Preventing Unwanted Animals

Using Time-Based Currency to Provide Vet Care for Unwanted Animals in New Brunswick, NJ

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Video Link:
Prezi: http://prezi.com/afpoo7akehwi/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-mqcI-T05s

Summary

Our aim is to identify the problems of overcrowding in shelters by unwanted and homeless animals in the United States and more specifically Middlesex County, New Jersey. Our intended solution to this and associated problems is to provide, using the Time Bank, a source of currency in which fosters or potential adoptive homes could receive veterinary care, food, and other supplies making it more appealing and affordable to adopt a homeless animal. In return, those who sign up for the Time Bank to provide these services and supplies can receive other services according to their needs from the members within the Time Bank.

The Problem of Animal Homelessness, Relinquishment and Overcrowded Shelters (RF, EE, MP)

Animal rescue has been a priority throughout the world for countless decades. Animal cruelty is a major issue and is not only limited to physical abuse such as hitting or kicking an otherwise helpless victim. The act of simply causing the animal to suffer by abandonment as well as leaving them to feel pain out in the streets also fits the role. Some examples of animal cruelty that we know of and see today are instances of dog fighting, cockfighting, inadequate nutrition and hydration, neglect during very hot or very cold weather, or even inadequate shelter from extreme weather. These actions are an abusive and cruel thing to do to an animal that was taken in by someone as a form of taking responsibility for the creature. Year after year pet owners abandon animals due to financial constraints. It has become a criminal offence to purposefully fail to provide a dog’s essential needs (Abandon Dogs 1). The issue expands and propagates when shelters become involved. The dogs are pulled off the streets and added to already fill facilities. There are only so many dogs that these shelters can take in due to capacity and when they
feel they have no other options or room, these animals are likely to be euthanized to open up spaces for newer dogs that will be more likely to be adopted. A lot of options have been juggled around in an attempt to decrease the rate of euthanasia from shelters. Some shelters have them sent to foster homes in an attempt to get them adopted much sooner. Our aim is to specifically identify the problems of overcrowding of shelters with unwanted and homeless animals in the United States and more specifically Middlesex County, New Jersey. Our intended solution to this and associated problems is to explore using Time Bank to provide a source of currency in which fosters or potential adoptive homes could receive veterinary care, food, and other supplies. Our goal is to make adoption and pet ownership more appealing and affordable. In return, those who sign up within the Time Bank to provide these services and supplies can receive other services from other members within the Time Bank. This idea of utilizing the Time Bank will all be possible with affiliation with the Rutgers University based rescue group, Scarlet Paws. The Scarlet Paws Animal Welfare Network is dedicated to the promotion of the humane treatment of both domestic animals and wildlife found living on the New Brunswick campuses of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey (5). The organization is a collaboration of Rutgers staff, faculty, students, and community volunteers. The project aim is to decrease the amount of sheltered animals by the use of foster homes and as a way to help the foster homes, provide for certain expenses (5). This strategy could adoption process for certain dogs that are less likely to get adopted. If a dog is a stray and the adoption price is around $200-$300 dollars, the likelihood of that dog being adopted is very little because individuals may prefer to use that money towards getting a store bought puppy.

(RF, EE, MP) Animal abandonment is a huge issue within the United States. According to animal-rights-action.com, there are a few reasons for which this situation exists. They cite the failure of pet owners to spay and neuter their animals. By not neutering an animal, the likelihood of reproduction increases. When an unwanted pregnancy occurs because of an accidental breeding of two pets, the offspring of that pregnancy are in turn, unwanted. With litters for both dogs and cats having the potential to reach up to 9 babies, this is a lot of unwanted, soon to be homeless animals. Another reason cited by the website is that there are a number of careless breeders who do not think of the welfare of the puppies or kittens, but only of profit. When money becomes the only motivating factor of breeding, the health of the animals decline. Thus, when more money comes in from the sale of these animals, the breeders are encouraged to perpetuate the cycle. Meanwhile, the already existing homeless and abandoned animals are left in kill shelters with limited time to be rescued. Those animals lucky enough to find refuge at a non-kill shelter are also to remain homeless while the sale of purebred puppies prevents a “healthy, problem-free, innocent abandoned pet” from finding a home (6). In addition to and in conjunction with these reasons, the amount of adoptive homes, sponsors and foster homes do not come close to the amount of unwanted pets sitting in shelters within the country. The non-kill shelter is also becoming a scarcity. Kill shelters simply euthanize the unwanted animal to make room for more. When the animal is not euthanized at the non-kill shelters, there is no room for more rescues once the capacity is reached. Pet owners choose to dump pets for a variety of reasons including financial restrictions or a
change in living situations, or even because the time commitment becomes too
demanding. Just like pets, all too often there are often unwanted human infants.
Fortunately, there are “Safe Haven” laws in place for these infants. So why shouldn’t we
implement the same laws for animals? The problem in this lies again with space. There
are far more abandoned animals than babies. When pet owners try to leave an animal they
can no longer care for at a shelter, there is a possibility that they can be refused from said
shelter. There is an inherent “Catch 22” within the problem of animal abandonment.
Between the sales of breeder puppies limiting the homes that are able to take rescue
animals, and non-kill shelters filling up with animals that for various reasons could no
longer remain in the families they began with, it seems like a vicious cycle.

The Depth of the Problem of Shelter Overpopulation/Animal Relinquishment
(DP)
The huge issue of Animal Abandonment in the US translates to the issue of pet shelter
overpopulation. Overpopulation has been considered a severe problem in the US since
back in the 1940’s by the Animal Welfare Community (Pet Overpopulation 1). As
already mentioned shelters are the ones who end up dealing with this type of problem and
resort to extreme procedures such as euthanasia. Estimates of 8 million stray and
unwanted animals are taken in by shelters per year and nearly half which would be
around 3.7 million of them get euthanized. It is sad to say that euthanasia accounts for
the major leading cause of death for dogs and cat in the U.S. (2). What make these
horrible statistics are not only the number of deaths but also how this is occurring. People who work at shelters and try to maintain them are only doing so for the
well-being of these poor unwanted pets that have no one to go to. These employees end
up doing the dirty work of a society in which animals are not a priority. There have been
cases in which a No-Kill shelter has had to turn into a Kill shelter due to shortage of
resources and adoptions. There have also been cases in which the shelter overall has
been shut down due to community complaints leaving animals without a permanent
home. This illustrates the views of our society in regards to an animal’s life and
value. The reasons as to why these animals end up on the streets and in shelters vary and
some may have already been mentioned. However, upon analysis the data of this
occurrence based demonstrates the proven reasons of why. The research study conducted
by the National Council on Pet Population and Policy (NCPPSP) portrays the top ten
reasons as to why pets are relinquished based upon interviews with the correspondent pet
owners on the act of relinquishment. For dogs, the number one reason was moving to
new homes and the new landlord not allowing pet, followed by too many animals in
household, cost of pet maintenance, owner having personal problems, inadequate
facilities, no homes available for litter mates, having no time for pet, pet illness(s), and
biting. As for cats, the most prevalent reason was moving, followed by too many animals
in household, landlord not allowing pets, cost of pet maintenance, owner having personal
problems, inadequate facilities, no homes available for litter mates, allergies in family,
house soiling and lastly, incompatibility with other pets (NCPPSP). The top reasons
given for species as to why they are consistently relinquished are essentially the same and
therefore a point of focus for our group to work with. It occurs very frequently and most
of the times it is really out of the person’s control. Hence, what is missing is a source of
communication to spread the word to find homes for these pets before they end up in a shelter where their future is very uncertain and most of the times are lethal.

