

Community Pet Days



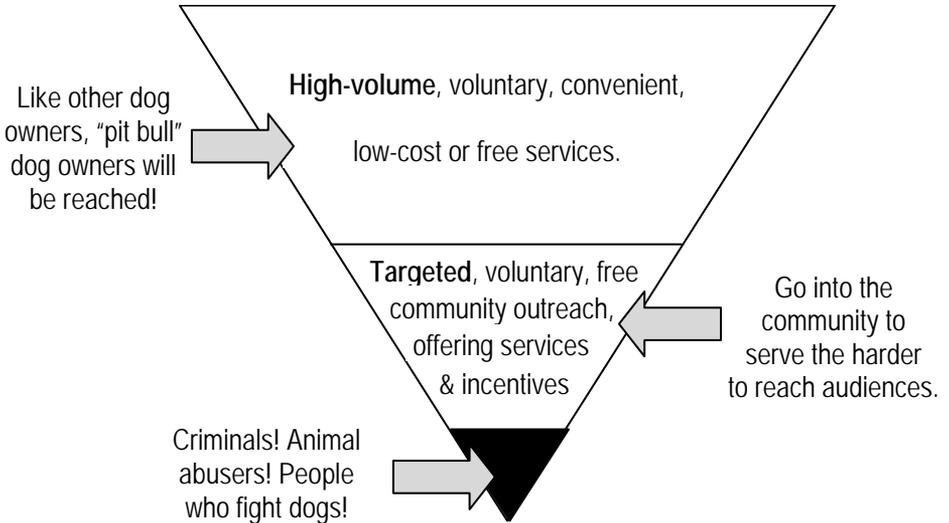
**A GUIDE FOR REACHING “PIT BULL”
DOG OWNERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

ANIMAL FARM FOUNDATION
www.animalfarmfoundation.org

COMMUNITY PET DAYS

Community Pet Days (CPDs) are a simple, low-cost way to reach pet owners, including those who own “pit bull” dogs. They are based on Animal Farm Foundation's "Spay/Neuter Partnerships/Service and Support Triangle," which demonstrates how mandatory spay/neuter laws miss the owners they were designed to reach, divide the community, and break the human-canine bond.

Cooperation, Education, and Accessible & Affordable Services – NOT Mandates!



Accessible & affordable services in targeted areas will reach the majority of dog owners. Mandatory spay/neuter laws will not.

THE GOALS:

- (1) To decrease euthanasia by reducing shelter intake;
- (2) To encourage responsible pet ownership; and
- (3) To support the human-canine bond.

These goals are accomplished through cooperation, education, and accessible & affordable services. Mandatory spay/neuter laws criminalize people who want to provide good care for their pets but need assistance accessing and/or affording services.

Safe and humane communities provide these services so everyone has the opportunity to be a responsible pet owner. It is our job to facilitate this process.

THE APPROACH:

As a neighborhood-focused program, CPDs operate within the neighborhood's existing norms, values, and culture. People connect over the universal bond between humans and companion animals, not personal opinions or preferences about pet ownership.

CPDs reach pet owners who are unfamiliar with or cannot access existing spay/neuter services because of location, cost, misconceptions, or lack of familiarity.

They attract “pit bull” dog owners by providing special deals for their dogs and creating an environment where “pit bull” dogs are celebrated and respected.



Community Pet Day in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The event is not always promoted as a spay/neuter event. Instead, CPDs celebrate “pit bull” dogs by providing FREE microchips and low-cost vaccinations in an environment where pet owners are not judged or stigmatized.

The conversation about spay/neuter takes place *after* this positive interaction has occurred and is *always* done without judgment or criticism.

Remember, most dog owners want to provide good care for their pets, they simply need some assistance. This is why CPDs are effective: they provide affordable and accessible services to pet owners instead of criminalizing pet owners who cannot afford or access them. CPDs reach the majority of pet owners; mandatory spay/neuter laws do not!

THE MODEL:

Each CPD should take place in a neighborhood where residents may need financial assistance caring for their pets or lack access to affordable vet care. Ideal locations include: public parks, parking lots, community centers, Boys & Girls Clubs, fire stations, schools, or churches. It is helpful to have options for inclement weather, but it is not a requirement. The event should last about three hours, and weekend mornings/afternoons are best.

A team of volunteers (including a vet or vet tech, if required by state law) provide FREE microchips for “pit bull” dogs and reduced-cost microchips and vaccinations for all other companion animals. Area veterinarians can provide onsite rabies shots at reduced rates or they can distribute coupons for low-cost rabies vaccinations at their nearby clinics.



Community Pet Day in Indianapolis, Indiana

Once a positive, mutually respectful interaction has occurred, volunteers can distribute vouchers for free or low-cost spay/neuter surgeries at local shelters, clinics, or veterinary offices. If the pet owner is not interested in or ready to spay/neuter at that time, volunteers collect their contact information (when they sign up for vaccinations or microchips) and revisit the conversation at a later time via phone or email.

To further engage pet owners, volunteers can also offer: free leashes and collars in exchange for ropes, belts, chains, etc; free training and pet care tips; and free pet food or pet toys.

