled forty-five miles away from home!

About a week later, Tammie received a call from Sadie's owners. They had noticed Sadie moping around, disinterested in food or play. As they talked, they realized that Sadie was lonesome for her new human friends and canine buddy and agreed that Tammie's family would take permanent custody of Sadie. Thrilled by this turn of events, Tammie scheduled a surgery appointment at SNAP to get Sadie spayed and ready to begin her new life—healthy, happy, and litter free.

6. In Closing

From SNAP's top leadership and throughout the organization, empathy is our driving force, with an emphasis on care and compassion for both people and pets. Our Executive Director is a veterinarian who comes from a culture in which animals are not regarded as family members nor afforded the care family members deserve. Understanding the intrinsic value of animals and the richness they bring to our lives, she is motivated to advocate for them and to empower people with limited means to provide adequate care for their own pets.

All SNAP personnel are pet lovers and/or guardians and understand our clients' concerns about providing their pets with adequate care. Many refer to their pets as their "kids;" some don't have human children, and their pets fill that space in their lives. Some of us bring our pets to work with us daily so as not to leave them alone all day. This passion for the wellbeing of pets and the humans who love them creates a bond of understanding with our clients. Team members have even personally assisted clients in paying for needed care, and our clients routinely express their gratitude for the compassionate care they and their pets receive at SNAP.

Fiscal Year 2023 Stats-At-A-Glance

	Houston Clinic	Pasadena Clinic	San Antonio Clinic	TOTAL
Dog Spay	1,330	205	2,452	3,987
Dog Neuter	2,052	376	2,838	5,266
Total Dogs	**3,382**	**581**	**5,290**	**9,253**
Cat Spay	2,469	414	2,833	5,716
Cat Neuter	2,412	468	2,901	5,781
Total Cats	**4,881**	**882**	**5,734**	**11,497**
Total Surgeries	8,263	1,463	11,024	20,750
	Houston: 9,726		San Antonio: 11,024	
Subsidized Surgeries	916	215	1,743	2,874
	Houston: 1,131		San Antonio: 1,743	
% Subsidized	4%	1%	8%	14%
	Houston: 12%		San Antonio: 0%	
EPP†	356	62	748	1,166
	Houston: 418		San Antonio: 748	
% EPP	2%	0%	4%	6%
	Houston: 4%		San Antonio: 7%	
Community Cats	659	63	1,350	2,072
	Houston: 722		San Antonio: 1,350	
Wellness Care	2,805	427	4,902	8,134
	Houston: 3,232		San Antonio: 4,902	
Microchip Insertions	3,281	446	3,130	6,857
	Houston: 3,727		San Antonio: 3,130	
Rabies Vaccines	5,921	1,349	9,077	16,347
	Houston: 7,270		San Antonio: 9,077	
Total Animals Helped	11,068	1,890	15,926	28,884
	Houston: 12,958		San Antonio: 15,926	

†EPP=Empowering People & Pets = Subsidized Spay/Neuter Program (largely funded by grants).
EPP surgeries are a subset of "Subsidized Surgeries," and are also included in the Subsidized Surgeries totals

Estimates of Births Prevented*

	End of Year 1	End of Year 7
Community Cats	**4,161**	**2,424,466**
House Cats	**26,626**	**140,630,396**
Dogs	**23,847**	**57,671,448**

***Assumptions**

The numbers of animals directly affected are exact numbers, recorded in our computerized database. The number of births prevented is estimated using research-based formulas derived by National Pet Alliance resercher Karen Johnson, assuming 50% of the offspring would have been female.

•The formula for feral ("community") cat reproduction rate is 2.1 litters per year with an average litter size of 4.25 kittens and an infant mortality rate of 62.5%.
•The formula for house cat reproduction rate is 2.1 litters per year with an average litter size of 4.25 kittens and an infant mortality rate of 33%.
•The formula for dog reproduction rate is 1.45 litters per year with an average litter size of 5.5 puppies and an infant mortality rate of 25%.
None of these three calculations takes adult mortality into account.