

Pet Talk

FALL 2011

LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org

Our mission

Lincoln Animal Ambassadors promotes enriching our community through progressive thinking, education, awareness and public support. We are committed to improving the lives of animals and alleviating cruelty in Lincoln and the surrounding area.

Donate

Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Program
Pet Food Bank
General Funds

Mail to: PO Box 67072, Lincoln, NE 68506. Pet Food Bank donation items can be dropped off at St. Matthews Episcopal Church, 2325 S. 24th Street. LAA is a 501(c)(3). All donations are tax deductible.

Or donate through our website
LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org



Cause For Paws
Boutique for Cheap

Don't forget to shop at Cause for Paws, located at 57th & Old Cheney Road. This "boutique for cheap" turns your donations and purchases into cash for animal charities, including LAA's low-cost spay/neuter program.
CauseForPawsLincoln.org.

Be responsible in November

During the month of November, the focus of LAA's low-cost spay/neuter program will be Pit Bulls and Pit mixes. Why? Sadly, Pits and Pit Mixes are the most euthanized dog breed in shelters across the country. LAA wants to be proactive by preventing unwanted litters of puppies from being born, eventually becoming homeless, and ultimately ending up at a shelter where their chances of being adopted are slim. Similar spay/neuter drives focused on this breed have been successful in Nebraska and around the country.

How can you help? First, if you have an unaltered Pit or Pit mix please consider making the healthy and responsible decision and get your dog altered. If you have a neighbor or friend, please pass this information on so LAA can help as many dogs as possible. And finally, please consider making a monetary donation to LAA so we can help as many dogs and their human families as "possibull".



Featured Rescue Nebraska No Kill Canine Rescue

By Missy Murkins

Nebraska No Kill Canine Rescue (NNKCR) is a new organization helping dogs in Lancaster County. Founded by five dedicated individuals, NNKCR has three main goals; Rescue Dogs, Rehabilitate Dogs and Re-Home Dogs. One thing that sets this group apart from most other rescues in the Lincoln area is that NNKCR is not breed specific. All dogs deserve an equal chance at being adopted.

The organization is made possible through a network of volunteers and



All dogs deserve an equal chance at being adopted.

directly to the care of the dogs not to salaries or building expenses. They provide emergency veterinary care for all dogs in their care as well as foster placement for homeless dogs and strays. No dog is turned away provided there is a foster family available to care for it.

Copper, a 5-year-old redbone coonhound is one such lucky dog. Copper was a stray and from the looks of him, had been for a long time.

foster families. NNKCR relies on families to care for their dogs instead of having a shelter facility. This insures that all money given to NNKCR goes

continued inside...

SAVE THE DATE!

4th Annual Wine & Howl

June 2, 2012

Deer Springs Winery

Details TBA.

Pet food program encourages community service

By Mary Douglas

Kendra Aaron didn't hesitate to take in three young pit bulls, Ceasar, Dangerous and Baby Girl, when her best friend had no choice but to leave her home for an indefinite period of time. Kendra is an animal lover and didn't want to see them end up at the shelter. But

"LAA helped me out tremendously with food, flea treatments, and spaying and neutering!"

with her own three pit bulls, Isis, Zues and Viper, she had her hands full. Although they were all very sweet and loving, that was a lot of dogs in one household. They all knew each other but living together was another story.

Kendra turned to the Lincoln Animal Ambassadors (LAA) for help. "LAA helped me out tremendously with food, flea treatments and spaying and neutering! I have six pit bulls at my house—3 of which are my friends—that I am caring for and in these hard times you have made our lives so much

easier." writes Aaron. LAA is glad we could help her do the right thing to help her friend and her dogs. Thank you for "stepping up" Kendra and giving back to your community!

The LAA Temporary Assistance Pet Food Bank encourages community service by its recipients. Once someone has received assistance for three consecutive months, they are required to show proof of some type of community service to continue to receive help. It could be for an organization, their church, or as simple as helping out a neighbor or a friend.

The Pet Food Bank is funded completely by donations and disburses over two tons of dry pet food, in addition to canned food and litter, each month to Lincoln and surrounding area pets and their people in need. Donations of pet food and/or other pet items, new or used, can be dropped off at:

**St. Matthews Episcopal Church
2345 S. 24th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska**

or call our hotline at (402) 817-1168
www.lincolnanimalambassadors.org



The numbers

as of October 2011...

PET FOOD BANK

LAA has disbursed over 46,000 lbs of dry pet food, over 7,200 cans of pet food, and over 8,400 lbs of litter. That's an average of over 2,300 lbs of dry pet food a month.

