

# Pet Talk

SUMMER 2020

LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org / 402.817.1168

## Our mission

Lincoln Animal Ambassadors is addressing the root causes of Animal Homelessness in Lincoln and the surrounding communities.

## 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:

Petco 56th & Hwy 2 (bin in front entry)

Petco 48th & O Street (bin in front entry)

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

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

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

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

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LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org](mailto:info@LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org)

## COVID-19 impacts LAA's Pet Food Bank and Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Program

*By Allison Hunter-Frederick*

Due to COVID-19, LAA has made changes to its programs and to the annual Wine & Howl fundraiser, held on July 18th at Deer Springs Winery.

In the wake of COVID-19, Lincoln Animal Ambassadors have not been issuing spay/neuter vouchers for several months. While it continues to operate its pet food bank, distributions are "no-contact".

LAA President, Mary Douglas said, "With the COVID-19 pandemic, veterinarians were overloaded, and their schedules were stressed. We are not issuing any spay/neuter vouchers currently, but plan to start again this fall, once the veterinarians have recovered and can handle them."

She explained that many vets were not previously open for spay/neuter procedures because they were not considered an essential service. In addition, appointments that had been set for the spring had to be pushed into the summer months, and so there was a backlog when procedures resumed. For owners who are in need of spay/neuter for their pets, LAA encourages them to contact the Nebraska Humane Society and/or Hearts United for Animals, while noting that both nonprofits might also have reduced operations. For those owners who specifically need to have cats spayed/neutered and are low income, LAA recommends contacting the Capital Humane Society about its income-based spay/neuter program.

But LAA has not been sitting back on its laurels during this down time. "We have been using this down time to re-format out low-cost spay/neuter program. We

hope to start issuing vouchers again this fall, with a new re-formatted program. It will be income-based and allow for more veterinarians to participate in the program, giving low-income participants a choice to use whichever veterinarian they choose, as long as that vet is willing to cooperate with our program."

***"LAA's spay/neuter program has a major impact on reducing pet overpopulation, decreasing aggression in some dogs, but most importantly has allowed thousands of pet owners who can't afford these procedures to have them done. It also saves pet owners with the cost of a city dog or cat license."***

—Steve Beal, Lincoln Animal Control Manager

Because pet food is essential, Douglas would like to reassure the Lancaster County community that LAA will be there for those with this need. The normal regulations for the pet food bank require owners to have their pets spayed and neutered, but Douglas noted that this rule is being temporarily waived while LAA's low-cost spay/neuter program is on hiatus.

To cover the costs of its pet food bank and spay/neuter programs, LAA normally hosts various annual fundraisers, including its popular Wine & Howl, an outdoor event that was held on July 18th, in a much smaller way, with COVID-19 restrictions. LAA's other annual fundraisers will likely not be able to be held this year.

# By the numbers

## Low Cost Spay/Neuter Program

3,329 total dogs, cats and bunnies

## Food Bank

### Dry food

21,002 lbs.

Approximately 3,000 lbs. a month

Since inception: 490,400 lbs.

### Canned food

34,410 cans

Approximately 4,916 cans a month

Since inception: 155,052 cans

### Litter

4,596 lbs.

Approximately 656 lbs. a month

Since inception: 82,697 lbs.

**Number of families helped in 2020 (many numerous times throughout the year): 196**

## Don't just take your dog for a walk...take your walk for a dog!

You walk your dog anyway, now you can support Lincoln Animal Ambassadors every time you walk your dog! Go to **WoofTrax.com**, download the app on your phone, and get walking! This is a completely FREE way to make a donation, just by doing something you already do.



## Featured Rescue: Nebraska Herpetological Society Group

When most people think of pets, they think about their four legged furry friends. However, for one Nebraskan, his love for scaly pets is bringing people across the state together.

"I had asthma when I was younger, so I couldn't have furry pets. Instead, I collected snakes in my neighborhood as pets," explained Glenn Eisel.

Once a hobby for Eisel, collecting snakes has turned into a mission of educating and sharing his excitement about reptiles with others.

"I think what people would find surprising is there are nearly 50 species of reptiles native to Nebraska,"

said Eisel who also studied herpetology at the University of Nebraska in Omaha.

The owner of Eisel Reptiles also started the Facebook group, Nebraska Herpetological Society Group which has 772 members.

"The group allows people to share pictures, fun facts, and stories about their scaly critters," Eisel said. "It's really interesting to read posts and interact with other people who are just as enthusiastic as I am."

Eisel hopes the group will continue to grow and educate other Nebraskans about reptiles.

"While there is so much separating us as people, it's nice to know that a simple Facebook group can bring us together over a shared

interest," he said.