(DP) The study done by the National Council on Pet Population and Policy also covered the data regarding the pets that were being relinquished. The most shocking data were that 37.1% dogs and 30.2% cats being surrendered were from 7 months to 1-year-old. These are the most adorable years of a pet one would say, when they are still puppies, but that did not matter. An estimate of half the pets surrendered had not been fixed and nearly half of them had not been to a veterinarian at all. Sex played no role in determining which pet was to be abandoned neither did age, ethnicity, education or income level. This broadens the scope of the problem. However there was some sort of correlation with pure breeds since only a small percentage of pure breeds ended up on the shelter, less than 6%. (Pet Overpopulation 1).

(DP) Further causes of overpopulation that are of great concern are puppy mills, pet shops, brokers, breeders and faux rescues. Puppy mills are basically large-scale producers of companion animals, which remain confined within inhumane living conditions for breeding purposes. The goal of running these puppy mills is to make a profit despite the care and quality of life of these animals. They are kept in cages for as long as they can breed and have puppies and afterwards they are put up for auctions. This gives rise to a whole industry of pet sales throughout the country. Brokers, intermediaries, buy off the young animals from the puppy mill facilities and then resell them to pet shops that attract prospective pet owners. The purchase of animals by these means is a contribution to this inhumane industry. The price for these sales are not economical to the consumer, but is the ignorance and misconception as to what the consumer thinks he/she is acquiring. Buyers assume puppies are in great health conditions and are designer breeds accommodating the person’s life style. In reality these dogs are a mix of many of the breeds within the puppy mill facilities and their health conditions are nowhere near good. The animals are confined in wire cages for their whole stay in the facility, usually in external conditions, causing them to suffer from many conditions that can be passed on to their offspring. The puppies placed for sale portray an array of medical conditions due to weak immune systems. The immune system is low due to young ages when sold or transported and the stress they face in the industry. They have contagious viruses, infections, congenital defects, parasites and other health conditions on top of the emotional and behavioral problems (PetWatchNJ). Supporting puppy mills and other related pet-breeding facilities reduces the number of potential adopters for rescued and abandoned animals left in shelters or on the street.

**Financial Reasons for Relinquishment**

(EE) Exploring some of the financial reasons for which an owner may choose to relinquish a pet may be some of the most compelling. Although someone may have chosen to adopt a pet at a time where they were more financially stable, unfortunately, circumstances change. Within the most recent recession, many pet owners were faced
with the choice to put food on the family or get their family dog vet care. When people lose jobs or are hit with an unexpected expense, often the furry member of the family is put on the back burner or in the worst-case scenario, given to a shelter or relinquished to animal control. Veterinary care is undoubtedly one of the most expensive parts of owning a pet. According to The New York Times article by Walecia Konrad, “Containing the Costs of Pet Care”, the American Pet Products Association estimates that Americans spent $12.2 billion of veterinary care in 2011 (11). Konrad brings to light that in addition to the routine checkups and shots, there are often unexpected costs to owning a pet. For example, she mentions the Nocella family and their dog “Pokie” (11). Pokie racked up a bill of $2,300 after swallowing Advil and suffering from renal failure (11). The article also talks about pet insurance, while much more available now than in recent years, can be “complicated and highly restricted” (11). Some policies, just like in human insurances, can exclude pets or certain breeds that are predisposed to certain conditions, such as hip dysplasia in German Shepherds or Labrador Retrievers. Also, some insurance plans limit coverage to one treatment “per illness”. For example, if you’re animal develops kidney failure, the company will only cover the initial veterinary visit, even though the animal has to come back for subsequent treatment. As an alternative, many pet owners opt to put aside money for an emergency fund. Although an emergency will likely cost you a “minimum” of “$2,000-3000” according to Dr. Louise Murry, vice president of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal (ASPCA)’s Bergh Memorial Animal Hospital in New York.

(EE) Of course, owning an animal includes providing that animal with adequate nutrition. According to the ASPCA annual dog food costs range from $55-235 a year and cat food costs at around $115. The ASPCA compiled this chart to sum up the first year costs of how much that doggie in the window really winds up being.

(EE, RF) A look at the financial obligations to owning a pet may be overwhelming, but what may be even more costly is that raising a puppy or kitten is time consuming, and we all know- time is money. From a puppy who needs to be let outside every few hours, with frequent feeding, and socialization, to a happy adult dog who still needs a walk once a day and some play time, to an older dog who may have a medical emergency and require an owner to leave work to take him/her to seek medical attention. Animals who have been domesticated as pets require a significant amount of human attention and care. Unlike the financial costs, the time costs are not as quantifiable. Blogs throughout the Internet attempt to answer the question “how much time does it take to own a dog?” The answer is as simple as “it depends on the animal”. Some animals are needier than others. It is unfortunate that when this “neediness” becomes something an owner did not plan for or becomes an imposition to them; it leads to the animal often being abandoned (7).

(EE) Financial burdens are understandable. In this age of recession, it can be expected and sometimes it leads to making difficult financial cuts that are hurtful but necessary.
Taking on more than one can handle often leads to subsequent financial constraints. Adopting/buying a new pet is a financial commitment and no matter how easy it might seem to care for them, taking care of a living animal that requires food, shelter and time can become expensive. According to Katherine Miller, the director from applied science and research for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, "Often the cute face and wagging tail and warm body is what forms the initial bond...but pets are completely depending on us for their care. You do need to make considerations for the financial side" (10). Miller goes on to say that the usual motive for adopting a pet is due to an encounter one has with a /cat at someone’s house which evokes a feeling of emptiness that perhaps a pet could fill. This may encourage the person in search of a pet to make an impulsive decision to buy/adopt a pet for which he/she may not be ready. Emotions take over and financial considerations are not thought of ahead of time.

