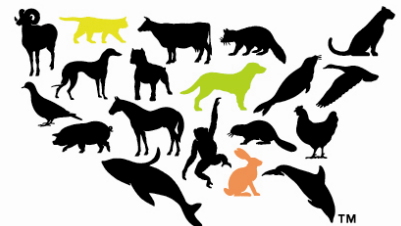


# Spay Day

## Event Planning Guide

U.S. Version

[ SPAYDAY 2010 ]



PROUD PARTNER



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**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

[humanesociety.org/spayday](http://humanesociety.org/spayday)

# Guide at a Glance

For Spay Day newbies to long-time alumni, this three-part *Spay Day Event Planning Guide* contains loads of useful information for planning and promoting Spay Day in your community.

<b>Welcome Message / Spay Day Overview</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Part I: Plan Your Event</b> .....	<b>2-13</b>
Spay Day Q & A: Even Einstein Asked Questions .....	3
What Should I Do for Spay Day?.....	4
Effectively Delivering the Spay Neuter Message.....	5
Spay/Neuter Event Ideas .....	6
Event Ideas for Veterinarians.....	7
Guide to Proper “Vetiquette” .....	8
Fundraising for Fido . . . and Fluffy, Too!.....	9
Education Creates Change .....	10
Get Politically Active – Pass a Resolution.....	11-12
The Spay Day Online Pet Photo Contest .....	13
<b>Part II: Promote Your Event</b> .....	<b>14-24</b>
Attract Media Attention .....	15
Make It Newsworthy .....	16
Write a Letter to the Editor .....	17
Sample Letter to the Editor.....	18
Write a Press Release.....	19
Sample Press Release .....	20
Create a Press Advisory & Sample Advisory .....	21
Public Service Announcements (PSAs) .....	22
Be a Media Superstar.....	23
Event Planning Checklist.....	24
<b>Part III: Additional Resources</b> .....	<b>26-27</b>
HSUS Contact Info .....	Back Cover

# Welcome & Spay Day Overview

## A Message to All Spay Day Event Organizers

Welcome to the U.S. version of the *Spay Day Event Planning Guide*! And thank you for joining The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in this worldwide campaign to reduce pet overpopulation.

This *Guide* contains all the information you need to run an effective, exciting, and enjoyable Spay Day event. Use it to carry out the following action steps for your event:

Plan • **Register!** • Promote • Perform • **Report!**

You'll notice that we've put extra emphasis on **registering** and **reporting** your event or activity. **These are two vital steps you need to take.** Why? Registering your event allows you to order Spay Day campaign materials for free or at significant discounts, and may make you eligible to receive spay/neuter funding raised through the Spay Day Online Pet Photo Contest (see p. 14). Reporting the results of your event adds to the success of Spay Day and thereby enhances our ability to grow press attention and educate more people about how critical spay/neuter is to ending the tragedy of pet overpopulation.

All of us at The HSUS hope you have great fun planning, promoting, and running your Spay Day event, and spreading the word about the lifesaving importance of spay/neuter. Together, we can end the suffering of homeless pet, stray and feral animals.

Sincerely,



Vicki Stevens, U.S. Spay Day Coordinator  
spayday@humanesociety.org • 301-258-1486

## Spay Day Overview

Spay Day (formerly Spay Day USA) takes place each year on the last Tuesday of February. Created by the Doris Day Animal League (DDAL) in 1995, Spay Day became a program of The HSUS and Humane Society International (HSI) when DDAL combined operations with The HSUS in 2006.

Spay Day is the first and **ONLY** international day of action to promote the spaying or neutering of pets. During Spay Day, veterinarians and their staff, animal welfare professionals, business owners, and concerned citizens join forces to spay or neuter as many animals as possible, and to promote spay/neuter as the most effective and humane means of decreasing the euthanasia of homeless animals in shelters.

During Spay Day's first fifteen years, participants spayed or neutered more than 1,470,000 animals, preventing millions of surplus births and saving millions of taxpayers' dollars.

# Part I: Plan Your Event

“The best way to have a good idea is to have lots of ideas.”

—Linus Pauling

# Spay Day Q & A: Even Einstein Asked Questions

**When is Spay Day?** The last Tuesday of February each year is officially “Spay Day.” However, any event or activity you perform during the month of February in honor of Spay Day counts!

## **How can I participate in Spay Day?**

1) ORGANIZE an event or activity, from distributing Spay Day brochures to hosting a fundraiser to offering discounted spay/neuter services to low-income pet owners—no event is too big or too small!

2) HELP with an event or activity organized by someone else in your community.

3) ENTER your pet’s photo in the Spay Day 2010 Online Pet Photo Contest! Every vote your pet’s photo receives raises funds for the spay/neuter programs of eligible Spay Day event organizers, The Humane Society of the United States, and Humane Society International.

*NOTE:* This guide is written for event organizers (option 1 above). To search for an event to help with, or to enter the Spay Day 2010 Online Pet Photo Contest, visit the Spay Day website beginning January 20, 2010: [humanesociety.org/spayday](http://humanesociety.org/spayday)

**What qualifies as a Spay Day “event”?** Any organized activity you perform during the month of February to promote spay/neuter as an effective and humane means of ending the pet overpopulation crisis counts.

**Must I provide discounted or free spays and/or neuters?** No. Because cost is a barrier to many owners of unaltered pets, most event organizers do offer special discounted or free spay/neuters (in particular, to pet owners in need of financial assistance or feral cat colony caretakers), but this is not a requirement to participate in Spay Day.

**Is Spay Day for cats and dogs only?** No. Spay Day is designed to enhance local efforts aimed at reducing the number of animals euthanized in shelters. We encourage the spaying or neutering of any animals on whom such surgery can be performed. (See page 28 for special resources.)

**Does Spay Day take place internationally as well?** Yes! In 2009, Spay Day events were held in 24 countries. If you live outside the United States, consider recognizing Spay Day in your country. Review this *Event Planning Guide* for ideas, and contact Humane Society International ([spayday@hsi.org](mailto:spayday@hsi.org)) for more information about Spay Day outside of the U.S. [hsi.org/spayday](http://hsi.org/spayday)

# What Should I Do for Spay Day?

**Successful events start with clear, achievable goals, a hardy dose of effort, and a bucketful of optimism!** Roll up your sleeves and, with pen in hand, make a list of achievable goals. Be specific—instead of “provide low-cost spay/neuters” or “raise money” write “neuter 50 cats at a charge of just 5 cents each” or “raise \$5,000.” Once you’ve identified your goals, a valuable tool that will help you reach them is a timeline—a sheet of paper that maps out graphically all the things you need to do and when they need to be done. To produce an accurate timeline, first list each goal, all the steps that need to be taken to reach each goal, and approximately how much time each step will take.

