



Field Trip

BY KATINA ANTONIADES

North Platte, Nebraska

The Organization: PAWS-itive Partners Humane Society, an all-volunteer group working to reduce pet overpopulation.

The Mission: "To stop the problem before it gets to the shelter, and that's of course by spay/neuter," says president Dianne Morales.

Date Established: 1998

Resources: 10 active volunteers, some of whom devote 15 to 20 hours a week to the group.

Population Size Served: 24,000 in North Platte, but efforts extend beyond city limits.

Website: www.pphs.com

How They Lend a Hand: PAWS-itive Partners focuses on educating the public about pet overpopulation, providing needy pet owners with funds for vet care and spay/neuter, and helping out the city-run North Platte Animal Shelter. Members walk shelter dogs, take photos of adoptable animals, and adopt animals from the shelter for fostering, transport to rescue groups, and placement in new homes.

Biggest Challenges: Many North Platte residents think that PPHS is part of the local animal shelter and receives government funds, making it harder to collect donations. The group's toughest task is teaching the public about pet overpopu-

lation. "We're constantly pushing spay/neuter, spay/neuter," says Morales. "We go to schools and talk, and we constantly have PSAs in the media."

Fifteen Minutes of Fame: PPHS captured attention in 1998 with a promotion they called "Walking Naked." The mayor made a public promise to walk Naked down Main Street if the group managed to raise \$5,000. The announcement caused a sensation in town and even as far away as France and Japan. But when the police chief got wind of the possible stunt, the mayor—who was out of town at the time—had to return to town to reveal that Naked was, in fact, a dog. The promotion still raised \$12,000.

What's Next: PAWS-itive Partners is seeking more support, especially in the form of foster homes, so they're planning a major membership drive. The current members want to reach out to younger animal advocates, too—they're hoping to establish a junior counterpart to the group. "There are so many kids in this town that are like 12 to 16, 17 years old that want to get involved," says Morales. Also on the horizon: a push to help the shelter spay or neuter every dog and cat prior to adoption, and the planning for this year's fundraising dog walk, *Woofstock*.

Want to see your agency or organization in the pages of Animal Sheltering? E-mail asm@hsus.org or write to Editor, Animal Sheltering/HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

It's Not Too Late to "Do It for Love"!

Don't forget to participate in the annual **Spay Day USA**, The HSUS's national campaign to promote the many lifesaving benefits of spay/neuter, on **February 27**. You can organize a reduced-cost spay/neuter clinic for low-income pet owners; a fundraising fete to subsidize surgery costs; a public education event; or other fun activities to promote spay/neuter.

However you choose to celebrate Spay Day USA in 2007, be sure to visit www.SpayDayUSA.org to download the online action kit, order materials and merchandise, and sign up for e-updates. While there, you can register your event online; if you report your results by March 15, you could win a prize!

