

PLANNED PETHOOD'S HISTORY

The organized spay/neuter movement in the Toledo area started in the '60s with two teachers who began discussing the concept at neighborhood meeting where roaming dogs were a concern. Soon others began to understand how sterilization modified behavior as well as controlled the population of dogs. Euthanasia rates at the dog pound/humane society were staggering. Penna Miller, one of the teachers, contacted United Humanitarians about their program and soon we were asking people to join and in return they could get their animals fixed at a significantly reduced fee with one of our participating vets. Actually, we had only one vet, Morris G. Weaver, DVM, who was willing to work with us. The state Veterinary Medical Association tried to sue us for price fixing. An incensed Penna contacted the Attorney General and the suit was dropped. In the notifying letter, we were praised for our humane goals.

Personality conflicts caused Maryellen Vorderberg, the other teacher, to join the Friends of Animals program which was similar to the first one. Finally a decision was made that we didn't need to send part of the membership fees to a national organization when we really needed the money here to subsidize hardship cases.

Planned Pethood was born and incorporated in 1979. One of our first fundraisers was a celebrity auction with the auctioneers county commissioner Jim Holzemer and radio celebrity, Mitch of "Mitch and Marybeth". A lock of Loni Anderson's hair went for \$100 and we netted \$1800.

In 1996, a coalition of animal rescue groups under the name of STOP (Stop Toledo's Overpopulation of Pets) began a dog adoption program in conjunction with the Lucas County Dog Warden. Not all dogs were fixed as they were coming directly from the pound but the adoption agreement included a voucher for sterilization*. When the pound entered into an agreement with the Toledo Area Humane Society and refused to sell us dogs, PPI recruited fosters and offered only surgically sterilized dogs to the public. By August 2001, members felt the need to find homes for cats as the need was great and so we addressed the cat issue in the same way. The animals in our program come mostly from the street, at risk (neglect or abuse) homes, Litter Patrol**, area pounds and shelters.

Once the public became aware of the cat adoption program, we found ourselves drowning in calls about stray or abandoned cats and kittens. As there is no animal control for cats and licensing laws have proven to be ineffective, with no enforcement, the county cat population is estimated in the tens of thousands. It became apparent that we needed to expand our spay/neuter efforts***.

In 2002, common ground was found in Operation Felix (Feline Education and Love Instead of Extermination). Various animal advocates, rescues, and shelters volunteered their time to work with vets who also volunteered to alter cats. Planned Pethood participated heavily in this project especially with TNR where we continued the work in trailer parks. Low-income neighborhoods are the focus for both owned and feral cats and the program is deemed successful. The program and the coalition have come under the auspices of Humane Ohio, a non-profit s/n clinic, that now provides services on a daily basis.

Both the TNR in Trailer Parks and Litter Patrol projects are being copied by shelter and rescues across the country.

Recently, after a public outcry, the Chief Dog Warden resigned after more than 20 years of running the pound. During that time he had managed to convince Toledo City Council to pass an ordinance that identified all pitbull type dogs and puppies as vicious and if they were impounded, they were euthanized. The board of directors, recognizing that puppies are not born vicious, unanimously voted to accept any

puppy under 12 weeks of age into our program if we have the appropriate foster. Following our lead, the county's largest shelter voted to accept bully breeds into their program. Eleven months later, City Council unanimously enacted new legislation that is not breed specific and further, holds the owner of a dog responsible for its behavior.

Planned Pethood is probably the most proactive and reactive organization in our area in addressing the needs of animal and people. It has become well established nationwide that we cannot euthanize our way out of the pet overpopulation. While we realize that health and behavioral issues may warrant putting an animal down, we need to stop the breeding cycle rather than continue taking in and trying to find good permanent homes for multiple litters from the same female dog or cat year after year. Through both spay/neuter and rescue/adoption, we will see a reduction in the overpopulation, suffering, abuse, abandonment and neglect of dogs and cats.

*The Lucas County Commissioners entered into an agreement with the Toledo Area Humane Society whereby the county agreed to pay \$25,000 per year to spay or neuter dogs adopted from the pound prior to going to new homes. That amount was the allocation for \$50 spay/neuter vouchers toward sterilization, but a study revealed that only 30% of the vouchers were ever used. TAHS also agreed to take as many dogs as possible that were not placed after two weeks on adoption row at the pound. Despite meetings with the commissioners and the Chief Dog Warden, PPI could no longer get dogs directly from the pound.

As of this writing, a new Chief Dog Warden is in charge and we now have access to available adoptable dogs.

**PPI began Litter Patrol in 2003, whereby volunteers respond to "free" puppy and kitten ads, offer to take litters into our adoption program if we have foster, and spay or neuter all adult animals remaining the the house. We have received a number of grants for this effort with out most current one of \$30,000 to be used over 2 years. This grant applies to TNR, also.

***We chose an area where we could monitor the effect of sterilizing cats and determined trailer parks, which have a notorious reputation for cat overpopulation, were the place to start. Studies show that once cats are altered, they form a colony and don't allow new cats to join. Only one trailer manager agreed to allow us to trap,neuter and return(TNR). We started there with limited funds but the success drew media attention and we then started receiving requests from other park managaers. One contributed \$1000 and with a \$6000 grant for TNR in trailer parks, we received more media coverage and more requests.