

Adam Wright

Michael Haskins

Pets for Life/Orange County Animal Services Report

Background on Poverty and Pet Ownership

The following key statistics show the importance of addressing the need for animal services amongst lower income pet owners.

- 1 in 6 Americans live in poverty
- 1 in 5 Americans speak a language other than English
- 6 out of 10 U.S. households include at least one pet
- 87% of pets in these communities haven't been spayed or neutered

Pets for Life Overview

Pets for Life is a program through the Humane Society designed to extend the reach of animal services, resources, and information to under-served areas. In these areas, there is a critical need for accessible and affordable pet care that the Pets for Life programs seeks to address. The program also attempts to build relationships with people in these communities by establishing an ongoing presence in the community, which will allow members of the community to develop trust in the person.

Additionally, a key component of Pets for Life is its ability to provide free services to pet owners. These services range from vaccinations and pet supplies to the most important service of free spay and neuter operations. The key measure of the program's success is the ability to drastically impact the number of animals that are spayed and neutered in the community. Finally, Pets for Life can also be done in conjunction with another service such as the Coalition for Unchained Dogs.

Takeaways from Interview with Bennett at Charlotte Humane Society

We interviewed Bennett at the Charlotte Humane Society, who is responsible for running their Pets for Life program. As one of the Pets for Life mentor cities, Bennett was able to provide us with the following key points for successfully running the program.

1. Focus on a 1 block area (“hot spot”) within a zip code and then expand out from there. It is important not to have multiple hot spots at once time and just focus on one area. Additionally, when identifying the area you should focus on need, not poverty level or intake rate.
2. Must be the same person going out in the community each time. This is vital to the success of the program because the members of the community need to begin recognizing the person’s presence and form relationships with them.
3. Providing transportation to the spay/neuter appointments is critical to the success rate of people following through with their appointments. It is better to pick the pet up from the owner’s home than having a central pick up location or having the owner bring the pet to the appointment. In Charlotte, they provide the transportation service every two weeks.
4. If possible, try and become a mentee city, because then you receive a grant from the Humane Society. To become a mentee city, it requires 500 surgeries per year.

Field Experience with Amanda Arrington

On January 31st, Michelle Walker, Michael, and I shadowed Amanda Arrington and her partner, Lori Hensley, during a Saturday of community outreach. The day’s goal was to visit a neighborhood they had frequently serviced in the past. During the visit, Amanda and Lori were focused on building existing relationships within the area, building new relationships, administering medicine to pets, and convincing

owners to spay and neuter their pets. The outreach lasted about four hours, in which time we visited 10-12 households. We administered de-wormer medication to almost 20 animals and set up multiple appointments to pick up pets the following week to be spayed or neutered. The key takeaways from the day with Amanda and Lori are as follows:

- 1) Members of the community were overwhelmingly receptive to the efforts of the Pets for Life program. Everyone was willing to let us administer medication (de-wormer) to their pets without much persuasion, and the vast majority were open to having their pets spayed and neutered.
- 2) Every one of the community members we met were kind, respectful, and engaging. We did not meet anyone who was rude, threatening, or unwilling to talk to us. This was in large part due to the fact that Amanda and Lori had already done extensive outreach in the area, but the stereotypical perception of lower-income neighborhoods was not justified in any way during our community outreach.
- 3) The biggest obstacle to getting pets spayed and neutered was community members' lack of transportation. Lori and Amanda have regularly scheduled spay and neuter days (i.e. Wednesday of every other week) in which they pick up pets from the community to be spayed and neutered at a separate location.
- 4) Building strong relationships through consistent community outreach was the key to building trust with its members. Lori and Amanda were known by name throughout the areas we visited, and everyone was appreciative of their efforts. Lori and Amanda also knew everyone in the community by name and remembered their pets' names, which seemed very important.
- 5) Beginning relationships was most successful when Amanda and Lori offered items such as leashes or small bags of food to pet owners. This opened people up and let them know they were only trying to help and asking nothing in return.

- 6) Community members that did not want to spay or neuter their pets were much more willing to do so when Amanda and Lori offered a fence for their yard. Amanda is also involved in the Coalition for Unchained Dogs, which builds fences for people so they stop chaining their dogs.
- 7) The type of individual that performs community outreach must be extremely personable, non-judgmental, able to handle detrimental living conditions for both pets and their owners, and be dedicated to consistent outreach.

Implementation Plan

How to Select Area for Community Outreach

The Pets for Life website includes a “Community Outreach Toolkit” page that details the entire process of selecting an area best-suited for the Pets for Life program. Both of these websites are listed at the bottom of this section. There are a variety of factors that should be considered when determining the best place to begin the program, all of which are detailed in the website. The most important factors are % below poverty level, ethnicity breakdown, and average household income. Optimal areas will have a high % below poverty (over 10%), lower household income than surrounding areas, and a diverse ethnicity breakdown. The factors included in the analysis are:

- Geography
- Zip Code
- Total Population
- Total # of Households
- Estimated Dog-Owning Homes - (number of households * .46)
- Estimated Cat-Owning Homes - (number of households * .39)
- Total Number of Dogs