Pet owners should not be turned away because of their inability to pay, lack of education (on responsible pet ownership or basic pet care), or their relationship with their animals. Throughout the event, volunteers should engage with pet owners and help them feel proud of their companion animals -- this is a day to celebrate the human-canine bond!

If a pet owner needs help transporting their pet to the surgery, volunteers can pick up and deliver the dog (or refer to transport services, if available). The key to converting CPD attendees into spay/neuter clients is to make surgeries affordable (with no hidden costs), accessible (location, time, parking, transportation), and judgment-free (no fear of being reported to authorities, except in rare emergency situations).

THE TOOLS:

To run a successful CPD, be prepared with the following tools:

- Clipboards, pens, & notepaper
- 2 or 3 folding tables & chairs
- Microchips, vaccinations, & coolers (to store them)
- Band-aids, cotton balls, alcohol wipes, trash bags, hand sanitizer
- Extra collars, leashes, & muzzles, & crates (for cats and dogs)
- High-value treats
- Instructional signs (e.g., "Sign In Here")
- Cash box, change (lots of \$1 bills!), and receipt book
- Bottled water for people & bowls of water for pets
- Spay/neuter vouchers
- Plenty of enthusiastic, friendly and engaging volunteers who can respectfully guide pet owners through the process

Most of these items can be donated. Ask school groups or volunteers to hold collar, leash, and pet food drives for CPD events. Ask veterinary hospitals or clinics to donate extra leashes, collars, or crates that they do not need (or that clients have left behind).

Talk to local shelters, clinics, or vet schools about ordering vaccinations in bulk at discounted rates.

Shop around for the cheapest microchips that don't charge extra for registration fees. Customers who pay for microchips (i.e., non-"pit bull" dogs) will typically offset the cost of the free microchips for "pit bull" dogs.

THE PREPARATION:

Advertise the event by passing out flyers in the target neighborhood one to two weeks in advance. Ideal spots include: local churches, Laundromats, grocery stores, community centers, churches, convenience stores, bus stops, libraries, store fronts, post offices, and Social Service offices. Submit the event to local or community newsletters and websites. Notify local block captains or neighborhood associations. During the event, ask attendees to spread the word to friends and neighbors.

Recruit volunteers who can interact with pet owners in a friendly, non-judgmental manner. Assign volunteers to tasks based on their strengths and interests.

Set up the area in a safe and efficient manner. Remember that people and pets might be nervous, so create plenty of space between them. Keep the dog owners separate from the cat owners, if possible. Use signage and volunteers to direct pet owners to the appropriate area



COMMUNITY PET DAY

\$15 SHOTS

INCLUDES:
RABIES & DISTEMPER

\$10 MICROCHIPS

INCLUDES CHIP & REGISTRATION FEE
(FREE FOR PIT BULLS & PIT MIXES!!)

LOW-COST SPAY/NEUTER INFO

SPECIAL COUPONS FOR PIT BULLS & PIT MIXES!!!

WHEN:

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

10:00 AM TO 1:00 PM

WHERE:

**OVERINGTON PARK
OVERINGTON & LEIPER STREETS**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY  **PAWS**
PHILADELPHIA
ANIMAL
WELFARE
SOCIETY (215) 298-9680 www.phillypaws.org

Sample flyer for Community Pet Day

HELPFUL HINTS:

- Focus on one neighborhood at a time. Frequent events in the same neighborhood will gain the community's trust and help with advertising.
- Don't get caught up in making the event "big"; be reliable, not flashy.
- Check your state and local laws that govern veterinary medicine. Some states consider only rabies vaccines "veterinary medicine," while others include all vaccinations and microchips. The law will determine if you need a veterinarian on-site or if a vet tech will suffice.
- Since a very small percentage of animals are allergic to vaccinations, it is advisable to have a person on site who can recognize an allergic reaction and administer the treatment.
- Use microchips that can be read with a "universal scanner." Some chip makers encrypt their chips to limit the types of scanners that can read them. This is not beneficial to the animals.
- Use paper forms whenever possible. Computers malfunction, but paper does not.
- Fill out any forms you can prior to the event.
- Some pet owners cannot read, so make a mutually respectful connection by offering up front to assist with paperwork.
- Know what languages are spoken in your target neighborhood, and have volunteers available to translate (or write out FAQs in that language ahead of time).
- Use receipt books and vaccination record books that provide copies in triplicate. You retain one copy, the pet owner keeps a copy for himself, and the third copy is for his/her veterinarian.
- Pre-fill syringes to save time, but remember that once a vaccine has been pulled into a syringe, it must be used ASAP.
- Have volunteers on hand to recognize when a pet owner needs help. Have designated areas where reactive or nervous dogs can go to relax while they wait.
- If a pet owner says his pet will bite, believe him! Have extra muzzles on hand for safety.
- Keep good records so you can repeat CPDs on a regular vaccination schedule (yearly).

Community Pet Days have been implemented successfully in cities across the United States.

For more information and to view sample marketing materials, please visit:

Downtown Dog Rescue

www.downtowndogrescue.org

Indy Pit Crew

<http://www.indypitcrew.org/>

Philadelphia Animal Welfare Society (PAWS)

www.philypaws.org/sargefund

Do you have questions about starting Community Pet Days in your area?

Email Animal Farm Foundation at:

info@animalfarmfoundation.org

