

Pet Talk

SUMMER 2025

LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org / 402.817.1168

Our mission

Lincoln Animal Ambassadors is addressing the root causes of animal homelessness in Lincoln and the surrounding area. LAA assists pets and their people through a voucher-based low cost spay/neuter program, an income-based temporary assistance pet food bank and teaching people about being responsible pet guardians at community events.

Donate

**Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Program
Pet Food Bank**

General Funds

Mail to: PO Box 67072,
Lincoln, NE 68506

**Or donate through our website
LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org**

**Pet Food Bank drop off locations
listed on page 3.**

*Lincoln Animal Ambassadors is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) organization.
All donations are tax-deductible.*

2,509 cats, 2,573 dogs, 13 bunnies and a fancy rat = 5,096 pets altered!

What do these animals and numbers have in common? The numbers add up to the total animals spayed or neutered using a voucher issued by Lincoln Animal Ambassadors' spay neuter assistance program. LAA is very proud of these numbers and thankful for the community support we have received over the years which allowed us to reach this number.

Fifteen years ago, in May 2010 LAA issued their first

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voucher for a black lab blend female dog, Mia, who had just finished raising a litter of eleven puppies. Mia's owner was having a difficult time finding homes for all those babies so reached out for assistance in getting her dog spayed. Thanks to that very first LAA voucher, Mia was forever done raising puppies.

Initially our clients told LAA the amount they could contribute toward getting their pets altered with the client choosing one of the ten-twelve local veterinarians who agreed to collaborate with Lincoln Animal Ambassadors to charge a lesser amount for all clients using LAA vouchers. LAA paid the difference between what the client could pay for the spay/neuter and cost of the spay/neuter. This system was updated to LAA issuing vouchers for a specified amount based on the type of animal, their sex and size. Currently LAA issues vouchers at \$50 for male cats,

\$75 for female cats, \$125 for male dogs weighing 50 pounds or less, and \$150 for male dogs weighing 51 pounds or more. For female dogs weighing 50 pounds or less, \$150 vouchers are issued and for female dogs weighing 51 pounds or more, vouchers for \$175 are issued. Pet guardians can use the vouchers at the veterinarian clinic of their choice. In fiscal year 2023-24 LAA spent about \$62,000 on over 500 vouchers.

LAA has built in an emergency fund used if one of the male animals has been diagnosed a cryptorchid (undescended testicle), testicular cancer or a severely infected testicle, or a female has been diagnosed with pyometra or mammary tumors.

Spaying and neutering reduces the number of homeless animals.

In just one year an unsprayed dog who is allowed to breed will generally have at least four offspring. One year later the mother dog and her female pups will have more litters resulting in an average of twelve offspring. By the third year the grandma dog will have 36 great-grand-pups. And by year four one dog will be responsible for 324 new dogs. Consider the statistics with large breed dogs who often have ten to twelve puppies in one litter.

Cat statistics are even worse. In just one year an unsprayed cat who is allowed to roam outdoors can have three litters resulting in twelve kittens. One year later those twelve kittens, if kept unsprayed, will have 144 offspring of their own.

Continued on page 5.

SAVE THE date!

**Spay-ghetti & No Balls
Dinner / October 11**

Music by CoolPoppas
Entertainment by T Marni Vos
Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street
6 - 10 p.m.

Calendar of events

Stuff the Truck September 20

Super Saver
2525 Pine Lake Rd

Pooches on the Patio September 28

MoMo Pizzeria & Ristorante
12 noon – 4 p.m.

Project Connect Lincoln

October 8
Lincoln Homeless Coalition -
Sponsor
Pinnacle Bank Arena
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Spay-ghetti & No Balls Dinner & Dessert Auction October 11

Music by CoolPoppas
Entertainment by T Marni Vos
Unitarian Church
6300 A Street
6 – 10 p.m.

Tails & Treats October 26

Capital Humane Society Event
Pieloch Pet Adoption Center

Rescue Spotlight: Nebraska Italian Greyhound Rescue

Nebraska Italian Greyhound Rescue is a foster home based, all-volunteer rescue group. We are part of the national Italian Greyhound Rescue Foundation with state affiliates and state representatives. We have an all-volunteer, national committee which guides our state affiliates. Often, state representatives will work together in times of need. We have been an affiliate of the Italian Greyhound Rescue Foundation since November 2003. Our mission is finding homes for dogs in need, offering assistance to those who have the breed, and providing education about avoiding puppy mills.