- Total Number of Cats
- Ethnicity Breakdown
- Average Household Income
- % Below Poverty Level
- Educational Attainment
- % of Renter-Occupied Residences
- Local Crime Rate and Statistics - (difficult to find)
- Shelter Intake and Euthanasia - (difficult to find)

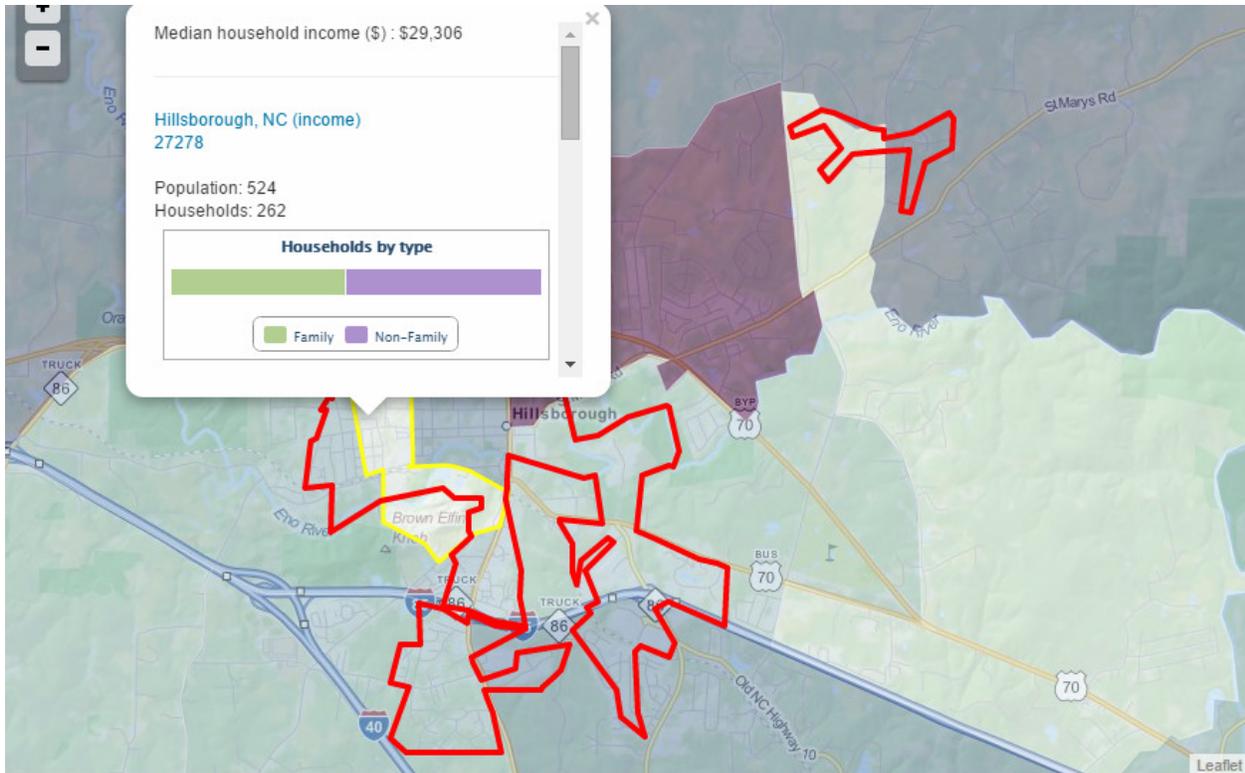
An example of in a community analysis (excluding crime rate and shelter intake stats):

Geography	Zip Code	Total Population	Total # of Households	Estimated		Total number of dogs	Total number of cats	Ethnicity breakdown	Avg household income	% below poverty level	Educational attainment	% of renter-occupied residences
				dog-owning homes	cat-owning homes							
Hillsborough	27278	23,897	9,559	4,397	3,728	6,464	7,866	White - 76.7%	\$ 62,973	13.5%	Less than HS - 41.4%	27%
								Black - 17.1%			High School/GED - 15.0%	
								Latino - 7.5%			Bachelor's - 14.6%	
											Masters - 7.5%	
											Other - 21.5%	

<http://www.humanesociety.org/about/departments/pets-for-life/> - Pets for Life homepage

http://gateway.hsus.org/files/pfl_toolkit/toolkit.pdf - Community Outreach Toolkit

City-Data.com is the best resource for finding these statistics. After determining a broad area or zip code that seems promising for outreach, identify a smaller area that representatives can personally visit in order to determine whether it is an appropriate area. City-Data.com provides maps that break counties down to smaller areas based on demographics and incomes. An example is listed below:



As you can see, the median household income in this area is \$29,306. The population and number of households is also small enough that the budget necessary for servicing the entire area would not be overwhelming.

Recommended Areas to Begin Program

Michael and I followed the previously detailed steps for community analysis and visited the area highlighted above to determine 2 streets that we believe are best-suited to begin the Pets for Life Program. The streets are both in Hillsborough/Fairview, NC. The first is Torain Street, which is a predominantly African-American community. It has a small number of houses and neighboring streets, so the budget required for this area should be minimal. The second area we identified is Terrell Street, which is a slightly rural area with a higher percentage of Caucasian individuals. We suggest beginning the program on Torain Street and expanding it to Terrell Street if initial efforts are a success (and the budget is sustainable).