**Services and Maintenance Associated with Pet Ownership**

 services that are needed to maintain the care of your pet are things like adoption fees, food, nutritional supplements, food/water bowls, treats, dental/chew toys, routine veterinary exam, vaccinations, emergency veterinary care, heartworm tests, heartworm prevention, fecal exams, de-worming medication, flea/tick prevention, spaying/neutering, professional teeth cleaning, collar(s), leash(s), training, grooming tools, professional grooming, shampoo, yard fencing, stain/odor removers, doggy bed(s), crate(s), toys, boarding/per day and many other items and services. (12). Besides all that, one aspect that many people forget to include is that owning an animal is a 12-year plus commitment. Aging pets are more expensive due to excessive services that are necessary to make sure the animal is in good condition health wise, and the necessary items to keep the owners house in equally as good condition (10). On average, people pay about $1,000 - $2,000 per year more depending on the needs of the type and breed of animal (12). Adam Goldfarb, director of pet care issues for the Humane Society of the United States says that its best to “Save money for emergency vet trips. Healthy animals are fairly cheap,” however, "When they become ill or injured, the costs can go up quite a bit” (12). This is to say that, although an animal may seem cute and cuddly, expenses come along with it and some can be more than others. According to PetFinder, nearly two-thirds of US households own a pet and according to Statistic Brain, 5 million animals end up in the shelters with about 60% euthanized and 40% adopted (9)(12). In reference to this information, it’s evident to say that it’s never a good thing to leave the stray animals in the shelters because it gets to a point where euthanasia is necessary. However, although this is true, it’s also not the best idea to want to adopt an animal you find cute and one that you “bonded” with for that reason alone. Doing so will lead you into an expense road you weren’t ready for and this may cause the animal to be abandoned once again and/or obligate a trip back to the shelter which will motivate them to automatically euthanize them.

Not only does one have to willingly pay money out of pocket in order to care and maintain the animal’s health at its very best, one must also remember that they have to willingly take time away from their busy schedules and find time to enroll the dog in
certain activities that will also benefit their health and can possibly decrease the chances of certain diseases and physical problems that usually add onto the expenses. The time needed to owning a dog also depends on their age and needs. Usually people say that taking care of a pet, especially a dog, is like taking care of a child. Among the companion animals, dogs need the most devoted time, loyalty and friendship. If you protest this kind of love toward your dog, every time you walk through the door of your home he will be there anxiously waiting to see you once again (16). Not only is it a privilege to own a dog, it’s also a big responsibility. Tasks like feeding, exercise and cleaning are just a few of the necessities that is needed to keeping a dog in good condition. Feeding the dog is essential in keeping up with their diet and making sure they get the right nutrients trending with their age as well as their needs. If your pet is supposed to be fed a certain brand or amount and the owner is only supplying half of that due to lack of responsibility or effort then that could cause health issues. Another form of responsibility is cleaning up after the animal. Cleaning is important to keep up on because if not, certain infections can arise from improper cleansing of the skin and coat. Not only is it necessary to clean the dog but where he or she sleeps as well.

(RF, MP) Although feeding and cleaning are vital to the animal’s well-being, exercise is just as crucial. Exercise is a high demanded responsibility for a dog no matter the age, breed or lifestyle they choose to live. However, this responsibility is usually not met because society doesn’t make time to take their pets out for even 10 minutes. Exercising doesn’t necessarily mean jogging but simply walking them will suffice. It not only provides an activity to stretch their legs out but it acts as an opportunity for them to eliminate or possibly stimulate their brain. If they are not properly taken out, there is a possibility that they will eliminate inside the house as well as inappropriate elimination which could motivate the owner to give the pet back to a shelter when it’s not even the dogs fault to begin with (4). They also need to burn off the energy that they have, especially as a puppy because that is when they need it the most (4). On a positive note, exercising also contributes to an animal’s health just like it does for us. Exercise helps keep a dog's heart healthy, his joints strong, and his weight down (4). This not only will keep the dog happy, but you too as well. Lastly and most importantly, be a friend and a companion to your pet (16). Being a friend can mean a variety of things like: playing, walks, talking, treat-time, loving them, switching toys, finding their spot, putting in effort and time, radio, go on trips and etc. (16).

The Fate of Shelter Pets
(DP, RF)
While there are people who end up showering their pets with love, there are also those who end up not caring about them at all. Those are the people that do just enough to get by causing the dogs to misbehave and this ultimately leads to them having to let the dog go. However, those same people don’t realize where their pets are actually going. When one thinks about a stray dog that was abandoned at one point or another, what comes to mind? Questions such as where have they gone, is the place a good location, is it safe, is this the only solution? As a way to deal with stray animals that end up on the streets due
to abandonment from the owner, shelters as well as animal rescue groups have been established in order to keep them off the streets and out of harm’s way. There are two types of places used, shelters and foster homes from animal rescue groups. A shelter is a location that houses and disposes homeless, lost, or abandoned animals; mostly dogs and cats (3). As of right now, there are about 5,000 independently run shelters operating nationwide (mostly no-kill). The other location used is at foster homes from animal rescue groups in the area. An Animal Rescue group has the same purpose, the only difference is that they pay for most of the vet bills and supplies on their own which is a loss for them considering if the animal is not adopted. They manage their program by having adoption events near the area where people want to adopt. Usually charging a greater adoption fee than shelters do. These two types of solutions are a good start to getting stray dogs off the streets and out of harm’s way; however this can only work for so long. There is only so much capacity that a shelter can afford and usually a shelter capacity runs from 20-40 animals also depending on the size of its resident animals. As well as shelters, animal rescue fostering homes have an even bigger issue because they are even more limited than shelters are. Usually, a good 5-8 dogs are adequate to have in a person’s foster home. The main difference between the two is that one has a proper facility built for all these dogs and the capacity is bigger and one is just a simple home where people live in but choose to take a risk in fostering animals at their own expense in hoping to find someone who will want to adopt the animal after being properly cared for.

(DP, RF, EE, MP) Many may think that shelters are the answer and they are here to protect animals that were abandoned and are on the streets as stays with nowhere to go. Good things about them include their adoption process, their animal control system and their temperament testing, as well as their socialization. However, according to eHow, despite the benefits provided by their services, animal shelters are not without their critics; animal rights activists cite overcrowding, euthanasia policies and understaffing as reasons for concern (8). Some of these bad qualities can weigh a lot on someone's decision to adopt from a shelter (8). Just like shelters, foster homes run by animal rescue groups are also a great resource but have their downsides as well. Good things about them include finding more about your pet versus from a store, paying less, adoption process, staff and their connection to the owners. On the downside, they are less likely to have a variety, a lot of personal questionnaire responses needed, you may be rejected if requirements are not met (17). The main difference that stands out is not even the issue of fees or variety but the fact that shelters euthanize and foster home does not. With that in mind one would be more willing to be in favor for more foster home rather than shelters. Both work toward a great cause, stray animal rescue, however both taking two different paths.

Adoption Fees (RF)

One of the issues that are also involved with the act process of adopting is the fact that many shelters as well as foster home charge an insurmountable adoption fee. Some shelters are a government issued organization, however the NJ budget does not pay to
sustain the shelter and so and funding comes from donations made (14). On the other hand, animal rescue groups run foster homes and are a philanthropic service groups relying on donations to sustain the services for the animals. The work done from obtaining the animal to caring for them as well as paying for vet bills, supplies and etc. can become a burden on a shelter as well as a foster home. At that point, it is necessary for them to charge an adoption fee to even out from all the services provided on the animal up to or including spaying/neutering. This then refers back to the ultimate issue stated before because some people will not want to pay such a high amount for a stray dog when it’s more convenient to pay a little extra and gain a new puppy purebred as well. If only there was a way to reduce the adoption fees for stray animals that are unwanted. This way it would make it convenient to adopt.

