

ANIMALS BEST FRIEND FUND, INC. JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2015

2014 Year End Report

Number of cats/dogs spayed or neutered.	1,553
Spaying and neutering expenses	\$72,464.92
Administrative expenses.	4,153.73
Donations and fundraising proceeds.	96,525.39

What a wonderful year 2014 was for the animals of Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties thanks to our donors and volunteers! You can all be proud of your contributions to our spay/neuter programs as our combined efforts enabled us to have 1,553 cats and dogs spayed or neutered during 2014. Our combined efforts saved thousands and thousands of unwanted kittens and puppies from being born right here in our community.

During 2014 we spayed and neutered 825 cats through our feral fund. We also spayed and neutered 36 dogs through this program from our trailer park projects, situations of severe neglect, puppy mills and strays that our volunteers found homes for. Funding for the spaying and neutering of these animals came from the sales of our catnip toys and mats and from donations that were specifically targeted to help these needy animals. Your donations to our feral fund are doing wonderful things for animals that we would not otherwise be able to help. You can get involved in this program by volunteering to sew, making tax-deductible donations targeted to our feral fund or joining our cat trapping team. The more volunteers we have the more we can spread out and bring our trapping efforts to other towns. If you're interested in becoming involved call Karen at 269/808-0064.

Paw Paw is best known for its wine and its plethora of grapes, but did you know that there is another bumper crop in this town that's less famous? Most casual visitors don't know there is a stray and feral cat problem in the village of Paw Paw. They can be seen roaming the restaurant parking lots, industrial areas and neighborhoods if you know where to look. Animals Best Friend has long known about the problem and has worked on it the best we could for many years.

A newer concept in the field of spay/neuter is called targeted spay/neuter. When researching grant opportunities last year, we had the opportunity to learn a whole lot more about it. PetSmart Charities, a large grant-making entity in animal welfare, is a big proponent of this concept, and requires that all their grantees follow a targeted approach in their spay/neuter efforts. What does this mean? In a nutshell, it means that an organization should identify the "problem area" in their community and work hard to achieve at least an 80% spay/neuter rate in that targeted geographic area. When we heard the term "problem area", the village of Paw Paw immediately sprang to mind.

Shortly after learning about the PetSmart Charities targeted spay/neuter grants, and feeling slightly overwhelmed by the rigors of their program and this new way of doing things, we stumbled across the Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society's Mentoring Program for Free Roaming Cats. MRFRS, located in Massachusetts, works with non-profits and municipalities that have never received a targeted or free-roaming grant from PetSmart Charities before and interested in getting spay/neuter money through the free-roaming cat

program. This program is sponsored by PetSmart Charities. Each non-profit approved to participate is granted a small grant to do a targeted project in its community. There is grant money available for equipment, like traps, as well. Over the course of 3-4 months, the group will do a targeted free-roaming cat spay/neuter project and then once the project is completed, MRFRS will help go through the process of the PetSmart Charities application, with the goal of successful funding for a larger-scale project. Learning about the MRFRS Mentoring Program excited us very much, and we applied to their program in August of 2014. In late September, we learned that we were accepted and would be receiving one of their small grants and mentoring in a targeted spay/neuter and applying for the bigger PetSmart Charities grant!

We chose a section of Paw Paw as our target area and have been benefiting from the grant money, equipment and mentoring provided by MRFRS. In just over three months' time we have spayed/neutered nearly 200 free-roaming and feral cats in our target area, with all the funding for this coming from the grant. Soon we will dig into writing our grant proposal for the larger PetSmart Charities grant with MRFRS's help and instruction on how to best approach it. It is our hope that we can obtain the grant so we will be able to continue this intensive work in Paw Paw!

