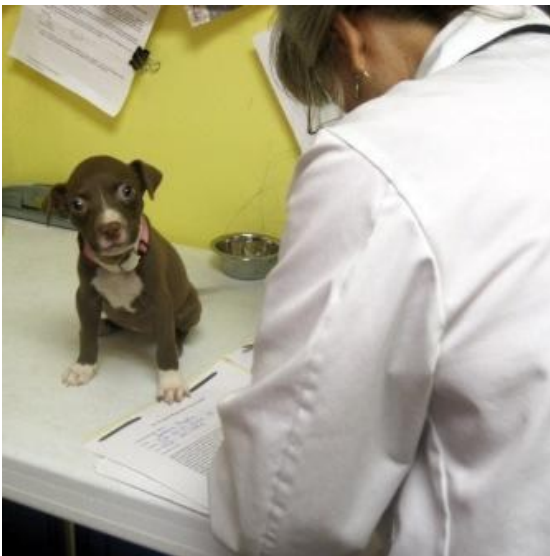


St
Francis
House
Pet Care
Clinic

2011

Annual Report of the St Francis House Pet Care Clinic,
January 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011

Annual
Report



Mission

The charitable mission of the St. Francis House Pet Care Clinic (the Clinic) is to provide primary non-emergency veterinary care to the pets of homeless persons, veterans in transitional housing, and very low income residents of Alachua County, Florida. In our most vulnerable communities, we try to keep people and pets together so both can benefit from the human-animal bond. We work to reduce the number of companion animals turned into shelters because their owners can no longer afford their care, and to increase the proportion of spayed and neutered pets in the population we serve.

The Clinic was founded in 2007 through the efforts of three women: Dale Kaplan-Stein, a Gainesville veterinarian, Chris Machen, the First Lady of the University of Florida, and Natalie Isaza, the Merial Clinical Assistant Professor of Shelter Medicine at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine. It is staffed and supported by a dedicated group of volunteers that includes students, veterinarians, community advocates and even some clients of the Clinic. The Clinic is named for the St. Francis House, a homeless shelter and soup kitchen in downtown Gainesville that generously provided space for the first four years of operations. The Clinic is not legally affiliated with St. Francis House.

Our Services

The St. Francis House Pet Care Clinic provides primary veterinary care and services to responsible but homeless or very low income pet owners. Veterinary care at the Clinic is provided by veterinary students taking the shelter medicine elective at the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine and by local veterinarians donating their time. Non-veterinary functions such as scheduling, client screening, cleaning, and record keeping are handled by student and community volunteers. Primary veterinary care services provided include health examinations; treatment for parasites, illness and injury; and vaccinations for distemper, rabies and respiratory disease. Non-veterinary services are also performed, including nail clipping and microchip implantation. Consultations are provided regarding diagnoses, treatment, and home care.



Clients are provided with medications for common ailments such as ear infections, skin diseases, and arthritis pain. They are encouraged to come in monthly for doses of flea and heartworm preventatives. Pet food and pet supplies (leashes, collars, shampoo, etc.) are offered when available.

A major objective of the Clinic is to teach responsible pet ownership and to encourage the spaying and/or neutering of all cats and dogs. Clients are allowed to have no more than two animals in the program at any one time, and in order to be accepted as clients, all animals in

their household must be spayed/neutered. With the owner's consent, the Clinic arranges for intact animals to be sterilized by the College of Veterinary Medicine, the No More Homeless Pets program, or other veterinarian-run services. Transportation to and from the surgery is provided by Clinic volunteers. The Clinic also tries to discourage its clients from adopting young animals on the assumption that free medical care will be provided. To this end, puppies and kittens under one year of age are vaccinated and scheduled for spay/neuter but are not seen on an ongoing basis.

Holistic Healthcare: It Takes a County

The Clinic is first and foremost a community organization. We are staffed entirely by local volunteers, about half working regularly at the clinic and the rest helping with non-clinical support like fundraising, record-keeping, and website maintenance. Beyond that, we are part of a network of individuals, businesses, charitable organizations and government agencies that work together to improve the lives of people and/or their pets in our underserved populations.