For more information, visit Nebraska Herpetological Society Group on Facebook. Media Contact: Quinn Slaven



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# The show goes on: 12th Annual Wine & Howl Fundraiser

We'd like to thank everyone who joined us for Wine & Howl on July 18th! While it wasn't quite the same, we have some wonderful supporters! One big change is that it was held in the evening, a really warm evening, but it was still a huge success. Because of the limit on the number of attendees we did not have vendors this year, but we will have them all back next year, including lots of rescue dogs looking for their forever home!

In the middle of COVID-19, there was a good crowd at Deer Springs Winery, that

managed to social distance, keep cool in the 90 degree temps, visit with their friends and a few dogs, enjoy some great grilled food from Hy-Vee, drink some wonderful Deer Springs wine, and listen to the smooth tunes of the band "Down the Line". There were over 70 raffle baskets to take a chance on. Every basket was won by the end of the night!

A very special thank you to our event sponsors!

# Pet Blessing

**October 3**

**Unity Lincoln**

**1941 N. 68th St, Lincoln**

(402) 476-6887 leave a message, please

Now is a good time to mark your calendar for the Pet Blessing that we traditionally do around October 4th, St. Francis Day. This year it will be Saturday, October 3rd, the day before St. Francis' Day.



# Thank YOU!

**to our Wine & Howl Sponsors**

DogGurt

EMRIS International: Paula Fankhauser, Founding Partner and Independent Brand Ambassador

Paws 4 Fun

T Square Movers

Happy Dogz Rescue

Capital Humane Society

R.u.F.F. Rescue

Deer Springs Winery

Down The Line

## Thank you to our recent donors!

Allison Hunter-Frederick  
Amazon Smile  
Andrew & Renee Benson  
Animal Care Clinic  
Barbara Nieveen  
Best Friends Animal Society  
Beverly Anderson  
Blake Gilmore  
Brad Beam  
Brady Rivers  
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Burke Casari  
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Karen & Ken Jefferson  
Karl Skinner  
Katherine Haskins  
Kayla Rapp  
Kim Gilliland  
Klara Schuman  
Kris Guthrie

## LAA receives \$3,600 grant from BISSELL Pet Foundation

Lincoln Animal Ambassadors is proud to announce it has been awarded a \$3,600 grant from BISSELL Pet Foundation (BPF) for spay and neuter procedures. LAA hopes to address overcrowding in shelters and rescues by preventing unwanted litters of cats and dogs in Lancaster County, Nebraska.

“Due to COVID-19, veterinary clinics across the country have put critical spay/neuter surgeries on hold for months, leaving thousands of shelter pets unaltered,” said Cathy Bissell, founder of BISSELL Pet Foundation. “Knowing this, BISSELL Pet Foundation is awarding more spay/neuter grant funding than ever to support shelters’ needs and ensure the health and safety of pets.” BPF’s spring grant cycle awarded funding to 86 organizations in 28 states totaling \$487,418 for spay/neuter. With a mission to find every pet a home, BPF focuses their efforts on adoption, spay/neuter, microchipping and emergency support.

LAA is in the process of re-formatting it’s low-income spay/neuter process and hope to re-open their program in a few months. “This grant will give our re-formatted spay/neuter program a jump start when we start issuing vouchers again this fall. We know that spay/neuter is important in our

community and that is has been missed during the COVID-19 shut-down. We hope to be up and running soon.” said Mary Douglas, LAA’s President.

Lincoln Animal Ambassadors is addressing the root causes of animal homelessness.

BISSELL Pet Foundation is a charitable 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to help reduce the number of animals in shelters through pet adoption, spay/neuter programs, microchipping and emergency support. Founded in 2011 by Cathy Bissell, BPF is an extension of her long-standing love for animals and commitment to their welfare. BPF has since partnered with 5,000 shelters and rescues across the U.S. and Canada to help pets find loving homes. The foundation is supported by generous donors and BISSELL Homecare, Inc where every purchase saves pets. To learn more, visit [www.bissellpetfoundation.org](http://www.bissellpetfoundation.org).



## LAA offers no-contact Pet Food Bank pick-up



## Volunteer Spotlight: Joyce Teets, thank you for 10 years of volunteer service!

LAA wishes to pay tribute to Joyce Teets for her ten years of volunteer service. Teets first got involved with LAA when some of her neighbors asked her for help with the community cats at Wyuka. "We had to trap the cats and get them to The Cat House for Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR)," said Teets. "I don't think I understood what all that would entail, but I wound up with a young female cat with four kittens." Teets placed an ad in the newspaper for homes for the kittens, and received a response from Karl Skinner, who at the time served on the board of LAA. "I accepted his offer and then, being an animal lover and close to retirement, I asked him if there were any volunteer jobs with LAA."