**Identify the needs in your community.** Contact animal care and control, shelters, rescue groups, veterinarians, and local government. Find out:

- Is there a substantial population of low-income families with pets and, if so, what resources are available to them?
- Which zip codes or neighborhoods are responsible for a disproportionate amount of animal intake to shelters and rescues?
- Which species is responsible for the bulk of intake?
- For dogs, which breeds account for disproportionate rates of intake or enter the system unaltered?
- Is there a high population of stray and feral cats in the community?
- Is there a neighborhood where foreclosure rates are high and families need extra help caring for pets?

Once you have knowledge of your community’s priority needs, match this with your event planning.

- Identify available resources, such as key players, potential sponsors, and event location.
- Match location with areas of high need based on your community assessment.
- Match targeted efforts to species and breeds identified in your community assessment.
- Advertise where the event will occur several weeks in advance through radio, newspapers, and by hanging banners.
- Use creative marketing to reach your target audience: touch pet-owners where they live, work and shop. Pet supply stores, large retail megastores, food stores and other high traffic areas should be priorities for leafleting. Use your most people-friendly volunteers to engage one-on-one with pet owners about the event. Pet owners want to be treated with respect. Train your team on the lessons learned in The HSUS’s spay/neuter campaign (p. 5) for more information on messaging spay/neuter.

**General questions to ponder: How much time do I have to devote to planning my event? How many people do I need to bring on board? Can I round up family and friends to help? Where else I can locate volunteers?**

Find out if an event is already taking place near you by visiting [humanesociety.org/spaydayfind](http://humanesociety.org/spaydayfind). If there is, don’t duplicate efforts! Share resources, join forces, or have your event fulfill a different community need.

# Effectively Delivering the Spay/Neuter Message

By far, the most popular way to participate in Spay Day is to organize some sort of special, beyond your everyday normal spay/neuter outreach event to motivate pet owners to make that spay/neuter appointment NOW! But here are some important things to think about before you run out the door with your megaphone:

The Humane Society of the United States has conducted groundbreaking, in-depth research with owners of unaltered pets to gain a better understanding of what barriers get in the way of spaying or neutering, and what the most effective messages are to help pet owners overcome said barriers and make the decision to spay or neuter. The eye-opening findings from this research are summarized in this report, which we strongly encourage anyone involved in spay/neuter advocacy download: *Messaging Spay/Neuter: Lessons from the Gulf Coast Spay/Neuter Campaign*, available for free at [animalsheltering.org/spayneutercampaign](http://animalsheltering.org/spayneutercampaign).

A few examples to challenge your assumptions (we've questioned ours!):

- Most owners of unaltered pets are NOT ideologically opposed to spaying and neutering. When educated about the consequences of accidental litters in a respectful manner and provided access to low-cost services, the majority of pet owners will spay or neuter.
- Most people truly love their pets and are offended by implications that they do not, or that they are irresponsible if they have not yet spayed or neutered their companions. We need to set aside the assumption that the general public shares our understanding of overpopulation.
- The most credible spokesperson for your cause? It's NOT a celebrity! Find out who the best messengers are, and more about how to deliver the message with more impact, at [animalsheltering.org/spayneutercampaign](http://animalsheltering.org/spayneutercampaign).

The HSUS is pleased to offer you free, customizable materials developed by our research-driven marketing campaign. Also at [animalsheltering.org/spayneutercampaign](http://animalsheltering.org/spayneutercampaign).



# Spay/Neuter Event Ideas

Following are just a few ideas that have worked well for other Spay Day event organizers. Feel free to brainstorm new ones!

## Ideas for Humane Organizations

If your organization has its own spay/neuter clinic, you might wish to:

- Invite local vets to volunteer for a shift on Spay Day to increase the numbers of animals your are able to spay or neuter. Host a special spay/neuter clinic, after hours. This guide has lots of tips!.
- Invite a segment of the public not usually targeted for your clinics to bring their animals in to be spayed or neutered.
- Invite local vets to view/participate in a special seminar involving:
  - Pediatric age spay/neuter
  - High volume spay/neuter

If you aren't currently spaying or neutering each adopted animal before releasing them to their new family, make a commitment to do so during the month of February in honor of Spay Day.

If your organization does not have its own clinic or vet on staff, consider teaming up with a local clinic or clinics to provide them with needed services while they concentrate on performing spay/neuter surgeries:

- Advertising
- Spay/neuter voucher distribution
- Screen clients for eligibility for low cost spay/neuter
- Monitor animals recovering from surgery
- Lunch! (and/or dinner, and/or snacks—depends on how long your Spay Day event is!)

## Event Ideas for Individuals

Many of the event ideas sprinkled throughout these pages may also apply to motivated individuals wishing to organize a Spay Day event. As an individual, you can serve as a liaison between veterinarians and humane organizations, and volunteer for both in a nearly infinite number of ways. To locate a Spay Day event near you, visit [humanesociety.org/spaydayfind](http://humanesociety.org/spaydayfind).

In addition, you can:

- Lobby your legislator(s) to issue a Spay Day Resolution (more in this guide)
- Write a letter to the editor (more in this guide)
- Contact radio and TV stations to run Spay Day Public Service Announcements (more in this guide)
- Distribute Spay Day flyers and hang Spay Day posters ([humanesociety.org/spaydaystore](http://humanesociety.org/spaydaystore))
- Encourage family, friends, and neighbors to spay or neuter their pets!
- Enter your pets in the Spay Day 2010 Online Pet Photo Contest!

# Event Ideas for Veterinarians

Veterinarians are vital to the success of Spay Day. After all, without your involvement, no spays or neuters would be performed! Following are just a few suggested, mutually-beneficial ways you can participate in Spay Day. If you have additional ideas, please let us know!