A picture of each street is listed below.

Torain Street:



Terrell Road:



Necessary Personnel

The amount of personnel needed to implement a small-scale Pets for Life program is 1-2 dedicated individuals. We would recommend 2 representatives to increase safety in the community and to keep each other motivated and accountable. We also recommend that representatives spend 2-3 Saturdays in the community per month for about 4 hours per trip, as well as any follow-up appointments that are scheduled during visits. Community members needing services often need medicine administered, and a regularly scheduled day to pick up pets to be spayed and neutered is also recommended. The time commitment to the program is one of the factors that makes it difficult to find numerous volunteers, but individuals that are committed to this schedule will likely be enthusiastic about the cause. There are a number of challenges representatives will face when they do community outreach. These include subpar living conditions for both humans and dogs, language barriers, and cultural differences. Representatives should be comfortable with facing and overcoming these challenges.

Tentative Budget – First Year

Budget numbers are based on 36 weeks of outreach (3 outreach events per month):

Spay/Neuter – assuming 70 spays/neuters @ \$40 - \$80 per operation:	\$2,800 - \$5,600
De-wormer medication – assuming 300 doses @ \$2-5 per dose:	\$600 - \$1,500
Dog food and leashes – 72 bags @ \$10/bag and 72 leashes @ \$4.00:	\$1,000
Miscellaneous/buffer expenses (gas, extra medication, spay/neuter, etc)	\$600
Total budget year 1:	\$5,000 - \$8,700

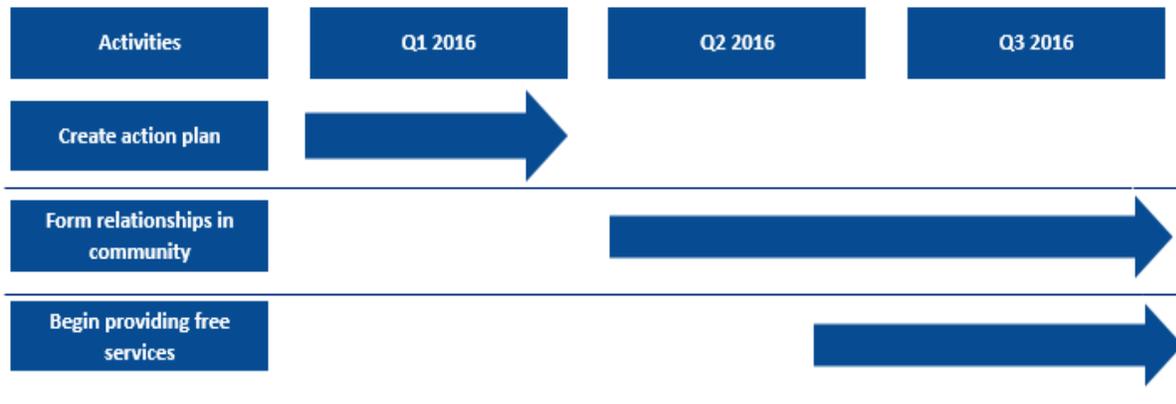
The highest proportion of the budget (56 – 64%) is comprised of spay and neuter operations. We recommend that OCAS develop relationships with veterinarians in the area that would be willing to give

1-2 weeks of pro-bono service per year in order to greatly reduce expenses. If 10 vets provide 2 weeks of pro-bono services in year 1, the budget can be reduced to \$2,600 - \$6,300 (assuming 40 free operations at \$60 per operation).

In addition to potential savings from pro-bono spay/neuter operations, significant cost savings may be realized by developing relationships with local pet retailers such as Petsmart, Petco, Phydeaux, The Pet Pantry, and others. The medication and supplies budget of \$1,600 to \$2,500 can be greatly reduced or even eliminated from forging strong relationships with retailers throughout the community, which could result in a budget of less than \$3,000 in year 1.

Recommended Timeline for implementing Pets for Life

Orange County Animal Services (OCAS) can successfully have the Pets for Life program up and running within 9 months of starting. The following three key activities need to be completed.



Please note that this timeframe is just a recommendation, and that it will be largely contingent upon how quickly OCAS can begin providing free spays and neuters, along with transportation to these appointments.

Short-term activities

If OCAS decides that they are unable to implement the Pets for Life program or that they need to delay starting the program, there are still activities that can be done in the short-term to improve their perception in the local community.

1. Find one to two people that are fully committed to going out in the designated focus area for four hours every other Saturday. It is crucial that it is the same person doing the outreach each time so that the members of the community become comfortable with their presence and develop trust in them.
2. As part of the outreach, the community members should be made aware of the services that OCAS currently offers at their headquarters. Additionally, pet owners should be made aware of the recommended vaccines for their pets, as well as which vets nearby that they can visit.
3. Lastly, OCAS can offer minor free services that would cost little to provide, but would make a strong impression in the community. A few examples of this are providing leashes and collars, as well as animal bedding for pets kept outside in the winter months.