

# Pet Talk

**WINTER 2024**

LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org / 402.817.1168

## Our mission

Lincoln Animal Ambassadors is addressing the root causes of animal homelessness in Lincoln and the surrounding area.

Lincoln Animal Ambassadors assist pets and their people through a voucher-based low cost spay/neuter program, an income-based temporary assistance pet food bank and teaching people about being responsible pet guardians at community events.

## 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:

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

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

Super Saver 27th & Pine Lake  
*(barrel at exit door)*

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

Arnie's Pet Food, 56th & Hwy 2

Pet Central Station, 5591 S. 48th St.

Long Dog Fat Cat  
8340 Glynoaks Dr. #110

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

## February is Spay/Neuter Awareness Month

*by Allison Hunter-Frederick, LAA Media*

In addition to it being the month of Valentine's Day, February is also Spay/Neuter Awareness Month. The gift of spaying or neutering your pets is one of the greatest ways you can show love to your pets, your family, and your community.

Spaying or neutering your pets will bring them many health benefits. For example, the procedure helps decrease the risk of diseases. The probability of certain types of cancer and other serious health complications can be reduced as much as 85% for both sexes. Specific health benefits for females include the prevention of mammary tumors and pyometra (infected uterus) and for males includes the prevention of testicular cancer and prostate cancer.

Both your pets and your family will appreciate that spaying or neutering can also help prevent behavioral problems. Females won't experience heat cycles, which will eliminate their incessant crying and nervous behavior. Males will feel less of an urge to spray and mark, which will reduce their aggression. Both sexes will feel less compelled to attract a mate. This will result in fewer females dashing out the door to serenade

the neighborhood and fewer males roaming the streets—and consequently fewer fights, injuries, and contraction of contagious diseases.

Spaying and neutering can even benefit entire neighborhoods. The procedure will help reduce the number of strays and homeless animals, which can result in fewer traffic accidents, complaints of nuisance animals, and threats to local wildlife from both dogs and cats. Spaying and neutering also decreases aggression, which reduces the danger of bites and attacks. Finally, the demand for animal control resources is reduced, which saves taxpayer dollars.

Animal welfare experts in the United States agree that spaying and neutering animals is one of the best ways to help curb pet overpopulation. The fewer unwanted litters, the fewer pets that are abandoned or relinquished to shelters, and therefore the fewer pets that end up homeless or euthanized.

If you need financial assistance, there is help! LAA offers a spay/neuter assistance program for Lancaster County residents who meet its income eligibility requirements. To inquire apply on-line at [LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org](http://LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org) or call 402-817-1168, and a volunteer

will return your call to get the necessary information to issue a voucher for a veterinary clinic of your choice.



# Thank you to our donors!

American Online  
Giving Foundation  
Arnie's Pet Food  
Audrey Schneider  
Ava Huber  
Barbara Michael  
Capital Humane Society  
Carol Raiter  
Cause for Paws  
Connie Beckman  
Dale & Kimberly Johnson  
Food Bank of Lincoln  
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Patricia Anderson  
Paula Einemann  
Petco - North  
St. Matthews Episcopal Church  
Super Saver  
Target  
Tom & Karen Bassett  
Tractor Supply Company  
Tyrene Wetzel  
Walmart Corporate

## Donations in MEMORIAM

Simba Kavanagh  
Onyx Gilmore

## First Plymouth hosts fall pet food drive

First Plymouth Congregational Church held a pet food drive for 3 weeks in October, 2023 to benefit LAA's pet food bank. They collected 71# of dry pet food, 318 ounces of canned pet food, 10# of pet treats, 8.5# of cat litter plus lots of other miscellaneous pet items.

LAA is grateful to the First Plymouth congregation for their efforts and generous donations to allow us to help feed pets of low-income households who struggle to feed their family pets.

THANK YOU FIRST PLYMOUTH!

*Pet Food Donation Barrell painted by Willard Community Center School Age Program kids*



# Wine & Howl

SAVE THE DATE  
June 9, 2024

## What should I do if my dog ate chocolate?

If you think your dog has eaten chocolate, or if they have any of these symptoms, contact the Pet Poison Helpline at 855-764-7661 or your veterinarian or emergency vet right away:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Increased body temperature
- Increased reflex responses
- Muscle rigidity
- Rapid breathing
- Increased heart rate
- Low blood pressure
- Seizures

Keep in mind, with any poisoning, it's always cheaper, less invasive, and has a better prognosis/outcome if you treat early. If your dog has already developed clinical signs associated with chocolate toxicity, the veterinarian visit may be more expensive, and the outcome may be worse.