## Event Ideas for Veterinarians and Their Staff

- Form or join a coalition of local veterinarians and hold a city, county, or even statewide Spay Day event!
- Offer your existing clients—or, only new clients—a special discount on all spay/neuter surgeries performed during the month of February, the last week of February, or just on the last Tuesday of February (Spay Day).
- Contact your local animal shelter and volunteer to spay or neuter a certain number of adoptable animals at no charge. Ask the shelter to provide the animals' adopters with your business card for follow-up health care visits.
- If a local animal shelter contacts you, be receptive to discussing how you might partner with them to promote Spay Day .
- If your community has a mobile spay/neuter unit, volunteer to perform spays or neuters for a shift.
- Hold an after-hours party! Schedule special free or discounted spay/neuter surgeries when your clinic is normally closed.
- Educate Clients —“Sell” pet owners on the benefits of spay/neuter.
- Provide special, discounted spay/neuters to low income households. Partner with social service agencies to identify qualifying households.
- Provide special, discounted spay/neuters to Good Samaritan caretakers of free-roaming cat colonies.
- Match Program—for every animal someone brings in for sterilization, alter a shelter animal or free-roaming cat for free or at a discount.
- Buddy Program—for every animal someone brings in for sterilization, alter their friend's pet for free or at a discount.
- Dental Duo—for every client who schedules a teeth cleaning in honor of National Pet Dental Health Month, provide a discount voucher for a spay/neuter. Or vice versa.
- Pediatric Spay/Neuter—review, promote and distribute scientific findings on pediatric spay/neuter to colleagues (below, and page 28).
- Free Gift—give a gift to very client who has a pet spayed or neutered for Spay Day . Ask local businesses to donate the gifts.
- Spay Taxi—have your staff provide a special pick up/drop off service for housebound pet owners (liability issues may apply).
- Spread the Word—display Spay Day posters and distribute brochures and other educational materials.
- Bundle Services—offer low-cost sterilization with vaccinations and pet I.D.
- If you distribute free or discounted spay/neuter certificates, consider charging recipients a refundable deposit or nominal fee. This will help guard against last minute no-shows.
- Order a free Spay Day PSA from PETS 911 (more info in this guide) and promote Spay Day on local radio and TV stations.
- While most veterinarians who participate in Spay Day offer special discounts or volunteer their services, this is an appreciated and effective—but not required—feature of the program.

# Spay Day Guide to Proper “Vetiquette”

Veterinarians are vital to the success of Spay Day—after all, only vets can perform spays and neuters! Follow these tips to build great working relationships with your community’s vets that will pay off in “spayeds”—for the animals!

## **Before Spay Day**

- Be polite! When asking vets to participate in your Spay Day event, be respectful and courteous of their time. Ask when they might be available to talk or meet with you.
- Send them a friendly letter explaining what you have planned for Spay Day and how you’d like them to participate. Ask for their feedback, and be open to alternative ideas your vets may suggest.
- In lieu of a letter, or as a follow up to the letter, consider offering to bring breakfast or lunch to your vet at her or his practice, to further discuss your Spay Day plans.
- When you approach your vets for help, offer to do something for them, too. Ask how you might be of service to them.
- If you ask your vet to offer reduced cost or free spays and/or neuters, keep in mind that this request is expensive for them, as the costs must come out of their operating budgets. Suggest targeting your community’s neediest animal guardians, and consider holding a fundraiser to help subsidize the cost of the donated services.
- If there is no objection, publicize the names of all the veterinarians who assist with your Spay Day event. Include their names in all of your organization’s Spay Day press releases and advertisements, and on posters, flyers, and other materials.
- If a vet chooses not to participate this year, thank her or him for their time and consideration. Circumstances change, and perhaps this vet may be in a better position to collaborate with you next year.

## **During Spay Day**

- Ask participating vets if it would be helpful if you provided yourself, your staff, or volunteers to assist during the event. Offer to clean cages, screen participants, do paperwork, run errands, or fetch lunch. (Ask a local restaurant or caterer to donate the food.)
- If your vets don’t object, distribute their contact information to everyone who attends your event—and who adopts an animal from your shelter or rescue organization (if applicable)—and recommend your vets for their future pet health care needs.

## **After Spay Day**

- If your organization is subsidizing the cost of spays/neuters performed by your vet during Spay Day, be sure to reimburse the vet promptly!
- Thank all the vets who worked with you. A personal thank you note is always appreciated!
- Give your veterinary partners a Certificate of Appreciation, available for free from The HSUS and the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association to event organizers who meet the deadline for reporting results.
- Be creative! Host a reception, send a gift basket, etc.
- With their permission, thank vets publicly in your newsletter, in a letter to the editor of the local newspaper, or by referring new clients their way.

# Fundraising For Fido . . . and Fluffy, too!

Raising money to help subsidize the cost of spay/neuter surgeries is a valuable and greatly appreciated activity that will allow more animals to be altered. The money you raise can be applied toward the cost of surgeries performed during your Spay Day spay/neuter event, or donated to a local clinic to provide spay/neuter surgeries after Spay Day. Set a fundraising goal and plan a strategy for success!

## Oodles of Ideas!

- The **Spay Day 2010 Online Pet Photo Contest** is a fun and easy way to raise money!
- **Corporate Sponsorship**—many local businesses welcome the opportunity to raise their “good citizen” profile. Ask them to sponsor all or part of your event costs, or for a donation in kind—meeting space, volunteer labor, equipment, consulting, and/or food.
- **Shelter Open House**—set up information tables, and sell or raffle off goodies donated by sponsors.
- **Craft or Bake Sale**, or both! Get out the glitter or the chocolate chips, and enlist the help of family and friends!
- **Walk-a-thon**—invite people to bring their dogs!
- **Haircut-a-thon**—ask salons and groomers to participate!
- **Contest or Raffle**—ask businesses, shops, and restaurants to donate prizes.
- **Auction**—get local celebrities to donate items, as well as artists and retail stores alike. Or, auction off a date with a local celebrity, or that cute kennel manager from your local shelter!
- **Donate-a-Portion**—ask restaurants, stores, movie theaters, etc. to donate a portion of their profits on Spay Day to a local spay/neuter program. Publicize the event to ensure a large turnout!
- **Benefit Concert**—get local bands/musicians involved.
- **Pet Portraits**—ask photographers to take pictures of people and their pets. Sell copies of photos and extras like frames, albums, etc.
- **Garage or Yard Sale**—ask the public to donate lightly used or new items for resale.
- **Organize a Competition**—local schools compete to raise the most money.
- **Capitalize on Valentine’s Day**. Sell heart-shaped dog and/or cat treats.
- **Spay-ghetti (and No Balls) Dinner**. Throw one!
- **House Party**: invite a representative from your local shelter to speak.

See also: [animalsheltering.org/fundraising](http://animalsheltering.org/fundraising)

“Lack of money is no obstacle. Lack of an idea is an obstacle.”

