

Help Pets, Help People



Pets of the Homeless
keeps pets happy
and healthy so
those experiencing
homelessness can keep
their lifeline

Pets of the Homeless allows those experiencing homelessness to keep their limited resources focused on themselves by providing free services for their pets.

PHOTO BY MARK ROGERS

Heart Heart

Pets are a lifeline for their owners!
Pets of the Homeless makes sure they stay that way.

BY ANNA QUINLAN

While walking past a homeless man and his dog one day — an unfortunate, common sight — Genevieve Frederick found herself wondering how many members of the homeless community were pet owners, and what specific challenges they must face in caring for their animals.

As a pet owner herself, she also found herself thinking how these pets must also enrich the lives of those who are currently experiencing homelessness.

“I come from a large family who have always had pets,” says Frederick. “Our many dogs over the years have brought so much comfort and love. When they pass, we grieve, as they were a member of the family. Scientists have proven that pets help all people mentally and physically.”

When Frederick learned that approximately 10 percent of the homeless have pets, she was moved to action. Inspired, she founded Pets of the Homeless (POTH), a nonprofit that provides free pet food and veterinary care to the homeless community, where she now serves as president.

“I knew I could help,” she says. “I knew that I wanted this to be a national program that would also highlight the issues of homeless having pets.”

Since its inception in 2008, over 17,000 pets have received free veterinary care as a result of POTH’s services, which have often saved their lives. The organization also includes over 460 donation sites nationwide, which have



“Sometimes the daily responsibility of caring for a pet can mean the difference between life and death.”

GENEVIEVE FREDERICK
Founder and president, Pets of the Homeless

collected and distributed over 500 tons of pet food.

“Sometimes the daily responsibility of caring for a pet can mean the difference between life and death,” Frederick says.

“Many homeless people have depression issues, and having that one being they can talk to and love means everything to them. They are their family. Pets make the homeless less invisible to the public. Folks will stop to comment on the pet and start a conversation. This makes them feel less isolated.”

Celebrating its 10th anniversary in July 2018, Frederick says the milestone anniversary shows POTH’s sustainability.

“Our growth and success is due to our wonderful donors, volunteers, doctors and staff whom believe in our mission,” Frederick says. This has allowed the organization to evolve from one program — providing free pet food — to also include veterinary and emergency care, and administering shelter crates.

All of POTH’s programs are provided to recipients completely free of charge.

“For me, it has been a journey of compassion for the homeless and their everyday survival,” says Frederick.



SHELTERED TOGETHER

Getting into a local shelter is often the first step to stability for someone experiencing homelessness. But for those with pets, this opportunity can present a difficult choice. Many shelters don’t allow animals, meaning owners either have to abandon their pet or turn down a warm bed.

“If a homeless person is separated from their pet it would be devastating to them,” says Renee Lowry, executive director of Pets of the Homeless (POTH). “Their pets provide loyalty, companionship, love and protection, as well as mental benefits.”

POTH’s newest program offers an alternative to splitting up pets and owners. The organization seeks out shelters willing to accept animals and ships them pet crates to use, thus providing free and safe lodging for pets at shelters.

“The crate becomes property of the shelter for future use,” explains Lowry. By supplying crates to shelters, POTH helps ensure these pet owners have access to the much-needed resources that can help get them out of homelessness.

ARE YOU A HOMELESS SHELTER THAT NEEDS A CRATE?
EMAIL INFO@PETSOFTHEHOMELESS.ORG
OR CALL 775-841-7463.

Extending a Lifeline



With Pets of the Homeless' help, Laurie Ross was able to find Dr. Peter Henriksen and his red caboose clinic, getting her dog, Snug, care when he needed it most.
PHOTO BY OWEN KAHN

"He's saved my life in more ways than one and more times than once."

LAURIE ROSS
Client of Pets of the Homeless

Pets of the Homeless puts emergency veterinary care within reach for pet owners in need

BY ANNE STOKES

It was love at first sight for Laurie Ross and Snug. The two met seven years ago in a Santa Rosa animal shelter, and the little Chihuahua has been Ross' sidekick ever since.

"He was sitting all alone, just sitting there quietly. We looked eye to eye and that was it," she remembers. "If things get overwhelming I'll start going a little too fast. I'll get hyper and he just calms me right down."