Since that first contact with Skinner, Teets has taken on various tasks for LAA, including passing out flyers and helping with fundraisers. For the past ten years, Teets' main role has been as a telephone volunteer, responding to calls about LAA's spay/neuter voucher program and LAA's food bank. "I liked this job because it did not require much physical strength or stamina and I had had experience with phone work in the past. My first real job had been as a long distance operator. Also, I liked to talk on the phone."

When I asked Teets to share some

memorable moments, she responded that she couldn't pick out just one or two. "I've spoken to so many seniors who live alone and have no close friends or family. All they have is their cat or dog and they can't afford to feed them, pay for their licenses, or get them vet care. It's been rewarding to be able to help. Also, there have been a number of homeless people who were still trying to take care of their pets even when they didn't have a home. In these circumstances, LAA was the only help available. Many would have lost their only companion and friends without LAA."

Naturally then, especially if you love animals, volunteering with LAA is a worthwhile endeavor. Teets noted that it can be "difficult and maddening sometimes," but she's enjoyed it and made many friends throughout the years. In addition, she enjoys the fundraisers. For anyone who is considering being a volunteer, she recommends "being ready for anything!"

Teets' favorite fundraiser is Wine and Howl. Teets described the annual event, which regularly occurs at Deer Springs Winery, as one that allows residents to "spend the day in the country, bring your dog, win a raffle prize, listen to live music, enjoy some wine, and most importantly raise money for animals in need."

# WE NEED YOU!

### Volunteer and prevent homeless animals

If you have ever considered volunteering for a worthy cause, we would love to talk to you. LAA has no paid employees and relies on volunteers to accomplish its mission. You can help pets and their owners by contacting us at [info@lincolnanimalambassadors.org](mailto:info@lincolnanimalambassadors.org).



## Thank you to our recent donors!

Kyndall Bedell  
Lacey Losh  
Laurie Hodges  
Lavonne Coash  
Leah Droge  
Lincoln Community Foundation  
Mary Yager  
Misty Petersen  
Mitzi A Graham  
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Teresa Lee  
Terry & Jo Ann Workman  
The Bissell Pet Foundation  
United Way of Lincoln  
& Lancaster County  
Valerie Bottcher  
Valerie Stehlik Walmart

### In memory of

Mia Stehlik, Dog  
Ruger Rivers, Dog  
Jean Jaeger  
Jackie Wells

## Dear LAA Board Members

I am a Volunteer Coordinator for a small local animal shelter. In addition to helping care for the animals at the shelter, I often receive pleas for help from community families with rehoming their pets, rescuing dogs from high risk situations and finding funding to assist with spays/neuter and vaccinations. Unfortunately, the area in which I reside does not have or is very limited on supportive organizations such as your board. As a result, I am forced to seek help outside of my community.

The families of Brooklyn and KwiKwi, two bully breed females, unaltered and not current on vaccinations, reached out to me for help in finding funding to spay their dogs. I reached out for help and was pleasantly surprised when I received an approval to help the families.

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your kind contribution to Brooklyn and KwiKwi spays and vaccinations. The families were not in a financial position to pay for the operations however, both families love their pets and wanted them to be healthy, happy and to never have puppies. Their decision to reach out for help prevented any unwanted litters that may ultimately end up in shelters. Both dogs are doing great and loved by the families whom they live with.

With Respect,  
Mary

## LAA receives Rachael Ray Save Them All COVID-19 Relief Grant from Best Friends Animal Society

Lincoln Animal Ambassadors (LAA) is pleased to have received a Rachael Ray Save Them All COVID-19 Relief Grant in the amount of \$4,500 from Best Friends Animal Society to ensure that LAA continues to help save and support the lives of local community pets living in Lancaster County.

“This grant allows us to continue our lifesaving work by helping us stock and supply our income-based pet food bank, which is central to our organization’s mission as we serve our community” said Mary Douglas, President of LAA. “In this uncertain time, our goal is to save and support as many dogs and cats as we were on track to save and support prior to the pandemic. We are grateful to our community for their support and appreciate the help from Best Friends Animal Society in making LAA’s pet food bank continuing pet food distribution possible. And community is more important than ever right now.”

Lincoln Animal Ambassadors is an active partner in the Best Friends Network, which offers resources and support to fellow shelters, rescue groups, and animal welfare organizations across the country. LAA is addressing the root causes of animal homelessness.

The Rachael Ray Save Them All COVID-19 Relief Program, administered by Best Friends and funded by The Rachael Ray Foundation™, provides COVID-19 relief grants to shelters and rescue groups across the country. The Rachael Ray Foundation helps animals in need and is funded by

a portion of proceeds from each sale of Rachael’s pet food, Nutrish®.

