



Humane Ohio's non-profit, low-cost spay/neuter clinic serves all area pet owners and stray cat caretakers, and offers a special, even lower rate to pet parents on select federal assistance programs.

**To donate to the Humane Ohio
Pet Food Bank contact:**

Humane Ohio, 3131 Tremainsville Road, Toledo, Ohio, 43613
Or Feed Your Neighbor warehouse, 139 Huron St., Toledo

If you are in need of pet food contact:

Contact Feed Your Neighbor Ministries at 419-242-7401
between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Humane Ohio Helps

Four-Legged Family Members In Bad Times

BY CYNTHIA L. JACOBY,
Special to The Blade

TOLEDO — Sometimes a pet is a life-line for a family.

Take the Toledo woman struck with stage-four ovarian cancer. Her husband had provided for his family for 20 years. Then illness struck and she was diagnosed with less than six months to live. He quit work more than four years ago to care for her. In recent months, though they have struggled to maintain a semblance of a normal life.

All along, their three dogs kept snuggled with them, comforted them and brought smiles to their faces.

But the cost of feeding the dogs had become an issue. And that hurt the couple as much as the other troubles they weathered.

That's where Humane Ohio came in.

The non-profit organization in cooperation with Toledo Area Ministries as well as two major area pet supply stores provides free food for cats and dogs to area pet owners through its Humane Ohio Pet Food Bank.

The concern, officials said, is that pet owners are using their own food supplies to feed their animals. Or that the costs are simply too

much for a family to handle, so they might have to get rid of the pets. Some will end up in shelters. Others could be left on the streets.

The program, launched in early September, gained firm footing when Pet Supplies Plus and Petco committed to donating damaged or discontinued bags of food to the cause, according to Jill Borkowski, marketing manager for Humane Ohio.

"There's nothing wrong with the food. It's just that the bags have been torn or damaged and have to be taken off the floor," she explained. In one instance, the program gained a major donation because a dog food manufacturer decided to change the bag's appearance and wanted the bags with the old pictures pulled from the shelves.

The food is stored at the Toledo Area Ministries' warehouse. That organization distributes the food at four of its 13 Feed Your Neighbor Ministries' food pantries. Humane Ohio hopes to expand the food giveaway to all the pantries.

Humane Ohio officials figure the animal food program melds with their mission — reducing the pet overpopulation in the region.

The demand for low-cost spay/neuter in the region is great,

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especially as the recession drones on. In order to meet the demand and help more animals and pet parents, Humane Ohio has moved its non-profit, low cost spay/neuter clinic to a new larger facility with enough room for a second veterinarian to work. They estimate that addition will allow the organization to boost the 8,700 procedures performed to 14,000 annually.

"Our mission is to reduce pet overpopulation by offering access to high-quality, affordable spay/neuter and our larger facility and additional staff veterinarian play a major role in our ability to do that," says Lisa Hochradel, Humane Ohio clinic director.

"By offering low-cost spay/neuter to any pet parent in need, and regularly offering free transports to and from our clinic from various locations throughout the city, we can help animals and people in need and make sure there's less homeless animals on the streets and at our local shelters and rescue groups."

The Pet Food Bank idea came up this summer and came together kind of quickly.

"We didn't know if we were going to be able to do it. But then the two food companies made commitments and it came together," Borkowski said.

"And we figured if we could just help one family, then it would all be worth it. Then we heard this man's story," Borkowski said of the Toledo man caring for his ill wife.

"Those three dogs were her therapy. On those days she is at her worst, they lay there at her side."

The pet supply companies created an opportunity to launch the program. But Borkowski admits there is a lot more work ahead. Humane Ohio is working hard to spread the news about the Pet Food Bank and hopes to eventually expand its services by teaming with Mobile Meals.

"As people learn more about it, they will get on board," she said.

The holiday season around the corner offers the next chance to make an impact. Borkowski envisions food drives among offices, workplaces and other organizations in lieu of gift exchanges and office parties. "There's a variety of ways people can help out," she said. ■