Recently, Ross has found it hard to make ends meet on Social Security.

For the past three years, she and Snug have been living together in her car, where he provides not only security, but love and emotional support.

"He's saved my life in more ways than one and more times than once," she says. "He'll let me know if anyone is near the car, anytime day or night. He's very protective. I've learned a lot from him about heart — this little guy has so much love and heart in him."



DR. PETER HENRIKSEN,
ACME PET REPAIR

Thanks to Pets of the Homeless (POTH), Ross has been able to access emergency veterinary care to keep Snug healthy. Several years ago, he came down with a severe case of kennel cough and more recently in November 2017, Snug required emergency care after he was attacked by a larger dog. In January 2018, one of his eyes required surgery after it became infected and treatment for pain and inflammation was unsuccessful. Ross says her first call was to POTH, which was able to help her pay for the surgery performed by Dr. Peter Henriksen.

"He had a lot of conjunctivitis in his eye and he was tearing all the time, and it was clearly painful to the touch," says Dr. Henriksen, who has been working with the homeless community and their pets for the past several years. "The decision was made to get his eye out and he's clearly better off without it."

Today, Snug is back to running around and keeping Ross safe and happy, albeit with a single, healthy eye. She says without POTH's help, she wouldn't have been able to care for her beloved dog.

"I didn't know what I was going to do or where I was going to start," Ross says. "That first call gave me hope."



HOW TO GET HELP NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE

First, call 775-841-7463 and ask for a case manager. If outside of business hours (9 a.m. to 3 p.m., PST), leave a message and one will return your call the next business day.

A case manager will determine eligibility, ask about your pet's condition and help find the **closest** emergency facility.

POTH will find the closest participating veterinarian willing to treat your pet and pre-approve an **examination.**

You'll be contacted with the local vet's name, address and phone number. You must make the appointment during POTH's office hours (9 a.m. to 3 p.m. PST) so that they can pre-approve and pay for recommended **treatment plans.**

POTH **pays veterinarians directly** for services, without a mountain of paperwork required.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.PETSOFTHEHOMELESS.ORG.



Wellness Clinics give the homeless and their pets access to lifesaving vaccines and basic treatments that stop major problems before they start.
PHOTO COURTESY OF PETS OF THE HOMELESS

Wellness Without a Price Tag

Homeless people often put their pets' needs before their own, but they shouldn't have to

BY ELIZABETH MORABITO

FIND A CLINIC

Just like people, it's critical that any type of beloved pet has regular check-ups with a veterinarian before a major health concern arises. Annual exams may catch problems early when they are easiest to treat, giving pets the best chance of staying happy and healthy.

Pets of the Homeless partners with veterinarians **nationwide** to offer *free* Wellness Clinics. Together, they provide crucial basic services such as:

- vaccinations (the most important are rabies, distemper and parvo for dogs and feline distemper for cats)
- basic exams
- minor treatment
- medications
- nail trimming
- ear cleaning
- spay/neuter vouchers (when available)



Clinics welcome both low-income individuals and those currently experiencing homelessness. They are held at organizations throughout the country that already offer community services, such as food pantries or resource centers. As many as 60 pets are served during each five-hour clinic.

FIND A LIST OF UPCOMING WELLNESS CLINICS BY VISITING WWW.PETSOFTHEHOMELESS.ORG/GET-HELP/STATE-RESOURCES OR CALL 775-841-7463.

For many people experiencing homelessness, their pet is what keeps them going. Though their pets are an added responsibility, these companions provide emotional support and help with depression — they become a lifeline.

Kelly Banks experienced homelessness eight years ago with her dog Nikki, a Jack Russell terrier and beagle mix.

"My dog helped me get through the hard times," she recalls. "Pets are there for you when you're happy, sad or even sick."

Pets also encourage responsibility. In fact, homeless individuals often make sure their pet is fed and cared for before feeding themselves or tending to their own health needs.

"The homeless have big hearts," Banks says. "They don't have anything, but they would help an animal in a heartbeat."

Pets of the Homeless (POTH) understands this. That's why the nonprofit holds Wellness Clinics for the animals of the homeless, whether they have fur or feathers or scales. Banks learned about the clinic in her area from others in her homeless camp in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

"On my first visit, I was blown away! I'd never seen anything like the clinic before," she says. "I asked how much money I needed to have and they told me the fees

were waived. They checked Nikki for everything, even heartworm."

