

Village Oak Veterinary Hospital

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Jim De Martini, Chairman
Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors
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Chairman Jim De Martini and Members of the Board of Supervisors

Project X, the non-tax payer funded, low cost spay/neuter program has now completed four months, and I would like to give you an update.

The Project X phone is receiving an average of 10 to 15 calls a day, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. We are able to schedule half of these pets for surgery that week at a practice close to their home. Some of these clients are referred to the Humane Society or Alley Cat Guardians if they still need further financial assistance.

Inquiries from outlying areas were slow to start. We have posted signs in remote areas of Stanislaus County, and now we are now getting calls from Hickman, Waterford, Empire and some of the more remote areas.

We are able to co-ordinate with the owners of feral cats to have them brought in any time they are trapped. Cats are admitted in their traps and picked up in traps to be re-released. Clients are not burdened with trying to trap cats to make a specific appointment.

Currently Project X is approaching 2000 spay/neuters for both cats and dogs utilizing the participating private practices throughout the county. Monte Vista Veterinary Hospital has altered an additional 819. We continue to promote our program, and at current rates we are on target to hit our goal of 9000 the first year!

An unexpected consequence of our program has been a competitive reduction of spay/neuter prices at some of the hospitals not participating in Project X. This has been mainly noted in Modesto. We have also been contacted by one of the large animal practices in our county, hit hard by the current economy in the dairy industry, considering a low cost spay/neuter as a means to recover some of their lost income.

The local Veterinary Association has contributed \$5000 to Alley Cat Guardians to help them get up running. Project X participants have also been partnering with the local Humane Association to fund raise and provide ultra-low cost spay/neuter clinics for those with urgent need.

Our group is focused and determined to make a difference. Project X continues to be the model for a true collaboration of government and private sector to solve a social issue. We have made a difference, not just in the animals we have altered, but in how this problem is perceived and in who is participating towards finding a solution. We urge you to postpone your decision on the taxpayer subsidized spay/neuter clinic. With county providing enforcement, humane societies and private citizens facilitating education and fund raising for ultra-low income families and un-owned cats, and local veterinarians providing service, we can reduce the unwanted population of dogs and cats in our county without government funding.

Respectfully, Susan Enz