Plan of Action: Partnership between Scarlet Paws and MiddlesexNJStrong (Time Bank) (MP, DP)

With all this in mind, our plan of action is to present a way in which shelters and fostering homes can cooperate with veterinarians and vice versa to come to a financial agreement. Not only with vets but also with certain pet stores and donation centers those are willing to donate their time as well as supplies. Our plan is to use the idea of a Time Bank. With the Time Bank, people are not using actual currency but instead, their time. This works through communication between people on the Time Bank. For instance, if one offers vocals lessons but is searching for a plumber and you seek to get vocally experienced and have experience as a plumber, individuals could donate their time in exchange for services. Though these time donation exchanges do not have to be to the same person that you receive the desired service from, it becomes a cycle in which you can bank hours for later use. It is a work in progress because not many people are aware of the Time Bank. However, it could be an important alternative to helping foster homes as well as shelters in Middlesex County. One of the ways we plan to help out the shelters and foster homes, in hopes of lowering the adoption fee to increase potential adopters’ interest, is by adding vets onto the Time Bank. With vets on the Time Bank, medical services will be less money if not completely free considering others can obtain a service in return. Another way we plan to use this Time Bank is by adding our services to volunteer at the shelters and volunteering to foster an animal. By incorporating fostering into our service plan of action, we can donate hours to Scarlet Paws, which can in turn receive the necessary services to rescue cats. Lastly, we also plan to work with certain pet stores in order to obtain donated supplies like food, collars, leashes, bowls, toys and etc. so that foster homes and shelters would have plenty of supplies to use instead of having to pay out of pocket for all those items which can cause a fortune in the long run, especially if the dogs they have go unwanted. Once shelters and foster homes see a change in their financial status and see that they are gaining money rather than losing and having animals being adopted out, they will be persuaded to lower costs and fees for certain unwanted animals rather than putting them in the list for euthanasia.

Scarlet Paws mission statement:
“Scarlet Paws Animal Welfare Network is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of the humane treatment of both domestic animals and wildlife found living on the New Brunswick campuses of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey as a result of abandonment, having become lost, or by birth to the aforementioned, and—in the case of wildlife—having become sick, injured, or displaced from their natural habitat. We are a collaboration of Rutgers staff, faculty, students, and community volunteers. Scarlet Paws has made a long-term commitment to the welfare and well-being of these animals. Following the example of animal welfare groups organized at other colleges and universities (such as Stanford, Texas A&M, Towson, and Utah State University), we endeavor to promote community awareness of their condition, and to promote, educate, and encourage responsible and timely action by the Rutgers Community and appropriate personnel, toward their care, rescue, and placement into safe and appropriate environments.”

(Scarlet Paws, Mission Statement 2014)

(MP, DP) Scarlet Paws has created a community that helps and supports each other in the acts of rescuing, educating and establishing animals in good homes. Hence, Scarlett Paws works towards the goal of our project as well and has agreed to partner with us to enhance our efforts to save unwanted animals. Many of the cats that are rescued by Scarlet Paws are also fostered and offered for adoption through Animal Rescue Force and Happy Paws Rescue. Different organizations differ as to the guidelines a prospective adoptive parent must meet in order to provide a permanent home for the animal and the adoption fee. In the case of adopting from Scarlet Paws the prospective ‘parent’ will have to fill out the ‘Pet Adoption Application’, which will then be reviewed by faculty in order to approve the adoption. The main points covered in the application are personal information including contact, residential and job information. This is to determine the pet will go to a stable home with a responsible owner who is capable of taking good care of the animal. They want to know who else resides at their home as well as the reason for their request. Previous history or experience with pets is important as well as personal and veterinary references, giving credibility to the prospective owner. This well-established organization will be of great help in our attempt to help shelter animals find good homes and providing help to those homes on the verge of rendering their animals to a shelter (Scarlett Paws). Our goal is to gain control of the unwanted animal population and ease the adoption process for them so they can end up in loving homes rather than under a needle.

Partnering with Local Rescue to Use TimeBanking Method to Boost Community Awareness and Prevent Financial Reasons for Animal Relinquishment

Introduction to a Solution (RF)

In today’s world, it is evident how many stray animals there are due to the lack of one’s responsibility or due to the inability of us managing the reproduction of stray animals on the streets. It is evident that trying to rescue every animal on the street is nearly impossible however, the act of reducing that number is doable and that is what our aim. Many things have been tried like sheltering and fostering but that has worked only to a
certain extent due to the fact that there is a capacity limit in each shelter and some shelters do not stay running for too long because of a lack of funding from the government and/or donations. We have to think that these shelters not only house these animals off from the streets but they also care for them by feeding, providing vet services to try and keep them healthy and in shape for possible adoptions. Remember that most of these animals had a home before and the task at hand for a shelter is to house them for a while and wait for a possibility in which someone will look at them and want to take them to give them a new home with a fresh new start at life and be part of a new family. That is what animal rescue is all about and society has strayed away from that and cared more about purebreds just because they are young and without any marks from being on the streets. This issue is just like if someone was to adopt a child. If the option to adopt a child presented itself because one was unable to conceive, would the idea of straying away from adopting come to mind just because it wasn’t one of your own, i.e.: “purebred.” We thought about partnering with a shelter, but noticed that shelters have been overpopulated with animals. There were really no hands on tasks that we could participate in rather than spreading the word around. So for our project, we thought of partnering with a fostering home. The good thing about a fostering home is that there isn’t one set location where all the dogs are kept but there are various homes where dogs are kept. We wanted to figure out a way where we could find several people that would help us foster animals in their homes without having the dilemma of an overcrowded location with having the obligation of turning down the opportunity to save animal due to capacity issues. Along with that, the fact of having to put down an animal for capacity issues plays a part and those are the things we wanted to avoid.

Reasons behind service project and impact (MP)

Today, the number of strays is prevalent due to the lack of one’s responsibility or due to the inability of us managing the reproduction of stray animals on the streets. It is evident that trying to rescue every animal on the street is nearly impossible, however, the act of reducing that number is achievable and our main goal. Many things have been attempted such as sheltering and fostering have limits because of the lack of space in each shelter and the reduced government funding and donations available to the shelter’s cause. These shelters not only provide a temporary home for these unwanted animals but they also care for them by feeding and providing vet services to maintain good health. These factors increase the opportunity for adopters to claim an animal kept in good conditions rather than capturing and housing an animal from the street. Often times, animals in shelters had previous owners that could not care for the pet and should receive adequate treatment in order to keep the animal socialized and in good standing for adoption. When these unwanted animals are relinquished, shelters assume the responsibility to find a home. In order to aid shelters and increase the number of potential adopters, we proposed to spread the word and make adoptions more appealing. For our service project, we used a Time banking system to donate hours of service to shelters in order for them to receive benefits in return. By offering up one’s home to foster unwanted dogs, shelters could receive time donations. Fostering allows these animals to be properly socialized and medicated prior to adoption so they are easier to transition them into a new home. This solution benefited
shelters and future adopting families while providing the opportunity to rescue and house more animals. Allowing the animal a more personal space where they will be acclimated to living in a home will benefit the animals’ behavior. The shelters need to reduce overpopulation in order to save more unwanted animals.