—Anonymous

# Education Creates Change

Educating people about spay/neuter—what it is, why it’s important, and where to get it done—can inspire them to take action. Spay Day educational activities can be performed alone or in conjunction with a spay/neuter and/or fundraising event.

## Reaching Young Audiences

Kids are an important target audience. Most kids love animals and are very open to messages about their well-being. By instilling in children good attitudes about spaying or neutering their pets, you are helping to ensure a better future for animals.

- Arrange to give a presentation at a local school. Do it yourself, or enlist a humane educator from your local humane society, or your veterinarian.
- Hold an essay, poster, or coloring contest. Ask businesses to donate prizes, and print the winning entries in the newspaper or display them in a public place such as a library.
  - Download a Spay Day coloring/essay sheet and other kids’ activity pages here:  
*[humanesociety.org/spaydayaction](http://humanesociety.org/spaydayaction)*
- Distribute buttons, stickers, and other kid-friendly items with positive spay/neuter messages.

## Reaching the Public at Large

It is important for people to understand that animals are euthanized due to pet overpopulation, and that the offspring of their unaltered animals could be euthanized in a shelter.

- Research with owners of unaltered pets has shown that 60% purchase their pet supplies at Wal-Mart.
- Distribute Spay Day materials. Ask businesses to display posters, your supermarket to insert flyers into shopping bags, or set up a table at a local event.
- Organize a rabies clinic.
- Set up a tent and table at your local pet supply store.
- Lobby your local legislators to issue a resolution declaring the last Tuesday in February “Spay Day” (see sample resolution in this guide).
- Organize free seminars at community colleges, churches, etc.
- Invite a vet, animal care and control officer, shelter staffer, or another expert to speak.
- Reserve your public library’s display case for the month of February and install a Spay Day exhibit.
- Place Spay Day ads in community theater, school, and sports programs.  
*[humanesociety.org/spaydayaction](http://humanesociety.org/spaydayaction)*
- Save time by using The HSUS's Spay Day educational materials, such as posters, handouts, etc. Beginning Nov. 23, 2009, visit *[humanesociety.org/spaydaystore](http://humanesociety.org/spaydaystore)*

# Get Politically Active

**Adopt a Resolution.** As a voter, you have a lot of power! Introducing a resolution is a great way for your legislator to connect with animal friendly voters in her or his district. In 2009, more than 50 Spay Day resolutions were passed on the state, county and city levels. Let's get more than 100 passed in 2010!

Resolutions (also called "proclamations" or "commendations") are a great way to educate legislators and bring credibility and visibility to an important issue in your community or state. A resolution is a formal statement adopted by the state legislature or city or county council recognizing a particular issue and a method of addressing it. A Spay Day resolution formally recognizes the tragedy of pet homelessness and endorses spay/neuter as a humane and effective means of reducing it, and is generally non-controversial.

Resolutions can also be used to designate a particular time period in honor of a cause. For example, the last Tuesday in February officially becomes "Spay Day." The concept is simple, yet goes a long way to putting an issue on the political radar screen. Adopting a Spay Day resolution gives legislators an opportunity to take a humane position with very little risk. Spay Day resolutions put the tragedy of pet homelessness on the legislative agenda and can pave the way for more substantive legislation in the future.

## How to Get a Resolution Passed

**Face to face meetings are the most effective way to ask your legislators to introduce a resolution. Set up a meeting with the state or local legislators who represent you and ask them to introduce a resolution to declare the last Tuesday in February "Spay Day." (You can adapt and use the sample resolution in this guide.) Most legislators will at least consider this request, but if not, the next step would be to have friends and family in different districts meet with their legislators and make the request.**

## Once Your Resolution Is Adopted:

- **Hold a Press Event** — Invite officials to sign the resolution at a public ceremony at city hall, the county office building, or on the steps of the capitol. Coordinate with your official's press office to maximize potential press interest in your event.
- **Show Appreciation**—Be sure to thank your legislator and forward a summary of press attention to his or her office. Build on your new relationships with your local legislators to encourage them to do more for animals.
- **Celebrate**—After the resolution is signed, congratulate yourself for making a big difference for animals!

### FIND YOUR LEGISLATORS

Visit [www.fund.org](http://www.fund.org) and click on "Find My Legislators" in the upper left column.

# Sample Spay Day Resolution

Office of the [Mayor, County Council or Governor]

Resolution

Designating Tuesday, February 23, 2010, as "Spay Day"

WHEREAS, pets provide companionship to more than 71,000,000 households in the United States; and

WHEREAS, humane societies and animal shelters have to put down more than four million cats, dogs, rabbits and other animals each year, many of whom are healthy and adoptable, due to a lack of critical resources and public awareness; and

WHEREAS, this tragic overpopulation of pets costs citizens and taxpayers of this country millions of dollars annually through animal service programs aimed at coping with the millions of homeless animals; and

WHEREAS, spaying and neutering has been shown to dramatically reduce the overpopulation of pets and feral cats, proving to be a wise investment in saving animal lives and taxpayer dollars; and

WHEREAS, veterinarians, national and local animal protection organizations, and private citizens worked together to ensure the spaying or neutering of more than 38,000 pets and feral cats through "Spay Day" in 2009; and

WHEREAS, veterinarians, national and local animal protection organizations, and private citizens have joined together again to advocate the spaying and neutering of pets and feral cats on "Spay Day 2010":

Now, therefore, be it RESOLVED by the [local or state government body], that February 23, 2010, is designated "Spay Day." The [mayor, county council or governor] is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of [city, county or state] to observe the day by having their own pets spayed or neutered or by sponsoring the spaying or neutering of another person's pet or of an animal in a shelter awaiting adoption.