One of the most critical services the clinic provides is vaccinations. Rabies and DHPP (distemper/hepatitis/para influenza parvo) shots, which are normally costly, are given completely free of charge. Without them, many dogs would most likely perish from disease and illness.

"Miss Kelly," as Banks is now known in her former homeless community, has transitioned out of homelessness and no longer receives services. Instead, she helps give them. She serves as a vital link, connecting the homeless and their pets to resources and services they need.

Banks willingly makes herself available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, striving to form a personal relationship with every dog and owner. Banks also keeps track of a pet's vaccinations and paperwork for their owners — records that need to be saved to

keep pets from being impounded.

She looks forward to working at the POTH Wellness Clinic in Fort Smith every year, the same one that helped her and Nikki when they needed it.

"The homeless people run up and hug us," Banks says. "They say, 'Thank you so much! Without you, my dog wouldn't have shots or food.'"

"I asked how much money I needed to have and they told me the fees were waived. They checked [my dog] for everything, even heartworm."

KELLY BANKS
Former service recipient and current volunteer for
Pets of the Homeless

Rolling Acres Memorial Garden for Pets in Kansas City, owned by Nancy Piper, has served as a pet food and supply Donation Site on behalf of Pets of the Homeless since 2008. An animal lover herself, Piper understands how important pets are to their human companions.

PHOTO BY CRAIG SANDS



"We recognize the importance of pets to people, that they are family members."

NANCY PIPER
President and owner, Rolling Acres Memorial Garden for Pets



HELP FEED THE HUNGRY

Pets of the Homeless couldn't provide food without volunteers at all areas of its organization, from donation to distribution. Food and supplies dropped off at Donation Sites are taken to Pet Food Providers such as soup kitchens or food pantries where they're distributed to homeless pet owners.

What's needed:

- Although dog and cat food are the most common donations, most pet food is welcome.
- Many Donation Sites also accept pet supplies such as blankets, coats, leashes, collars and treats. There's also a need for brushes and grooming supplies.
- Please tape shut any open containers before donating them.

How you can help:

- Talk to your local veterinarian or other pet-related businesses about becoming a Donation Site.
- Become a Donation Site at your own business or workplace.
- Deliver donated pet food to provider organizations or directly to homeless community members.
- Tell homeless pet owners about Pets of the Homeless and provide them with contact information so they can be connected with the closest provider.

**TO VOLUNTEER OR DONATE, VISIT
WWW.PETSOFTHEHOMELESS.ORG OR
CALL 775-841-7463.**

The Gift of Daily Pet Food

Donated food and supplies go a long way in improving the lives of the homeless and their pets

BY ANNE STOKES

A cat named Adam Blu changed the course of Nancy Piper's career. As a management consultant in the human end-of-life industry, she wasn't quite sure what to do when her pet was nearing his "rainbow bridge." It was kismet when she found out a local pet cemetery was for sale in Kansas City.

Today, Adam Blu is buried at Rolling Acres Memorial Garden for Pets, where Piper has been president and owner for the past 40 years. Every day she sees what an integral role animals play in the lives of their human companions.

"We recognize the importance of pets to people, that they are family members and they deserve to have dignified and respectful after-life care," she says.

By entering into the pet industry, Piper soon found herself caring for animals in another way — as a food Donation Site for Pets of the Homeless (POTH). When she learned that many in the homeless community also have pets, she wondered just how they provided for their animals.

"I envision that they have a hard time meeting their own material needs," she says. "Their pets are just as important to

them as ours are to us. To me, it was easy to start requesting donations — it was just a matter of jumping in and doing it."

Piper's facility has been collecting items for POTH for the past 10 years. In 2017, she collected 428 cans and 3,000 pounds of dry pet food as well as supplies such as leashes, collars, blankets and winter coats. The food she collects is distributed by Uplift, a Kansas City ministry organization.



NANCY PIPER, PRESIDENT AND OWNER, ROLLING ACRES MEMORIAL GARDEN FOR PETS

"We suggested owners bring leftover food to us, or if they bought a new pet food and their pet doesn't like it, we take those donations.

