



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

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The Humane Society of the United States Celebrates Spay Day USA 2008 in Historic Fashion with L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa

HSUS President & CEO Wayne Pacelle Joins Mayor for Signing of Landmark Spay-Neuter Ordinance

LOS ANGELES (Feb. 26, 2008) – Every year, millions of cats and dogs - nearly half of all those entering shelters in the United States - are euthanized. The cost of pet overpopulation is staggering – an estimated \$250 million in California alone is spent on animal control services and care for homeless animals. Animal experts agree spaying and neutering is the best long-term solution to the problem of pet overpopulation.

Those facts are the driving force behind Spay Day USA, an annual event during which thousands of volunteers coast to coast host activities that educate and assist people with getting their pets spayed or neutered. More than 500 events are scheduled throughout the month, culminating in the official day of commemoration on February 26 as Spay Day USA 2008.

Doris Day, founder of Spay Day USA and the Doris Day Animal League, has provided through her Foundation a special grant of \$50,000. “We decided to expand our support of Spay Day USA this year by providing funds for spays and neuters in specific geographic areas where the help is most needed,” says Miss Day. “For 2008, we worked with The HSUS to identify needy areas, and we have granted supplemental funding in 10 states for additional spays and neuters. Those hundreds of animals will be part of what we hope will be many thousands of successful surgeries this year.” More than 30,000 animals across the country are expected to be spayed or neutered as part of Spay Day USA 2008.

This year, The HSUS will commemorate Spay Day USA in an especially fitting fashion by joining Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa at City Hall today for the signing of an historic spay-neuter ordinance. The measure, introduced by Councilmember Richard Alarcón and approved by the City Council last week, will require all cats and dogs in the City of Los Angeles to be spayed or neutered if they are older than 4 months, unless they fall under one of seven exempted categories.

"By requiring that all cats and dogs be spayed or neutered, we can help to humanely decrease the number of pets abandoned and euthanized each year," said Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. "This ordinance, which contains clear guidelines and enforceable penalties, creates a valuable tool to take this city another big step toward eliminating the unnecessary

euthanasia of animals."

"The Humane Society of the United States commends the Los Angeles City Council for passing this sensible measure that will save animal lives and taxpayer dollars," says Wayne Pacelle, HSUS president and CEO. "Combined with the availability of financial assistance for pet owners in need, Los Angeles now has the tools in place for successfully ending the euthanasia of healthy and treatable pets. I am grateful to all of the people who are working so hard in Los Angeles to prevent the needless killing of dogs and cats."

Besides the ceremony where this landmark measure will be signed into law, through the efforts of The L.A. Department of Animal Services, the Offices of Mayor Villaraigosa and Councilmember Alarcón, the Amanda Foundation and PETCO, there will be free spay-neuter, vaccination and microchipping of pets on the South Lawn of City Hall beginning at 7:30 a.m. Pre-registration is required; to book an appointment call the Amanda Foundation at (888) 349-7388.

The HSUS coordinates Spay Day USA, now in its 14th year, by working with local shelters, humane organizations and rescue groups, veterinary clinics and individual volunteers to offer special spay-neuter events, deploy mobile spay-neuter clinics, raise money to subsidize spay-neuter surgeries and increase awareness about the importance and benefits of spaying and neutering.

Benefits of Spaying and Neutering

In addition to reducing the number of homeless pets entering animal shelters, spaying and neutering offers significant benefits to pets and their families:

- Sterilized animals are less likely to run away.
- Male cats are less likely to spray, and male dogs may be less likely to bite or get in fights with other dogs. Spaying female dogs and cats gets rid of heat cycles.
- Spaying and neutering eliminates certain common forms of cancer. This can reduce veterinary costs.
- Sterilized animals usually make better companions. They are less likely to develop behavior problems and generally have a better temperament.

Facts about Cat and Dog Overpopulation

Animal welfare groups have worked for decades to reduce the number of homeless animals. The overall number of animals euthanized every year in animal shelters is down from a peak of an estimated 13.5 million (22 percent of the owned pet population) in the early 1970s, to an estimated 3-4 million (less than 3 percent of the owned pet population) today.

- Nearly half of all animals entering shelters are euthanized. If more people spayed or neutered their pets, this sad statistic could be reduced.
- A survey of 186 animal shelters showed an average cost of \$176 to house and care for every homeless animal while at the shelter.

- Spaying and neutering are safe, simple surgeries that stop animals from reproducing.
- Healthy kittens and puppies weighing as little as two pounds can be safely spayed or neutered.

About Spay Day USA

The Doris Day Animal League founded Spay Day USA in 1995 to reduce pet overpopulation. DDAL combined operations with The HSUS in 2006 to maximize and coordinate operations between the two animal welfare organizations.

Since its inception in 1995, more than one million animals have been spayed or neutered because of Spay Day USA.

Spay Day USA 2008 is made possible in part by our corporate sponsors: Nature's Miracle and Zoombak, LLC.

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The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization – backed by 10.5 million Americans, or one of every 30. For more than a half-century, The HSUS has been fighting for the protection of all animals through advocacy, education, and hands-on programs. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty -- On the web at humanesociety.org.

The Humane Society of the United States

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Celebrating Animals, Confronting Cruelty