[SEAL] Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Spay Day Online Pet Photo Contest

## Checklist for: Potential Beneficiary, 2010 Spay Day Online Pet Photo Contest

Prior to the photo contest's January 20<sup>th</sup> start date:

- I acknowledge that I represent a 501c(3) nonprofit organization or a municipal agency able to receive spay/neuter funding from a nonprofit organization.\*
- I have informed The HSUS that the organization I represent would like to be listed as a potential beneficiary of the 2010 Spay Day Online Pet Photo Contest.\*
- I have reviewed and updated (if necessary) my organization's contact information in the Spay Day online database ([humanesociety.org/spaydaylogin](http://humanesociety.org/spaydaylogin)). (Please do NOT create a new record if your organization has participated in Spay Day in the past. If you do not remember your login information please contact us.)\*
- I have confirmed that The HSUS has on file a current copy of my organization's 501c(3) determination letter and W9 (not 990) tax identification form.\*
- I have confirmed that The HSUS has on file for my organization a current ACH/EFT form and a voided check so that we may receive our funds via electronic funds transfer rather than a check.
- I have read, signed, dated and returned to The HSUS ([spayday@humanesociety.org](mailto:spayday@humanesociety.org) or fax 301-258-3081) the form confirming that I understand the rules pertaining to potential beneficiaries of the 2010 Spay Day Online Pet Photo Contest and that my organization will use any funds generated from the photo contest solely for spay/neuter surgeries, services or vouchers.\*
- I have logged on to my record in the Spay Day online database and registered my organization's Spay Day event(s).\*

After the start of the photo contest:

- I have asked my staff and volunteers to enter their pet photos in the 2010 Spay Day Online Pet Photo Contest and choose the organization I represent as the beneficiary of all votes.
- To maximize my earning potential from the photo contest, I have prepared a series of emails to send to my organizations members and supporters encouraging them to enter the 2010 Spay Day Online Pet Photo Contest and choose the organization I represent as the beneficiary of all votes. (For those who don't wish to enter the contest, I have asked that they consider voting for a photo that benefits the organization I represent.)
  - Email 1 January 25: Enter now!
  - Email 2 February 8: Enter/vote
  - Email 3 February 23: Today is Spay Day; enter thru Feb 26
  - Email 4 March 1: Last day to vote is March 4
  - Email 5 March 22: Thanks to you, we raised \$\$\$
- I have held my Spay Day event(s) during the month of February.
- I have logged in to my Spay Day record ([www.humanesociety.org/spaydaylogin](http://www.humanesociety.org/spaydaylogin)) and reported my Spay Day event results by the deadline of March 8, 2010.
- When I reported my results I also requested any Certificates of Appreciation I wanted.
- Upon learning how much money my organization will receive from the photo contest, I have provided to The HSUS an estimate of approximately how many animals we will be able to help spay/neuter with the funds.\*
- After spending the photo contest spay/neuter funds, I have submitted to The HSUS ([spayday@humanesociety.org](mailto:spayday@humanesociety.org)) a brief description of the good we were able to accomplish for animals with the funds.

## Part II: Promote Your Event

“The best way to get a good idea is to get lots of ideas.”

—Linus Pauling

# Attract Media Attention

Getting media coverage of your event is crucial to ensuring as many people as possible hear the important, lifesaving spay/neuter message.

While The HSUS promotes Spay Day nationally, it's up to you to get the word out locally. Here's how:

- Create a Media List—compile a thorough and well-targeted list. Try your community's website, or [newslink.org](http://newslink.org)

Organize your list into the following categories:

- **Print Media:** Daily newspapers, weekly newspapers, local magazines, local newsletters, and specialty publications (non-profit organizations, community clubs or groups). For each entry, list all pertinent contact information including the names of the news, city, or assignment editor; the features editor; the editorial page editor; and the person responsible for the community calendar or bulletin board.
  - **Electronic Media:** Local television and cable stations, local radio stations, local Websites (pet-related and community calendars). For each entry, list all pertinent contact information including the names of the assignment editor (for TV stations), news director (for radio stations), public service director, and the people responsible for booking talk show guests.
- Write a Media Advisory (page 21)—and submit it to each contact person on your media list.
  - Write a Press Release (page 19)—and submit to each contact person on your media list.
  - Write a Letter to the Editor or Op-Ed (page 18).
  - Order a pre-produced PSA or submit your own. Provide TV and radio Public Service Announcements to identified stations on your electronic media list. Order PSAs online when you register your event.
  - Follow-up—it is important to follow-up with the media you contacted to make sure they received your information. Contact them the morning of your event (early), as well, reminding them of the exciting details!
  - Follow-up AGAIN!—contact the media who were not able to attend but may be interested in running your story after the fact.
  - Be your own journalist! Find a hook, tell a good story and take great photos. Then write an article, op-ed piece or letter to the editor.
  - Use Your Connections!—contact everyone who can spread the word fast and far, at rabies shot clinics, Wal-Mart parking lots, churches, festivals, parades, etc.
  - Piggy-Back—promote your upcoming event at an existing event or well-trafficked public space. For example, pass out info to a line of movie-goers, people exiting a sports arena, etc.
  - DO NOT MISS DEADLINES! Organize your media contacts into daily, weekly, or monthly categories listing deadlines for each. Daily newspapers/TV and radio stations have short deadlines, so be sure to contact them NO LATER THAN the third week of January.(too late for Feb. 1st; one week out for local thing; longer and they will forget.)

# Make It Newsworthy

Reporters cover interesting stories because interesting stories sell papers. Sell them your story and you'll gain a lot of exposure. Here's how to make your event irresistible:

- **Prepare**—Have your thoughts and materials prepared ahead of time. Create sound bites (short, catchy phrases) for interviews and articles.
- **Important Points**—Organize and state them clearly and briefly.
- **Local Angle**—Focus on what people in your community are doing to promote Spay Day .
- **Milestones**—Create a strong headline for the media. If your event is saving 1,000 lives or reaching its 500th (or even 50th) spay/neuter, it will have a better chance of being covered.
- **Mayor/Governor Seal of Approval**—Ask your legislator to issue a Spay Day Resolution. Getting local TV coverage of the signing is a great way to launch your campaign.
- **Promote**—Make “Spay Day ” and contact info visible for the cameras. Ensure logos, banners, t-shirts, and other visual identification are prominent when the media is around.
- **Join the Gang**—The media can do a feature story on local experts like a veterinarian in conjunction with their participation with Spay Day .
- **Money Talks**—Crunch numbers and show how many tax dollars you are saving the community with your efforts. Emphasize and promote this.
- **Impact**—The more beings effected by your event, the more newsworthy it is. Not only do tax dollars get saved but many animals' lives improve, and when a community takes care of its problems, everyone benefits.
- **Originality**—Something new and fresh like your event could be just the story the media is looking for. So make it fresh every year!
- **Proximity**—The closer the event is to the media source, the more likely the media will consider it news.
- **Star Power**—Celebrities aren't the way to go for delivering the spay/neuter message, but they sure do attract supporters to your fundraising event!
- **Props** will get you noticed. Construct an oversized check to show how many tax dollars your event saves the community. Get artistic! Create posters and other visual promotion for an event. Have a teacher help organize a contest for the winning poster. Download graphics at [humansociety.org/spaydayaction](http://humansociety.org/spaydayaction)

# Write a Letter to the Editor

Writing a letter to the editor is one of the most effective (and least expensive!) ways to educate people about the importance of spay/neuter and to promote your Spay Day event.