Thanks to the veterinary clinics that are working with us on our Paw Paw neutering project: Family Pet Health Center; Paw Paw Veterinary Clinic; Red Arrow Animal Clinic; Lawton Animal Hospital; KL Cat Hospital; Eighth St. Veterinary Clinic and the Kalamazoo Humane Society. These clinics are an important part of helping us to reduce cat overpopulation in Paw Paw! We were also able to save a life this week due to our trapping efforts and the help of Dr. Ann Marie Baker of the Paw Paw Veterinary clinic. Dr. Baker was doing 6 feral cat spay/neuters for us when they discovered something odd when doing one of the female's pre-surgery checks. They could tell something was inside that shouldn't be there, and they proceeded, not knowing what they would find. It turns out the cat had what they described as two mummified kittens and placentas inside her uterus. Dr. Baker said the cat would have eventually gotten an infection and died from this had ABF not brought her in for her spay! The cat was given some time to recover and will be released back to her colony, where hopefully she will be feeling much better.

We have set a goal of spaying and neutering 2,000 cats and dogs during 2015. You can help us reach this goal by making tax-deductible cash donations, baking for our bake sales, joining our sewing team or our cat trapping team. The more volunteers we have the more animals we can help! Help us reduce animal overpopulation in Kalamazoo and Van Buren Counties by becoming an ABF volunteer today.

UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

January 17- We will be setting up with our t-shirts, catnip toys and dichroic glass necklaces at the Sugar Bear in Paw Paw, MI as part of their Home-based Business Vendor Event from 11:00-3:00.

MVPets in Portage will be selling heart cutouts during the month of February to raise money for Animals Best Friend. Be sure to stop by and purchase a heart or two to help them raise funds for our spay/neuter programs.

February 14- Our Valentine's bake sale will be held from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at Pet Supplies Plus (across from Meijers) in Portage, MI. We need lots of bakers and buyers for this event. If you can bake for this sale please let us know ahead of time by leaving a message on our answering machine (269/624-1090).

March 14- Our St. Patrick's bake sale will be held from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at Pet Supplies Plus (across from Meijers) in Portage, MI.

March 28- The Sugar Bear in Paw Paw, MI will be holding a fundraiser for us from 11:00-3:00.

The following people donated to our feral cat programs: Jerre Beattie-Ihrcke; Sarah Payne; Kim Dimock; Ben & Claudia Johnson; Helen Page Dolan; Karen Imus; Jennifer Cohen; Fetzer Institute; Donna Ramesh; Michele Mullen; Carol Rhodes.

The following people donated to our "donate \$30.00 to help spay or neuter one cat or dog program: Jeanne Vroegindewey; Jackie Bullard; Diane Skiba; Denise Blakely; Wilma Heerlyn; Chris Wilkins; Janet Berghorst; Gene & Vivian Wood; Kyle Taylor; Jeanne Vroegindewey; Kathleen S. Pierce Burnett; Mary Johnson; Louise Thompson.

We received a donation from Ashley Slavings, the six year old daughter of Dawn Slavings who works at Paw Paw Veterinary Clinic. When Dawn told Ashley what Animals Best Friend does to help animals she asked her mom if she could donate the money the tooth fairy left her. What a sweet little girl!

Daniel & Sandra Bouwman sent a donation to help us spay one dog.

We received a \$10,000 donation from the sale of stock that was donated to Animals Best Friend. This donation was given in memory of Tiger; Bootsie; Mitch; Charlie and Grand-Dog Diesel. This donation was used to help pay our neutering bills for November and December, along with some medical expenses for Violet, a kitten that we saved from an abuse situation.

We will be receiving an \$80.00 check from Spartan Stores for the Spartan UPC's that we submitted in 2014.

Thanks to Gail Ross for donating catnip mice and catnip and to Kelly Ross and Jerre Beattie for donating cookie tins. Thanks to Dr. Kathy Crookes for paying our booth rental for our fundraising table at the Mattawan Holiday Extravaganza.

On November 26 we reached our goal of neutering 100 cats and kittens in Paw Paw from a grant we received this fall. Our trappers have been working hard in Paw Paw since October of 2013 and this brings the total number of cats and kittens neutered through their efforts to over 400! The majority of the trapping has been done by Marcie Parker and her husband Jim. We are attacking the cat overpopulation hard in this area and we would welcome more volunteers to help us trap the cats and transport them to their spay/neuter appointments. We also need warm places (such as a heated garage or basement) for recovery during these cold winter months. If you can help us please call Karen at 269/808-0064.