LOW-COST SPAY/NEUTER PROGRAM

More than 400 dogs and cats! That's the number of pets LAA's Low Cost Spay/Neuter Program has altered since its beginning in June 2010. Six local veterinarians are working with LAA to reduce Lincoln's pet overpopulation.

Remember: Two cats and their offspring can produce 420,000 cats in seven years. Two dogs and their offspring can produce 67,000 in six years. Spaying or neutering just one animal can help save thousands of lives because nationwide, 56% of dogs and 72% of cats entering shelters are killed.



Baby Girl



Ceasar & Dangerous

Thank you to our Meow & Chow sponsors

9 South Char Grill
A Novel Idea Bookstore
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Evette Balkus
Pauline Balta
Kyndall Bedall
BK Pet Necessities
Val Boettcher
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The Cookie Company

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Jim Volkmer
Walgreens
Carole Webb
White Crane Gallery

Meow & Chow celebrates 2nd year

By Tammie Lang

A perfect fall evening greeted eager bingo players and animal lovers on October 15. This was the night of the Second Annual Meow and Chow soup and bingo night fundraiser hosted by Lincoln Animal Ambassadors (LAA) and The Cat House (TCH). The event, held at the Scottish Rite Temple, featured over 12 types of soups, desserts and breads for an all you can eat feast. After everyone was full and content from such a wonderful selection of food items generously donated by several Lincoln businesses, our featured comedian, George Hametis took the floor to get the overflowing crowd in an even better mood before the main event started!

Bingo callers kept the bingo games flowing with several games with many prizes won by the audience. Frequent eager winners got to pick from a wide variety of donated bingo prizes.

The night was capped off with the winners of our grand prize raffle items being

revealed. These four grand prizes included a gift card to Kohl's, Nebraska volleyball tickets, a cat tower designed by BK Pet Necessities and an iPad.

Event organizers and volunteers spent countless hours collecting raffle and food donations. The raffle tables were nearly double from 2010, and the variety and choices were endless! The food selection too provided such a great variety that it was hard to choose which soup to try first!

LAA and TCH are grateful for the volunteers and supporters that made this night such a success. Event organizers are already considering a larger venue for 2012 which is a very exciting prospect for a two year old event. LAA and TCH would also like to thank our generous food and raffle donators. This list is too long to include in this newsletter, but the generosity made this event possible. Thanks too to everyone who came out to help make this event another "meowing" success!

Calendar of events

Cause for Paws Holiday Open House November 4-6

57th & Old Cheney Road
Sales benefit local animal charities.

The Cat House Christmas Garage Sale November 11 & 12

Fri 3pm-8pm

Sat 8am-3pm

1935 Q Street

Proceeds benefit The Cat House.

Sub Sandwich Sale November 19

Super Saver, 56th & Hwy 2
LAA fundraiser. Sandwiches made to order.

I Love My Dog Expo February 25 & 26, 2012

Lancaster Event Center

Cause for Paws Fashion Show March 3, 2012

Cornhusker Marriott

Details TBA. Proceeds benefit local animal charities.

4th Annual Wine & Howl June 2, 2012

Deer Springs Winery

Details TBA. Benefit supports Lincoln Animal Ambassadors.



Featured Rescue, continued from cover

He was found begging for food in rural Nebraska, was skin and bones, and very insecure and timid. This poor guy had been through a lot. Thankfully, Copper was taken to the folks at NNKCR. Together with the Nebraska Animal Medical Center (NAMC), they cleaned Copper up, got him neutered, cleaned his teeth and quickly earned his trust. He was placed in foster care where his foster family fell in love with him and adopted him. Now, Copper is doing great. His confidence has increased and he's quickly becoming the dog he was meant to be. His new fur-ever family is ever so grateful to NNKCR for bringing Copper into their lives.

This is only one example of the many success stories occurring with NNKCR. If you would like to be part of this growing organization, there are several ways you can help. NNKCR is always in need of foster homes. If you are unable to foster, you can volunteer your time helping find forever homes, coordinating home visits or conducting interviews for potential adoptees. They have frequent adoption events and are also in need of table workers and dog walkers.

NNKCR also helps families experiencing unwanted behavioral or training issues. They work with trainers to teach owners how to work with their dogs. This service helps keep dogs in homes and out of the shelter systems. Dog training is another way that volunteers can lend their talents to NNKCR. If you have experience in dog training, please consider volunteering with this organization. Because many of the dogs that enter in to NNKCR come with no supplies, donations of kennels, leashes, dog food, treats, toys, beds and blankets are always appreciated.