**Costs of Pet Care** (RF)
Although fostering homes do not get government aid like some shelters, they still receive donations from people. However, regardless of aid both of these programs still charge a small adoption fee due to the expenses that come with every month, week or even day. Expenses can vary from vet services, feeding material, pet-care supplies, and other materials that are essential to caring for an animal. Our goal in trying to reduce or even doing away with that fee is with ability of gaining certain vet services like check-ups and such vaccines for free as well as trying to work with people that are willing donate food, supplies, time for dog sitting or even their home to use for fostering an animal. This way when people foster a stray, most of the expenses for vet services, supplies will be dealt with and there will be no need to charge people an outrageous amount to adopt the animal of their choice. As stated before, a reason people may not adopt animals from a shelter or a foster home is due to the price and most people feel that if they pay such money to adopt a stray they might as well put in a little more and adopt a purebred from a puppy mill. The fostering agency that we are partnering with is the Scarlet Paws. The Scarlet Paws is a New Brunswick affiliated program that is a combination of several Rutgers students. Their passion for animals is undeniable and they work to try and solve the crisis.

**Incorporating the Time Banking concept into the Partner Organization’s Mission** (RF)
In exchange for partnering with the Scarlet Paws, we introduced them to the Time Bank. The Time Bank is a form of currency that we are trying to spread into the world as a way to take away expenses out of pocket. The Time Bank is a simple mechanism that people sign up for online and in relevance to their county. For example, if a plumber signs up for the Time Bank someone requests an hour of that individual’s time for a plumbing job, they will receive an equal hour worth of service in return. The Time Bank doesn’t use actual currency; it uses time as a currency. Therefore, no service will have a monetary value but rather will be donated through the logging of time. So, for example, if the plumber takes 2 hours to finish a job, the painter will give those two same hours back and they both will save the money they would have spent in paying someone to accomplish the needed tasks. The same concept is applicable with our idea in helping the fostering services. Our first task in partnering with the Scarlet Paws is to try and figure out what their system was and if they would have been willing to go beyond their system and expand it a bit in order to reduce the burden of fostering so many animals on their own as well as giving the Time Bank a chance. Not only would they benefit from it but others would also recognize them from the Time Bank, which will lead to possibilities of adoption networking. When meeting with the director, Eddie, from Scarlet Paws, he were very pleased that we took a step forward in wanting to partner with them. When
speaking with them we told them all about our ideas, mainly the one about the use of the Time Bank. We told them that the Time Bank was a very good cause and it could lower the adoption fee. This in turn, could motivate more people to look into adopting rather than rejecting. We told Eddie that the Time Bank was a way to do away with many of the vet service fees and with costs like ones used to get supplies for animals in foster homes. When using the Time Bank, people are not really using money to get what they want but in reality they are using their own time due to having the ability and being an expert in a certain field. For example, if a foster home brought in one more animal into their home the first thing they would want done would be a check-up at their vet’s office. With using the Time Bank, the veterinarian would be able to put his/her availability built around his/her busy schedule. This way when a service is needed such as a simple check-up, he/she would offer to perform it in and rack up hours on his/her Time Bank as a form of currency. Then, let’s say the vet needed a lawyer for some reason and he/she had already 20 hours racked up under “Time Given” he/she then would find a lawyer on the Time Bank and ask for that service in return rather than having to pay legal fees. As you can see, it saves money on both sides of the story. Not only will the fostering home save money, but the veterinarian will also save money. The money then that was going to be used for the veterinary service can be used for something else like food or other supplies.

We met with the director of Scarlet Paws on April 11 @ noon in Foran Hall (room 138B) to discuss the Memorandum of Agreement” below:

Memorandum of Agreement (EE, DP, JF)

A partnership between Scarlet Paws and MiddlesexNJStrong has been formed to combat the problem of animal abandonment and relinquishment and shelter overpopulation in the Middlesex County, NJ. Scarlet Paws, a non-profit organization comprised of Rutgers staff faculty students and community volunteers, rescues animals that have been abandoned or have become lost or born to the aforementioned and works to find foster and permanent homes for these animals. MiddlesexNJStrong, a project of Rutgers University, New Brunswick, is a community-based network that works to engage community members in the sharing of their time and talents. The aim of this project is to work together to engage the community to reduce the homeless animal population in Middlesex County.

Middlesex County NJ Strong and Scarlet Paws (SP)

- SP will become a member of MiddlesexNJStrong as an organization.
- SP will hold coordinator status on Middlesex County NJ Strong.
- SP will be responsible for adding and reviewing SP volunteer member’s information and hours.
- Volunteers of SP (including administrative staff of Scarlet Paws) will sign in as individuals (not as SP workers) enabling them to personally receive services, time and talent from others.
- MiddlesexNJStrong members can donate their hours to SP.
- SP can print and hand out brochures prepared by MiddlesexNJStrong.
- SP and MiddlesexNJStrong are responsible for community outreach - pet owners who are struggling financially should be made aware of services and goods offered.

**Giving and Receiving of Pet Services**

**Veterinary Care**
- Receipt of Veterinary services to be pre-approved by both directors of SP (Mary Ann Cancio) and MiddlesexNJStrong (Julie Fagan).
- Limit receipt of services to individual veterinarians to 4 hours/month (exceptions discussed case by case).
- Vet services provided to community residents that are deemed at risk of relinquishing their pet to a shelter, SP, or to the street.

**Grooming**
- Grooming services can be offered and provided by community residents to SP animals and animals owned by community members.

**Giving and Receiving of Pet Goods**
- SP will be the recipient of donations of pet goods and will be authorized to give individuals, businesses or organizations the necessary paperwork to claim a tax deduction.
- Gifts of time of individuals, businesses or organizations (ex. traveling to SP to deliver pet goods) will be logged in by SP (the receiver). The giver will accrue hours, and the receiver will deduct hours.

**Policies on Adoption**
- SP policies on adoption will hold true, however consideration to the reductions of SP adoption fees will be made on a case-by-case basis in order to adopt out difficult to place animals.

**Policies on Fostering**
- Fosterers receiving time credits: For every week, or portion thereof, the fosterer will have given 4 hours’ worth of time credits and SP will have received 4 hours of time credits.
- Fosterers registered with MiddlesexNJStrong can receive veterinary services such as exams, vaccines, and spay/neuters from licensed veterinarians registered with MiddlesexNJStrong. Vet services must first be authorized by Scarlet Paws and MiddlesexNJStrong.
- Pet Goods: Community members can donate leashes, food, accessories, food bowls and other pet essentials to SP. Travel time involved with donation can be accrued as member time given on MiddlesexNJStrong. Donated pet goods can be distributed to SP fosterers/adopters and community members in need.
TimeBank Transaction

On May 7th, 2014 Dayana and I went to Maryann’s office on College Ave Campus. Our ultimate purpose for going there was so that the transaction of getting ScarletPaws on the TimeBank was complete. This meant that Maryann would sign up as an individual as well as having her sign up ScarletPaws as an organization. This was so that anyone would donated hours on the TimeBank, would directly donate them to the ScarletPaws so that they could use them as a tradeoff for Vet services or such. A first she was a little confused with the whole donation of hours from one person to the next on the TimeBank and how that would all work in the long run, however, Dayana and I took our time to explain to her all the small details that go into TimeBanking. We wrote a letter for her to send to her volunteers and after revising the letter, she sent it out to her volunteers. This allows each volunteer to sign up on the TimeBank as an individual and then once they complete a few hours here and there they will donate those hours to the ScarletPaws and then that will rack up the hours completed for ScarletPaws which would help Vets in doing a trade off with them for services that he can offer. If every volunteer donates, then it would help a lot. After briefly explaining to her the whole system, she then was confident that it would be a good idea. In the end, we took her through the steps in creating an account for herself as well as the ScarletPaws. As of today: May 8th, 2014 both she and the ScarletPaws Animal Welfare Network are signed up on the TimeBank and ready to roll. All they need now if the recordings of the volunteer’s hours.