Since we are a breed specific rescue, we typically have the foster home space to take in all dogs in need that are brought to our attention. This often includes dogs who do not have other viable options for assistance. Senior dogs with medical concerns or great vetting needs, young dogs with acute leg breaks requiring immediate surgery and dogs with behavioral concerns are helped by our dedicated volunteers. The Nebraska Italian Greyhound Rescue utilizes the help of not only volunteers, but also previous adopters to help transport, provide foster care and then re-home dogs primarily in the Lincoln and Omaha areas. We are a small but mighty and very dedicated group of IG enthusiasts. We often host meetups with other IG owners in our community to provide fellowship and offer fundraising opportunities as well as provide a safe outlet for IGs to socialize among each other.

The need for IGs coming into rescue slowed down substantially around 2020 but this last year, the need has picked up quite a bit. Our first goal is to help keep IGs in their current home by providing education,



recommendations and then follow up. We will keep communication open in case in the future the owners are requesting help with re-homing. If there is a need for foster care, our foster parents will bring dogs into their home, set up vetting appointments, provide training as well as lots of love for the foster dogs in their care. Once they are medically and behaviorally ready for adoption, we will carefully screen adoption applicants to find the right forever home for each dog's unique needs. Some dogs have specific needs to be successful in their new home, and we take this very seriously. During this process, we also thoroughly educate the adopters on the nuances and safety concerns of this unique and special breed. Typically, our applicants and adopters have experience with the breed.

We could not do this rescue work without our dedicated volunteers, amazing adopters, and generous donors. We have a wonderful network here in Nebraska and especially here in the city of Lincoln.

igrescue.com, neigrescue@gmail.com

Thank you to our Give to Lincoln Day supporters!

LAA would like to extend our appreciation to the over fifty donors who donated to us during the "Give to Lincoln Day" fundraising event on May 29. LAA was blown away by your generous donations of over \$9,000 which makes a huge impact on our ability to continue with our programs, which in turn allows us to continue to address the

root causes of animal homelessness and help to reduce the companion animal overpopulation in our community. We also want to thank Lincoln Community Foundation for all their hard work year after year to put on this great event. Thank you to all for supporting LAA and other local charities.

Volunteer Spotlight: Julia Wilkinson



Where did you first learn about Lincoln Animal Ambassadors? I googled volunteer opportunities here in Lincoln and thought LAA would fit me best.

Tell us a little bit about yourself. I have a Mini Aussie "Chomper" and a cat "Shadow." They have really become best friends. Besides work, just being able to come home and play with them and take walks are the highlight of my day.

What areas do you primarily volunteer for us at this time? Events team and

distribution staff.

What do you find rewarding in your volunteer activities? Being able to help not only animals but also people who are going through a hard time. Helping plan events and then being able to see the joy on people's faces as they enjoy a care free day with their pets is very rewarding for me.

What would you recommend to anyone looking to volunteer for Lincoln Animal Ambassadors? It's a great way to get involved and meet people in your community who you may not normally meet, and a good way to make new friends. The volunteers are so welcoming.

If you could add one thing to the Lincoln Animal Ambassadors "wish list," what would it be? I want to thank people for their support and just wish for their continued support whether it be donating or them getting involved and becoming a volunteer as well as we continue to help those in need.

Volunteer Opportunities

LAA is an all-volunteer organization. We are always looking for committed, skilled people to help our programs thrive. LAA is not a hands-on animal group. We help pets and their people, but we do not rescue or re-home animals. If you are interested, please complete a volunteer application at LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org.

Grant Writing

The truth is that LAA is donation-driven and we sustain our programs with donations, fundraising events, and private grants. Big grants or small grants...they all add up to one more pet altered or one more can of pet food purchased. A mindset incorporating LAA values is important as is a desire to help your community.

Fundraising Events

Fundraising events are how LAA can do what we do. If you like working with a team, enjoy party and event planning, decorating, or organizing, then joining LAA's events committee might be the volunteer position for you! You could choose to help with one-time events or all events LAA does each year.

Thank you to our annual sponsors!

UBT

Union Bank & Trust.