We are often the first point of contact with people who are not motivated to take care of themselves but will go out of their way to take care of their pets. When we see clients who could benefit from other services we try to refer them to other agencies or to make these agencies aware of them. Sometimes other organizations bring clients to us. In 2011 we had story after story of multi-agency cooperation.

Few things are more painful to practicing veterinarians than to have to turn away suffering animals, but animal hospitals have to make tough decisions daily simply to stay in business. Now veterinarians in Alachua County know that they can refer qualifying cases to the Clinic. Late in 2011 one local veterinarian was presented with a Pit Bull with pyometra, an acute and often fatal disease of the uterus. The dog's owner had scraped together enough to pay for the consultation but could not afford any treatment and did not qualify for a payment program. The veterinary practice called one of our Clinic veterinarians who immediately arranged for the animal to be spayed by No More Homeless Pets, which has a grant to do free spay/neuter for pets of qualifying individuals. The owner was accepted into the Clinic's program and brought her dog to the next Tuesday clinic for follow-up treatment. After the crisis was over, Clinic veterinarians explained the importance of spaying all female dogs, not only to prevent unwanted litters but also to prevent diseases like pyometra. Thanks to the local veterinary hospital, No More Homeless Pets, and the St. Francis House Pet Care Clinic all working together, this story has a happy ending.

A few months before the pyometra case, a few volunteers with the Home Van Pet Care Project, a local organization that helps to feed pets of the homeless, went to see some dogs in tent city that they had heard about. The dogs were in such bad condition they called Alachua County Animal Services right away. Animal Services went on-site immediately and directed the owners to our Clinic. The dogs were treated for scabies and other problems, and the dog's owners were referred to the County Health Department's Mobile Outreach



Clinic for treatment of their own medical conditions. St Francis House Pet Care Clinic veterinarians and volunteers followed up with a massive campsite cleanup “the likes of which have seldom been seen.”⁵ The Home Van (another volunteer organization that serves the homeless, independent of the Home Van Pet Care Project) donated a new double-size tent. Here three charities and two county agencies each did their part to help. The dogs are doing well and the owners are now taking better care of themselves as well as their pets. Poverty and homelessness can breed a feeling of helplessness, but with care and support people can feel empowered to improve their lives.

2011 in Review

The 2011 point-in-time survey carried out by the Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry found the homeless population up 38% over 2010 and up 53% over the last five years, blaming the “atrocious” economy for the numbers. The count, held on January 26 and 27, found 1,783 homeless in the county.¹ Numbers were expected to rise throughout the year based on the rate of foreclosures, which climbed to a six-month spike in pre-foreclosure activity in November 2011. As a result, the county saw “more families in hotels, or staying with friends and relatives.”² Demands on local food pantries continued to increase, with the regional food bank distributing a record 4,103,419 pounds of food in FY2010-2011 and unable to keep up with demand.³ We continued to see cases where an illness or job loss plunged entire families below the poverty line.

For the first time since the Clinic was founded in 2007, there was more need for services than we could satisfy, and we had to suspend screenings for new clients for several months. At the same time, we computerized our records and significantly improved the on-the-ground efficiency of Clinic operations. We lost our long-time host location but found a new temporary home, developed an outreach program to veterans receiving assistance, got a grant to support spay/neuter, and participated for the first time in the UF Campaign for Charities. We feel well positioned to make major progress in 2012 in finding a dedicated location and expanding our hours and our services.

Location

Since 2009 the City of Gainesville had enforced an ordinance that limited the number of lunches that could be served at the St. Francis House to 130 a day. In the fall of 2011 the Gainesville City Commission gave final and unanimous approval to a revised city ordinance that removed the meal limit, replacing it with a three-hour window during which all comers could be fed. While wonderful news for the St. Francis House and the hungry families in our area, this had the consequence that St. Francis House needed our space and could no longer continue to host our Tuesday clinics. We were notified in September that we would have to find other quarters by the end of the month.