We get donations through the veterinary clinics the same way," she says. "A lot of people donate around Christmas, but we have a year-round need. We need it in July as much as we do in December."

Amber Starr, POTH case manager, says that providing food can have a profound impact on homeless owners, many of whom ensure their pet eats before taking care of their own needs.

"I think it provides a little bit of hope, that there's somebody who does care and that gives people the strength to go on and get themselves help," Starr says. "They have that companion who gives them unconditional love and that helps their drive for life."

'It's Contagious Helping Others'

Pets of the Homeless volunteer makes her community a better place, one connection at a time

BY ANNE STOKES

When Grissel Chavez saw Papi limping alongside his owner, she couldn't just drive by the heartbreaking scene without stopping. As an outreach volunteer with Pets of the Homeless (POTH), she knew she could help.

"This little dog was hit by a car and for four months was hobbling with three legs," she says. "His leg ended up being amputated and POTH, in partnership with other organizations, helped pay the bill, which was over \$2,000. POTH helps those in the worst of conditions, like Papi."

Like many in the homeless community, Papi's owner wouldn't have been able to afford such care and the little dog would have suffered considerably before dying. Chavez, who has been volunteering with POTH in the Los Angeles County area for the past two years, says that, unfortunately, it's a common situation.

"I come across a lot of homeless people who have pets, many that couldn't afford urgent care," she says. "POTH has always been responsive, helpful and willing to help. Everyone has had a lot of healthier, happier pets because of them."

To many of the homeless people Chavez works with, their pets are *the* most important part of their lives, causing them to often forgo housing rather than abandon their companion.

"A lot of people have told me that their dog is their best friend and what's kept them from committing suicide," she says. "That's what drives my passion — to help these people who love and care for pets like I do."



Volunteers connect homeless owners with critical resources like food and veterinary care they would otherwise be unable to afford for their pets.
PHOTO BY ZACH SUTTON

"Pets of the Homeless' mission is to help the pets of the homeless, and that's the bottom line."

GRISSEL CHAVEZ
Outreach volunteer for Pets of the Homeless

Chavez says volunteering with POTH is as easy as it is rewarding. She does outreach to homeless pet owners she sees near her home or work and connects them with needed resources, including pet food.

"There's no cost other than time," she says. "If you don't have the financial means to give money, information sharing is free. I think if we all just try to offer a helping hand to those who need it, it rubs off. It's contagious helping others."

She says POTH consistently stands by its mission and has been there every time Chavez has reached out for help on someone else's behalf.

"Homeless people feel that a lot of the organizations they reach out to are all promises and no action," she says. "But Pets of the Homeless' mission is to help the pets of the homeless, and that's the bottom line. The rest of it doesn't matter, and that means the pets always get the help."



LEND A HELPING HAND

Recruit Donation Sites and Wellness Clinic sponsorships

- Ask businesses and veterinary hospitals if they're willing to be Donation Sites or host Wellness Clinics.
- Help tally and transport monthly donations to Pet Food Providers such as soup kitchens, shelters and food pantries.
- Assist veterinary offices in preparing and holding Wellness Clinics.

Community outreach

- If you see a homeless pet owner with a sick or injured animal, give them Pets of the Homeless' contact information.
- Distribute donations of pet food and resources directly to the homeless community.
- Hold pet food drives.

Food, supply and monetary donations

- Donations of any type of pet food or supplies are always welcome.
- Pets of the Homeless is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, so any donations are tax-deductible.

VISIT WWW.PETSOFTHEHOMELESS.ORG OR CALL 775-841-7463 TO GET STARTED!
FILL OUT AN APPLICATION AND WATCH FOUNDER GENEVIEVE FREDERICK'S VIDEO OF HELPFUL TIPS FOR VOLUNTEERING.