NNKCR is a 501(c)(3), non-profit dog rescue group. Monetary donations can be mailed to PO Box 6295, Lincoln, NE 68506-6295. Your generous donations ensure that this group will continue to grow and help all adoptable dogs find fur-ever homes. If you are interested in adopting, fostering or volunteering you can reach NNKCR at info@NebraskaNoKill.org. To learn more about this new and exciting group, check out their website at www.NebraskaNoKill.org or visit them on Facebook.

**As 2011 comes to an end, now is a great time to remember LAA in your year-end giving.
As a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, all donations to LAA are tax deductible.**

A passion for pet food

By Lori McGinnis Black

One issue I am most passionate about is the food we feed our pets. I believe too few people are educated about pet food.

Just as human food has differences in nutritional value, pet food has nutritional differences. Many people fail to think about their pet's nutritional needs when they buy a bag or can of dog or cat food.

The purpose of this month's column is not to bash specific brands of pet food. My goal is to encourage pet owners to read the ingredients on the bags of the pet food they buy.

(One caveat I must add is that I don't have any formal education or knowledge about the making of pet food. My comments here are based on my own independent research because it is an area that greatly interests me. If you dispute my thoughts, I encourage you to do your own research.)

Have you ever wondered why one 30-pound bag of dog food can be bought for \$10, while a different brand's bag of the same size sells for \$50 or more?

I recently read the ingredient lists of some common pet food brands. Nearly all listed the first ingredient as corn, and high up the list was byproducts.

From what I have learned, I encourage you to avoid foods that list any form of corn as the first ingredient. Corn is a cheap filler that has little nutritional value and is difficult for pets to digest.

Another common term you will see on ingredient lists is "byproducts." This could be in the form of chicken or beef byproducts or simply "meat byproducts."

According to www.feedmypet.com, byproducts "consist of organs and parts either not desired, or condemned, for human consumption. This can include bones, blood, intestines, lungs, ligaments, heads, feet and feathers."

Bone meal is an inexpensive source of animal protein and is poorly digestible, according to the Web site. Sweeteners like sugar or corn syrup sometimes are added to pet foods to increase their appeal to animals.

What good ingredients should you look for on a bag of pet food? Look for the first ingredient listed to be a protein source.

Here is a list of the first few ingredients in one of the top foods available: deboned chicken, whitefish, chicken meal, oatmeal, ground peas, ground barley, ground brown rice, salmon meal, tomatoes, natural chicken flavor, ground flaxseed, salmon oil, carrots, spinach, sweet potatoes, apples and blueberries.

Sounds like a list of human food ingredients, which is what I believe you should look for.

Admittedly, a more nutritious pet food will cost you more. I understand some people don't have the money to pay \$50 for a bag of dog food. But I believe some people who can afford a better pet food are buying a less healthy one simply because they don't know any better.

I hope after reading this column, they do know better.

Lori McGinnis Black is a Realtor and freelance writer. You can reach her at lori.mcginisblack@gmail.com. This article was originally published in the October edition of L Magazine.

Vet recommended brands...

- Hills Science Diet
- Nutro Natural Choice
- Wellness Pet Food
- Natural Balance
- Blue Buffalo
- Nature's Variety
- Royal Canin
- Innova EVO
- Taste of the Wild

Weaning your dog or cat onto a new food should be a very a slow process. For the first 7-10 days try doing about 10% of the new food mixed with 90% of the old food. Then increase the new food by 10-15% every week. Introducing a new food slowly usually won't affect your pet negatively. Consult with your veterinarian if there are any problems during this transition period and follow their advice.

Benefit concert for the animals of Lincoln

By Tammie Lang

The Antelope Park Band shell was the location for an evening of free music to benefit the animals of Lincoln on August 20, 2011. The audience was filled with several animals and their guardians.

The opening entertainment was provided by Chris Sayre, who shared some of his original music while playing a variety of unique instruments. Chris was followed by the event organizers, Tom & Wes. Tom & Wes delighted the audience playing their guitars in unison and performing their folksy music.

The non-profit organizations, The Cat House and Lincoln Animal Ambassadors had volunteers on hand to greet those in attendance and provide information on each organization. Pet food and pet supplies were the suggested admission, and all items donated were shared by both groups. Approximately 750 pounds of cat and dog food and cat litter was collected which will help supply the shelves of Lincoln Animal Ambassadors as well as be used at The Cat House.

Both organizations were grateful for Tom & Wes for organizing the evening, Chris Sayre for his performance, and everyone that attended to show their support for the animals of Lincoln.