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### What Makes Chocolate Toxic to Dogs?

Chocolate contains substances known as methylxanthines (specifically caffeine and theobromine), which dogs are far more sensitive to than people. Different types of chocolate contain varying amounts of methylxanthines. In general, though, the darker and more bitter the chocolate the greater the danger.

For instance, a 50-pound dog could become equally sick from eating 8 ounces (½ pound) of milk chocolate as they would from 1 ounce of baker's chocolate. This is because the darker chocolate is more toxic, so a smaller amount would still result in toxicity. The amount of caffeine and theobromine will vary naturally due to growing conditions and cocoa bean sources and variety.

### Why Isn't Chocolate Toxic to Humans?

Humans can break down and excrete methylxanthines such as theobromine much more efficiently than dogs.

Used from PetMd.com by Chewy [www.petmd.com/dog/chocolate-toxicity](http://www.petmd.com/dog/chocolate-toxicity)

# Volunteer Spotlight: Donna Kavanaugh

By Allison Hunter-Frederick

Several years ago, while searching online for local organizations that support animals, Donna Kavanaugh first learned about Lincoln Animal Ambassadors. The nonprofit's mission to address the root causes of animal homelessness aligned with her beliefs, and so she became a volunteer.

"By providing financial assistance for spay and neuter," Donna said, "LAA is helping to prevent unwanted litters of kittens and puppies who might end up homeless or in bad situations. Also, with the Pet Food Bank, LAA helps provide pet food and other supplies for lower-income families in Lincoln. Sometimes this assistance means the difference for someone who might otherwise not be able to provide for their pet and possibly give the pet up."

Donna began volunteering as a phone line volunteer, a position she held until she resigned this past summer. During her time with LAA, Donna also took on many other roles. She served as the newsletter coordinator, volunteer co-coordinator, and secretary for the board. She also volunteered with the Pet Food Bank and participated in most of LAA's major fundraising events.

"As a new volunteer," Donna said, "I didn't know what was involved within the organization until I became familiar with the various roles. Sometimes, a role needed to be filled that I could step into (for a temporary or extended period of time). Other roles, like being the secretary, were a natural fit for my abilities. I work full time but my employer allowed for volunteer hours, and so I used that time to answer the phone line, pick up donations, and volunteer at the Pet Food Bank doing inventory or helping with projects."

Donna grew up always being around and loving animals. As an adult, she still includes cats and dogs in her household. Currently, she has several cats and also a dog. "Three years ago when my dog passed away, I vowed I wouldn't get another one, but that changed when a rescue brought a litter of puppies to Wine & Howl in 2021 and I met Willow. I got to adopt her, and she is my spoiled baby." Each of Donna's cats are a rescue of some sort, including two that are feral. "It can take a lot of time working with a feral to acclimate them to life in a house, but it has been so worth it. They

are very loving and provide companionship and comedy relief. I'm glad each of them is part of my life." Donna believes all pets deserve to be safe and loved. "And mine are. They may be a bit spoiled too, but that's okay!"

Unfortunately, due to ongoing health concerns, Donna had to resign from her duties with LAA this past summer. "I felt I couldn't give my all and that it wasn't fair to the other volunteers if I couldn't pull my own weight and fulfill my roles like I feel I should."

Donna wholeheartedly believes in LAA's mission and programs, and she would love to see LAA continue to grow. "It needs the support of individuals, both as donors and volunteers, to exist and to fulfill the mission of preventing animal homelessness." She would like to see LAA receive the recognition she believes it deserves, so that more people can use its services and can support it.

If you're interested in becoming a volunteer for LAA, Donna's advice is to just do it! "There is a place for you, your talents, and your skills. In fact, you'll probably find more than one way to volunteer. You'll also meet a lot of great people and be involved in an organization that truly helps people and their pets."