Follow these tips to ensure your letter gets published!

- Read—existing letters in the publications you want to get published in and identify what makes it to print.
- Get It Right—address your letter, “Dear Editor.” Type it, double-spaced, and follow any specific publication guidelines.
- Keep It Short—preferably 100-150 words (10 to 15 typed lines). Three hundred words are the maximum most papers or magazines will publish without cutting. Contact your local paper to find out what their requirements are.
- Grab ‘em!—make the first sentence count, so they keep reading.
- Clarity—write concise sentences and stay focused on your one issue.
- Get Real—sign your letter and include home and work telephone numbers. Some papers will want to verify that you wrote it.

**Write an Op-ed piece.** Op-eds (short for “Opinion/Editorials”) are longer articles of 500-800 words that summarize an issue, develop an argument, and propose a solution. As with letters to the editor, review the op-ed pieces in targeted publications to get a sense of what gets published. Send the article to the Editorial Page Editor with a cover letter explaining why you feel it should be printed. Establish your expertise/stake in the issue. (do both; send letter and online)

- Avoid worn-out clichés, exaggeration, weak puns and run-on sentences. Keep it short with punchy sentences.

## Tips & Resources

- Credibility—mention anything about yourself that lends clout (your status as a board member or longtime volunteer, your education, who you know, etc.). stakeholder thing
- Avoid negative language and hyperbole. Don't preach.
- Write affirmatively. People respond to positivity.

# Sample Letter to the Editor

[insert Date] REWRITE

Letter to the Editor

[insert Name of Publication]

[insert Street Address]

[insert City, State Code, Zip]

Dear Editor:

More than four million pets are put down in U.S. shelters each year. That's one every eight seconds. Often these animals are the offspring of cherished family pets, even purebreds. Maybe someone's dog or cat got out just one time or maybe the litter was intentional, but efforts to find enough good homes failed. The result is that homeless animals have to be euthanized because there are more pets entering shelters than there are people able to provide them with loving care. By spaying or neutering your pet, you will have peace of mind knowing that his or her offspring won't be put down in a shelter.

The sixteenth annual Spay Day takes place on February 23, 2010. To volunteer or have an animal spayed or neutered, simply call [insert local number] or visit [humanesociety.org/spayday](http://humanesociety.org/spayday) [or insert local contact information]. Together, we can ensure every pet enjoys a long, happy, and healthy life in a loving home.

Sincerely,

[Insert Signature]

[Insert Typed Name]

[Insert Address]

[Insert Contact Details]

# Write a Press Release

A press release is a brief announcement of a newsworthy event. It is sent to media outlets to interest them in covering your story. News directors receive hundreds of releases every day, so yours must look professional, present the facts quickly, and grab their attention in seconds!

## THE DO'S!

- **TYPE, double-spaced on or on 8.5" x 11" standard white paper with your contact information. Download the Spay Day logo if you don't have letterhead or want to add it to the release.**
- **Always begin the body with the dateline: "CITY, State, Month, Day, Year" followed by 2 dashes (--).**
- **PROOFREAD carefully for mistakes.**
- **FACT CHECK for accuracy.**

## THE DON'TS!

- **Make sure it does not exceed one page.**
- **Don't use zeroes for time (e.g., use "11 a.m." not "11:00").**
- **Don't use letters after numbered dates (e.g., August "22" not "22nd").**

GET MAXIMUM VALUE FOR YOUR EFFORTS—The day before your event, call the news desk to

- inform them you are holding a newsworthy event the next day. Do not read your entire news release to them. Just briefly describe your event, state your phone number in case more information is needed, and mention that you sent a release to the news desk.

# Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

logo

**[ORGANIZATION] IN [CITY] PARTNERS WITH  
THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES  
TO PROMOTE NATIONAL SPAY DAY**

*Local Citizens Urged to Spay or Neuter Pets*

[insert CITY], [insert State], [insert Month, Day, Year] -- [insert Organization's Name] will participate in Spay Day , a national campaign of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), to promote the life-saving benefits of spay/neuter, when it [or sponsor name, if applicable] hosts the [insert name or brief description of your event] at [insert place name, address] on [insert day, date and time of event].

[insert Local Dignitary/Celebrity Name if appropriate] will open the event, which will feature [list most interesting highlights of your planned event].

“Spay/neuter protects pet health, improves pet behavior, and lessens the burden on animal shelters and taxpayers,” says [insert Name of Local Spokesperson, title]. “We are inviting our citizens to sponsor the spay or neuter of at least one animal in honor of Spay Day 2010.”

This year marks the sixteenth annual Spay Day . Since Spay Day's inception in 1995, participants have altered an estimated 1,418,500 animals. It has been a proud achievement of Spay Day participants like [name of your organization or event] and other spay/neuter programs that the number of homeless animals euthanized in the U.S. has fallen from approximately 13.5 million in 1973 to about four million currently.

[Insert a brief paragraph/boilerplate information about your organization here, if appropriate].

For more information, please visit [insert URL of organization and/or [humanesociety.org/spayday](http://humanesociety.org/spayday)].

###

Contact:

[insert Name of Media Contact]

[insert Phone Number]

[insert e-mail address (if applicable)]

# Create an Advisory – Sample Advisory

If you have time and resources for only one media activity, this is it! Send this advisory to all your local media outlets. Such information is often posted in "Community Calendar" sections of local publications.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: [insert Month, Date, Year]

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION] IN [CITY] PARTNERS WITH  
THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES TO PROMOTE SPAY DAY

*Local Citizens Urged to Spay or Neuter Their Pets*

**WHAT:** In honor of Spay Day, a program of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), [insert Organization name] will host the [insert Event Name] to promote spay/neuter as a humane and effective means of reducing the number of animals who are put down in shelters each year.

**WHO:** [Insert Organization's Name and/or Participants' Background Information]

**WHEN:** [insert Day of Week], [insert Date], at [insert Time] OR from [insert Beginning Time] to [insert Ending Time]

**WHERE:** [insert Location]  
[insert Street Address], [insert City]  
[insert Parking Information, Directions (if applicable)]

**WHY:** Between 6-8 million companion animals enter our nation's shelter system each year. Shelters can't save and support this huge number of accidental litters, strays and offspring of family pets, and more than 3 million are euthanized each year. Spaying and neutering is the only 100% proven way to reduce these numbers and prevent the tragedy of overpopulation.