Meet our volunteers: Tara, Nadia, and Frankie Skorohod



Where did you first learn about Lincoln Animal Ambassadors? I was searching the internet for local animal groups to volunteer for and happened upon the LAA website. I printed out and sent in an app, and got started volunteering within a couple weeks.

Tell us a little bit about yourself. I have lived in Northeast Lincoln all of my life. I work full time for a non-profit here in Lincoln, and am trying to finish up my bachelor's degree online. Nadia is a seventh grader who plays soccer, is secretary of the Leadership Club at her school, and will be an ambassador for Lincoln's community learning centers (after school programs) at a rally in October. Frankie is in third grade, and loves swimming, art, riding his bike, and recess (isn't that everybody's favorite subject?) We have two male Boston Terriers named Baxter and Ronnie, and a female Puggle named Daisy. Oh, and a Beta fish named Tonya. We are fortunate to have my parents and sister's family all living within a mile of us.

What areas do you primarily volunteer for us at this time? We have worked the Thursday night shift of the pet food bank for maybe a year now.

What do you find rewarding in your volunteer activities? We know that what we do is important and that it matters. Taking an hour out of our week to volunteer not only helps others, but gives us a sense of giving back. It's awesome to see the kids sacrifice their time to help out, even when I give them the option of staying home and watching TV!

Do you do other volunteer work in Lincoln? We foster dogs awaiting adoption with the MidAmerica Boston Terrier Rescue out of Omaha. I also volunteer once a week as a reading tutor for first grade students through City Impact here in Lincoln. I try to stay involved with the parent advisory council at Nadia's school, and any other opportunities that become available for working parents and fit into our busy schedule.

What would you recommend to anyone looking to volunteer for Lincoln Animal Ambassadors? I encourage people to take an hour out of their week to volunteer ANYWHERE. You may not feel like you're accomplishing anything or helping anyone, but you never know what difference you're making in someone (or some animal's) life. Even five minutes spent answering a phone call or handing out food could make a big difference to another family. Whether the saying "everything you do comes back to you threefold" is true or false, I still emphasize to the kids that we never know when our good deed will come back to us when we are in need.

If you could add one thing to the Lincoln Animal Ambassadors "wish list," what would it be? We would add pet food to the wish list! The amount of food donated to us is phenomenal, but we go through A LOT of food and could always use more!

A litter of kittens spayed/neutered through LAA's Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Program



Senior pet adoption = an instant friend for life.

November is Adopt-a-Senior-Pet Month

Ask anybody who has adopted an adult dog or cat, and they'll swear their bond with their rescued pal is as deep as they come. When you open your heart and your home to an older dog or cat who needs help, they really do show their appreciation for the rest of their life! Pets who have been uprooted from their homes, or have had difficult beginnings are likely to bond completely and deeply with their new human caretakers who they view as heroes. Pets who find themselves in the shelter or at a rescue group because of a death or other tragedy in their former human family usually go through a mourning period. Once they are adopted, however, they usually want nothing more than to please their new hero—YOU! No matter what circumstances brought them to the shelter or rescue group, most older pets for adoption are exceptionally affectionate and attentive pets and extremely loyal companions. But first you have to adopt one!





Petco Spay/Neuter Drive

Every year in the United States, 3 to 4 million homeless dogs and cats are needlessly put to death. The PETCO Foundation raises millions of dollars every year to benefit homeless pets. But it's not enough. It's never enough. No matter how hard we work, no matter how much money we raise, no matter how many charitable partners we assist, there are just not enough resources to save them all.

Millions of pets die needlessly each year because people didn't take the time to spay or neuter their pets. Spaying and neutering is the #1 way to prevent pet euthanasia and reduce pet overpopulation.

LAA has benefited from the spay/neuter drive and will have the opportunity to receive donations from future Petco Foundation fundraisers.

We need your support!

Did you know that you can name Lincoln Animal Ambassadors on your United Way donation? Your donation helps provide services to pets and their people in and around the Lincoln area. We couldn't do it without the support of people like you! Don't forget LAA with your "end of year" donation!

Donate through our website, www.lincolnanimalambassadors.org using PayPal or mail this form to LAA. Pet Food Bank donation items can be dropped off at St. Matthews Episcopal Church, 2325 S. 24th Street.

Name _____ E-mail _____

Address _____

Please select your contribution amount:

\$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$250 \$500

Other \$ _____

Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Program

Pet Food Bank

General Funds

Make checks payable to:

Lincoln Animal Ambassadors

Mail to: PO Box 67072

Lincoln, NE 68506



Thank you!

PO Box 67072
Lincoln, Nebraska 68506