Happily, the Civic Media Center and Library (CMC) stepped in with an offer to host us for a small monthly donation and the Clinic was able to relocate without missing a day. The CMC is located only a block from the St. Francis House and our clients had no problem with the transition. The space was also excellent for our purposes except for the lack of secure storage. Clinic volunteers have to pack up and move all files and supplies to and from the CMC each clinic day. Efforts to find our own space,

whether a modular unit or a rentable building, were in full force at the end of the year.

The unexpected turn of events had a silver lining: the Clinic's story received good publicity from the Gainesville Sun, TV 20, and other local news media. As a result, our name recognition and donations from individuals increased significantly at the end of the year.

Clinic and Screenings

At the beginning of 2011, screenings for new clients were held the second Monday of each month from 10:00 am to noon. In May, due to a lack of medical supplies, screenings were suspended until the fall. Then, because of the uncertainty created by having to vacate St. Francis House, the resumption of screenings was not advertised but people who inquired directly were placed on a waiting list.

During the summer the Veterans Administration proposed using the Gainesville Hotel and Conference Center at Tower Road as transitional housing for war veterans receiving services. (The proposal was later withdrawn due to opposition from nearby businesses.) At the same time, the Clinic experienced an unfortunate incident in which unscreened veterans were turned away, and one of them intended to surrender his dog to Animal Services because he could not afford heartworm preventative. This led the Clinic's Board to agree to accept war veterans as clients when referred to the Clinic through the Veterans' Administration. These veterans were the first to be accepted into the program when screenings resumed.

Because of constraints on resources, the Clinic tightened up on requirements for approving new clients. These included making sure that food stamp letters were up-to-date and that County residency was documented. An unexpected consequence was that some homeless individuals without documentation felt that they would not qualify for our services. To counter this, the Clinic instituted a system whereby the records of clients known to be homeless were placed in special green folders, and front desk workers were instructed not to ask green-folded clients for credentials. We feel that this has created a friendlier environment. We also flagged the folders of clients who had trouble with transportation so that they were allowed to pick up three months' worth of heartworm and flea preventatives at a time.

One of the most significant accomplishments of the year was a major improvement in record-keeping, accompanied by many small changes to improve efficiencies. All client records were computerized, and a number of stickers were designed to flag commonly occurring situations on patient folders. Stickers with the most common instructions for use were prepared for routine

medications, so that veterinarians would not have to write out instructions by hand for every case.

Another innovation was to allow clients to make a donation to the Clinic of up to \$10 per month for receiving heartworm and flea preventatives and pet food and supplies. Donations were requested via signage in the Clinic, and no payment was requested personally or enforced. This brought in an average of \$80 per Clinic, and some clients told us they were happy for the opportunity to contribute what they could.

Sometimes pets require emergency care, surgery, or other non-routine treatments which the Clinic is unable to provide. To help clients and others find sources of financial assistance, a new section was added to our website, "Sources of Aid." This lists charitable organizations that take applications for assistance for veterinary expenses.

	Clients	Patients
Active 2011	269	401
Green folder active	66	112
Total files (active & inactive)	690	1480

Spay/neuter

The Clinic was privileged to receive a \$13,500 grant from Florida Animal Friend, the organization that distributes funds raised through sale of the official Florida Animal Friend Spay and Neuter License Plate. In prior years our sterilizations have been done by the College of Veterinary Medicine's Shelter Medicine program and subsidized through that program's grants. That was a wonderful and much appreciated service to us but it also created uncertainty, as the program would occasionally lack the funds or capacity to handle our referrals. In 2011, No More Homeless Pets (NMHP) received a grant allowing them to spay/neuter the pets of qualifying individuals at no cost to them, and the Clinic began referring clients to NMHP. With the Florida Animal Friend Grant we can now cover the cost of all of our referrals and we have the flexibility to use a wider variety of approved veterinary services.



Because of our policy that all cats and dogs in a household be sterilized as a requirement for being accepted as a client of the Clinic, most of our spay/neuter referrals come from new clients to the program. Since screenings for new clients were suspended for much of the year, we had fewer spay/neuter referrals than normal. By the end of the year we had worked out a process where prospective clients could have their pets vaccinated and sterilized immediately at the time they were placed on our waiting list. These individuals' cooperation with this process is being found to be a good indicator of their future compliance with the program.