Contact: [Media/Publicity Contact Name]

[Phone]

[E-mail]

# Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are short (10 to 60 seconds) ads aired on radio and TV stations, designed to raise awareness of significant social issues in an effort to stimulate positive change. The Federal Communications Commission requires stations to air PSAs to balance the effects of paid advertising and to present balanced coverage of issues, so the airtime is generally free to nonprofit community groups. As a result, PSAs present a cost-effective way of reaching the broadest possible audience.

Send stations a personalized PSA – The HSUS has partnered with Pets 911 to provide you with an updated selection of PSAs that you can order for your local radio and television stations. Choose from 3 different video PSAs and 5 different radio PSAs! To preview and order PSAs, simply log in to your Spay Day profile at [humanesociety.org/spayday](https://humanesociety.org/spayday).

# Be a Media Superstar

## Do a Radio and/or TV Talk Show Interview

You can reach thousands of people through talk shows. However, before you can do an interview, you must get the radio or TV station interested! Here's how:

Contact your local radio station's talk show host or producer (call the station first to find out her or his name) several weeks before your event. Similar to a pitch letter, when you pitch, create a solid first impression with your credentials (or those of your organization's spokesperson), explain what you'd like to discuss, and convey why they and their audience should care about what you're telling them.

### Interview Preparation

- Research—familiarize yourself with the show's style and format, so you'll know what to expect.
- Be an Expert—study the issue inside and out. Anticipate and be prepared to answer difficult questions. Memorize facts and quotes and have sound bites ready.
- Key Points—make a list of up to five things you want to get across during the interview and be prepared to back them up.
- Practice Makes Perfect—have a friend play talk show host and interview you. Tape the interview with an audio or video recorder for reference on how you can improve.
- It's All Surface—if appearing on TV, follow these general rules: Don't wear patterns or solid black, white, or bright red. Do wear plain, solid colors others than those just listed (green and blue show up especially well). Smile, and don't fidget or touch your face or hair.
- Sound Bites—the media looks for brief, catchy phrases to plug into a 60-second story. So, only express the most important points and make them concise and strong. Sample sound bites:  
"Spaying and neutering saves lives."  
"Spaying and neutering prevents more animals from becoming homeless."
- Appoint a Spokesperson. Make sure it's someone credible, like a veterinarian or a shelter representative!
- While your spokesperson will be the primary media contact, everyone at the event should be familiar with the main points, as reporters will often want additional comments from others involved.
- Be careful what you say. Don't say anything in an interview that you wouldn't want attached to your name.

### Tips & Resources

- *Communications Toolkit: A Guide to Navigating Communications for the Nonprofit World:* available from [causecommunications.org/clients-cause.php](http://causecommunications.org/clients-cause.php)
- Display a Spay Day billboard along a busy highway. Contact The HSUS for artwork, available for a nominal fee.

# Event Planning Checklist

Whether you're a force of one or fifty, you'll find this checklist invaluable to your event success!

- Plan my event
- Register my event online at [humanesociety.org/spaydaylogin](http://humanesociety.org/spaydaylogin)
  - Register as soon as possible, beginning November 23, 2009.
  - Provide a summary description of your planned event, including all relevant information people need to participate. (You can edit this information if things change.)
  - Include opportunities for donating and volunteering, if applicable.
  - When you login to your Spay Day record to register your event, be sure to also click on "Review or Edit Your Contact Information" and make sure everything is up-to-date!
- If you represent a 501(c)(3) humane organization or municipal agency, decide if you'd like to be listed as a potential beneficiary of the Spay Day Online Pet Photo Contest (deadline 1/13/10).
- Download, order, and/or create promotional/educational materials for my event.
  - Visit [humanesociety.org/spaydayaction](http://humanesociety.org/spaydayaction) to download flyers, customizable mini-posters, ledger-size posters, logos, ads, kids' activity pages and other freebies.
  - Visit [humanesociety.org/spaydaystore](http://humanesociety.org/spaydaystore) beginning November 23, 2009, to order posters, T-shirts, scrubs and more! If you register your Spay Day event first you will receive significant discounts on your order. Please note that, **by taking advantage of the discounts, you are agreeing to report the results of your Spay Day event by the deadline**, which is March 16, 2010.
- Advertise my event.
- Photograph my event;
  - Track during my event for maximum exposure! Include copies of the photos in media kits, sponsorship proposals, and other promotional materials, and send copies to [spayday@humanesociety.org](mailto:spayday@humanesociety.org) for possible inclusion on The HSUS's website.
  - Number and sex of cats, dogs, and/or other animals spayed or neutered (if applicable).
  - Amount of money raised for spay/neuter (if applicable).
  - Number of people exposed to the spay/neuter message.
- Report the results of my event online at [humanesociety.org/spaydaylogin](http://humanesociety.org/spaydaylogin) by **March 16, 2010**.
  - Provide data tracked during event.
    - Always report your best estimate if you don't know the exact results. A good guess is better than nothing at all!
  - Provide final summary description of event.
    - Give us all the noteworthy details on your event. Enquiring minds want to know!
  - During the reporting process, request Certificates of Appreciation for your event's Most Valuable Players—vets, vet techs, humane society staff, lay volunteers, and of course yourself!
  - Reporting by the deadline of March 16, 2010, is important in order to:
    - Receive spay/neuter funding from the photo contest
    - Request Certificates of Appreciation for all your MVPs.
    - Be included in the official Spay Day count.
- Thank everyone who helped!
  - Veterinarians, vet techs, and other staff
  - Humane society and rescue personnel
  - Lay volunteers
  - Sponsors
- Begin planning for Spay Day 2011!
  - Keep records! Good records this year will save time and effort—and help you build on your success—next year.

## Part III: Additional Resources

“Life affords no higher pleasure than that of surmounting difficulties, passing from one step of success to another, forming new wishes and seeing them gratified.”

—Dr. Samuel Johnson

# Additional Resources

Use this information to connect with people and publications that can increase your Spay Day effectiveness!