Thanks to the VML Foundation for their generous donation (grant). This grant was used to help pay our December neutering bills.

Thanks to Old National Bank in Oshtemo for hosting a Christmas bake sale for us on December 12, along with a cat and dog adoption event for Animal Rescue Project. We made \$209.10 for our spay/neuter programs and Animal Rescue Project had one cat adoption. Thanks to April & Giovanna Nolasco de Carvalho; Danielle Padley; Nina Kiser; Sarah Gerstner; Kathy Owens; Katie Herrera; Elizabeth Poole; Linda Marquart and Alice Duncan for baking for this event.

Thanks to Pet Supplies Plus Westnedge for providing the location for yet another Christmas bake sale! We made \$1,705.75 at this event. Thanks to Michele Mullen; Mike Williams; Sarah Gerstner; Sandy Ormanovich and Linda Marquart for working at this event. To Rebecca Stuurwold; Sarah Gerstner; Sandy Ormanovich; Phyllis Martens; Lorraine Haring; Teresa Rakowsky; Karen Macklom; Claudia Johnson; Kathy Slocum; Faith Haley-Caro; Betsy & Melinda Ryba; Peggy Reitenour for baking for this event. To Judy Vanderslik & Sandy

Ormanovich for donating crafts. To Cherie Robinson for donating baking supplies and for collecting donations of pet food for us Thanks to Laurie White and Jennifer Cohen for donating sheets.

On December 20 we held mini bake sales at Pet Supplies Plus and MVPets. MVPets also hosted pictures with Santa to benefit Animals Best Friend. Thanks to Danielle Irish; Kathy Mason; Sherry Quinn; Sarah Gerstner; Nina Kiser for baking; to Gaby Dhaseleer; Sandy Ormanovich; Susan Chapman and Sarah Gerstner for working at our booths and to “Santa” Dave Hopwood. We made \$516.55 at MVPets and \$365.51 at Pet Supplies Plus. Thanks to Pet Supplies Plus and MVPets for hosting these events.

Thanks to our sewing team for their work on our on-going catnip toy and mat projects we raised \$13,183.62 during 2014 for our feral cat spay/neuter program. During 2014 a few needy dogs benefited from this neutering program also.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

From

Peggy Spencer
Chris Wilkins
Kathleen Mason
Karen King
Roxanne Sargent

In Memory Of

June Carmer
Spotsy
Barbara Cline
Arlene Guthrie
Jan & Tim McCarthy

We received a donation from Mary Ann Ford to honor her sisters and their families for their love of animals and dedication to spaying/neutering: Kathy & Tom Soard and Peggy Mulrenin. We received donations from Nancy Bonner Drake and Norma Logan in honor of Sarah Gerstner’s birthday!

CAN YOU HELP? We have learned of a colony of approximately 50 feral cats in Van Buren County that need to be relocated. These cats will be destroyed if we are not able to find them new homes. While barn homes are often ideal for ferals, they can fit into a variety of situations. Please don’t think you can’t help because you don’t have a barn. Feral cats can thrive in country, suburban and urban environments. They require little more than a simple shelter, dry food and water. Shelters can be a small outbuilding like a shed, or little homes made out of Rubbermaid containers. Please visit <http://alleycat.org/ShelterGallery> to see how very simple and inexpensive a feral cat shelter can be. Wherever you live, if you think you’d enjoy feral cat caretaking, please contact us! We would be happy to answer any questions, and if you agree, to set you up with a couple of kitties who desperately need your help. Please call Karen at 269/808-0064 if you’re interested!



← Shelters made from Styrofoam coolers

Animals Best Friend is an all volunteer animal welfare group dedicated to reducing cat and dog in Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties. Spay/neuter is our only function. Donations to Animals Best Friend are tax deductible and can be sent to us at P.O. Box 443, Oshtemo, MI 49077. Our policy is to spend 10% or less of donations we receive on administrative expenses, which means that at least 90% of your donation funds spay/neuter surgeries for cats and dogs. Since Animals Best Friend was founded in 1981 we have helped spay/neuter over 45,074 cats and dogs.