Partnerships and Outreach

Since early spring the Clinic has been working with the Department of Veterans' Affairs to increase our services to war veterans. Referrals from the VA are given priority on the waiting

list, and we are hoping to institute additional services in the future. We have discussed holding clinics on-site at veterans' housing once a transitional housing facility is established, and providing short-term kenneling for pets of veterans who need overnight hospitalization or detox.

In March, UF faculty members in Law and Medicine brought a group of students to the Clinic to observe, talk with clients, and assess their needs. We have opened the door to partnering with UF social workers when we have a permanent location in the future.

Outreach to potential clients has been limited because of our limited capacity to absorb them; we did not want to run up a hopelessly long waiting list. However, the Clinic did staff a table at the annual Breakfast on the Plaza and Homeless Services Fair in November. Sponsored by the Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry, this event aggregates dozens of service providers in one location to provide information on their services.

Fundraising and Grants

As noted above, the Clinic applied for and received a grant for \$13,500 from Florida Animal Friend to spay and neuter the pets of our clients.

The Clinic also applied to be a recipient agency of the 2011 University of Florida Campaign for Charities and was accepted into that program. This means that UF employees can designate their United Way donations directly to the Clinic. Undesignated donations are distributed in proportion to the agency's percentage of targeted donations. As a first-time recipient agency, the Clinic launched a major publicity campaign targeted to UF donors. In addition to placing an ad in the *Independent Alligator*, we also mailed letters to 300 of the "leadership" donors to the 2010 Campaign. Our donation allocation will be announced in March 2012 and disbursed in four portions over 12 month period.

The Swamp Restaurant in Gainesville made us the beneficiary of "Christmas in July," an annual promotion. Diners were encouraged to bring donations of pet food and supplies to be eligible for a raffle. The Swamp's manager, Israel Mendez, also drew a new version of the St. Francis House Pet Care Clinic logo, which now appears on all of our materials.



Sweet Dreams Homemade Ice Cream allowed us to table on a Saturday afternoon and donated a proportion of their ice cream sales to the Clinic.

Volunteers also tabled at the Micanopy Fall Harvest Festival and the Downtown Festival and Art Fair in Gainesville. These gave us the opportunity to spread the word about the Clinic as well as to take in donations. Additional funds were raised through a June yard sale and our Sympathy Card program.

Several organizations made us the recipient of their Holiday drives. The generosity of the Human Resources Department at Shands Hospital, the staff and clients of the Pet Paradise Resort, and the Greater Gainesville Dog Fanciers Association filled our storage room with a three months' supply of pet food and products.

Our best source of funds remained unsolicited donations from individuals aware of the Clinic's work. Publicity in local news outlets about our relocation from St. Francis House helped raise awareness of the Clinic and resulted in several first-time donors.

Balance Sheet

Our unaudited 2011 balance sheet is provided as an appendix.

Notes:

1. Gainesville Sun, <http://www.gainesville.com/article/20110201/ARTICLES/110209951>
2. ibid
3. Bread of the Mighty Website, <http://www.breadofthemighty.org/about.html>
4. Erika Friedmann, The Role of Pets in Enhancing Human Well-Being: Physiological Effects, <http://www.deltasociety.org/Document.Doc?id=48>
5. Home Van Pet Care Project Newsletter, <http://homevanpetcareproject.blogspot.com>

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Accrual Basis

St. Francis House Pet Care Clinic
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2011

	<u>Dec 31, 11</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Alarion Checking 7423/6086	26,885.35
UF Foundation	731.21
Total Checking/Savings	<u>27,616.56</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>27,616.56</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>27,616.56</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable	527.00
Total Accounts Payable	<u>527.00</u>
Credit Cards	
Chase 3245	62.48
Office Depot	50.19
Total Credit Cards	<u>112.67</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>639.67</u>
Total Liabilities	639.67
Equity	
Unrestricted Net Assets	9,736.89
Net Income	17,240.00
Total Equity	<u>26,976.89</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>27,616.56</u>