## **Spay Day**

### **Home Page**

*[humanesociety.org/spayday](http://humanesociety.org/spayday)*

### **Action Kit**

*[humanesociety.org/spaydayaction](http://humanesociety.org/spaydayaction)*

### **International Events**

*[hsi.org/spayday](http://hsi.org/spayday)*

**Organizer Login** (update your contact info, register your event, report your results)

*[humanesociety.org/spaydaylogin](http://humanesociety.org/spaydaylogin)*

### **Participate**

*[humanesociety.org/spaydayparticipate](http://humanesociety.org/spaydayparticipate)*

### **Store**

*[humanesociety.org/spaydaystore](http://humanesociety.org/spaydaystore)*

### **Photo Contest**

*[humanesociety.org/photocontest](http://humanesociety.org/photocontest)*

## **HSUS Resources**

### **Feral Cats**

*[humanesociety.org/feralcats](http://humanesociety.org/feralcats)*

### **Resources about Pet Overpopulation**

*[humanesociety.org/issues/pet\\_overpopulation](http://humanesociety.org/issues/pet_overpopulation)*

### **HSUS Spay/Neuter Campaign**

*[animalsheltering.org/spayneutercampaign](http://animalsheltering.org/spayneutercampaign)*

## **Other Resources**

### **Alliance for Contraception in Cats & Dogs (ACC&D)**

ACC&D is the world's only nonprofit organization dedicated solely to furthering development of non-surgical methods of pet population control.

E-mail: [info@acc-d.org](mailto:info@acc-d.org)

Website: [www.acc-d.org](http://www.acc-d.org)

### **Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV)**

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians seeks to improve the health and well being of animals in shelters through the advancement of shelter medicine. Visit the "About Us" section of the website to review ASV's position on early-age spay/neuter.

Julie D. Dinnage, DVM

Association of Shelter Veterinarians

c/o MSPCA

P.O. Box 260007

Lakewood, CO 80226

E-mail: [admin@shelternvet.org](mailto:admin@shelternvet.org)

Website: [www.shelternvet.org](http://www.shelternvet.org)

### **Humane Alliance Spay/Neuter Clinic**

The Humane Alliance Spay/Neuter Clinic is dedicated to ending shelter overpopulation by providing high-volume, high-quality, targeted, affordable companion animal sterilization services. Through its National Spay/Neuter Response Team (NSNRT), Humane Alliance offers the first and only national training program to provide resources and support for groups wanting to open a spay/neuter clinic in their community. In 2009, Humane Alliance opened a new training program for veterinary extern students and private practitioners.

Humane Alliance Spay/Neuter Clinic

25 Heritage Dr.

Asheville, NC 28806

Phone: (828) 252-2079 • Fax: (828) 254-9774

E-mail: [humanealliancewnc@yahoo.com](mailto:humanealliancewnc@yahoo.com)

Website: [www.humanealliance.org](http://www.humanealliance.org)

### **Koret Shelter Medicine Program at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine**

The Koret Shelter Medicine Program's eWbsite has been designed as a resource for all those involved with homeless animal care. Type "spay" in the search engine to search their Website for information on spay/neuter costs, techniques, etc.

Koret Shelter Medicine Program  
University of California at Davis  
School of Veterinary Medicine  
One Shields Ave.  
Davis, CA 95616-8782  
Phone: (530) 752-101  
E-mail: [mjbannasch@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mjbannasch@ucdavis.edu)  
Website: [ShelterMedicine.com](http://ShelterMedicine.com)

### **National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy (NCPSP)**

The NCPSP gathers and analyzes reliable data that further characterize the number, origin, and disposition of cats and dogs in the United States and recommends programs to reduce the surplus.

Sally Fekety Bolgos, Consultant  
National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy  
P. O. Box 131488  
Ann Arbor, MI 48113-1488  
E-mail: [ncppsp@aol.com](mailto:ncppsp@aol.com)  
Website: [www.petpopulation.org](http://www.petpopulation.org)

### **Project Spay and Neuter**

Project Spay and Neuter is a charitable division of Pet Vet, Inc., dedicated to fighting the immeasurable suffering causing by the pet overpopulation problem. Dr. Tracy Land has performed over 18,000 pediatric spay/neuters with 0.006% mortality. She is happy to talk to any veterinarian who has questions about this procedure, and teaches pediatric spay/neuter techniques to veterinarians. Contact:

Dr. Tracy Land  
Project Spay/Neuter, Inc.  
4630 Martin Rd,  
Cumming, GA 30041  
Phone: (770) 887-1565 • Fax: (770) 781-4237  
E-mail: [tland@bellsouth.net](mailto:tland@bellsouth.net)  
Website: [www.projectspayneuter.com](http://www.projectspayneuter.com)

### **SPAY/USA**

*(Not affiliated with Spay Day)*

SPAY/USA is a nationwide network and referral service for pet owners who cannot afford the regular cost of spay/neuter in their areas. In addition, SPAY/USA offers "A Guidebook to Mobile Spay/Neuter Clinics" and other information on pet overpopulation.

SPAY/USA  
2261 Broadbridge Ave.  
Stratford, CT 06614  
Phone: (203) 377 1116  
E-mail: [CGalog@snet.net](mailto:CGalog@snet.net)  
Website: [www.spayusa.org](http://www.spayusa.org)

### **Other Companion Animals**

#### **House Rabbit Society's Spaying and Neutering FAQ's**

Spay/neuter facts from the rabbit experts.

Website: [www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/spay-neuter.html](http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/spay-neuter.html)

#### **How to Find a Good Guinea Pig Vet**

Website: [www.cavyinfo.com/html/vet.htm](http://www.cavyinfo.com/html/vet.htm)

#### **San Francisco's Small Animal Adoption and Spay/Neuter Program**

Read all about it in the Spring 2002 issue of the Doris Day Animal League/Doris Day Animal Foundation's member magazine, the *Animal Guardian*.

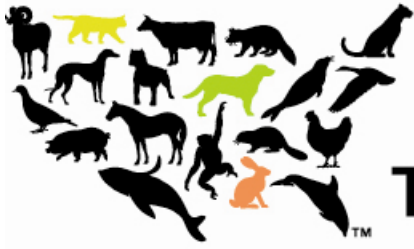
Available online only:  
[www.ddal.org/animalguardian/archive/2002](http://www.ddal.org/animalguardian/archive/2002)

#### **Rat Assistance & Teaching Society (R.A.T.S.)**

Visit the "Info for Vets, Pet Shops, & Shelters" section of the R.A.T.S. Website for special considerations regarding rat spays and neuters.

Website: [www.petrats.org](http://www.petrats.org)

[ **SPAY DAY 2010** ]



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY**  
OF THE UNITED STATES

[humanesociety.org/spayday](http://humanesociety.org/spayday)

[spayday@humanesociety.org](mailto:spayday@humanesociety.org) • 301-258-1486