# THANK YOU

## Spaghetti & No Balls donors!

Beatrice Humane Society  
Brave Animal Rescue  
Capita Humane Society  
Domesti-Pups  
Hearts United for Animals  
Poo Patrol  
Pug Partners of Nebraska  
Rembolt Ludtke Law Firm  
ScrOnyHam Publishing  
Second Chance Pups  
ShelterMe Nebraska  
Valhalla Bee Farm  
Zoom Room  
Margaret Aalberg  
Pauline Balta  
Blake Gilmore  
Jane & Warren Nelson  
Mary Yager  
Super Saver  
Sorrisos Gourmet Pasta Sauce  
Olive Garden  
Deer Springs Winery  
James Arthur Vineyard  
Beatrice Baking Company  
Berries by Jillian  
Crumbl Cookies  
Cupcakes & More  
Dairy Queen  
David Clark Framing  
Edible Arrangements  
Embassy Suites  
High Society Cheesecake  
Rabbit Hole Bakery  
Paw Bakery  
The Venue/Piedmont Bistro  
Sadie and Dolly Aalberg  
Katie Brown  
Mark Fahleson  
Ramzi Hynek  
Mitzi Graham  
Dahlia Torres

# Spay/neuter numbers

## Low Cost Spay/Neuter Program

4,283 total  
2,172 dogs  
2,097 cats  
14 small animals



# Calendar of events

## Give to Lincoln Day May 30

[givetolincoln.com](http://givetolincoln.com)

## Wine & Howl June 9

11 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Deer Springs Winery  
LAA fundraiser  
Entertainment by AM/FM



## Rescue Spotlight: Scatter Joy Acres

Joy Bartling, Founder and CEO began her journey with animals in her childhood raised on a dairy farm in Nebraska. Joy's first loves were the animals who became her closest childhood friends and confidants when she felt she had no one else to turn to during a painful part of her journey to adulthood. Understanding that there are often deep pains in life and the many times that human beings were not able to touch them, she realized she was not alone in that aspect.

In 2005 Joy founded Scatter Joy Acres as Soby Ranch Ministries near Fort Calhoun, Nebraska. In 2006 Joy began her Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) program and rescuing abused or neglected animals. In 2013 Scatter Joy Acres (Scatter Joy Acres) relocated to Omaha and in 2022 Scatter Joy Acres had the opportunity to move to the 15-acre ranch located in Murray, Nebraska.

The ranch in Murray serves as headquarters for the ever-expanding Scatter Joy Acres organization. The ranch is presently home to more than 65 animals like porcupines, sloths, alpacas, sheep, rabbits, goats, horses, cows, kangaroos and a camel, a variety of fowl, pigs, and peacocks. Scatter Joy Acres provides Animal Assisted Therapy for the developmentally disabled, seniors and veterans, autistic children, at-risk youth both at the ranch at on-site at many other facilities in and around the metro Omaha/Lincoln area.

Scatter Joy Acres is one of the regions certified EAGALA Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) (Individual, group, family, and corporate) and an education site for the widely acclaimed Cowboy Ethics, curriculum, teaching young people to be responsible adults using the Code of the West.

Scatter Joy Acres provides an experience unlike any other for those it serves. Animal

rescue and therapy, an urban ranch, real-life, hands-on STEM education, and animal interaction makes Scatter Joy Acres an incredible organization and place to visit. In addition to the therapy and rescue, the ranch is available for birthday parties, corporate outings, and other events. There is ample parking, picnic areas, a playground, hayrack rides, bonfires, and plenty of room for fun and games.

Scatter Joy Acres capital improvement project for 2024 is The Stillwater Barn. This is a climate-controlled barn where the Animal Assisted Therapy can be conducted year-round. The Stillwater Barn is crucial for Joy to increase the AAT program which will enhance and improve the quality of life for so many individuals. The barn will also be used for events that are open to the public and for private events.

Scatter Joy Acres always has volunteer opportunities available, on and off the ranch. For more information visit our website at [scatterjoyacres.org](http://scatterjoyacres.org). If you know of anyone who would benefit from Animal Assisted Therapy, please call us at 402-709-9401.



# LAA raises \$8,750 at 8th annual Spay-ghetti and No Balls

120 people attended Lincoln Animal Ambassador's annual Spay-ghetti and No Balls fundraiser on the evening of Saturday, November 4, at the Unitarian Church. \$8,750 was raised!