Service Ad: Offer and Receive

A group member that resides in the Middlesex county area made a TimeBanking account to record the fostering hours completed throughout the semester, which would be donated to Scarlet Paws. The offer for “Animal Fostering” was posted on May 8th with a brief description and availability statement, which appeared as:

Offering foster services which may be counted as 4 credit hours per week of fostering a dog or cat. Fostering includes complete care and responsibility of animal including but not limited to feeding, walking, house-training, medicating (if needed), cleaning up after, socializing, exercising, etc. Foster will be involved in adoption process to place the animal in the best fit forever home. The foster parent will not be responsible for veterinary medical expenses unless issue arises as a direct result from improper foster care. Specific requests can be made and discussed regarding training such as allowing animal to sleep in cage/crate or on furniture. Foster available upon request. Experience: Fostered two puppies on separate occasions for a total of 19 days. Veterinary Technician experience and therefore able to medicate animals (liquid, tablet, injection, etc.).

Once the offer was posted, Maryann was notified in order to complete the transaction by accepting the hours from her Scarlet Paws account. The steps to accept the donation/exchange of hours were as follows. First, ScarletPaws the organization would login to their account and hover over the green “Give and Receive” drop-down menu then select “View All Offers”. Next, they would click on the “Animal Fostering” ad in the listing. On that page, the right hand column had a link that read “Record Hours for this Listing” which would allow Scarlet Paws to enter the hours they would be receiving.
Time for Time- Time Bank Donations (RF) Another example used was having people give a donation of time for something like animal sitting for a couple hours or donating food/supplies. The same concept would apply in this context because if another community member were to be included in the Time Bank, they would be able to offer services that were more or less equivalent to what an expertise in a field would do. For instance, if one were to sign up onto the Time Bank, the available services would be things like animal sitting, animal bathing as well as donating food or supplies that one would encounter or have extra of. Foster homes would be intrigued in requesting for one of these services reducing their expenses and time put in fostering the animal. This would not only help by taking away some of the burden but it will also help the Time Bank member by racking up hours on his/her Time Bank, which will allow him/her to request services that he/she need as well. Although this sounds promising, it wouldn’t have such of an impact toward fostering homes because usually food/supplies are already presentable and what is really needed are the vet services that the animal may need from time to time because those are what become costly, especially if the animal needs medical attention often.

Changing Adoption Fees (RF)

The idea behind the use of the Time Bank was a way to lowering the price of the adoption fee. Scarlet Paws adoption fee was nearly $100 and we were expecting to lower it to about $25. At first we thought that it would be advantageous if the price dropped down to $0. Thinking about it some more, we realized though it would benefit Scarlet Paws to keep an adoption fee, it also benefits the owner because it requires them to assume responsibility. Every time something is given out for free, the person that gets it doesn’t value you it as much as if they were to pay a fee for it. We applied that same concept and tried to reason with Scarlet Paws in a way to drop the price down to $25 because at least the person that adopted the animal will have a monetary commitment towards valuing the animal and not just treating it like a free item, not worth anything. It’s not that we are putting a price or value on the animal but it’s the key concept of having value for something because you spend your money on it and that’s the message we tried to portray toward the Scarlet Paws. The Scarlet Paws thought our ideas were great and they were pleased to know we wanted to partner up with them but there was only one catch and that was keeping the adoption fees constant with what they had already decided on.

(EE) Although they had turned down our idea of lowering the adoption fee, we still went along with them because our goal was to partner with them and try to achieve a greater purpose in the animal rescue program which was to reduce the number of strays by
adding to services needed. Our goal that was set in mind was trying to reduce the number of stray animals and spreading the word about adopting out unwanted animals by easing up the adoption process for the people adopting. Not only would the people adopting be benefited but the fostering homes would also benefit because they would gain free services from vets through the Time Bank creating less expenses. Consequently, this would lower adoption fees allowing people to pay a lesser amount to adopt out an animal of their choice.

**Encouraging Spay/Neuter Surgeries after Adoption (MP)**

One of the concerns a rescue group has when adopting out an animal is whether the animal will be released or continues the cycle of overpopulation of unwanted animals. In order to control this, a strategy was implemented to ensure adopters spay or neuter their new pet after they have been adopted. Once the pet is of age and is in good health to be spayed or neutered, the adopters have a responsibility to take the animal to the veterinarian. Adoption and rescue agencies could implement an agreement in the adoption contract by charging a $50 deposit to receive a certificate that the animal’s spay/neuter surgery was completed within 6 months of the adoption, if the animal is nearing the age that he or she could get the surgery. When the surgery is complete, the adopters will receive their deposit back otherwise it will be kept as a donation to the adoption agency. Scarlet Paws was interested in this agreement since it would motivate adopters to fulfill their responsibility in preventing pet overpopulation while instilling a financial obligation.

**A Spay/Neuter Program- SPAY USA (DP)**

SPAY USA has set an official policy regarding feral cats in many communities in which these are present. These feral cats have the same value as any other companion animal with the difference of not having a ‘legal’ owner to take care of them. This leads to the concept of feral cats being a public issue that should be resolved by the public. Common complaints by the residents of neighborhoods with an abundant feral cat population are nighttime howling, fighting, odorous spraying and marking and endless ‘littering’. (15)

Fortunately, the spaying and neutering of these feral cats can solve most of these neighborhood problems. Once they have been fixed the cats calm down, stop spraying, marking and fighting and most importantly reproducing. Looking at the brighter side of having these wild companion animals on the streets, they help keep down the existing populations of disease carrying animals such as rats and mice. The diseases that are transmitter through mice and rats include Hanta virus, bubonic plague and many more; these can be fatal to human health. (15)

The Spay/Neuter Program is a nonprofit organization that has an agreement between a licensed veterinarian and an organization. The veterinarian charges an agreed-upon fee for clients in need who are referred to this veterinarian. Usually a phone line is
set up for their spay program and is promoted locally. They also raise subsidy money for helping the clients who cannot afford this medical procedure. For instance, this organization helps people who feed colonies of feral cats in their neighborhoods and wouldn’t be able to afford to spay them all (15). As a part of a service project towards these unfortunate feral animals and my community I’m planning to call the toll free number (1800) 248-7729 and request funding for the spay/neutering of up to twelve feral cats in my neighborhood. I have to further look for support from Animal Rescue Teams and Welfare organizations to help me handle this task efficiently of capturing and holding them safe through their recuperation period. This call request for funding happens every first day of each month so be aware and take action if it’s on your reach to do so.