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Rembolt | Ludtke



By the numbers

Spay Neuter Assistance Program

5,096 total spays/neuters
2,573 total dogs
2,509 total cats
14 total bunnies and a rat

Pet Food Bank

4,828 families assisted
550,004 total pounds of dry food distributed
126,758 total cans of food distributed

Pet Food Bank: Dry dog food, clumping litter, & flea/ tick meds needed

The LAA Pet Food Bank has a distribution once a week for qualified families to help feed their pets. We appreciate our communities' support! You can help by donating these items at any of the donation sites.

Donation drop off locations:

Super Saver 56th & Hwy 2
(barrel at exit door)

Super Saver 27th & Cornhusker Hwy
(barrel at Customer Service)

Super Saver 27th & Pine Lake
(barrel at exit door)

St. Matthews Episcopal Church
2325 S. 24th St. (leave near office)

Arnie's Pet Food 56th & Hwy 2

Pet Central Station
5591 S. 48th St.

Long Dog Fat Cat
8340 Glynoaks Dr. #110

LAA receives Walmart Grant

LAA sends a big thank you to the Walmart on N. 27th St. for a recent \$1,000 Spark Good Local Grant in support of our spay/neuter program for low-income families. Spark Good Local Grants provide funding directly from Walmart and Sam's Club facilities to local non-profit organizations with the goal of helping people live better, together. LAA has helped families alter more than 5,000 pets since the beginning of the income-based spay/neuter assistance program, preventing millions of unwanted puppies and kittens from being born and filling local shelters and rescues. "Local support like this from Walmart makes it possible for LAA to continue its work to reduce animal homelessness in Lincoln and Lancaster County," said Mary Douglas, LAA President. We are grateful.



Thank you to First Plymouth Animal Ministry

Deb Navratil, Co-Chair of the First Plymouth Animal Ministry delivered a \$600 donation check to Mary Douglas, LAA President, in support of LAA's income-based pet food bank and low-cost spay/neuter program. These funds were raised from a free will offering at their June 1st Pet Blessing. LAA was one of three non-profit organizations that received funds from the ministry. We are so grateful for their on-going support and for their efforts to help animals in our community.



Wine & Howl a great success despite rain

Despite the rainy day, supporters and volunteers showed incredible dedication to the LAA's 17th annual Wine & Howl fundraiser on June 8 at Deer Springs Winery. Between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. cars made a continuous stream in Deer Springs drive bringing in over 200 people (and their dogs) to listen to live music from "No Motive," check out over 25 vendors, take their chance at winning one or more of the 75 raffle baskets. Attendees enjoyed food from Hy-Vee Catering, MetaModern BBQ, and SoCal Taco Shop, and of course, enjoyed Deer Springs wine and slushies. Various area animal rescues brought dogs at the event who participated in the "rescue roundup" to bring light to the crowd of their availability for adoption.

Although there were clouds and raindrops, generosity truly showed through the overcast skies thanks to the unwavering support of all our attendees

making it possible to raise over \$5,000 to support LAA's pet food bank and spay/neuter assistance program. The rain could not dampen the spirits of our volunteers who worked in the drizzle to make this a successful event. We could not have done it without our hard-working dedicated volunteers, as well as Emcee Karl Skinner who always makes the event so much more fun. And a big thank you to the Greater Lincoln Obedience Club for setting up their agility equipment for people to try with their own dogs. And a huge thank you to Deer Springs Winery who hosts us year after year.

"LAA is just so appreciative of the community support of our mission year after year attending this event," said President, Mary Douglas. "We are so grateful that our community believes in our mission enough to continue their support—rain, or shine. Thank you, Lincoln!"

Thank you for "Stuffing the Truck"!

Super Saver at 56th & Nebraska Highway hosted LAA for a "Stuff the Truck" event on May 26 for their income-based pet food bank. LAA volunteers promoted their pet food bank needs as customers came into the store. And those customers came through in a big way, donating 700 pounds of dry pet food, over 1,400 ounces of canned pet food, 765 ounces of pet treats, over 300 pounds of cat litter, plus other pet-related products including toys and

flea and tick medication. We also received \$482 in cash/check donations. We truly stuffed the truck! It was a huge success, thank you to Super Saver Store Manager Tana VanArsdale, to our dedicated LAA volunteers who helped promote, load, and unload the donations, but most of all to our great animal-loving supporters who purchased pet food and donated it at the event. Thank you to all! We love you!

