

SUN-TRIBUNE PEOPLE



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Krista Pedersen is heading up a spay and neuter clinic at the OSPCA's Whitchurch-Stouffville facility. The clinic should open in March.

Neuter clinic first in Canada

BY SANDRA BOLAN
Staff Writer

An encounter between a single intact male and female cat and a single intact female and male dog can result in more than 424,372 kittens and puppies being born within a seven-year period, according to the Animal Rescue League of El Paso, Texas.

The majority of these kittens and puppies will live a shortened and difficult life as strays, or be brought to overcrowded shelters where the possibility of euthanasia is greater than being adopted because there is just not enough room at the inn.

But this does not have to happen.

By spaying just one female cat and neutering one male cat, up to 420,000 feline births can be prevented. Spaying one female dog and neutering one male dog can reduce the dog population by 4,372.

After years of trying to educate pet lovers and owners about the importance of spaying or neutering their cats and dogs, the OSPCA is going one step further and is opening Canada's first self-sus-

taining high-volume spay/neuter clinic.

"We're trying to go to the heart of the problem and deal with it symptomatically and get to the root of the problem," Krista Pedersen, manager of the OSPCA's spay/neuter clinic said.

The clinic, which will be located at the OSPCA's Woodbine Avenue site in Whitchurch-Stouffville, and is expected to open this March, is based on the business model created by North Carolina-based Humane Alliance.

There are currently more than 30 spay/neuter clinics operating under the Humane Alliance model in the United States.

"In areas where these clinics are operating, they've found shelter admissions (at some locations) have been reduced by over 50 per cent," Ms Pedersen said, noting the GTA has an "enormous problem" with homeless animals.

"In the GTA, over \$14 million is spent annually on un-homed pets," Ms Pedersen said.

Although stray dogs are a problem within the region, homeless cats are an even greater issue.

"We would love to make a big difference there and I think we will with the initiative," Ms Pedersen said.

However, the clinic is not just for homeless animals — it will be open to all pet owners, which is something local veterinarian Paul Westermann is uncomfortable with.

According to Dr. Westermann, pet owners who use these types of clinics fail to get an overall picture of their pet's health, which may result in serious illnesses not being detected in a timely manner.

"It just leads to more serious issues later on," he said. "Two years later, when the dog has a broken leg, these shoppers are looking for discounted prices" and when they don't find them, the pet may end up at a shelter or abandoned on the side of the road because the owner was too cheap to visit a veterinarian on a regular basis.

"I think it's good for people who have six cats living in a barn or (care for) a stray cat (but not) for people who have this beloved family pet looking for cheap service," Dr. Westermann said.

Volunteers wanted for \$200,000 facility

In order to operate the more than \$200,000 facility, the OSPCA is looking for 10 volunteers to assist the veterinarians and technicians during the animals' pre- and post-operative care.

"It's a really good opportunity for everyone," Carol May-Quillan, manager of volunteer programs at the OSPCA said.

In order to be an animal care volunteer at the spay/neuter clinic, the person has to be available from either 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 1 to 6 p.m. one to two days a week.

Preference will be given to applicants with animal or medical experience, however the OSPCA will be providing extensive training.

For more information on volunteering, contact Carol May-Quillan at cmay@ospc.on.ca or 905-898-7122, ext. 307.

—Sandra Bolan

Whitchurch-Stouffville News Digest

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Winter clothing collected for needy on weekend

New Beginnings York Durham will be holding a winter clothing drive Jan. 10 and 11 at the Stouffville Wal-Mart.

The organization will be collecting new and gently used winter coats, boots, hats and mitts, as well as blankets and sleeping bags for the less fortunate in York Region.

New Beginnings is an agency that distributes, free of charge, usable items to those in need such as newcomers, families in shelters and the homeless.

All items are given to those in need via a network of agencies and churches through Durham and York regions. The event goes from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day.

For more information, contact newbeginningsyorkdurham@yahoo.ca.

Del Zotto Knighted in deal

John Tavares wasn't the only member of the Oshawa Generals who went to the London Knights in Thursday's Ontario Hockey League blockbuster trade for young prospects.

While the Generals forward and tournament's Most Valuable Player for gold-medal winning Team Canada at the World Junior Hockey Championships was the cornerstone piece in the trade, Stouffville resident Michael Del Zotto joined Tavares.

In his third OHL season and a first-round pick of the New York Rangers last year, Del Zotto, 18, had seven goals and 26 assists in 34 games with the Generals this season. Also going to the Knights was goalkeeper Daryl Borden.

The Generals received rookie Christian Thomas, Scott Valentine, Michael Zador, four second-round picks from 2009 to 2012 and two third-round selections in 2010 and 2011.

SOUND OFF

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