Putting together a brochure for the program
(JF)
The image below was put on a tri-fold brochure that had been previously developed by Dr. Fagan. The Golden Retriever with the backpack was photo shopped to have the Rutgers “R” on it by another group of students in a previous project (See Fig. 2). The brochure will be black and white with red. The other images (in addition to our Rutgers dog and the word “Pet Care”), there is a picture of eyeglasses and a stethoscope with the words “health care”. A paintbrush with the word “painting”, a broom with the word “cleaning”, a whisk with the word “cooking” and a wrench with the word “Repairs” also appear on the brochure. The name and contact information for Scarlet Paws was put on the back panel titled “Partners”. The brochure was emailed to Scarlet Paws with the hopes that they would make copies and hand them out.

Communication with Scarlet Paws, Rutgers University Based Rescue Group (JF)

Dear Scarlet Paws,

We are students at Rutgers University and with our professor, Dr. Julie Fagan, have been discussing ways to help the issue of animal rescue, specifically in the area of New Brunswick. Our goal is to find homes for unwanted animals within the New Brunswick community by introducing TimeBanking for veterinary services, foster and forever homes, in addition to promoting awareness of homeless /abandoned animals within our community.

We are contacting your organization because we want to be of assistance in helping to ease the fostering process as well to quicken the adoption process of the unwanted animals that you rescue. A way in which we want to help is by using a program called a Time Bank. A Time Bank is a program where people in the community, once they become members of the Time Bank, can post what services they could offer and what they’d like to receive. There is no money exchanged. Members “bank” their time given and received. Every participant’s time is equivalent; for example, an hours service from a Veterinarian, a lawyer, or someone that pulls weeds in your garden, are treated equally. Services provided by a Veterinarian will be recorded into his/her Time Bank as “offered”
and then he could request some other service, like a paint job or plumbing job for that same hour he/she gave in.

You are probably wondering how this applies and benefits your organization. The Time Bank is a way to save your own money because instead of having veterinarians charge you for services, you can look them up on the Time Bank and request their services. You would not need to directly provide services for them in return. You, also as members of the time bank, could be logging in your hours of volunteer service that you do for your organization, and get services in return (like vaccinations/spay/neuter services). This not only will reduce the amount of bills for each pet but it might help the adoption process because this may eliminate an adoption fee (if say you use the vets time banking service to spay/neuter one of your rescues), making the adoption free for the new pet parent. We have recently engaged a veterinarian, with another on the way, as a member of the new time bank “Middlesex County NJ Strong” (middlesexnjstrong@timebanks.org).

Key to your group is to find homes for the unwanted or abandoned animals in our community. You would have access to a much larger pool of potential fosterers and adopters by being involved in the time bank. It is expected that members of the Time Bank may be further stimulated to foster animals because of reciprocal nature of the Time Bank. If a community member of the time bank is fostering an animal, they can put their hours in the Time Bank as “offered” as well because they are giving a service of watching over an animal until the adoption process comes through. Members of the Time Bank may be incentivized to fostering animals because of reciprocity it means for them with other services/talents.

We are sincerely hoping that you will participate and become our partner in this venture. We look forward to working out the details with you.

Regards,
Rui Franco, Michelle Panek, Dayana Perez, Elise Enners and Julie M. Fagan, Ph.D.

Response email from Scarlet Paws
Hi Julie,
We are honored to have been asked to serve as one of the partners in this grant initiative. I will prepare the letter of endorsement as requested.
You had mentioned at Monday's meeting that you have a form letter that I can follow or do you want me just put a few sentences together on Scarlet Paws letterhead stating our endorsement?

Please advise.
Thanks,
Mary Ann

Email below sent to S Paws 2/25 (JF)
Dear Mary Ann, Mary, Eddie, and Scarlet Paws people,
I am pleased that Scarlet Paws will serve as one of my partners for my project proposal “Establishment of a New Brunswick Neighbor to Neighbor Care Team Using a Time-Based Currency and a Proof of Work Scheme to Foster Community Health and Resilience”. I believe that your participation in this project will prove invaluable to your organization and to the New Brunswick community. It is expected that, through this project and your participation, that collectively we will reduce the number of animals that are abandoned by community residents, perhaps by providing needed vet care or food for which residents may have limited resources for, and increase the number of animals that are adopted or fostered by New Brunswick residents that were rescued from the streets of New Brunswick. Furthermore, the animals that are placed in homes will bring a new richness to the lives of residents that care for them.
The grant application is due this Friday (2/28/14) and I will need from your organization a “letter of endorsement and commitment from the community partner organization”. If you could put your letter on letterhead and email it to me as an attachment, that would be much appreciated.
Julie M. Fagan, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of Environmental and Biological Sciences
Rutgers University
84 Lipman Dr
New Brunswick, NJ 08903

Reply to Scarlet Paws:

I don't really have a form letter (you and New Brunswick Tomorrow are the only partners). I'm ok with copy and pasting my words, and redirecting to your words - like...
Give this a go... Julie

Scarlet Paws both endorses and is committed to be a partner in Julie Fagan's project proposal titled “Establishment of a New Brunswick Neighbor to Neighbor Care Team Using a Time-Based Currency and a Proof of Work Scheme to Foster Community Health and Resilience”. We believe that our participation in this project will prove invaluable to our organization and to the New Brunswick community. It is expected that, through this project and our participation, that collectively we will reduce the number of animals that are abandoned by community residents, perhaps by providing needed vet care or food for which residents may have limited resources for, and increase the number of animals that are adopted or fostered by New Brunswick residents that were rescued from the streets of New Brunswick. Furthermore, the animals that are placed in homes will bring a new richness to the lives of residents that care for them.

We are so excited about this project, that we anticipate getting on board in the weeks to come. We will begin working with Dr. Fagan and her students in establishing the framework and guidelines to make this program successful.
Scarlet Paws Endorsement Letter that Accompanied Submitted Grant

February 25, 2014
Dear University Engagement Committee – New Brunswick:
The Scarlet Paws Animal Welfare Network Executive Board both endorses and is committed to be a partner in Dr. Julie Fagan’s project proposal titled “Establishment of a New Brunswick Neighbor to Neighbor Care Team Using a Time-Based Currency and a Proof of Work Scheme to Foster Community Health and Resilience”.
We believe that our participation in this project will prove invaluable to our organization and to the New Brunswick community. It is expected that, through this project and our participation, that collectively we will reduce the number of animals that are abandoned by community residents, perhaps by providing needed vet care or food for which residents may have limited resources for, and increase the number of animals that are adopted or fostered by New Brunswick residents that were rescued from the New Brunswick Community. Furthermore, the animals that are placed in homes will bring a new richness to the lives of the residents that care for them.
We are so excited about this project that we anticipate getting on board in the weeks to come. We will begin working with Dr. Fagan and her students in establishing the framework and guidelines to make this program successful.
Sincerely,
Mary Ann Cancio
President
Scarlet Paws Animal Welfare Network
501(c)3 Organization
macancio@rci.rutgers.edu