Best Friends Animal Society is a leading national animal welfare organization dedicated to ending the killing of dogs and cats in America’s shelters. In addition to running lifesaving programs in partnership with more than 2,800 animal welfare groups across the country, Best Friends has regional centers in New York City, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Salt Lake City, and Houston and operates the nation’s largest no-kill sanctuary for companion animals. Founded in 1984, Best Friends is a pioneer in the no-kill movement and has helped reduce the number of animals killed in shelters nationwide from an estimated 17 million per year to around 733,000. That means there are still about 2,000 dogs and cats killed every day in shelters, just because they don’t have safe places to call home. We are determined to bring the country to no-kill by the year 2025. Working collaboratively with shelters, rescue groups, other organizations and you, we will end the killing and Save Them All. To check out our community lifesaving dashboard and for more information, visit [bestfriends.org](http://bestfriends.org).

Join the conversation on Facebook. [com/bestfriendsanimalsociety](https://www.facebook.com/bestfriendsanimalsociety), Twitter (@BestFriends) and Instagram (@BestFriendsAnimalSociety).



# A quick guide to cat and child interactions

By Allison Hunter-Frederick

A cat's first few days in a new home are often stressful for it but exciting for any children in that home. Balance your child's enthusiasm for spending time with your cat with your cat's need to acclimate to their new home by allowing your cat to explore your home without your child present. Then ask your child to allow your cat to approach without paying attention to them or forcing attention on them. When your cat safely interacts with your child, reinforce with treats or toys.

## Observe Your Cat's Body Language

Teach your child how to read your cat's body language. Signs of anxiety include crouched or tense body, fast breathing, eyes wide open, ears partially flattened, whiskers back, legs bent or under body, tail close to the body, and plaintive meow.

Encourage your child to mainly touch your cat around their face and back and to avoid touching the cat's tail and stomach.

## Teach Your Child to Respect Boundaries

Instruct your child to wait for your cat to approach them before trying to pet them.

Your child should never chase after your cat or force attention on them. Otherwise, your cat will begin to avoid your child.

Provide a safe space for your cat and their resources. Explain the reasons to your child and make sure they understand to follow these rules.

Watch for inappropriate behavior from your cat and/or child. Be aware of how they feel about each other. Take appropriate steps to help your family enjoy a positive and loving relationship with your feline friend.

Allow your cat to hide. When your cat is in a high or low resting space, your child should never try to squeeze next to your cat or pull your cat out.

Teach your child to allow your cat to come out on their own or to lure them out in a non-stressful way with treats or toys.

## Teach Appropriate Handling

Be a role model in how you handle your cat. Talk to your child about why you are handling your cat the way you are.

Encourage your child to spend time with your cat in ways that don't involve handling, such as playing with wand toys or training your cat.

Both will give your child the chance to play with your cat but will also allow your cat

to keep their distance while having fun and burning off energy.

Keep your cat's claws trimmed to minimize the risk of scratches.

## Younger Children

- Minimize the stress to your cat of being handled by a child by teaching your child to sit on the floor or a couch and inviting your cat into their lap.
- Have your child lure your cat into interactions by using treats or toys.
- Reinforce your cat for calm behavior with petting, treats, or toys.
- Always allow your cat to leave when they want.

## Older Children

- Teach your child how to appropriately handle your cat.
  1. Place one hand under your cat's belly and slowly pick up your cat's front feet off the floor.
  2. Continue to pick your cat up as your other hand supports your cat's back legs.
  3. Hold your cat securely against your body as you support her feet and continue to pet her.
  4. If your cat wants to get down, lower your cat to an elevated structure or to the floor where your cat can walk off without needing to jump down.

## Ensure Appropriate Play

When your child is playing with their siblings or peers, have them play in a room separate from your cat or outside. Normal children's play may frighten your cat.

Teach your child to use toys to play with your cat, and not to encourage your cat to nip at their hands or feet. Play with hands or feet teaches a cat that it's okay to use claws and teeth on hands, which could lead to your cat unintentionally hurting your child.

Never allow your child to roughhouse with your cat during playtime.

## Involve Your Child in Chores

Invite your child to help with feeding, grooming, and cleaning the litter boxes. These positive interactions will make everyone feel good!

Remember that you are the adult and therefore are responsible for both your children and your pets. Always supervise any pet chores you assign to children.



On behalf of Joining Forces

Saving Lives, we want to thank LAA for your contribution toward the garage cats project! We are still working on this project but have caught almost all the garage cats (two left) and have five outdoor cats left along with kittens (unfortunately). Also, thank you for the donation of the food! It is greatly appreciated. Thanks again.

Mitsi Money-Beecher



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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](http://LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org) using PayPal** or mail this form to LAA. Pet Food Bank donation items can be dropped off at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 2325 S. 24th Street; Super Saver, 56th & Hwy 2 and 27th & Cornhusker; or both Petco Lincoln locations.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address (City, State, Zip) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please select your contribution amount:**

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**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!