A Healer's Touch

Veterinarian provides preventive and emergency care to keep homeless pets healthy

BY ANNE STOKES



Dr. Kacie Martin, medical director at VCA Wyoming Animal Hospital N.M., works to provide preventive and emergency medical care for homeless pet owners and their companions.
PHOTO BY NICK FOJUD



CALLING ALL VETS

Pets of the Homeless' mission is to keep homeless pets healthy and happy, but it can't do so without assistance from veterinarians across the country who are willing and able to provide emergency and preventive veterinary care. Here's what you can do to help:

Provide emergency veterinary care

- Get paid directly by Pets of the Homeless
- Agree to a 20% discount in services
- Help is especially needed in rural areas where homeless communities congregate

Sponsor a wellness clinic

- Funding is available to cover hard costs like vaccines and syringes
- Participating organizations can submit a proposal, including an estimate of the number of pets expected to receive care

Become a Donation Site

- Collect donations of pet food and supplies
- Deliver them to local providers such as soup kitchens and food pantries for distribution to homeless and low-income pet owners

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO GET INVOLVED, VISIT WWW.PETSOFTHEHOMELESS.ORG OR CALL 775-841-7463.

From vaccinations to surgery, Dr. Kacie Martin, medical director of VCA Wyoming Animal Hospital in Albuquerque, N.M., heals homeless pets.

Realizing that many local homeless pet owners were likely unable to provide their animals with lifesaving medical care, she decided to help in the best way she could. "It was something I knew I could offer," she says. "I felt that this community needed it, and would be deserving and appreciative of it."

Two years ago, Dr. Martin started conducting monthly clinics for those experiencing homelessness at The Rock at NoonDay day shelter. With grant funding from Pets of the Homeless (POTH), she and her staff have been able to perform physical exams and vaccinations for up to 40 pets in a day, in addition to taking on emergency veterinary cases.

"It's great to have Pets of the Homeless to rely on," she says. "Everything is taken care of very quickly. It wasn't hard to get the funding for the care."

According to Renee Lowry, POTH's executive director, veterinarians like Dr. Martin help the organization serve a crucial need that would otherwise be financially out of reach for most homeless pet owners.

"When we're dealing with a pet emergency, time is of the essence and it can sometimes be difficult to find a veterinarian in the area where the homeless person is located," Lowry says. "It's a great way for veterinarians to give back to have a Wellness Clinic and also to support our organization through emergencies."

Dr. Martin says she would love to see more veterinary organizations and volunteer groups help the homeless and their pets. For her own part, participating in the Wellness Clinics have inspired Dr. Martin to begin planning a biannual wellness fair for pets in her area.

"The more veterinarians that would be willing to help, the more as a community we can do," she says. "Being available to handle those emergencies, it's really not anything more on our part that we already do every day. It's just reaching out to a new community."

Dr. Martin is still very committed to providing care to the homeless community who she says is always appreciative of the help.

"A lot of them didn't want to be homeless, it's not a lifestyle that they chose," she says. "Having their pet, that is their life and they would do anything for their animals. To give them back that quality of life is amazing. We love doing it."

"The more veterinarians that would be willing to help, the more as a community we can do."

DR. KACIE MARTIN
Medical director, VCA Wyoming Animal Hospital N.M.

You Can Help Pets, Too!

Make sure every pet has food and health care services needed to survive – no matter who they belong to

Lend a hand as a...



Veterinarian

Participate in a Wellness Clinic or be added to the Pets of the Homeless (POTH) Emergency Services database.



Homeless Shelter

Receive crates free of charge to use at your location, keeping pets and owners together.



Provider

Distribute donated and correctly portioned pet food to the homeless from your community food bank or other organization.



Volunteer

Work at Wellness Clinics, connect homeless individuals with POTH services, run pet food drives, recruit businesses to host pet food donation sites and recruit local veterinarians to join POTH's programs.



Donor

Donate tax-deductible monetary funds, name POTH as your beneficiary, enroll POTH in your company's cash matching program or give CharityChoice gift certificates.



WHO HAS PETS OF THE HOMELESS HELPED?

Care given at a **Wellness Clinic** since founded:

15,324 pets

Emergency veterinary care given since founded:

2,116 pets

Pet food donated for all types of animals since founded:

1,111,647 pounds

Though POTH helps all homeless people and their pets, some individuals experience greater hardships.

Over the past four years, POTH has provided emergency veterinary care to the pets of:

906 women

84 veterans

Figures provided as of December 2017. Data from GuideStar

POTH can help pet owners and accept volunteers anywhere in the U.S.

Get in touch

775-841-7463

info@petsofthehomeless.org

www.petsofthehomeless.org

www.facebook.com/OfficialPetsoftheHomeless

www.twitter.com/petsofhomeless

www.youtube.com/user/PetsHomeless

www.instagram.com/pets_of_the_homeless



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