

# My Experiences with Spay Day

Barb Jones, DVM, MS

HSVMA Leadership Council Member

Graduate, Koret Shelter Medicine Residency

Program, University of California, Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine

Shelter Veterinarian, Placer SPCA, Roseville, CA

[barbiejones@earthlink.net](mailto:barbiejones@earthlink.net) or [barbj@placerspca.org](mailto:barbj@placerspca.org)

## Sacramento Area Animal Coalition (SAAC)



- Founded in 1999
- All volunteer organization
- Funded solely by donations and grants
- Serves three local counties
- Three main programs:
  - Spay/Neuter Vouchers
  - Feral Cat Assistance Coupons
  - Spay Day
- Approximately 10,000 animals spayed or neutered through SAAC since 1999

## SAAC Programs

- Voucher Program
- Feral Cat Coupon Program
- Spay Day



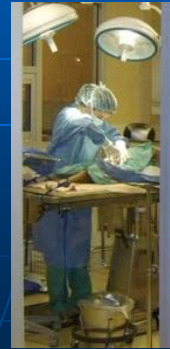
## Spay Day Sacramento

- Largest one-day spay/neuter event in U.S.
- 16+ vet clinics and shelters
- 6,000+ surgeries since 1999



## My Experience with Spay Day Sacramento

- Volunteer surgeon for participating clinics
  - UC Davis vet school, local shelters & local private clinics
- Chairperson in 2008
- Post-Spay Day on-call vet
- Appointment scheduling
  - Software committee chairperson
  - Scheduling coordinator



## Spay Day Sacramento: Clinic Recruitment & Participation

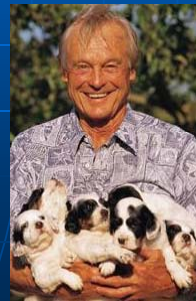
- SAAC recruits participating clinics
  - Clinics provide most surgeries free of charge
    - Clients pay \$15-\$20 per pet
    - SAAC pays clinics for most dogs > 50lb
  - Clinics sign up to do a certain # and type of surgeries
- SAAC provides clinics with vaccines, microchips & flea preventive
- SAAC also provides paperwork, food & volunteer T-shirts

## Spay Day Sacramento: Scheduling

- Potential clients contact SAAC to request appointment
  - Voicemail or online application
    - Proof of income required in 2011
- Volunteers call clients back to schedule appointments
  - Online scheduling tool
  - Most appointments on a Sunday in late February; some in the weeks before or after

## Spay Day Sacramento: Client Eligibility

- 35K annual income limit
  - Able to afford \$15-\$20 payment per pet
- Resident of certain counties
- Must own the pet(s)
  - Limit of 2 pets per household
- Must have mailing address & transportation



## Spay Day Sacramento: Pet Eligibility

- Age:
  - At least 3 months
  - Less than 6 years
- Healthy, not obese
- Not cryptorchid
- Not pregnant
  - Pregnant females fast tracked into voucher program
- Not aggressive or feral



## Spay Day Sacramento: What Clients/Pets Receive

- Pre-surgery exam
- Spay/neuter surgery
- Core vaccines
  - DHPP, FVRCP, Rabies
- Microchip & registration
- Dose of flea preventive



## Spay Day Sacramento: Successes/Advantages



- Most surgeries are free to SAAC
  - Non-free surgeries still cheaper than voucher or coupon program surgeries
- Well-known annual community event
  - Several participating clinics are "regulars"
  - Well established sponsors & donors
  - Many willing volunteers
  - Media interest
- Generates revenue for SAAC's other programs
- Lots of community demand

## Spay Day Sacramento: Limitations/Challenges



- Only once a year
  - Not consistently available S/N services
- Requires massive volunteer effort
  - Burnout has been a problem
- Size & scope presents many challenges
  - Committee management : job descriptions, responsibilities & decision-making authority
  - Consistency in protocols, timelines, etc.
  - Data management infrastructure & skills
  - Matching availability with demand

## Suggestions for Spay Day Planning

- Veterinary protocols
  - Include veterinary professional in planning committee
  - Encourage tattooing females & use of pain meds
- Scope
  - Avoid overextension
  - Start small
  - Start with single location?



## Suggestions for Spay Day Planning, 2

- Veterinary recruitment
  - Utilize local Veterinary Medical Association (VMA)
  - Demonstrate concern for veterinary liability
  - Include veterinary/vet tech schools if possible
- Clinic Participation
  - Get agreed upon schedule in writing
  - Balance flexibility with consistency & meeting demand
  - Assign liaison for each clinic early on



## Suggestions for Spay Day Planning, 3

- Scheduling
  - Utilize data to aim for availability that meets community demand need
  - Have a plan for excess demand
  - Address no shows via reminders & standby list
- Services Included
  - Don't recommend blood work, transportation
  - Keep it simple



## Pregnant Animals

- Many clinics want to avoid in high-volume setting
  - Divert & get done asap (before Spay Day) if possible
- Clarify what to do about "surprise" pregnancies
  - Ensure that vets will proceed
  - Inform clients that spay will proceed





## Post-Operative Care

- Minimize need with clear discharge instructions
  - Verbal and written
- On call vets to triage /answer questions?
  - Distinguish common minor complications from major complications
- Participating clinics see their own post-op concerns?
  - Clarify who is financially responsible
- Designated post-op clinic
  - Emergency clinic ideal, but tend to be expensive
- Designated emergency fund?

Thank You,  
and Good Luck!

Barb Jones, DVM, MS  
HSVMA Leadership Council Member  
Graduate, Koret Shelter Medicine Residency  
Program, University of California, Davis, School of  
Veterinary Medicine  
Shelter Veterinarian, Placer SPCA, Roseville, CA  
[barbiejones@earthlink.net](mailto:barbiejones@earthlink.net) or [barbj@placerspca.org](mailto:barbj@placerspca.org)