

Philadelphia Suburb Gets Low-Cost Spay/Neuter

Husband-and-wife-team offer discounts to promote cat and dog sterilization.

Posted: August 19, 2008, 5 a.m. EDT

A husband-and-wife team in Pennsylvania has taken on a mission to sterilize as many cats and dogs as possible in order to curb the region's pet population. To do so, they opened the Affordable Spay Neuter Clinic, located in the lower level of their pet retail business in Pottstown, Pa.

Steven Silberman, DVM, has performed 500 spay and neuter surgeries since the clinic first opened in February on the lower level of his wife Diane Dietch-Silberman's store, Diane's Discount Pet Supplies and Adoption Center, which is on the main level. By focusing on pet sterilization, the clinic doesn't need to support other hospital services with high surgery fees, Silberman said.

"This enables us to keep our costs down and therefore available to more people so we can make a greater impact," he said. "We are trying to take away cost as the reason for not having one's pet sterilized."

In a survey of full-service animal hospitals in the area, he found that fees at his clinic are 50 percent to 70 percent less. The new clinic houses treatment facilities, a dual surgical suite and recovery area, and uses skilled volunteers and paid technical staff to provide service, Silberman said.

All pets receive pre-surgical exams, anesthesia and pain relief medications, and sterilized surgical instrument packs are used for each procedure. Silberman also runs a low-cost vaccine clinic each month at the facility.

"What we're trying to do, and what I hope we have done, is make sure the animals that are adopted will be spayed or neutered," he said. "We're trying to be good guardians of our best friends."

Dietch-Silberman, owner of Diane's, said she and her husband opened their business in 1989 and it operates mainly as an adoption center. They have a policy that mandates the spaying or neutering of the adopted pets.

"By opening the Affordable Spay Neuter Clinic, we can now enforce this policy and take a proactive step to address the ongoing and chronically under-addressed problem – the control and destruction of cats and dogs due to pet overpopulation."

The clinic is not equipped to provide routine veterinary services or treatment for sick animals, but will provide ancillary services for spay and neuter patients such as retained puppy teeth extractions, puppy hernia treatments, and miscellaneous minor surgeries as well as minor medical treatments.