Continued: 5,096 pets altered!

By the third year the grandma cat will have 1,728 great-grand-kittens. And by year four this one cat will have been responsible for 10,736 new cats roaming the earth!

Lincoln and Southeastern Nebraska have many active animal rescues and shelters taking in as many homeless animals as their finances and peoplepower will allow. The sad fact is that there are only so many people available to adopt homeless animals. Spaying and neutering are so important in reducing the numbers of homeless animals—everywhere.

Health reasons to spay and neuter pets.

Pyometra: In the past two-three months, LAA has been contacted by two veterinarian clinics who had diagnosed female dogs, and two dog owners whose dogs had been diagnosed with pyometra for a total of four dogs. Treatment of pyometra involves emergency spay surgery which involves more risk to the animal and added expenses than a routine spay surgery.

Pyometra is a disease mainly of middle-aged female dogs and cats that have not been spayed. Pyometra follows a heat cycle in which fertilization did not occur. Typically, within two to four months after the cycle, the female starts showing signs of the disease. Pyometra is an infection within the uterus that results usually because there is an abnormality in the uterine lining. This abnormality occurs because of repeated exposure to the hormone progesterone. Because several cycles may be necessary to create these changes, this is why pyometra is typically seen in middle age and older females.

What causes pyometra? After a normal “heat” cycle in the female, there is a phase of several weeks called diestrus in which the progesterone is highest. Progesterone has the following effects on the uterus which lead to pyometra:

1. increases gland secretions in the uterus,
2. can cause thickening in the uterine wall,
3. decreases contractibility in the uterus,
4. causes closure of the cervix,
5. suppresses cellular immunity.

Putting these factors together, they make the uterus easier for bacteria to gather, grow, and cause infection.

Pyometra is seen in two forms, open-cervix, and closed-cervix. Both need attention immediately but closed-cervix pyometra can rapidly become fatal.

As the body attempts to flush out the build-up of waste products through the kidneys, the animal will drink excessive quantities of water and urinate large amounts frequently. She will lick at her vaginal area while the cervix is still open, and the uterus is discharging a white fluid. She may run a low-grade fever and if blood work is done, she will show an elevated white blood cell count. As the uterus increases in size and weight, the dog shows weakness in the rear legs, often to the point where she cannot rise without help. As the dog or cat enters kidney failure, she stops eating and becomes very lethargic.

Since toxicity may develop very quickly in dogs and cats with pyometra, it needs to be treated promptly. In most cases, the preferred treatment is to spay. This removes the ovaries, oviducts, uterus, and all associated blood vessels. These animals can be a surgical challenge because of their poor overall condition. Prevention - The best prevention is to have all female animals spayed at an early age. Pyometra is a fairly common and serious problem and is just one of many compelling reasons to have your female pet spayed at an early age.

Testicular Tumors: From veterinarians at Capital Humane Society: “Astro was found as a stray dog in Lincoln. Unfortunately for him, he was never neutered. On physical examination, it was discovered that one of his testicles was a lot larger than the other. Histopathology of the mass revealed he had an interstitial cell tumor. Luckily for Astro, these types of testicular tumors typically have a good prognosis as surgery is often curative. Neutering is SO important!”

Mammary Tumors/Cancer: Also from veterinarians Capital Humane Society: “Miss Bailey was brought into the shelter as a stray pup. Several mammary lumps were palpated during her vet examination. The biopsy later revealed she had mammary carcinoma. This type of cancer is almost exclusively eliminated in females that are spayed before their first heat cycle. Luckily for Bailey, biopsy of these mammary lumps revealed she has a low-grade cancer; therefore, recurrence and metastasis are rare. With over 50% of mammary cancers being malignant, spaying your dog is so important!”

Source for pyometra information: 2012 Pet Talk Winter Edition.

Thank you to our donors!

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& Allison Hunter-Frederick
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LINCOLN COMMUNITY
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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!

Donate through our website, LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org using PayPal or mail this form to LAA. Pet Food Bank donation items can be dropped off at various locations throughout Lincoln (see list elsewhere in newsletter).

Name _____

E-mail _____

Address (City, State, Zip) _____

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!