Scarlet Paws Letter to Volunteers (DP& Maryann)

Dear Scarlet Paws Volunteers,

On behalf of the Scarlet Paws Animal Welfare Network we would like to thank you for your services towards our organization and the wellbeing of abandoned/rescued animals. We greatly appreciate the hours you donated and would like to introduce you into the Middlesex Time Bank community. The Time Bank is an online community created by individuals in the Middlesex County that promotes the equality of hours of different individuals. The idea is simple, Time Bank members share donated time services using time credits instead of money. For every hour that you invest doing work for someone you get an hour in your “time account”. You can then request an hour on any service available that is more convenient to your needs. Our members use a proprietary computer program to post their needs and the skills they are willing to provide, and to keep track of their time credits. Members can easily find each other when they are in need of a particular service or skill. Members can also be “matched” through our membership coordinator. We strongly encourage you to sign up as an individual and use those hours of work at your convenience or as a donation to Scarlet Paws. To become a member visit the website <middlesexnjstrong.timebanks.org>, email countystatestrong@gmail.com or call Dr. Fagan (610) 847-2411 or Maryanne (609)-575-
5428. Once again we greatly appreciate your time and effort during your time here at Scarlet Paws.
Sincerely,
President: Maryann Cancio
Scarlet Paws Animal Welfare Network

Conclusion: Paying in Time versus Dollars (MP)

Upon completing our project, two veterinarians were added to the Time Bank community who were willing to contribute their time. Our group members put ourselves on the Time Bank as a way to offer animal-care services to those who needed it, especially to donate hours of service, mostly by fostering animals, to Scarlet Paws. We partnered with them to spread the word but also to take a step towards solving the unwanted animal issue and encouraging adoptions. In conclusion, our service project was designed to impact the issue of unwanted stray animals that need a home while benefiting an organization such as Scarlet Paws by making the adoption process more appealing. In order to prevent individuals from giving up their pets due to financial struggles, the time bank offered an alternative to receiving veterinary and basic animal care services through the donation of time. Without a monetary obligation, community members may be more willing to adopt a pet into their family or seek treatment for a family pet in need of veterinary care, normally at a high cost. Individuals are more likely to donate their time in exchange for other services in the Time Bank than spend money on veterinary care which leads them to abandon pets or reluctant to adopt an animal. The use of the Time Bank could ultimately save animals’ live and reduce the unwanted animal population while making animal care less financially demanding.

References – Work Cited


Appendices

Figure 1: Annual Pet Care Costs according to the ASPCA. (http://www.aspca.org/sites/default/files/upload/images/pet_care_costs.pdf)

Figure 2: Rutgers Dog used as mascot for Time Banking/Animal Rescue
(RF) Unwanted Animal Rescue/Fostering With the Help of Using the Time Bank
Unwanted animals are a real big issue in this world as well as in the Middlesex County. As a way to prevent the overpopulation of unwanted animals on the streets as well as in overcrowded shelters, we have allocated with the ScarletPaws (a fostering organization) with the hope that many more people will foster these unwanted animals that are found daily.
Yes! Fostering does take time as well as money for supplies and clinical services, however, with the use of the Time Bank, there will be no need for much money out of pocket. The Time Bank works through timed currency; if a Vet gives in an hour of his time for a service, and then he will get that hour back from someone else who offers something he needs. The same thing would work for people donating food, pet supplies and pet-sitting services.
This is a proposed solution in reducing the amount of unwanted animals out there and finding a home for them, which is what they need. The Scarlet Paws can only do so much, but I bet that with your help in fostering these animals, we can reach success.
Thank You!

Michelle Panek sent to eletters@starledger.com, editor of Star-Ledger:

(MP) Pet abandonment and unwanted animal overpopulation is a prevalent issue effecting communities. When individuals are not capable, physically or financially, to keep their pets they often release them to the street or to a nearby shelter. There are not enough individuals financially able to adopt or foster to rescue all the unwanted animals. In order to remedy this issue, a time banking strategy has been implemented and local veterinarians have signed up to donate their services with a time-based currency in exchange for other services. Community members can receive veterinary services that usually have a monetary value. In addition, members are able to donate their time, for instance by fostering, to organizations such as Scarlet Paws, a Rutgers University organization which rescues cats and works to find potential adopters. This strategy will hopefully increase individuals’ willingness to adopt or foster unwanted animals, help pet owners who may be financially struggling to keep their animal, benefit the animals’ health by promoting veterinary visits, and ultimately reduce the number of unwanted animals in the community. This proposed solution to pet abandonment and overpopulation will benefit pet owners while also giving homeless animals the chance to find a forever home.

Elise Enners sent to editor@goleader.com, editor at the Wesfield Leader newspaper:
Many of us consider our furry friends in our lives as part of our families. They eat with us, sleep with us, and watch TV with us. Sadly, animals are not always found in warm and loving homes. There are approximately 8 million dogs and cats that enter shelters in the United States each year. Due to this seemingly insurmountable number, there is often no place to put these animals and shelters are unable to save them all. There is a way you can help, however. A new type of time-based currency called “Time Banking” is an outlet where people of the community can donate their hours and services, and in return receive talents or special services from others within the community. Now, how does Time Banking work with animal rescue, you may ask. It’s simple. Veterinarians have signed up to donate their services, and community members can sign up to become foster homes, pet sitting services, or other wise donate their time to help the animals find homes. Individuals can also donate time toward a rescue organization so that they may find foster homes and adoptive families. The aim of this is to lessen the financial constraints that potential foster homes may have, and therefore keep animals out of shelters and in homes. Hopefully, Time Banking can make adoption a more appealing and financially responsible option to pet ownership. Giving a homeless pet a second chance at life is an experience everyone should appreciate!

Dayana Perez sent “Letter to the Editor” to editorial@theobserver.com, editor of “The Observer” Kearny, NJ:

The overpopulation of pets in Animal Shelters has let my team and I to work towards a system that will help eliminate the numbers of animals that end up on the shelters. Additionally, we also focus on increasing the number of pets being adopted or fostered from the shelters. Among the many reasons as to why pets get continuously rendered to animal shelter is the absence of resources and economic problems. As we all know Veterinary Care is of great expense plus the additional expenses such as food, accessories and sheltering. Owning a dog or cat is a great responsibility of providing what is necessary for their growth, health and a good quality of life. We present the idea of a "Time Bank" which is in essence the exchange of services with no monetary value. The time of any individual is equivalent to the other, no matter the societal or economic status. If a Veterinarian provides an hour of his/her time, he must in return receive an hour back of a service he might need such as plumbing. We intend to build a community that supports one another and spreads the awareness of animal shelter overpopulation and the services available for those in need of help. The organization 'Scarlet Paws' has partnered with us in our attempt to increase the number of adoptions of these great but unfortunate unwanted animals. Scarlet Paws will get in contact through the Time Bank system with those individuals intending to foster or adopt and those who need support in keeping their pets at home. The services that are available as of now are basic Veterinary visits and pet food donated by Pet Smart, Edison. I ask for your support towards educating the public on how this affects their community and how they can help and be helped.