For \$25, attendees received a buffet dinner that included salad, spaghetti, and bread sticks. Meatballs were available for an extra cost. The volunteer wait staff kept everyone's water and tea glasses filled; wine and beer were available for purchase.

The event's featured speakers were Matt Madcharo, the Executive Director of the Capital Humane Society and Carlee Fiddes, the Executive Director of the Beatrice Humane Society. Both spoke about the challenges their respective animal shelters face and potential solutions. Madcharo talked about the new Stransky Veterinary Clinic CHS plans to open in March 2024 with the goal of providing affordable care to all pet owners. Fiddes talked about BHS' new low-cost spay/neuter program.

The theme of the night was collaboration. "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much," LAA president Mary Douglas said in her speech to open the 8th Annual Spay-ghetti and No Balls fundraiser.

A few years ago, LAA and Nebraska No Kill Canine Rescue decided to collaborate to help spay/neuter pets when the procedure would help keep a pet in the home, the pet's well-being would be improved, or the family couldn't afford the cost to alter their pet. Both organizations set aside an emergency fund, and if either organization encountered one of these situations they would split the cost of the procedure. The two organizations have collaborated on 44 of these situations to date.

When the CHS started their low-income cat spay and neuter program, LAA collaborated

with them to issue a voucher from LAA to pay for the entire procedure. Then when CHS announced they would start issuing dog spay/neuter vouchers for the public, LAA offered its software to them to issue their vouchers. LAA also integrated their voucher requests with the CHS requests, allowing a client to double the support for the cost of the procedure by using both vouchers in unison.

The most recent collaboration occurred this past spring. Now that the Beatrice Humane Society has opened a low-cost spay and neuter program, LAA will refer clients to their program if they have the ability to drive to Beatrice. Clients also receive a voucher from LAA, which means they have less to pay out of pocket.

LAA also collaborates with retail stores that carry LAA's donation barrels, various local companies that give larger donations to the pet food bank, and with every donor to LAA. "Donors are part of LAA," said Douglas. "Nothing would happen without them."

Wrapping up the evening was LAA's' ever-popular dessert auction, run by auctioneer Tom Bassett who volunteered his time. An assortment of treats were up for auction, including cakes, cookies, and pies for people, and desserts for dogs. Whether attendees were bidders or spectators, they enjoyed watching desserts being sold, with the highest individual dessert bid being \$410.

A huge shout out to all who supported LAA by coming out to Spay-ghetti and No Balls. Special thanks to the businesses that donated food and drinks, the 20 local bakers who donated desserts, the 18 event sponsors, the Gilchrist/Nelson Family who prepared and served the food, and all the volunteers who ensured that the event ran smoothly.

# WE NEED YOU!

## Volunteer and prevent homeless animals

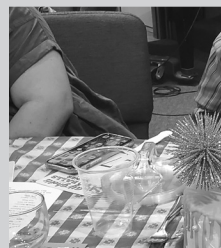
**Lincoln Animal Ambassadors is an all-volunteer organization** and

part of that is that most of our volunteers are in the work force, so inquiries and requests for pet food and spay/neuter are left on a voicemail. LAA uses volunteers to pick up and answer voicemail shifts (partial days/voicemails each day). You can do this from your own home. Calls would need to be returned within 48 hours of the time it was left on our voicemail line. Training is supplied, of course. Internet/computer and a telephone are required.

LAA currently has several phone line shifts open. LAA is not a hands-on animal group but what we do helps to give companion animals in our community a better quality of life. If you want to feel like you are helping an innocent animal that has no way of asking for help themselves, this might be the volunteer spot for you. To know that you helped feed a hungry pet, or helped to prevent unwanted litters, is such a rewarding experience.

We are also looking for someone who might be interested in helping to write grants for LAA. If you have a couple hours each week to volunteer for this worthy organization and want to help animals, go to our website and fill out a volunteer inquiry.

A full list of volunteer opportunities with LAA is available on our website, [LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org](http://LincolnAnimalAmbassadors.org)





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Until every pet has a home.



# 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 various locations throughout Lincoln (see list elsewhere in newsletter).

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**Please select your contribution amount:**

\$25  \$50  \$75  \$100  \$250  \$500  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- 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!

